regarding human conduct. God’s **sovereign will** is discerned only when the **secret** counsel of God is **revealed** as events actually happen. Whatever comes to pass is what He has sovereignly planned and **decreed** from all eternity. Thus, we answer questions like, “Is it God’s will for me to do this or that,” by simply looking to God’s revelation of His moral will in Scripture. But as events actually occur, we come to know God’s sovereign will, i.e., what He has ordained and then approved, permitted or prevented. When discussing these matters, therefore, we must clearly distinguish between **Two Wills of God**. The following Table will help us do that.

### The Two Wills of God

**Deuteronomy 29:29** - “The **secret** things belong to the LORD our God, but the things **revealed** belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law. NASB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>SOVEREIGN WILL</strong></th>
<th><strong>MORAL WILL</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Also called.....</em></td>
<td><em>Also called.....</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SECRET WILL</strong></td>
<td><strong>REVEALED WILL</strong></td>
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<td><strong>WILL OF DECREE</strong></td>
<td><strong>COMMANDED WILL</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>WILL OF PRECEPT</strong></td>
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**God’s Sovereign will** includes God’s hidden decrees by which He governs everything that happens. We find out God’s **Sovereign will** when events actually happen.

- Ephesians 1:11
- James 4:15
- Genesis 50:20
- Matthew 11:25-26
- 1 Corinthians 4:19
- Romans 1:10, 9:18, 15:32
- 1 Peter 3:17, 4:19

**God’s moral will** expresses God’s general desire concerning things and usually contains God’s commands about our moral conduct.

- Exodus 20:1-17
- Ephesians 5:17
- Romans 2:18
- 1 John 5:14
- Matthew 6:10, 7:21, 12:50, 18:14
- 1 Timothy 2:4
- 2 Peter 3:9
- Ezekiel 33:11

**Question #41:** In your own words, distinguish between God’s sovereign will and His moral will.

**Question #42:** How would you explain the difference between God’s sovereign will and His moral will to a young child?
Examples of the two wills of God are clearly seen in Scripture and in the world around us. When we see evil take place, we know that, although it is a violation of His moral will (His revealed will, commanded will, or will of precept), God permitted rather than prevented it by His sovereign will (His will of decree or secret will) which He determined from all Eternity.

Consider the following:

**Joseph and his brothers:**
*Genesis 50:20:* And as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive.

**The murder of Jesus:**
*Acts 2:23:* this Man, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put Him to death.

**Genocide in War**


How can we explain such things in the light of God’s absolute sovereignty? **Jonathan Edwards** well states what is taught in Scripture: “God decreed from all eternity all the evil that He ever does permit, because God’s permitting is God’s forbearing to act or to prevent.”\(^{13}\)

Simply stated, God permits the existence of evil in His world, which He hates, to accomplish higher purposes in His world which He loves.

**Question #43:** Formulate a short response to someone who asks you, “How can a good God allow all this evil to exist in our world?” (This response should briefly answer the question from a biblical perspective while serving as a foundation for further discussion.)

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**Government:** God is continually involved with all created things in such a way that he . . . (3) directs them to fulfill his purposes.” Grudem further defines this third aspect of God’s Providence by saying, “God has a purpose in all that he does in the world and he providentially governs or directs all things in order that they accomplish his purposes.”\(^{14}\)

The Scripture plainly declares that everything happens ultimately under the sovereign authority of God as He directs them so that in the end His purposes are fulfilled.

*Psalm 103:19:* The LORD has established His throne in the heavens; And His sovereignty rules over all.

Paul affirms that God works “all things after the counsel of His will” and to His “ends.”

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\(^{13}\) Edwards, 529.

\(^{14}\) Grudem, 331.