

# 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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## THE BEGINNING AND THE END

*The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD.---- The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the LORD. Proverbs 16:1,33*

Here in the sixteenth chapter of Proverbs is one of the greatest testimonies to the absolute predestination of all things by the LORD that is found in all of the scriptures. The chapter begins with a clear declaration that even the planning that men do and the thoughts of their mind are not random at all but are determined by HIM who rules in the heavens and the earth. The chapter ends with an equally clear declaration that the details of every event, even down to the number which appears on a set of dice thrown in a back alley craps game, occur exactly according to HIS will and purpose.

It is essentially redundant to use the terminology of "absolute predestination" even as it is equally redundant to use the terms "absolute sovereignty". It is sort of like saying "dark black" or "pure white". There is no such thing as "limited predestination" as some purport. The power of GOD has absolutely no limitation even as the fact that if something is predestined it must occur and cannot occur if not ordered by HIM. The same GOD who orders the events and directs the steps of men in the earth is the ONE of whom the Psalmist says, "*But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*" (Psa 115:3)

Men like to come up with a limited set of activities which they consider that GOD can bring to pass without the violation of some unwritten law of fairness, morality, or the supposed free will of men. Yet the true and living GOD freely testifies of HIMSELF, "*I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things.*" (Isa 45:5-7) HE is clearly the first cause of all events and is limited by nothing except HIMSELF. HE further declares the complete fulfillment of HIS will in the occurrence of all events, by saying, "*Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.*" (Isa 46:9-11)

Those who would oppose the view of GOD as the predestinator or determiner of all events are those who ultimately think it possible for men to establish their own righteousness before GOD. If not in a future existence at least from a conditional viewpoint that they can by their own actions determine the blessings of GOD upon them in the present time as a result of their supposed obedience. They would try to make the scripture references to GOD's

"foreknowledge" to be speaking of a mere ability to know ahead of time what things will occur. They find some odd comfort in thinking that any sort of event may randomly happen without GOD directing that course but rather sitting idly by as a mere observer of what does occur. Such a view is quite comfortable to the natural mind but is diametrically opposed to the revelation of the GOD of the Bible who testified to John, *"I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."* (Rev 22:13)

Those who go about to establish their own righteousness consider that men are in some kind of probationary state before GOD wherein their own actions can either fulfill the will of GOD or thwart it. They view GOD as hoping all men will follow a certain path but absolutely uncertain what men will do except that HE can look into the future like some superhero of the comic books, and merely twiddle HIS thumbs as men do whatever they determine to be done. They usually rise in anger when confronted with such scriptures that indicate the elective grace of GOD such as Paul mentions, *"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated."* (Rom 9:11-13) Some will even admit that GOD elects men unto salvation but balk at the plain truth that HE also reprobates some unto damnation (see I Pet.2:8; Jude 4) according to HIS purpose.

The revelation of this truth strips men naked and bare before GOD and manifests the fact that apart from HIS mercy they shall surely perish. They have no remedy of their own. It is impossible that a man could be lifted up with pride or strut about with some false sense of his own righteousness when HE has been convinced by the HOLY GHOST of the same truth that Nebuchadnezzar was brought to confess after he (the mightiest king on earth at the time) was brought down to utter humility and made to eat grass like an ox. *"And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honored him that liveth forever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation: And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?----- Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase."* (Dan 4:34-35, 37)

The ONE who has revealed HIMSELF as the SAVIOR of sinners has plainly demonstrated that HE has fully accomplished the exact purpose which HE came into this world to perform. Were HE not that living GOD who predestinates the beginning and the end HE could not have assured the salvation of HIS people nor in any wise could HE have proclaimed *"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out."* (John 6:37) Just as the Aaronic high priest went into the Holy of Holies with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel emblazoned on his breast plate so did our GREAT HIGH PRIEST enter into the very presence of HIS FATHER with the names of all of HIS elect written upon HIS breast, yea graven upon HIS heart.

Just as surely as our SUBSTITUTE offered HIMSELF without spot to GOD in order to fulfill HIS own predestined purpose, so does HE order the application of that salvation which HE has purchased and ordained for HIS people to receive. Even as Luke tells us, *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Act 13:48) *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* (Phi 1:6)