

2. WE Bow Down IN Worship

⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. ⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. – **Genesis 12:7-8 (ESV)**

3. WE CONTINUE TO SERVE FAITHFULLY

¹³ These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. – **Hebrews 11:13 (ESV)**

From The Pastor's Study I Don't Know

Do you have all the answers? Do you know someone who does know all the answers? Does your pastor have all the answers? If your pastor is Jim Hamilton the answer is a resounding NO.

I have spent many, many hours studying scripture, reading books by Christians who are a lot smarter than myself, researched scripture and meanings. I have spent hours on the web discussing theology and in every case I could always find a question I couldn't find the answer for, which is fun for me because I love a good challenge.

For instance one time I was asked a question by someone who I considered to be very Bible savvy. He asked me if I believed in free will, this was proof he didn't know me as

well as I thought because anyone who does know me knows the answer to that one. Of course I do, we make our own decisions, God doesn't force us to do anything. If He forced us to love, or to follow Him then we are little more than robots. Just as I am not one of God's tools; if I am a tool then I am like a screwdriver, I can only work if God directed my every step. If that's the case I don't need to research and prepare sermons, I would just stand in the pulpit and let God move my lips. I do believe the Holy Spirit influences my words.

Definitions:

Popular - *Our will is free if our preferences and our choices are really our own in such a way that we can justly be held responsible for whether they are good or bad.*

Biblical - *The human will is free when it is not in bondage to prefer and choose irrationally. It is free when it is liberated from preferring what is infinitely less preferable than God, and from choosing what will lead to destruction.*

His next question was "Then when we say God is in control, we are wrong." This "friend" seemed to be trying to rope me into a corner. God created all there is but once the creation is finished He controls what we can't.

There is a part of Him who has set the speed which the earth spins but does He control the weather? I firmly believe He could but if He does control it then He sends hurricanes to destroy people and their homes; He sends tsunamis to kill hundreds or even thousands of people.

Is God really in control? Or did he just create all things, set them in motion, but out of his control? The Bible teaches that God's sovereignty is an essential aspect of who he is, that he has supreme authority and absolute power over all things. God doesn't have his thumb on my head pointing me in the right direction.

What about people, does he cause a drunk driver to pile into another car; was He controlling the gunman at Columbine, does He make us do bad or is it just good He brings.

You can't have it both ways. If God is in direct control of our lives nothing bad would happen to righteous Christians, we would never make mistakes, only bad people would have bad things happen to them.

Christians would never make mistakes or do anything wrong and if they did God must be punishing them. Do you remember the story of Job, that's what his friends and neighbors felt.

A friend of mine told me that one of her seminary profs believed that God determined at birth that a person was going to heaven or hell. If that's the case we can close all the churches, get rid of Bibles since it is apparently wrong, then do anything we want because our eternity has been determined by God before we took our first breath,

If I decide to rob a bank the Devil didn't make us do it and God certainly didn't. It is our decision. Jesus wants us to accept His offer of salvation, we decide whether to accept that invitation. Without free will, we are robots.

Series: THE FAITH JOURNEY

Title: "The Eyes of Faith"

⁵ And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people that they had acquired in Haran, and they set out to go to the land of Canaan. When they came to the land of Canaan, ⁶ Abram passed through the land to the place at Shechem, to the oak of Moreh. At that time the Canaanites were in the land. ⁷ Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your offspring I will give this land." So he built there an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him.

⁸ From there he moved to the hill country on the east of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east. And there he built an altar to the LORD and called upon the name of the LORD. ⁹ And Abram journeyed on, still going toward the Negeb. ¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land. – **Genesis 12:5-10**

¹ "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² And I will make of you a great nation." – **Genesis 12:1-2a (ESV)**

1. WE STAY FOCUSED ON THE PROMISE

¹⁰ "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹ so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it." – **Isaiah 55:10-11 (ESV)**