

# GRACE GAZETTE

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*Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.*

*Hebrews 12:12-13*

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## WILT THOU GO WITH THIS MAN?

*And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go. Genesis 24:58*

There are two major obstructions in the mind of the natural man which causes him to balk at the biblical teaching of the predestination of all things by the hand of an absolutely Sovereign GOD. The first of these is his aversion to the complete rule of GOD over himself which produces rebellion in his mind and heart due to his natural corruption and depravity. David described it like this, "*The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.* (i.e.; for me) *They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good.*" (Psa 14:1) Even a fool can look around and behold the wonders of GOD's creation around him. (see Rom. 1:20) So there are in reality very few who will say "there is no GOD at all". Rather what David is pointing out is that "fools" (i.e.; all natural men) will not easily acquiesce to the complete LORDSHIP of GOD and will go on in their determination to be the "master of their fate and the captain of their soul."

The second major obstruction (which in reality arises from the first) is the natural understanding (or actually the lack thereof) that men are born with a self-determining free will. You never have to teach a man this concept for he believes it from the moment of his birth. If you do not accept this as being true, then observe young children and their natural desire to do what they want to, in spite of instruction and even persuasion otherwise. The older that they get the more determined they are and much heartache can ensue when they have fully pursued that natural bent.

Man has devised many "religions" which have served to calm his mind since he cannot escape the observable and incontrovertible fact that there is indeed a GOD who has made all things. Yet all of these "religions" have one thing in common. They all rely upon the notion that men either make the "choice" to join them and continue on in them or reject them with the same "choice". Each one teaches that men can choose to worship GOD as easily as he can pick out a pair of socks to wear or decide what he is going to eat for supper.

Now we are certain that men do make "choices" in this world, and many choose to align themselves with the various religions which men have devised. They are quite happy with their "choice" and rightly consider that they have generally made these "decisions" without coercion. In such a scenario we could say that man has a "free will". Men are indeed free to choose the things which they can choose and their choices reflect their desires.

When Joshua challenged the various tribes of Israel to "choose" whom they would serve, he gave them two "choices" and then declared that he would (by the grace of GOD) serve the LORD. He did not assume that they could "choose" the LORD, nor did he "offer" them such a choice. He said, "*Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD." (Jos 24:14-15) "*

As religious men are inclined to do, they boldly stated that they would serve the LORD. "*And the people said unto Joshua, Nay; but we will serve the LORD.*" (Jos 24:21) Yet he had clearly told them

that they were not really of a mind to serve HIM because of their sin which separated them from HIS glory. *“And Joshua said unto the people, Ye cannot serve the LORD: for he is an holy God; he is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins.” (Jos 24:19)* In their ignorant boldness I am reminded of Peter as he boastfully said that *“Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.” (Mat 26:33-35)*

Just as Joshua prophetically spoke of the rebellion and disdain which the children of Israel would display, so too did the LORD JESUS declare the same to Peter. The children of Israel did not receive Joshua’s rebuke and the ultimate hardness of their heart was demonstrated even as the LORD asserted the weakness of Peter and the certainty of Peter’s actions. Yet Peter was not humbled before the LORD until sin had its perfect work and brought forth death. (see James 1:13-15) The LORD did not tempt Peter, but rather ordained Peter’s actions to occur in direct concert with the wickedness that was in his heart, by nature. Peter chose what he could choose. In like manner do we read of Pharaoh “hardening his heart” and “the LORD hardening Pharaoh’s heart.” (see Ex. 7:13; 8:15)

The free will of man is not free, because he is a slave to sin and darkness and will not seek the LORD, nor in any wise choose to follow HIM apart from a radical transformation of his will by the operation of GOD’s Sovereign grace. This is that which the LORD informed Nicodemus of when HE said, *“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3)* This that which HE declared unto the Pharisees as HE observed their rebellion against HIM and HIS doctrine. *“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.” (John 5:40-42)* Though HE addressed HIMSELF directly to the Pharisees, HE also declared the inability of all natural men to come to HIM. Religious men will roundly object to such a statement and continue in their belief that men can choose the way of GOD as easily as picking out which shirt to wear.

In the calling of Rebekah to be Isaac’s wife we can see an illustration of GOD’s mercy and grace in the calling of sinners out of darkness and into the LIGHT. Rebekah had never even heard of Isaac before Abraham’s servant, Eleazar, journeyed to where she was, let alone had she any inkling of desire to be his wife. Who can doubt that every step of Eleazar’s journey was marked out by the LORD. Nor would we ever consider that the calling of Rebekah was some sort of random occurrence. The LORD led Eleazar to the exact well where she would be and prepared her heart to water his camels (see Gen.24:11-20). *“Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his.” (2Tim 2:19)*

In the unfolding of this wonderful picture, we see Eleazar (who is indeed a type of the HOLY SPIRIT) putting gold and jewels upon this damsel, who had no idea who he was nor where he had come from. Yet these gifts are like the work of the SPIRIT of GOD upon the heart and mind of those HE is pleased to prepare for that which is to come. Rebekah had nothing to give unto him, yet he came to her with the riches of his master, for she was marked out for this meeting before she was ever born.

Had he asked her to leave and go with him at that time, she would probably have refused, yet he was not through showering her with gifts and telling her of Isaac’s love and the glory which surrounded him. Even as the LORD does woo and win the hearts and minds of HIS people, drawing them with cords of love which cannot be broken as HE is pleased to send the gospel to them to bring *“LIFE and IMMORTALITY to LIGHT”*, where there was none. Just as the Psalmist has said, *“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.” (Psa 110:3)* So too was the heart of Rebekah made desirous of going with Eleazar. When she was asked *“wilt thou go with this man”*, she gladly answered, *“I will go.”*

Only the LORD can give a man a desire to follow the LORD and no man can overturn that desire when it is bestowed by the grace of our Glorious and Gracious SAVIOR.

“The blessed Holy Spirit, From our Father God above,  
Has come down to earth to find a worthy Bride. For our Isaac over yonder  
Has prepared His tents of love, And He wants His fair Rebekah by His side.  
We have left our kinfolk gladly; We have bade the world goodbye.  
We’re going to a land beyond the sky. Where we’ll soon behold our ISAAC  
In that blest eternity what a happy, happy meeting that will be!” (by Hansel Vibbert)

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