

## **REFORMATION 500 WEEK 49 THE HUGUENOTS**

“France, like Germany, was divided between Catholics and Protestants. The Huguenots formed a strong party. They were a prosperous, intelligent class and many of them belonged to the nobility, but they were in a minority.

“Both Catholics and Protestants tried to control the government. Young Charles IX and his regent mother, Catherine de Medici, favored one side and then the other. Civil war broke out between the two religious parties in 1562.... In 1570 a brief peace was made.... For a time, Admiral [Gaspard] de Coligny, the leader of the Huguenots, acted as a sort of prime minister to Charles and his mother. Henry of Bourbon, a Protestant, was to marry Margaret, the sister of Charles. Thus, it was possible that this Henry might become ruler of France.

“The Catholic extremists alarmed Catherine with reports that the Huguenots were plotting to take the throne. Catherine convinced the innocent king of this, and a plot was formed for a treacherous and wholesale massacre.

“All of the leading Huguenots were invited to Paris for the marriage of Henry and Margaret. In the early morning of August 24, 1572, Saint Bartholomew’s Day, bells were rung in the city of Paris a signal for the massacre to begin. For three days and three nights the massacre went on. No fewer than two thousand Protestants were murdered in Paris, and, as the massacre extended to other cities, over ten thousand throughout the country. One of the first victims was the noble leader of the Huguenots, Gaspard de Coligny. Henry Bourbon, however, escaped. It was one of the foulest crimes recorded in human history” (Kuiper, *Church in History*, 240).

“Pope Gregory XIII was so overjoyed that he commanded a salute to be fired, all the church bells to be rung, and a grand *Te Deum* to be sung.” He “also had a medal struck” (*Sketches from Church History*, 133).

The civil war in France “continued into the reign of Henry III who succeeded his brother Charles. It was a three-cornered conflict between three Henry’s: Henry of Guise, the Catholic leader; King Henry III who tried to follow a moderate course; and Henry of Bourbon and Navarre, the Protestant leader. Henry of Guise was murdered on orders of Henry III, who in turn was assassinated in revenge. Thus in 1589 Henry of Bourbon had a clear title to the throne. Because most of the people were Catholic and would not tolerate a Protestant king, Henry declared himself Catholic in 1593 and in 1594 entered Paris in Triumph as King Henry IV. Though no longer a Protestant, Henry did not forget his former comrades. In 1598 he issued the *Edict of Nantes*, which granted the Huguenots freedom of private worship, civil rights, and the right to public worship in two hundred towns and three thousand castles” (Kuiper, 240-41).

In 1620, Henry IV “was assassinated by a fanatic employed by the Jesuits [The Society of Jesus], ... a Catholic order founded in 1534 [accountable only to the Pope], ...their chief aim being the complete extermination of Protestantism” (*Sketches*, 135).

“The final blow came in 1685 when Louis revoked the *Edict of Nantes*. Protestant worship was suppressed. All Protestant churches were demolished. Huguenot children were to be brought up as Roman Catholics. Despite all the king’s efforts to prevent emigration, many thousands made good their escape” (Ibid. 137).

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## REFORMATION 500 WEEK 49: HEIDELBERG CATECHISM QA 124

**Question 124:** WHAT IS THE THIRD PETITION? **“Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven;”** that is, grant that we and all men renounce our own will, and without disputing obey Your will, which alone is good; so that everyone may fulfill his office and calling as willingly and faithfully as the angels do in heaven.

God’s will, refers to His commands revealed in His Word. Doing God’s will means obeying His commands out of thankfulness for salvation. “This is the will of God, your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3); “in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you” (1 Thess. 5:18); “whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor. 10:31). To know God’s will we must know God’s Word (Eph. 5:17).

It is God’s will that we fulfill our office and calling, that is, our daily work and responsibilities (1 Cor. 7:24). “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might” (Ecc. 9:10). Our daily work is a divine calling. It is part of subduing the earth for God’s glory (Gen. 1:28; 2:15, 19). Sometimes we struggle to know which line of work to pursue. Scripture gives general principles. First, we cannot miss God’s plan for our life (Ps. 33:11; Acts 17:26). God told Jeremiah, “Before you were born I ordained you a prophet to the nations” (Jer. 1:5). Even Jonah, who tried not to fulfill his calling to go to Nineveh, still did! Second, God has many different ways of directing our steps (Prov. 16:9). Moses was right that he was the one to lead Israel out of Egypt, but he was wrong about *how* and *when*. He didn’t know he needed desert training for 40 years!

It is God’s will that we learn to be content with His sovereign (providential) will, without complaining (Phil. 4:11). We need to be faithful today, right where we are, trusting God to do what is good for us (1 Sam. 3:18; 2 Sam. 10:12). “So when Paul would not be persuaded, we ceased, saying, the will of the Lord be done” (Acts 21:14). “If the Lord wills, we shall live” (James 4:15). Jesus is our perfect example. “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34). “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42).

God’s will, is not being obeyed on earth as it is in heaven. “The will of God is done in heaven in such a way by the angels, that every one of them stands before God ready to do whatever He commands [Ps. 103:20-21; Heb. 1:14] .... No one declines or refuses to do the service which God requires from them” (Ursinus, 640).

By praying, “Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,” we are asking for God’s help to do His will as faithfully as His angels do in heaven (cf. Matt. 5:48). The Holy Spirit has worked in our hearts a desire to do God’s will. David said, “I *delight* to do Your will, O my God” (Ps. 40:8). But we also have to fight against our old sinful nature which is against God’s will (Rom. 7:18-23). Jesus said, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny [renounce, forsake] himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). We cannot renounce our own will and do God’s will unless God helps us; which is why we pray, “*Make* me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it” (Ps. 119:35).

Notice how the first three petitions of the Lord’s Prayer fit together. The name of God is sanctified only when His kingdom comes to our hearts; and His kingdom makes progress only when we do His will. Only when Christ returns will God’s will be done perfectly on earth as it is in heaven. For earth and heaven will be one (2 Pt. 3:13)

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