

Boundaries, Incursions, Migrations, And God (Part Two)

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I want to make one aspect of the subject of human will clear, at least for your comfort, and appreciation as well within your conversion.

Beginning with Adam and Eve the estrangement between God and man is actually formed around a simple cause. I want to make some true, simple, and clear statements about this very serious subject. I believe there are only four or five, and I know that the statements that I am going to make are not going to solve issues on this at all. I just wanted this for your benefit, so that you are not in any way upset because you do not know the answer to some technicality that appears in a scripture.

This subject is serious because I think you understand there are millions, hundreds of millions of people in the United States and Britain alone, who believe that they are in contact with God, the true God. What is going to happen whenever these things are revealed that they are not? The Scriptures make some very pertinent statements regarding this very thing; when people find out they are not worshipping the true God. They were deceived by people along the way. So, I want you to have these statements, they are simple, and they are clear.

The first thing that we must get out of the way here is maybe this simplest one of all. What caused the estrangement between God and man? It began with Adam and Eve. Man does not believe what God says about Himself, about man himself, about what God is working out, about sin, about death, or where man is headed because of how man is conducting his life. In one sense, that is almost the whole issue in one simple 15-word or so statement. This is what has caused the estrangement between God and man.

The next one has to do with all of time as well, but we can apply it to right now. It is for your benefit.

Numbers 23:19 God is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent. Has he said, and will He not do, or has He spoken, and will He not make good?

Turn now to I Kings 8 where it says:

I Kings 8:56-57 [Solomon is speaking] “Blessed be the LORD, who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. There has not failed one word of all of His good promise, which He promised through His servant Moses.”

Here is my second statement to you. God, under no circumstance, ever lies. *Ever*. Scriptures, therefore, never contradict any portion of the Bible. *Ever*. There are no contradictions in the Bible whatsoever. God is not playing games with mankind. His purposes are very, very serious for each and every person. And they *may appear* to contradict. But these appearances are caused and then supported by man's lack of understanding, and many of mankind's claim that they are free to initiate joining themselves to God by the exercise of their will. God flatly denies that in strong and clear terms.

Now here is my third one. These people say they are seeking God out of the strength of their will. But in Romans 3 Paul writes,

Romans 3:10-11 As it is written: There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.

Let that one rattle around. All these billions of people out here who feel that they are seeking God, and they are doing it confidently believing. But God's Word says nobody seeks after Him. Do you know why? There is a simple answer to this. They do not know what to look for. And that is the truth. What they think is God, is not.

Number four. Let us turn to John 15.

John 15:16-18 "You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you. These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, know that it hated Me before it hated you."

That is a very strong term. He has been hated from the beginning. They proved the hatred when He came as a man. And, of course, they put Him to death. They did not put Him to death because they loved Him. They put him to death because they hated Him. That was the expression of their attitude.

Number five is in Romans 9. All of these are just simple truths, so that your mind is certain about the kind of world that we are living in. Where the people claim to be Christian, and they are sincere about it, but nonetheless, it is not true. Unless, God has truly called them.

Romans 9:16 So then it is not of him who wills [Listen to this positive statement], nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

The Amplified Bible translates Romans 9:16 this way. "So, then [God's gift] [That is, the calling.] is not a question of human will and human effort, but of God's mercy. [It depends not on one's own willingness, nor on his strenuous exertion, as in running a race, but on God's having mercy on him.]"

Now, we are going to do something; just a little act. Suppose I lift this Bible up, and then let it drop. [THUD!]. I do it again. [THUD!]. I do it again. [THUD!]. No matter how many times I do that the Bible is always going to react the same way. Suppose, though, that I *desire* that the Bible be lifted several feet higher from the lectern. It goes up. What, then? Is it going to go up? Not on your life. By nature, I must lift it. In other words, a power outside the Bible must raise it.

This simple illustration parallels the unconverted person's relationship with God. Brethren, such is the relationship between a sinful person and God, even though that sinful person believes that he is on the right track, and he sets his will to go to God. That sinful person cannot lift himself into a position of being saved. He cannot call himself. He cannot grant himself repentance unto salvation. He cannot give himself the Holy Spirit. He cannot rid himself of carnality.

The sinful person is certainly free to cry out to God to call him to salvation. And that is certainly acceptable, if God knows it would be good for that person. But volunteering to give oneself to God, in this circumstance, described simply, will not work. Because God's preparation for that person before his calling are necessary to lift him into that position. Do you get the picture?

God has to be involved in the beginning, the very beginning, or it never happens. Just like the Bible will not float away on its own. A person who volunteers to be part of God, and cast his lot with the Great Creator, but the Creator reveals Him as being exceedingly intelligent, and He is. He is also exceedingly kind and merciful. But the world has pretty much portrayed Him as somewhat of a pussycat one should not be overly concerned about. Now, He is not. But He operates in such a way that can be frequently unsettling and even difficult to accept, causing us to use our faith.

The sermon is going to take a bit of a turn here. I just wanted to make sure you got those five little points that should prove to you (not upset you in any way), that nobody can volunteer to be in God's Family without God calling them first.

I was reading a newsletter from a conservative civic organization as I was beginning to prepare this sermon, when I noticed that the writer quoted a comment made by Arthur Pink. I very much like to read things that Arthur Pink has written because I have appreciated his insights for a long time. Pink stated this in relation to I Timothy 6:12. The apostle says to Timothy, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses." Well, what Pink said was this.

God grants His people no furloughs in the good fight of faith to which He has called them. And should they take one, then their enemies will inevitably prove too strong nor will the captain of their salvation fight their battles for them.

In other words, he says, when you take a furlough away from your relationship with God, you get weak. That triggered thoughts in the author's mind, because the author of the newsletter then went on to add his thoughts saying (this is an American),

Judging by the shape and the tone of the American culture today, it is apparent that Christendom took the whole last century off.

Both of those comments fit neatly into the direction I plan to take in this message, because Jesus Christ must be with us from calling to resurrection. From beginning to where we are actually in the Kingdom of God. From calling to resurrection. And I want us to grasp that the sovereignty of God will thus impact on us the rest of our life and is portrayed in Scripture. God's sovereignty is portrayed in scripture as absolute, irresistible, and infinite.

This is the part of my message that applies more directly to you and me on a daily basis. God's sovereignty will impact on us. And it is portrayed in the Bible as absolute, irresistible, and infinite. Is it possible that we might fail to appreciate the length and the breadth and the depth of God's sovereignty in our life? Is it possible that we fail to grasp how much of our life His sovereignty impacts upon those who live by faith, and how He uses it? That is, God uses it, along with that member from circumstance to circumstance. It is that term, infinite, that I believe is so needful for those of us who live by faith to grasp.

Think about how God challenged Abraham and Isaac's faith when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Was that fair of God? What if you were in that circumstance? Well, in that circumstance, Abraham, it seems, never blinked. That is important to you and me because God is going to push our faith harder and harder as time goes on. Are we going to accept a command from our sovereign God to do something akin to what Abraham had to do with Isaac? And what Isaac had to do by submitting to his father's knife that was poised there to come down on his neck? Was that fair of God? Remember, His sovereignty is infinite, and it reaches out to you and me now that we have committed ourselves to God.

God's sovereignty is never ending over everything, all the time. In the Bible, God merely affirms His right to govern the universe by use of His sovereignty. But now, listen to our responsibility regarding that sovereignty. We are to affirm in our mind that it is His right to affirm to us individually that He has made everything for His glory. Everything. Not ours. God is no pussycat. He is no pussycat when you think what He ordered Abraham to do. Admittedly, he was a man of towering faith. As I said, he never blinked. And that proved how deeply he believed in God.

You think we are not going to prove to God that His judgment of what we will take in the way of an order from Him, will be obeyed? He is never going to test us above what we are able. But will we trust His judgment that we are able? I am not taking it any further than that because I trust what God says, that He will never test us above what we are able.

God has the right of a potter over the clay, to shape it any way He wants. His sovereignty is infinite. He has the right to do everything He pleases with everybody and anybody in every circumstance. God is under no rule of law outside of His own will and nature. He is a law unto Himself and has no obligation to give an accounting of what He did, or is doing to anybody. He answers to nobody. That is why I say God's sovereignty is infinite!

We started this part of the sermon out talking about man *willing himself*. Now, we are talking about how God's will matters. This can get scary. He is the sovereign in the exercise of His awesome powers. And from the same lump, He is free to make one person into a vessel of honor and another person into a vessel of dishonor. He is free to heal one person of a terrible, ravishing disease, but not to heal another person.

Do you understand that there are people calling themselves Christian, who believe that the one they call their Creator's original plan was frustrated by Adam and Eve? They are carelessly suggesting that God was taken by surprise by them in Eden, and that through grace, He is now attempting to remedy an unforeseen calamity. And thus, they essentially believe God made an adjustment and devised the plan to make it easier to save souls.

No way. To believe such a thing is to dethrone God in their own minds. Such a concept reduces their concept of God to nothing more than the level of a finite, erring human being. It is human beings who make mistakes. The reality is that God is Omnipotent in His intelligence and foresight and is perfectly aware at all times in His creation. Brethren, He made no adjustments to His original plan. Each and every aspect was approved before they put things in motion.

And one aspect of His perfect sovereignty is the exercise of His mercy. Why? Because His mercy is directed by His will. In His will is where everything begins. So, let us reason together for a short time here.

Let us compare mercy to justice. Justice demands the impartial enforcement of law. It requires that each shall receive his legitimate due. Justice bestows no favors and is no respecter of persons. Mercy, on the other hand, is not a right to which we are entitled before God. Mercy is an attribute of God by which He relieves those who are wretched. To speak of one deserving mercy is a contradiction in terms.

Justice and mercy are far different. Why is this so? This is often difficult for one to accept. But, brethren, the reality is that we have all earned death through sin, and we fully deserve the death. Are we reconciled to this? We fully deserve the death because we are so frequently self-centered. In other words, what I am basically saying, we are sinning often. We are earning the death penalty every time we sin.

Mercy is needed when one is miserable and wretched. Where do misery and wretchedness come from? Both are fruits of sin and under the righteous government of God we also absolutely deserve to die and be miserable before we die, because we, along with others, have sinned. Everybody who is miserable deserves to be miserable because he is a sinner. These are realities. It does not mean that we are always miserable. But we *deserve* to be miserable. We have earned it. God, however, bestows His mercy on whom He pleases. Not those who volunteer—who He pleases. Because it seems good to Himself, whether anybody else approves or not.

Look what He did with the apostle Paul. Everybody who felt himself to be righteous feared Paul. That is the guy God called. I mean really did call him. It was not a fake. So, God dispenses His mercy even on those that He might consider His enemies. That is how far His sovereignty reaches even to the enemies. (I will get back to this in just a little while.) He does it through the exercise of His sovereignty. And He does it so frequently. But He also frequently does things that are truly inexplicable to us.

Here is an example. God allowed one of his greatest servants, Moses, to die without going into the Promised Land. I will bet you Moses had a heartache over that. For 80 years of training and service, he was surely one of God's most faithful servants. Why did He withhold that merciful gift? None of us knows with absolute certainty the whole story. But God denied that gift to Moses.

And yet, on the other hand, God healed Hezekiah, who was by comparison to Moses, a so-so servant at his very best. He was a servant, but he was not anywhere near the class of Moses. For God's pleasure only, God simply exercised His sovereignty and extended Hezekiah's life.

Turn with me to Hebrews 11, because we are getting really close to the key in this entire message here, where it says,

Hebrews 11:30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were encircled for seven days.

This is what I want you to consider. Do you know that when Israel invaded the Promised Land, Jericho was the only city subdued in that manner? The city walls fell flat. But with every other city in Canaan, Israel had to subdue it by means of the sword, thus putting them at risk of death. What would you have done in that situation? Well, "Let's knock off those city walls in every city." God said, "One is enough." Every other city had to be put down by the sword. That is why I am saying,

sometimes God does things that are inexplicable. And those soldiers, we will call them, had to risk their lives because of God's sovereignty. That is what He decided. It is infinite. It is irresistible. Let us continue.

Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe when she had received the spies with peace.

We heard about that in Bill Onisick's sermon.

Hebrews 11:32 And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also of David and Samuel and the prophets.

Now it is the next part that I am really getting to here.

Hebrews 11:33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness, were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight armies of the aliens.

Now look at what God did not do.

Hebrews 11:35 Women received their dead raised to life again.

He saved some. And He let others die, maybe agonizingly.

Hebrews 11:35-38 Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy.

But God put them through it. Are you having any second thoughts? This is the One that we have to trust. He is no pussycat. And everything He does has a loving, kind, saving purpose in putting the people through those times. I am going through this because, this is the direction the United States of America and Britain, and the other Israelitish countries in Europe, are heading toward. We are not there yet. It might be 20 years. I do not know. Maybe I will be in my grave by that time.

But you understand, this is the God that we worship. This is the God that we serve, and this is the God who does things that are inexplicable to us by the decisions that He make. Are you going to trust Him? That in those times, you are going to grow to the place where you are like these people who did this with an understanding will? By this, I mean, they observed the giving of God honor in their lives.

God calmed the nature of ravishing lions, making them into a group of kittens to save Daniel's life. In addition, God allowed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to be thrown into a super-hot fire, killing those who carried out the responsibility that Nebuchadnezzar gave to them. And then he saved the Jews' life. But on the other hand, God exercised His sovereignty in an entirely different manner in those other verses that I just read. Now let us turn this off a little bit away from the gruesome part there.

Are you willing to accept a provable biblical fact? God does not love everybody to the same degree. Did you hear me? God does not love everybody to the same degree. God clearly chooses whom He will love. Here is a radical example. God does not love the Devil. Why not? Well, the answer in this case is actually very clear. There is absolutely nothing in him to love. He hates God, and God knows full well, love given Satan will never change him. His nature is fully set in him like aged concrete to be perpetually evil.

Now this raises yet another question. What about His love among mankind? And there are, brethren, differences in His degree of love for mankind, too. It very clearly states,

Romans 9:13-15 As it is written, “Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.” What shall we say, then? Is there unrighteousness with God? For He says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.” [So, in verse 13, God is not exaggerating.]

Remember, I said that God's Word is true. He was not lying when He said that He hated Esau. We might put a measurement on what that hatred consists of. But I want you to know this to be reminded of it. That even within the womb, when neither had done anything evil or good, God exercised His sovereignty, and He chose Jacob. He had not done anything good, bad, indifferent, whatever. For whatever God's reason He simply chose Jacob. You can read it in the Bible and at least it seems this way, that Esau was really the good guy. And Jacob, he was not to be trusted with many things.

People, because of a misunderstanding, believe God is obligated to love everybody equally. No, He is not. That is picked up with a misunderstanding, or because of a misunderstanding of John 3:16. Go watch a football game on TV and you see all over the place, which says,

John 3:16 For God so loved the world He gave His only begotten Son.

Do you remember the sermonette that David Grabbe gave about a month or so ago regarding the god of this world? After David gave that sermonette, I read some research done by somebody else besides David. I just happened to run into it, I was not checking up on David in this way because I was sure that he interpreted that correctly. But it was somebody else's research regarding the word, “world.”

I found in that article something that touched on what David said as well. That word, “world,” is used in seven, clearly distinct contexts. But it is always translated “world.” Now, that is not wrong, but the contexts are each clearly showing different “worlds” of which God was speaking in each case, and each was different. And this might make all the difference in the world.

An example is that “world”—the “world” that God loves in John 3:16—is not the “world” in general. It is not Satan's “world” either. John 3:16, its context, restricts the application to the world of the converted. The world God loves is that world of converted people. Them, He loves. Nobody else outside of that world is loved in the context of that verse.

If you want to put it another way, God truly loves His own children over and above others by far. Does that not seem natural to you that people love their own children? God is no different in that regard. Thus, God is stating He loves the converted that Jesus died for. And “world” in that context does not refer to any others.

Here is a very interesting one.

Ephesians 2:1-5 (KJV) And you [written to members] He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience. Among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and off the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others. But God, who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ by grace, you have been saved.

I want you to listen to me as I read this out of the Amplified Bible, because they expand it quite a bit and fill in things that will give you ideas. And I think they have done a pretty good job here.

Ephesians 2:1-2 (Amplified Bible) And you [He made alive], when you were dead (slain) by [your] trespasses and sins in which at one time you walked [habitually]. You were following the course and fashion of this world [were under the sway of the tendency of this present age], following the prince of the power of the air. [You were obedient to, and under the control of] the [demon] spirit that still constantly works in the sons of disobedience [the careless, the rebellious, and the unbelieving who go against the purposes of God].

Ephesians 2:3 (Amplified Bible) Among these, we as well as you, once lived and conducted ourselves in the passions of our flesh [our behavior governed by our corrupt and sensual nature], obeying the impulses of the flesh and the thoughts of the mind [our cravings dictated by our senses and our dark imaginings]. We were then by nature children of [God's] wrath and heirs of [His] indignation like the rest of mankind.

Ephesians 2:4-5 (Amplified Bible) But God—so rich in His mercy! Because of and in order to satisfy the great and wonderful and intense love with which He loved us, even when we were dead (slain) by [our own] shortcomings and trespasses, He made us alive together in fellowship and in union with Christ; [He gave us the very life of Christ Himself, the same new life with which He quickened Him, for] it is by grace (His favor and mercy which you did not deserve) that you are saved (delivered from judgment and made partakers of Christ's salvation).

I know that was quite a mouthful. But what He gave there with this description, that before God reveals Himself, when He calls us, we are so completely under the influence of Satan, who is totally subject to God's wrath. That we, like him in the verses, are called just like Satan, children of God's wrath. Now, God exercised His sovereignty and called us anyway. In this case, it means being under that direction of Satan we were headed straight for an execution, the death penalty. And that is where Satan is headed because he *will not* repent.

Before our calling, we would never repent. Do you understand this? All those words, all of those descriptive things given in that verse are telling us why we, mankind, cannot do what he does in setting his will to try to get on God's good side because we have so much to repent of. Following Satan, we would never do it. Anybody with any sense, hearing that description of our character at the time that God calls us—would we ever be accepted? Absolutely not. Impossible.

Here is the point. God knows exactly what we are, and yet He exercised His sovereignty and extends us mercy. That brethren, is awesome! Now, since we are clearly called in that verse, children of

wrath, within that context of that verse, He most certainly is not calling us because we are good and have earned being called and sanctified.

We are reaching a conclusion of this sermon. And it is this, that God, by exercising His will, clearly shows His decisions are not always carried out in the same manner. He picks and chooses how He will use His awesome powers. Our responsibility is to trust His character which is always exercised in love and is absolutely righteous in what is accomplished.

So, let us look at one more example of the exercise of sovereignty by the Father. This one is of the Son, our Savior. Notice what is said of Him, and as we do this note that Jesus stated that He and the Father are one. He meant that they agree. They are of the same mind. The Son is of the same mind as the Father. I know brethren, this is sobering. But we need to understand that God's sovereignty is not used in the same way all the time, except whatever decision He reaches. His will is always the best.

John 5:1-9 Now, after this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these laid a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving in the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity of 38 years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?" The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up. But while I am coming, another steps down before me." Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk." And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was a Sabbath.

Answer this for your own pleasure. Why was this one man singled out? He was not a member of the church. He is only identified in the context as a certain man. We are not told that the man appealed for anything. He was just sitting there. He did not say, "Lord, have mercy upon me." Is there anything within the context showing any qualifications that entitled him to be relieved of his wretchedness? For him to receive any special favors? Why only him among all that great crowd? Jesus could have healed the entire group by simply speaking out. But He only healed the one with the exercise of His sovereignty.

Salvation is by grace through faith, and God surely wants us to make sure that our faith is challenged. He wants very much to see whether there is enough love within our heart to step out and use it, as He did with Abraham and Isaac.

Let us look at one more thing regarding Jesus Christ. Divine truth is hidden from the wise and the prudent but revealed to babes. The Pharisees and the Sadducees are left in the dark, so to speak, regarding the Promised Seed's birth because no angels announced His birth to the Sanhedrin. But on the other hand, publicans and harlots are drawn to Jesus Christ.

God could have arranged a whole orchestra of angels playing trumpets and singing Handel's Messiah. But God had only a single light in the sky, attracting a few wise men from the east, and some shepherds. Jesus was not born in a capital city of the great powers of the times, like Rome and

Athens. Rather, in a small town in a nation held captive by another. That is the way God exercised His prophecy. The most important birth ever to occur on earth was made known to these common folks.

God certainly does things as only He, at the time, seems fitting to Him. Therefore, God's will is exactly the right time and the way. He is sovereign. Only He and the Son know fully where they are headed with everybody all the time. We, brethren, must believe Him as He deals with us, and we must trust Him even at His most mystifying times.