

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

PERSUASION

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. *Romans 8:38-39*

It is very interesting to look at the way words are used in the scriptures. Sometimes these words which were translated from the original Greek language into English almost 400 years ago, are understood in our modern vernacular a little different than they were in these texts. We are not suggesting that there are "errors" in these translations, only that our understandings of the nuances of these words are sometimes lost in our use of the words in present day conversation.

When we use the words "persuade" or "persuading" (or any of its various tenses and modifications), we generally mean that we are seeking to change another's mind by our arguments and reason. Most of the time we would use the words with the underlying notion that such can be done by appealing to the reason of men and the wisdom of our counsel. To say that this is never the use of the word in the scriptures would be an error. However, I do not believe it is an error to point out that this is not the primary use of the words or that the terms often refer to a "persuasion" which is not based upon this notion.

There are basically two Greek words which are translated in the KJV as "persuade" (along with its variations and tenses). One of these words means "to convince, pacify, or conciliate" such as we find in our text (Rom.8:38). The other means "to completely assure, or fully accomplish" such as we find in Paul's description of the faith which the LORD gave to Abraham. "*And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.*" (Rom 4:21)

The first of these Greek words which we reference is also translated into other English words which we think shed a great deal of light on how we might understand more clearly what is contained in these Biblical terms, "persuade or persuasion". In Matthew 27:43 we read about those Jews who mocked HIM as HE was being crucified, saying, "*He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, I am the Son of God.*" CHRIST was indeed "persuaded" of the faithfulness of HIS FATHER, for HE did trust in HIM, even though this was hidden from the wise and prudent and used as source of disdain by those who could not believe. Ten times in the NT we see this word translated as "trust or trusted".

Next we see this word translated as "obey or obeyed" seven times. One instance being when Paul admonished the Galatians concerning the apparent departure of many of them from the truth of the Gospel, concerning their reliance upon the law. "*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*" (Gal 3:1) Another is found a little later in his epistle, "*Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you.*" (Gal 5:7-8) A man cannot be "persuaded" simply in mind by wrote recitation of the scriptures, but must be caused to "*obey the truth*", or in other words to walk in light of that which one recognizes to be true. Paul upbraided Peter over this very matter when he told him, "*But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews,*

why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" (Gal 2:14) A man is not persuaded of HIS freedom from the law (see Rom. 8:1-11) if he is compelled to put the saints under the law.

We see this word translated as **"agreed"** (see Acts 5:40) and as **"friend"** (Acts 12:20). David wrote *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa 133:1)* Paul followed this up by saying, *"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1Cor 1:10)* To be persuaded by the SPIRIT of GOD is to love the brethren and seek peace among them. *"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph 4:2-3) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." (Php 2:5)*

Then we see it translated as **"believed"** in Acts 17:4, as Paul "reasoned" with the Thessalonians from the scriptures. *"And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." (Acts 17:4)* The LORD often uses the scriptures, preached by men, sent by the power of the HOLY GHOST to break down the walls of their rebellion and to bring life and immortality to LIGHT in their soul. This is that "FAITH which comes by hearing." A man cannot be "persuaded", apart from the gift of faith, and cannot follow CHRIST except he believes, as one follows the other. (see Acts 28:24)

The word is translated as **"yield"** in Acts 23:21. It is translated as **"confident"** in Rom. 2:19 and Phil.1:6 where Paul speaks of his persuasion that the LORD will be faithful to those whom HE calls, *"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" (Php 1:6).* We see it translated as **"confidence"** in I Thes.3:4, where he expresses much the same thought, *"But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you."* He was persuaded that the LORD would indeed work in them both to will and to do of HIS good pleasure even as David of old testified, *"I will cry unto God most high; unto God that performeth all things for me." (Psa 57:2)* (see Philemon 1:21)

John uses this word when he writes, *"And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God." (1Jn 3:19-21)* The **"assurance"** of FAITH comes from the same SOURCE as the FAITH itself. A man must be "persuaded" by the HOLY GHOST in order to be assured even as Peter confessed, *"Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." (Mat 16:16-17)* This is the same confession that HE made later when he said, *"And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:69)* This is that **"assurance"** or **"persuasion"** that comes to those who are given the gift of FAITH.

The second Greek word which is translated as **"persuasion"** is accompanied with an adjective such as **"most surely"** or **"fully"**, in order to describe the absolute nature of it. We see this word first used in Luke's introduction to his Gospel, as being *"those things which are most surely believed among us." (Luke 1:1)* Then we see it (as we mentioned earlier) as Paul describes Abraham as being **"fully persuaded"**. There is no shadow of turning in this sort of **persuasion** for it is not built upon the ability of men to believe according to an action of their free will, but is that which is engraved in the heart by the power of the HOLY GHOST.

Paul admonishes Timothy to faithfully declare the WORD of GOD, despite those who turn from it, *"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." (2Tim 4:5)* He clearly testified of his own **persuasion** when he said, *"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1Tim 1:15)* *"I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2Tim 1:12)* Are you thus persuaded?

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