

RUMINATIONS OF A FORMER HEATHEN

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More election and Free Will

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The questions regarding election and free will never seem to end. There is always another angle, another ramification. Can those two ever be reconciled completely? Oh, I have no quarrel with God. Not anymore. I'm his, and with all gladness. Besides, where am I going to go? He's got all the power, and only he has the words of life. I don't have any more free will to do anything I might have wanted to do at another time. My free will has been surrendered to him. I have free will only within his boundaries. It is odd, that I feel both constrained and free at the same time. It's like roaming free inside a fence. When God changes the heart of stone into a heart of flesh that new heart becomes very sensitive to his boundaries.

At any rate, all this is profoundly intriguing. If the only way we are saved is by sovereign election of God, and it is, where is the free will to claim the blood of the Lamb? I know for an absolute fact that if God himself had not pulled me out of the fire (and he probably pinched his nose when he picked me up), if he hadn't decided on his own to do that I'd still be dead on my feet, a walking dead marching towards death, and hell, that insatiable maw. I certainly wasn't looking for him when he found me. And to say that he found me, is not altogether correct. It wasn't like he just happened to bump into me. He knew where I was all the time. I was lost. I was so lost I didn't know I was lost. I thought I was fine. I was a regular heathen, swept by every wind of doctrine. Buddhism, Hinduism, Psychology-ism, New Ageism, to all I gave heed. I thought I knew important things. God is too big for one religion and all that. That's where my free will took me, away from God. Could my own free will have brought me back to God? I doubt it. The only thing free will is good for is rebellion. But I do believe that rebellion really is a manifestation of ignorance. As long as one doesn't know with whom one is contending, there can be rebellion. Can a person rebel against God to the point of preferring hell rather than heaven? Is there a third way? Well, reincarnation, with the concept of Samsara, the eternal wheel of life, would sort of fit that third way. You just tumble through many lives going from a heaven to a hell depending on your level of purification, until you finally escape the wheel. Of course there is no guarantee that you are going to reincarnate, maybe this is really it and after death, the judgment. But even if that wheel of life were true, the final destination of it is some kind of heaven, fuzzy as that is. On the first question on whether a person would choose hell rather than heaven, yes, I think so, some

people do say that it would be O.K. to go to hell. But it's never a very thoughtful choice, it's more like unconcern, not believing, not caring. It's like: So what if I go to hell? It's probably not so bad, all my friends will be there, I can probably handle it. That speaks of profound ignorance and disregard for the consequences. Only an ignorant fool would think it's going to be a long party with all his friends. And I don't know what either heaven or hell is like, could heaven be boring? Personally, I don't think so, but some people think it could be. But the difference between what heaven *could* be and what hell *could* be, is so great that only utter ignorance can take a person to choose hell. There is no comparison between being bored and being roasted, and that, without being consumed. Well, then, can God hold me accountable if I'm ignorant? The answer is yes, absolutely yes, particularly so if the ignorance is willful. I studied everything that came down the pike except the Bible. I gave credence to any doctrine of false religion, including witchcraft, but rejected the God of the Bible. I was too smart for the Bible so I didn't need to read it. That's willful ignorance. I didn't know because I didn't want to know. Why didn't I want to know? Well, I can say with certain amount of certainty that Satan, the god of this world, blinded my eyes. Unfortunately, the excuse doesn't wipe away the responsibility. The fact that the devil made me do it doesn't make any difference. I know I didn't want to know, of my own free will I didn't want to know. But I didn't want to know because I didn't know how bad hell could be. God in his sovereign mercy put fear in my heart.

Nevertheless, doesn't John 3:16 suggest we come to God of our own free will? "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him shall not perish but have eternal life," or Matthew 11:28 "Come unto me, all ye who labour and are heavy laden..., etc." or Deuteronomy 30:8 "And thou shalt return and obey the voice of the LORD..., etc." All these verses in one way or another seem to indicate some kind of initiative in our part. But that apparent initiative is really an illusion. How can whosoever believe unless God by means of the Holy Spirit revealed himself to him? Or, who can come if one doesn't know who or where he is? Or, how can one return lest God be a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path? Fortunately, Deuteronomy 30:6 says: "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." It is he who opens the eyes and opens the ears and circumcises the heart. No matter how far back one goes God is already there doing the electing.

So, it goes back to election and free will. Can one contend with God? Can irresistible grace be resisted? Can one be elected of God and still resist him? For myself, I don't think so. When he opened my eyes and I met him all my strength left me, I fell on my face as dead, my neck was no longer stiff. But he spake to me

kindly, and lifted up my head. My predicament was far more dire than I could have ever imagined, but he didn't leave me dangling. He also showed me that Jesus, his only begotten son, had been killed in my place. Was there free will on my part to claim the blood of Christ? Well, if one can call the grasping of a drowning man for a rope thrown to him free will, then, I acted with free will. If one can call jumping out of a burning building free will, then, I moved with free will. The curses of God were what convinced me, not his blessings. Only after one is saved, can his blessings be appreciated.