

# **Dr. Gary Meadors, Knowing God's Will, Session 4a, The Will of God in the Old Testament, Part 1**

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Welcome back to our lectures on Biblical Theology for Knowing God's Will. In this lecture, we're going to talk about the Old Testament. This is GM 4. GM 4. You should have your slides, and there are some notes for this particular lecture as well, so you can have those available.

It'll make this a whole lot more enjoyable on your part. I just want to mention a couple of things. Number one, someone mentioned to me that capital letters in certain situations are considered yelling at somebody.

I think you understand that I'm using capital letters so you can see the slides better and for clarity. Sometimes, I'll use them for emphasis, so just mention that on the side just in case anyone has considered it. So, so far, we've had an orientation.

We've talked about an overview of my model. We've talked about Bible versions. We've talked about three ways the Bible teaches us.

We've talked about patterns of how the church historically has gone about this question. Now, we're going to talk about the Old Testament today and the New Testament in the next lecture. These are, in many ways, the most fun lectures of all because we're seeing the development in the text of this question of knowing God's will.

And that's what is really crucial at the end of the day. So, if you will, buckle up your seat belt, and we'll get ready to go. Okay, first of all, evaluating aspects of the Old Testament.

There are certain categories that we will go through. We have six of them here, five actually in conclusion. We're going to talk about the Old Testament patterns for knowing God's will and how it presents that.

We're going to talk about the Old Testament nomenclature that's used for God's will. We'll see a contrast between the Old and the New, not in terms of meaning, but just in terms of the linguistic constructs. We'll talk about Daniel's life just a little bit and use it as an example of doing God's will.

We'll talk about some abused examples that have occurred many times in churches. I heard them very much in my early Christian life. They're examples of abuse by what I call moralizing the Bible rather than understanding the Bible.

Then, we'll talk about wisdom. Wisdom is a key factor in God's will, and we'll try to clarify what that means, and then we'll bring it all together as we go along. First of all, Old Testament patterns for knowing God's will.

Obviously, direct revelation is a major part of those patterns. On the supplement handout that I gave you, which has a lot of information but I will not be referring to very often, we have what's known as the pre-Mosaic period. If you were to look at page one of that handout, you'd see that we list things here that were occurring in terms of revelation prior to the time of Moses, who we give credit for being the first to codify scripture.

Book of Job is kind of the odd book out. We're not really sure about its date, but nonetheless, we have Adam and Eve. How did God communicate to Adam and Eve? Well, he did it in the garden.

He did it orally to them. He gave them stipulations. The main stipulation, as you well know, is don't eat from the fruit of this tree because that's the tree of knowledge, and if you eat it, that's implying that you think you want to be like me.

And you know the story of Adam and Eve in the garden in the fall. Then we have the story of Noah in the biblical narrative that becomes quite large in terms of the flood, and then quite a while after all that, we have Abraham, who comes from the ancient Near East over on the Babylonian type side, the Ur of Chaldeans, as they call it, probably in the northern part of that region where the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers were. He comes to the land of Canaan by God's call.

An amazing thing. Abraham couldn't pick up a Bible or read it. He had to go directly from the standpoint of God's direct speaking to him, and that happened not every day.

Sometimes, there were decades in between God's speech to Abraham, and we take and look at the Abrahamic narrative and see how it spaces out. And then we have Lot. Lot is a fascinating character that we'll look at in a little detail because he illustrates the negative side of doing God's will.

Melchizedek was an interesting figure in that period who knew the true God, yet we don't have a clue very much about him. People tried to do all kinds of things with Melchizedek, but the fact is that he comes on the scene as a king and one who follows the true God, and yet we have no information about that issue. Balaam is kind of a mystery, too.

He comes from up in the north, back over around where Abraham had come from, and he seems to know quite a bit. And yet, first of all, we don't have a recorded scripture yet, so he was going from oral tradition and from whatever experience that happened. There was something that went on in the ancient world in God's communication that we just don't have any information about.

But that was a period of direct revelation, God speaking to chosen individuals, not just to anybody. It was not God's speech on demand, but it was him orchestrating history, and it happened over a long period of time. We don't know the exact time of Adam and Eve and Noah, but we know that Abraham was about 2000 BCE, before the common era or before Christ, and so we have a lot of time gaps in here.

All right, so we've got a direct revelation, particularly in that pre-Mosaic period, but it continues in different ways, as I've already mentioned. Okay, we've got direct revelation in the sense of codified into what we call scripture, and Moses is the primary person presented in this regard. We know that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

He didn't write the end of Deuteronomy; probably that was done by Joshua since Moses was on the way out. And we have the prophets, and of course, in the Bible, and particularly the Hebrew Bible, that's called the law, the first five books in the Bible, and the prophets. So, God reveals through select individuals, not just anybody.

In other words, you couldn't walk out into the desert and pray, and God would tell you something. That is never at any time provided as an example of how things work in scripture. He communicated through chosen individuals who were a major part of the redemptive history that was developing.

All right, furthermore, there's the ancillary product. Ancillary means it comes alongside, so to speak, and we call this the values deposit. I mentioned in the overview that as time goes on in the progress of God's redemptive work, certain individuals become narrative examples, good and bad.

And the rest of the believing community, through their teachers, would learn about those, and values develop, worldview develop, which, of course, values come from. In that oral and the codified direct revelation, we have the value deposit. We're talking about Lot's narrative, and wisdom literature is a big part of that development.

Okay, so furthermore, the Old Testament patterns for God's will are direct revelation. We talked a bit about having those supplementary notes, and you can look at those as your plates. Now, Moses codifies the oral pre-Mosaic redemptive history.

We're not told how he got all that information. It had to come through orality. Some could have been direct revelation to Moses, but we don't have accounts other than the Ten Commandments of that.

When Moses put these things down, and then in the book of Deuteronomy, Deuteronomy means second law. Deuteronomy is a Greek word. They actually get the name Deuteronomy from the Septuagint, and that's the second law.

And Moses preaches the law and the revelation he'd received about God in the book of Deuteronomy. It's a fascinating study to look at the original passages that he codified and see how he both repeated them and expanded upon them. And that gives us a little bit of a pattern for how we take the Bible and get its implications.

Moses gives us some examples of that process. So, he codifies this material. It's pre-Abraham material.

It's Abraham material. He has Melchizedek, of course, and Balaam, the patriarchs. The whole story of the patriarchs is recorded here by Moses. And so we see that we're getting information from all kinds of sources, but primarily the oral tradition.

And in the ancient world, orality was a very stable factor in passing information along. It doesn't work today. We've all played those games where you tell somebody something, they tell the next person, and see what you get by the time you get to the end of the party line with 10 or 15 people.

And it doesn't reflect what was told to the first person. That's not the ancient world. The ancient world was very stable in terms of its transmission in the oral period.

Now, Moses comes along, Sinai in the Torah, that's written scripture. I have a lot of text in here. We'll look at some text, but we're not going to overdo this because it would become a Bible drill if we did.

You know, some of these texts are in the early part of Deuteronomy, where Moses talks about the law and God's communication of that law. Joshua reiterates that in chapter one, verses seven and eight. In our lessons together, when I only cite the scriptures, I'm asking you to maybe stop the video, read those texts, and see how they relate to the point that I make.

If I read all these to you, besides becoming a Bible drill, we would be forever being able to get through the material. So, I have to ask you to take responsibility for that. I'll cite and read some key texts.

They're all key because I'm only giving you a sample. The actual supplemental notes will flesh this out a great deal more, and that's for your edification. Post-Moses.

God disclosed himself to a variety of representatives. During this post-Moses era, we have priests who have become God's conduit for information. We have judges.

The priests were failing in many ways. The judges came along. We don't have a lot of information about this other than the book of Judges.

But we see how God is moving redemptive history along. And in the judges' period, he only deals with certain select individuals. It's not an open audience room for people to say, God, what do you want me to do? They were still operating on the basis of the values deposit and the revelation they had.

There are non-writing prophets like Elijah and Elisha. There are writing prophets that you well know. We have what we call the major and minor prophets.

That merely means longer books and shorter books. The minor prophets are referred to as the 12 minor prophets. All right, and these key individuals.

So, as we see the biblical narrative in the Old Testament develop, God communicates his will through representatives. It's not general. It's not an open audience room.

It's just key individuals conveying to the redeemed community God's will, God's information, and God's teaching. Note that patterns of revelation are by God's discretion, not believers' solicitation. Look at that again now at the bottom of our slide.

Patterns of revelation are by God's discretion, not believers' solicitation. We're going to have to address this when we get into the New Testament because I think in the church, we have downgraded our access to information along that line of solicitation. God's going to tell me this.

God's going to tell me that. And I'd like to say that that's probably not the pattern, not probably, but it's not the pattern that the Bible presents to us. All right, let's move along.

The Old Testament patterns for knowing God's will, the values deposit. Let's see if this still works. All right, there's the values deposit.

Let me walk you through this. Abraham took Lot out of the year of the Chaldees with him to the land of Canaan. And Lot was a nephew.

Abraham became his mentor in every way. Lot was always by his side, as it were. When Abraham failed, Lot saw that failure.

When Abraham conveyed the information that God gave to him only, Lot heard it. Around the Campfires, as Abraham shared the message that God gave him, it was transmitted orally and was continued that way. Lot had a high level of privilege to be where God's work was centered in the person of Abraham.

He learned values, good and bad. When Abraham lies about Sarah, Lot is there. He saw that.

How did that impact Lot? The Bible doesn't tell us. And yet, at the same time, we see some of Lot's patterns later that maybe he was defaulting to things that were not appropriate as a result of seeing Abraham do it from time to time, even though I'm sure that Abraham would have made it quite clear that he failed in that particular point. Lot, the land he wanted when they divided, Abraham had matured quite a bit from the episode in Egypt.

And he said to Lot, you take what you want. I'll take what's left over. Now, that was careless because God had called Abraham to a certain point, a certain place in Palestine. And I'm reading the word that we use now back in Canaan.

And he shouldn't give Lot that choice. But when Lot made his choice, he didn't make it for what he knew was the land that God had called Abraham to. He made his choice on another basis because down where Sodom and Gomorrah existed, and even at that time in history, they were well known for being profligate cities, cities of sin, by biblical definitions.

And Lot wanted to go there because there was more grass for his cattle. I could put it this way. Lot was making choices for his cattle, not for his kids.

And as you read the Lot narrative, particularly in Genesis and then some in Leviticus, you're going to find out that Lot made some bad choices. His lifestyle is that of Lot going to the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. He sat in the gate in the ancient Near East.

The sit-in-the-gate is an expression that means he was on the city council. He was a judge, as it were. So here he was. He knew the true God through Abraham.

And he was sitting on a council that was making judgments on a worldly basis. In other words, a wrong worldview. Lot knew that, but he had to go along with it if he wanted to have prestige.

And so we'll see later where in Peter, it's made quite clear that Lot was in total turmoil. He had great tension in his life as a result of one worldview clashing with the worldview that was the Sodom and Gomorrah. In 2 Peter 2, verses 6 and 8, I'm going

to turn and retrieve a Bible here because I want you to look at this text with me for a moment.

2 Peter 2, verses 6 and 8. This becomes an extremely important text about, and if I can turn my pages, sometimes it's rather surprising how small the New Testament books are. All right, 2 Peter 2, verses 6 to 8. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, having made them an example unto those that would live ungodly. Well, how do you judge ungodly? By worldview and values.

And he delivered, now watch this word, righteous Lot. What? Righteous Lot? The man who left Abraham and went to that sinful city, the person who had incest with his daughter, and the children of Moab and Ammon were born. His wife turned to salt because she didn't believe in God.

And she looked back and, in her values, valued that city more than God's judgment. It wasn't a curiosity peak at the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, but it was an intense look and anger because everything she loved was back there instead of with God. Don't make the mistake of thinking that was a curious peak.

And delivered righteous Lot, sore distressed by his lascivious life of the wicked for that righteous man dwelling among them in seeing and hearing vexed. If you want to trace this out, you check the word distress and the word vexed. I like to use the illustration.

I'll give it to you in a second. I won't say something else. His righteous soul from day to day with their lawless deeds.

How many times was the word righteous used here? Repetition is a key to meaning. We wouldn't believe that Lot was a believer if it wasn't for this text because the Old Testament presents him in such a way that he made the wrong choices with the wrong direction. And yet the New Testament credits him as being righteous, which means by and large that he was a man who knew God regardless of the fact that he acted like he did.

And he was vexed in his soul. Those two words distressed and vexed me. I like to use the illustration of him as a judge under mafia control.

He couldn't say what he believed. He couldn't say what he thought. He had to say what they wanted to hear.

And so here's Lot. His choices were horrible, and his development declined as a result. But in the values deposit, equal knowledge, values, we're all on level ground as Christians as we have the knowledge of God.

We develop our values. Our will makes choices. And from there comes our moral development.

Do we develop in a good direction? Up. Do we develop in a bad direction? Down. But all that development is based on knowledge.

But our volition is what deals with the choices that we make from what we know. Doing God's will is making good choices according to the way the Scripture guides us in that regard. So we see here the values deposit.

I need to go back to a slide before that one. There we go. Okay.

Furthermore, we got Lot's life, and we also have Deuteronomy 6, 1 to 9 in the values deposit. Here again, because these are so key and they're probably not as familiar to you in the way that I'm presenting this to you, it's good for me to go in here and read a couple of these texts. Deuteronomy 6, 1 to 9. Just listen.

Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the ordinances which the Lord, your God, commanded to teach you that you might what? Do them. Look at that. And we'll see this in the New Testament.

Do them in the land, whether you go over to possess it. That thou mightest fear the Lord, your God, to keep all his statutes, commandments which I command you. And on and on it goes through verse three.

Hear, therefore, O Israel, and observe to do, do, do, do, not find, find, find. The commission to God's people was not to find God's will but to do God's will from the revelation that had been given to them. I mean, the texts on this are massive.

And we, like I said, could take six or seven lectures by just exegeting these texts that are telling us how God is guiding his people through his representatives and the information that he had trusted them to give to us. The historical books do the same thing. It's a repetition of the law and the testimony over and over and over.

There is never, never a call for God's people. Why don't you go ask the Lord what he wants you to do? Never. Why don't you go read the law and the prophets and see what they tell you to do? Now we'll see that the verb do is the operative term when we talk about God's will.

Wisdom literature is a fascinating part, and we'll talk more about it later. So I'm not going to spend much time here, but the wisdom literature in certain books like Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and a lot of the Psalms are wisdom literature. We even have wisdom literature in the New Testament, like in the book of James.



It gives you the product of a worldview. In fact, if I remember correctly, the wisdom literature virtually never quotes the Torah, but it takes the message of the Torah and translates it into how you live life now, and that's what our responsibility is, too. We can't do it in an inspired manner, but we still have to do it to take God's word and translate it into how we're going to live life.

Then there were the writing prophets--Isaiah. Let me just read this passage, Isaiah 8, chapter 8, for you. Isaiah chapter 8. I could have tagged these, I guess before I sat down here, but you need time to look it up, too.

And I want you to look at all these passages on your own and meditate on them in relation to how my paradigm sets them out for you. Isaiah chapter 8, verse 16, bind them up, the testimony, bind them, bind thou, excuse me, this is the American standard version, 1901, kind of old English. Bind thou up the testimony, seal the law among my disciples.

What's the focus here? The focus is not to get information. The focus is to grasp the information that you have. And I will wait for the Lord that hides his face from the house of Jacob.

Verse 19: let's see how far I want to go. Actually, verse 16, as I've already read. And I will wait for the Lord that hides his face from the house of Jacob.

And I will look for him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts who dwells in Zion. But it's all based on the testimony.

Look at verse 20. This is a very important verse. Highlight this.

To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, there is no mourning in them. There's no light in them if they don't speak according to the word. Now, some people will say, well, you ask God what he wants you to do.

And if it doesn't agree with the Bible, then you shouldn't do it. The Bible never says that. The Bible says to start with the law and the testimony, start with the statutes, and start with the information that God has given about how we're supposed to live our lives.

That's the Old Testament pattern. And it's in your face as you work through every book of the Old Testament. Now, we talked about that values deposit slide.

Let me just go back there for a second. So here it is. Not only do you have the text of Scripture, but those narratives give you information about how you ought to live.

Don't live like Lot. And Abraham's not a perfect person, but he's a better model. Moses wasn't perfect, but he's a better model.

Why? Because at the end of the day, they obeyed God. They followed God's teaching. Not perfectly.

And isn't the Bible wonderful in that it records the flaws of our heroes as much as it does their victories? This value deposit becomes a big part of our worldview because it is not direct, but implied. You can learn a lot from watching how Lot violates the values and God's communication, as well as many other figures in Scripture, even David later on.

All right, so Joshua 1 that we haven't read yet, but I'm not going to read this one. I'm just going to talk to you about it. Joshua 1:6: to 6-8, and chapter 24 illustrate this fact of God's communication and the development of values from that communication.

You really need to read these texts carefully. And here's what you're going to observe. In 1:6 to 8, observe Moses's teaching.

That's what Joshua is telling the people after Moses is gone. Do what Moses said. Do what God said through Moses.

Observe Moses's book of teaching, as he calls it. Observe faithfully all that's written in it. Never is Joshua saying, go find out what God wants to do now.

Have a committee meeting, and so forth. No, it's all attached to Scripture. Joshua 24, I call this the rehearsal motif.

He rehearses at the end of the book. These are the terminal points of the book of Joshua, chapter 1, chapter 24. The rehearsal motif comes up a lot in the Bible, where the communicator rehearses God's goodness to the people.

It's usually that. Sometimes, there's the rehearsal of judgment. But by and large, it comes back and rehearses.

Remember how God was so good to you when he brought you out of the land of Egypt? You failed. Doesn't really mention a lot of that sometimes. It looks at the bright spots many times.

In Joshua 24:25, Joshua made a covenant and recorded it in a book of what? Divine instruction. So I don't know how many times we have to emphasize this, but the fact is, is that following God means following his word and the worldview and value

complex that that word develops. Revelation becomes more focused as time goes on.

I have to show you this. I'm not really good with PowerPoint. You may not be able to see it that way because you're probably looking at a PDF or something, but I've got this handout here.

Revelation becomes more focused as time goes on. The Pentateuch is the foundation. And you see and hear the echoes of the Pentateuch as you continue in the Bible, the Psalms, the Prophets, and it all features in Jesus.

Then, the New Testament repeats very much what happened in the old. The Gospels, in a sense, is our foundation, our Pentateuch. The book of Acts talks about the expansion and how the church was living.

The epistles go into the occasional issues that were going on in the church, and the apostle tries to work those things out and bring people back to their values and back to their worldviews and behavior. So, value deposit development is a very important aspect of our understanding of Scripture. Okay, so Old Testament patterns for knowing God's will.

There are some non-sanctioned provisions used by pagans when you study the Old Testament. This is a fascinating domain. Sorry, I have a tendency to go a little too fast.

That may be hard for the AI translations. I need to be slower and more articulate. But the A.N.E. divination.

A.N.E. means Ancient Near East Divination. It's alluded to in Deuteronomy 18. In the book by Bruce Waltke, he uncovers this quite a bit.

That's in the bibliography in your notes. In Deuteronomy 18, we have all kinds of things. They cast lots in the pagan world.

Well, they cast lots in the Jewish world. Lot casting in the pagan world was a revelatory thing. Lot casting many times, most of the time, in Israel's world was a choice that was viewed as sovereign and, therefore, fair.

The land was divided by lot. Therefore, no one could say, well, Joshua, you made this choice, not God. No, it's God's sovereignty in the choice.

That's a part of the lot casting in the scripture. Then we have organ reading. We have arrow casting, and they read those.

It's kind of like watching a cowboy and Indian movie. The Indians, many times, the medicine man would do things like this. But in the ancient Near East, it was very common.

Reading water in vessels. Astrology. There were mediums and spiritualists, but the Bible condemns this strongly.

I'm not going to read these to you. You can read them, but in Leviticus 1 Samuel, when Saul got drawn into the witch of Endor and was surprised because God took over and Saul got his comeuppance, if you please, it is a correction from that. The Bible consistently, totally condemns any kind of divination.

That's a part of the world. Furthermore, Old Testament patterns are used to know God's will. There are special provisions.

Pagan divination practices were condemned completely in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, as I mentioned to you. Furthermore, special provisions in the Old Testament period. There were Old Testament-sanctioned practices that some might say, well, that's a kind of divination.

We might even call it that. There were divination vehicles called lock casting. And that was mentioned in numbers in other places, even in the New Testament, with Matthias as an apostle.

That was a process of being able to choose and trust God's sovereignty in the choice. A kind of an interesting thing. The Urim and Summon in Exodus 28 is a very short-lived item that God gave the priest for direction for the nation.

Therefore, it was a very limited item as God transferred the priest out and the prophets in as the voice of God. This disappears—a brief history.

And in the notes, I've given you some information on that. And I've also given you two books that are relatively unknown unless you're good at searching for a bibliography on this issue of Urim and Summon. Sometimes, some might say Urim and Summon because I can sound like a B. All right.

Dreams. Dreams were big. That happened even with Joseph in the New Testament.

Now, you might say, well, I have dreams. God communicates to me through dreams. You're not a part of the development of redemptive history.

You're a product of redemptive history. These dreams are at God's processing of his people and they are more in the mainstream. They're not incidental.

We all have dreams. Dreams, as the Bible says, come out of the busyness of a day's thoughts. It's going to be interesting.

There is a good book by Franz Delitzsch called Biblical Psychology. I'll have to say that again because I don't have that in my notes. Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Psychology.

It's an old book, but a very interesting book on the issue of dreams in the Bible and in the believer's life. Miraculous signs. We see these a lot in the Old Testament.

They were performed not by just any individual but by God's leaders and God's chosen communicators. The early prophets in terms of the judges and Samuel and what was going on there. Again, chosen individuals.

This wasn't a common property that you could use if you wanted to as a believer in the Old Testament, but it was what God used through select individuals to communicate his word. We could compare divination in the ancient Near East and in the Old Testament. In the ancient Near East, some law codes were derived from the reigning king.

Hammurabi and others have law codes. Sometimes, they sound very much like the Old Testament, but in the Old Testament, God's law codes were his self-disclosure. They're a revelatory piece, not a human development piece.

Furthermore, in the ancient Near East, divination and magic were major due to the fact that they had inadequate codes, and so people were constantly asking for their medium's information. Now, you know, we're tempted to do that. In fact, I think the thing that drives the demand and the lust for direct revelation from God now is that we don't want to make a mistake.

That's a good motivation. But the other side of it is that we assume that that's the way God has chosen to communicate, and he has not chosen that communication. Divination was minor in the Old Testament because an adequate code existed to guide life, the law, and the testimonies.

Moses, Joshua, and the prophets never said to the diviners, the biblical diviners; he said to the law and to the testimonies. The individuals in the Old Testament were responsible for obeying God's Word. They may have heard it orally.

I'm sure they had teaching moments all the time. We see those in the text as major teaching moments, but they happen frequently. I'm sure there were understudies of the main leaders like Moses and Joshua who repeated those things.

In the New Testament, we've got apostles and we've got prophets. The prophets repeated the teachings of the apostles, and so, consequently, that's going on. In the ancient Near East, divination was for all manner of issues.

In the Old Testament, divination was mostly in relation to major redemptive events, and the major leaders of those events performed it. So those Old Testament patterns are quite interesting, aren't they? Let's move along here. We go to slide number 13.

I call it a side note of curiosity, and it has to do with some issues. An issue to think about is how God used the priest as his representative, but he changed to the prophets in redemptive history. The priests were the original vehicles, but they failed.

They became corrupt. So God shifted to the prophetic office, and the prophets took over. We don't really find the priest as conveyors of God's revelation, his divine disclosure.

They orchestrated his will, and they probably did badly like everybody else from the documents or the knowledge that they had orally of God's teaching. But the fact is, they are quite different from the prophets. The prophets got immediate direct revelation.

They continued to write after quite a long period of time of the preaching prophets, but not the writing prophets. The use of the Urim and Thummim, as I mentioned before, was priestly, but it was brief. Only the priest used it.

When God switched to the prophets, that vehicle of discernment disappeared. There's no history of it. It's a very brief piece in biblical history.

Fascinating item, but it was only related to the priest. See section B in the notes that I gave you for more information about this. All right, some summary observations.

Miraculous procedures were special, not normative. I think that's important because in the Old Testament, that was a period where God was revealing himself; he had to because the record was sparse. But miraculous procedures even then were special.

Not normative. He just didn't go out in the desert and get a message from God. Furthermore, obedience to God's word and special revelation were normative for God's people.

Now, they didn't have the access we have. We're much more responsible to God because of our easy access to scripture. They didn't have as much access.

So they had to go talk to someone who was a priest or a prophet who knew the word and discuss with them their situation. And that priest or prophet would apply God's word and help them as a pastor might help you today. Special procedures were national more than individual.

Old Testament practices are not necessarily perpetuated. There's an issue of the Bible that has the issue of special revelation that devalues deposits, and it describes things in certain passages, and it's commanding things in certain passages. And we'll mention this at a moment when you have to ask if the Bible is being descriptive or commanding. Is that command temporary and descriptive? So, the it was temporary and descriptive.

They ceased with the Old Testament, but they were prescriptive during the Old Testament. You were supposed to follow them, but they ceased, and we moved on. So those are the things you have to decide from biblical interpretation.

What's describing, what's prescribing, and how long is it being prescribed? The 10 commandments are prescriptive, and yet the Sabbath issue is an issue that most think is descriptive within certain timeframes, and yet it has a prescriptive piece that they parse out in different ways. Furthermore, Old Testament practices are not necessarily perpetuated. You know, you can still use locks, as far as I'm concerned.

For example, have you thought about if you've got five people in the church who are qualified to be deacons or elders, but you're only going to have two of them, why don't you use locks? You could put their names on a hat and have somebody draw. If they're all equally qualified, that would bypass personality issues. That would bypass a few people making decisions about who's best suited for this category.

That's what lots did in the Old Testament. It's what it did in the book of Acts. Frankly, I've heard a pastor talk about this one time.

Maybe we should use lots for the election of certain people who are equally qualified within the church and follow that. I don't know if that's a bad idea. Furthermore, God's word, oral or written, was central in discernment.

It's at the center. The worldview and complex values that they were developing were the keys to discernment. One thing that's clear is that there is no individualism model.

I think that individualism is so strong in the United States churches because our country is based on rugged individualism. That was true from the beginning. The Kennedy era made that very strong, rugged individualism.

Americans are individualistic more than they are community. Churches end up being that way, too. And so that's a challenge that we all have to deal with as Christians.

Those are some summary observations. Now, the next thing is the will of God's nomenclature in the Old Testament. The use of the term will and the categories of God's will.

The term will, we mentioned this in our overview. The study of this term is complicated by English versions. And I'll give you a continuum chart in a moment.

The stereotyped phrase, will of God, which is so common in the Christian setting, is primarily a New Testament phrase. That phrase isn't actually used in that exact same way. The same ideas are there.

The desire of God, the purposes of God, and so forth. Those are all will of God statements. But it doesn't phrase it the same way.

The Septuagint doesn't even do that except in a couple of places. It's primarily a New Testament phrase. Look at Romans 2:17 and 18.

I think this is an important text for you to see. Romans 2:17 and 18. It's a text that needs to come to the forefront here.

Romans 2:17 and 18. Paul discusses the issues of Jews and Gentiles in these early chapters. It's 17.

But if you bear the name of a Jew and resist upon the law, or rest upon the law. Here is that old language again. And you rest upon the law and the glories and glory in God.

And know his will. And approve the things that are being instructed out of what? The law. Law is mentioned twice in those verses.

What is the law? The law is the will of God. And there are a number of texts that do that. However, the Romans 2 text is an important one to see in that Paul is using and describing.

God's will for the Christian is the Bible. God's will for the Jew was the law. And it's said specifically.

A single phrase or term does not make theology. In other words, when we talk about the will of God, we don't have many texts in the Gospels. But we want to look at Jesus' model, don't we? Well, that would be part of the narrative model, as we talked



about in the setting where we're talking about Scripture and models for how to behave and how to live from the narrative parts of Scripture.

We don't have to have a direct proof text, but we have a story. And Jesus gives us plenty of those. So, we can't just take one word or one phrase and make that sacrosanct and rule out everything else.

There's much more to it. The continuum for the term will in the Old Testament. Okay? The word runs from desire to purpose.

Desire is what God wants. Please Him. He delights in you when you obey Him.

You find favor in His sight. And it goes to the other side of the continuum of purpose, where God chooses. God chooses to love.

God determines. So, you've got this continuum from what God wants to what God will perform, from desire to purpose. And that's going to be true in the New Testament as well.

On the purpose side, we'd see something of God's sovereignty. On the desire side, we see the obedience that we have to God's teaching. All right, let's go on.

The Greek phrase. This is interesting. I'm not going to spend much time here.

But there's a search of the Septuagint that does not yield will of God patterns like the New Testament. It follows the pattern of what God desires, delights in, and purposes. And that's just linguistics.

The meaning is the same, but there's a linguistic difference. But oddly enough, in the Second Temple Jewish literature, that was from Malachi up through the Dead Sea Scrolls. We've got all that going on in that period before the time of Christ.

A lot of writing, very important writing for you to know. Oddly enough, in Second Temple literature, this phrase does occur: the will of God. Now, is that because of a Greek influence on how you frame a linguistic statement? I don't know that I can answer that.

Oh, I'll give you a slide in a moment. Remember a word or a phrase does not a theology make. For example, God's sovereign will is talked about in Sirach, Tobit, First Maccabees, and Second Maccabees.

There's this literature you should read. It's not the Bible, but it is Jewish history and it's important. The New Testament believers valued a number of these books.

Ecclesiasticus, not Ecclesiastes, but Ecclesiasticus, which is the wisdom of Ben Sirach. The early church valued that. They valued Josephus, too.

The moral will is in Ezra, Maccabees, wisdom of Solomon, odes to Solomon. Those are all Second Temple books where these things are brought out. There's no obstruction at all for personalized individualistic will, as far as I can find.

I'm not an expert at Second Temple, but I've looked at it as much as I can with my expertise. Now, the will of God's nomenclature in the Old Testament. We've got categories for the will of God.

God's sovereign will. Now, here I would like to read these verses to you, but I'm already into this to my hour. And this is going to, and this lesson will go a little longer.

You can always stop and start. So I have to make it, I want it to be continuous. I don't want to divide it up into OT1 and OT2.

So, I want to make it continuous. The will of God nomenclature in the Old Testament. Categories of God's will.

God's standard version translation says, I know that thou canst do all things and that no purpose, there's the word will, that no purpose of thine can be restrained. There are all kinds of texts about God's rules. From the fall of a raindrop to the fall of a kingdom, God is in control.

God's sovereignty is very present in Scripture. God's moral will, frankly, God's moral will dominates the Bible, the way he wants us to live. And that comes from both the Old Testament and the New Testament.

We're only looking at the Old Testament at the moment. We'll talk about Daniel's life in a moment to see how he lived out God's teaching in his own circumstances. So you got the sovereign will, you got the moral will.

Those dominate the categories of the will of God in Scripture, both in the Old and in the New. I have searched and searched. I cannot find anywhere what I would call an individual will where you go to God and say, God, tell me what to do.

Should I be a doctor? Should I be a lawyer? Should I be a teacher? Maybe I should be a pastor. Maybe I should be a businessman. Maybe I should dig ditches.

All of those are noble works in the world to make a living and support your family. But there's no individual model in Scripture to figure that out. You figure that out from who you are and what you can do best to fulfill who you are and do that in a way that is consistent with biblical teaching.

That everybody's got an individual will. You got the whole Bible. That's for you.

It's not to you, but it is for you. And you live by that. That's the category.

But the model of an individual will that you have to find out ahead of time, and listen carefully, that you have to find out ahead of time in order to make a decision does not exist. That is a myth of people's imagination. It fits a lot of people's thinking, what they want God to be, but they're not listening to the way the Bible is framed and the way God has chosen to communicate with us.

The pattern of Daniel's model. Daniel's a very interesting person coming near the end of Israel's history before what we call the intertestamental period. Daniel's model.

Daniel recognized his dependence upon God's revelation. Here again, I can read all these passages to you, but I'm going to have to ask you to do that. He read to, read right along with these slides, read to 20 to 23, and see how it unpacks his dependence upon God's revelation.

He wasn't making decisions. He was making decisions based on what he had concerning God's revelation about how to live. He organized his life around God's values, his prayer life, and his dependence on God, even opening his windows pointed toward Jerusalem to pray.

All of this was him fulfilling what the Old Testament modeled as a good believer's life. He patiently observed God's sovereign will fulfilled in fascinating ways. Daniel's life spans several of the Kings of Babylon during that period.

And it's fascinating. They'd even forgotten who he was on one occasion. And he's called in, and then God performs a miracle when he writes on the wall, and the prophets are there to unpack that for them.

And so consequently, Daniel models living according to God's word, according to God's teaching, not on his own wisdom, but on the wisdom of God. Okay. Now that's, that's Daniel.

Let's look on. Select samples of abused text. And here I would love to. I probably should have a whole lesson just on this, but I can only do so much.

All right. A bride for Isaac. Remember when Abraham called his servant in Genesis 24 and said, I want you to bring back Isaac, a bride from our people.

You see, it was very, very, very important in the ancient Near East to keep your genetic lines together. And so he wanted a bride from his people. He sends his

servant, and his servant goes with the instructions that he is to bring a bride from his people.

Not just anybody, not anybody that comes along. The servant makes this statement that a lot of people use: being in the way God let me. Well, what was in the way? It wasn't anyway.

He was in the right place at the right time at the right well for the right family and the girls to come so that a choice could be made. It didn't turn out to be quite as easy, but nonetheless, the bride for Isaac was done according to the stipulations in the Old Testament of the line of Abraham and his prodigy. Gideon's fleece, you know, Gideon put the fleece out.

One day, he said, Lord, make it dry, and I'll believe you when all the rest of the grounds are wet. He didn't, and he didn't believe it. So he did it again, making it wet and all the rest of the grounds dry.

God was pretty patient with Gideon, but Gideon's fleece is a sign of unbelief. It wasn't appropriate, but God accommodated Gideon and was patient with Gideon in spite of himself. He's not a good model.

So don't go there. Guidance terminology in the Old Testament: trust the Lord with all your heart, lean not until your own understanding, in all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths. I've heard that verse quoted a thousand times as an individualistic paradigm for knowing God's will.

No, it isn't. Don't trust, uh, trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not until your own understanding. What does that mean? It means following the value deposit, the law, and the prophets.

It doesn't mean you can't trust yourself. So you got to give some revelation. So you'll be right.

That's not what that passage is about. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths. How does he direct your paths? It's not like the psalm. Put your hand in the hand of the man who walked on the water.

That's not it. But it is the fact that you are to follow his teaching. In all your ways, acknowledge him, and he will direct your paths.

How? Through the scriptures, through his teaching, and through the value deposit that emanates from those scriptures. This is not a call to individualism at all. You can read those other texts as well.

Conclusion. Abuse of text is often based on what I call moralizing, spiritualizing, or allegorizing texts so that you can put them into your view and feel like you've gotten God's approval. I pastored; I was ordained in 1967; as I mentioned before, most of you were born.

And I have watched this and watched this and watched this. People create a God of their own making and claim that it's God telling them something. They spiritualize text.

They take the words of the Bible out of context because they happen to fit what they want at the moment. That's not right. That is not what God wants.

And it may work on occasion. You may think it works, but it doesn't. I've got an interesting illustration in my book, I've got to tell you. My wife was planning and setting up a computer system for an orthopedic, excuse me, ophthalmology surgery center.

Now, my wife knew how to run a computer, but she didn't know a lot about computers. She was scared to death. But the doctors trusted her.

And she checked out this person who was with IBM and Hewlett-Packard. And he was Mr. Clean, had all the answers, had the software and hardware that the world praised. Then, as she researched, she found this other person who had a specifically designed software package for ophthalmology.

So she called him in for an interview. Here he comes. He looks like he just crawled out of a suitcase.

His suit was all wrinkled. He was the typical nerd as N-E-R-D, nerd. In the U.S., that means a fellow who is brilliant, and it looks like he just crawled out of a suitcase.

She was scared of him, but what he had to offer was exactly what she wanted. So she went home, and she took her Bible. She opens it up, and the verse that meets her eye says, go down to Lebanon for help.

Now it so happens the guy that just got out of the suitcase was from Lebanon, Indiana. Man, did she get excited? She called me.

I was in my office at the seminary, and she called me on the phone and said, okay, smarty, what do you think about this? And tell me your story. And I didn't have the heart to tell her, woe to those who go down to Lebanon for help, not go down to Lebanon for help. She misread that context when she opened it up as much as she was misapplying it.

Sometimes, you just have to let things go, particularly when it's your wife. Now, it turned out great, and maybe God has a sense of humor, but that is not the way God teaches us to direct our lives. Defining wisdom in the Bible.

You know, I'm sorry, I am going to have to stop and start here because this is going to take a little more time than I could put on one presentation or should put on one presentation. I'm already over my hour limit. And so number five, defining wisdom in the Bible.

We're going to come back, and this is going to be the second part of the Old Testament presentation on knowing God's will. So stay tuned, and you'll know where to come later. I'll lead you into it when we do.

And we'll spend our next session on this particular section.