

Understanding Tragedy & The Will of a Loving God

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How tragic to attribute the Ocean Isle tragedy to the will of God or to say that such a horrendous event was just a matter of luck or chance! It was neither. I shudder to hear someone use the blanket expression “God’s will has been done” to cover such a horrible catastrophe or to blame it on the “roulette wheel” of the game of life or death.

As light through a prism is refracted into different rays, so the pure light of God’s holy will can be broken down into at least three different aspects: 1) intentional – God’s ideal plan for mankind; 2) Circumstantial – His plan within circumstances (sometimes called “permissive”) and 3) Ultimate – God’s final realization of His purposes.

His *intentional* will for the human race was that we, created in his image in a perfect state, would never have to experience the negative forces of life and nature.

But with the fall of man came chaos. This resulted in God having to move through *circumstantial* means in dealing with His creation, not causing, but *permitting* certain things to happen, and this always that His *ultimate* will might be accomplished.

A classic example can be found in the Crucifixion, the most excruciating execution in history, which was the design, not of God, but of evil men. And when Jesus, facing the cross, was compelled either to die or to flee, then, in those circumstances, the Crucifixion became the will of God. And through this, His ultimate will, the redemption of mankind was accomplished.

For those struggling in grief with this difficult topic, I would commend the words of the Apostle Paul to the Romans, 8:28-39, with emphasis upon verses 28, 31-32 and 37-39. Verse 32 speaks eloquently in these matters! “He that spared not His own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall He not with him also freely give us all things?”

It could especially be applied to this story from life: “A woman, whose son was killed in a tragic accident, in deep agony, asked her pastor, ‘What was God doing when my son was killed?’” The answer: “He was doing the same thing as He was when His ‘only begotten Son’ (John 3:16) was killed: He was loving you.”

Only as we perceive God in this manner, as loving Heavenly Father, can we possibly understand His perfect and ultimate will for us all. May the blessing of this perception be yours.