

### How many "iotas" equals "a little"?

**Pastor Clay Kent, from the debate:** "To me, a God Who cannot allow you one iota of freedom because you might upset His apple cart, or a God Who could give you a little freedom and still work it all out to the counsel of His will, is a greater God."

By evidence of the many times he used the phrase, my opponent thinks a great deal of this concept of "a little freedom." How much is "a little?" I guess he did say it was at least, "one iota." But what, exactly, is an iota? If I have, say, a dozen iotas of freedom, does that still equal a little? Or would that be a lot? How many iotas does it take to tie my shoe? To choose Christ? To reject Him?

According to another one of Pastor Kent's debate quotes, I have "a certain amount of freedom to believe and accept." How much, exactly, is "a certain amount?" Can I exchange "a certain amount" of freedom for, say, three dozen iotas? Since believing in and accepting Christ decides my fate for the eons, I need to know, precisely, please—just where God's control ends and mine begins. Isn't that a vitally important question? Where is this all-important line? Does not God bother to answer such a life-altering question?

He does not bother to answer it because there is no such line. God's control does NOT end. God is operating ALL in accord with the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11).

If you want to draw a line, draw it between faith and ignorance. ■



# Martin Zender's Clanging Gong News

*"If I know all mysteries and all knowledge, but have no love, I am a clanging gong" --1 Cor. 13:1-2*



Two out of three isn't bad.

## Valuable lessons from the Kent Debate

In the interest of those subscribers who are tired of hearing about the Kent debate, I have decided to ignore them. I don't know how I manage to be so loving and kind in the face of such adversity, but I'm sure that it has something to do with the spirit of God that makes its home in me.

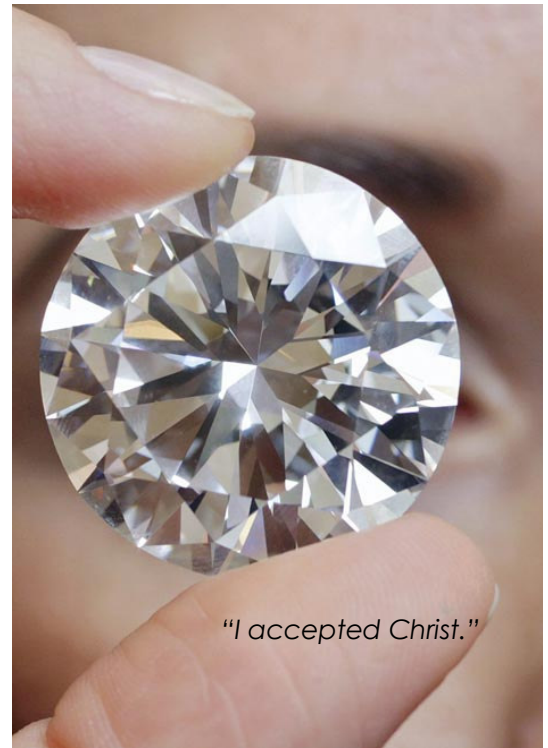
I am going to use lessons learned from the Kent debate to teach important points concerning the sovereignty of God. I know that some of you are saying, "Stop picking on poor Pastor Kent. He looks like my grandfather." I can't help it that Pastor Kent looks like your grandfather. Does your grandfather teach human free will and then pretend he doesn't? All right, then.

### The priceless stone

What have we learned so far in this series? For one thing, we have learned to accept debate invitations whenever possible, because of the sheer enjoyment of participating in them. For another thing, we have learned to avoid contradiction on the subject of the sovereignty of God. Either God controls everything, or man controls his own will. It is impossible for both to be true. A controlled will is not free, and a free will is not controlled.

But people want so badly for both to be true that they're willing to live in a fantasy world. Let's call this fantasy world: Acceptable Contradiction. In Acceptable Contradiction, the sun shines and doesn't shine at the same time. Mail arrives on the same day it does not arrive, and clocks go backward even as they race ahead. God controls absolutely everything, without controlling hardly anything.

Ignorance is king of this world, and Thinking the enemy. Should Thinking scale the battlement of Acceptable Contradiction, Ignorance rises to withstand it. What



*"I accepted Christ."*

could be so valuable that Ignorance would resist Thinking? It's good that you asked.

There is a glass case in the central square of Acceptable Contradiction, ringed with guards who watch it day and night. Inside this case, on a blue velvet pedestal, is a stone. This stone, cut and polished to rare human perfection, is priceless. It is inscribed with a three-word sentence, which is the essence of its worth. This simple, three-word sentence is the heart and soul of the kingdom. The inscription reads:

*I Accepted Christ.*

### Talking versus playing

The basic problem, we have discovered, is that man's spirit and flesh oppose one another. Man's spirit believes that God controls everything, but his flesh wants a piece of the pie. When asked if God is sovereign, the average Christian will answer, "yes." That's the spirit talking. But when asked if man has a free will,

*(Continued on pg. 2)*

## ...valuable lessons from the Kent Debate

(Continued from pg. 1)

the average Christian will also answer, “Yes.” That’s the flesh.

Thus, the average Christian suffers from a conflict of interest. The spirit is interested in God directing all of life’s affairs—this certainly *sounds* good—but the flesh wants some credit and control. Just a little bit of credit and control would be fine, as long as there is something. So while most Christians talk a good game of sovereignty, their flesh refuses to play it. Do you want to see this in action? Neither do I, but here it goes. ■

## Queen of a Little Bit of Freedom

by Queen of a Little Bit of Freedom



**H**ello! I am the Queen of a Little Bit of Freedom, and I would like to thank Martin Zender for allowing me to write in his overly-logical newsletter.

Well, our natural minds just can’t figure out how God can be sovereign *and* human beings can have a free will at the same time. It seems, like, impossible to us. But with God, all things are possible—even contradictions!

Besides, this contradiction is a great way for me to sound spiritual (and actually *be* spiritual) while still hanging on for dear life to my precious free will and fitting in with all my Christian friends. Nobody is taking my free will from me, not even God! After all, I chose Jesus, and choosing Jesus is what separates me from the unbelieving riff-raff of this world. My church is awesome! If there are any unbelievers reading, you should go to my church. You don’t want to burn in hell, do you?

Anyway, thanks to this great contradiction that only God in His awesome sovereignty could come up with, not only can I say, “God is sovereign!” and sound so spiritual at my

church and when I witness to the heathen riff-raff, but I can also say, “I have a free will!” and feel that warm glow of righteousness in myself.

Just think. I could have rejected Jesus, but I didn’t. I could have turned my back on Jesus, but I didn’t. I could have chosen the devil over Jesus, but I didn’t. I could have drank beer or said cuss words—but no. I do the righteous things instead. What is the most righteous thing I have ever done? I let Jesus come into my heart. It was not hard at all, I just did it. You should too!

If I had been Eve in the Garden of Eden, I’m sure I would have done the right thing then, too. “Be gone, Satan!” That’s what I would have said, and the devil would have fled from me. What is so hard about that? I have no idea why the whole world does not just become Christians!

I know people who try to be logical. We all know that Martin Zender is one of them. (Yes, I see you, Zender.) Martin Zender says that I can’t be free and God can’t be in control at the same time. This comes from the human mind, which can be very evil. I know for a fact that the human mind is just about worthless. Logic is of the devil, and all you have to do is resist the devil and he will flee from you. I do this all the time; what is so hard about it? God does not use logic—praise His holy name. If He doesn’t want to make sense, that’s His business. God is not a man! God’s contradictions are wiser than men, which is in Second Titus.

All you have to do is trust Jesus. But whatever you do, don’t trust Him with your brain. Whenever you feel tempted to trust Jesus with your brain, then just do what I do and resist the devil and he will flee from you. I know I keep saying this, but it keeps me from thinking. I know it is true that Jesus had a brain when He came to earth. *Duh!* But this was to further humiliate Him. We know this from Leviticus.

I dare Martin Zender to put this letter in his precious and very logical newsletter. If he does, then I guess I have more free will than he has! ■

# ROCK ON!

## What a Revelation!

NOT ONE PERSON HAS EVEN ONE IOTA OF A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF FREEDOM

“God gives people a certain amount of freedom to believe and accept.” —Pastor Clay Kent



*Really?* But scripture says: “Not one is understanding. Not one is seeking out God. All avoid Him” (Rom. 3:10-12).

*Really?* But scripture says: “For in grace, through faith, are you saved, and this is not out of you; it is God’s approach present, not of works, lest anyone should be boasting” (Eph. 2:8-9).

*Really?* But scripture says: “For to you it is graciously granted, for Christ’s sake, not only to be believing on Him, but to be suffering for His sake also” (Phil. 1:29).

*Really?* But scripture says: “God parts to each the measure of faith” (Rom. 12:3).

*Really?* But scripture says: “God makes you competent for a part of the allotment of the saints, in light” (Col. 1:12)

*Really?* But scripture says: “What have you that you did not obtain? Now if you obtained it also, why are you boasting, as though not obtaining?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

*Really?* But scripture says: “In the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Cor. 15:10).

# Rants & Stuff

The Apostle Paul says we should not murmur (Philippians 2:14). Therefore, I shall rant.



## Changing the channel: am I the only one who can do this?

The absolute viewpoint is that God is operating all in accord with the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11), and that it is God working in us to will and to work for the sake of His delight (Phil. 2:13). This is the part of God's operation we are not always conscious of. But who is so daft as to think that lack of consciousness means lack of fact? How often do you think about your heart? I don't think about mine at all, not even when I eat three fried eggs for breakfast. And yet, it beats just the same.



The relative viewpoint is how we relate to our world. Like this: "If I don't stop at that stop sign, I may die." Notice the emphasis on the word, "I." The word "I" is king of the relative viewpoint, and should be; it's perfectly natural. Otherwise, I run the stop sign because *I* can't stop because only *God* can make me put my foot on the brake.

Having said that, I will say this: Only God *can* make me put my foot on the brake. This is the absolute viewpoint. It's "the heartbeat" of my

life and yours; God's control of every little thing keeps all things ticking. Most of the time, we're simply not conscious of this—and neither should we be. But for God's sake, we're not to discount it as untrue.

Before something happens, I live in the relative and say, "It's up to me." After something happens, I live in the absolute and say, "Well, it had to happen that way." To me, this is the best of both worlds. It is easy for me to flip between these viewpoints, and I do it all day long.

It's hard to understand why this is so difficult for everyone else. Doesn't this generation live and die with the television remote in its hands? ■

## God's total control: what's not to like?

Believing in the total control of God is the best of all worlds. How? God graciously grants us ignorance of His everyday plans for us. Thus, we live life *as if* we have free wills. To put it as Paul puts it: "Be carrying your own salvation

into effect" (Phil. 2:12). Do you *feel* like God is controlling your every action? Of course not. Thus, life continues to be a rollicking adventure of willing and doing. The second part of the above verse, however, states, "for it is God Who is operating in you to will as well as to work for the sake of His delight" (Phil. 2:13). We can't lose! We have the fun and enjoyment of living life *as if* free, and yet we also have the assurance and comfort of knowing that



The Smiths felt so much better thinking that God didn't control everything.

everything we do, and everything that happens in this life, is predetermined by a wise and loving God.

What's not to like about that? Is it the fact that this truth goes against every major religion on earth, including the Christian one? ■

**No Gong next week! Due to my preparations for the Amarillo conference, there will be no CGN next Saturday. Sorry!**