

GOOD AND BAD CHOICES

From the very beginning man has been faced with the task of making choices. Many of these choices are recorded for us in the pages of God's word. From a study of these examples we should be better prepared to make the choices which face us in our daily activities.

In the beginning God told Adam and Eve to dress and keep the garden of Eden and commanded that they should not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The penalty for violating this command was death (Genesis 2:15-17). Later, the serpent told Eve that such would not be the case (Genesis 3:4). Eve must make a choice. Hers was a foolish choice. Not only did she choose to disobey God but she also gave the forbidden fruit to her husband and he did eat. This bad choice resulted in separation from God and their being driven from the garden. Paul refers to that separation from God as death (Romans 5:12). Some have perverted the teaching of this passage by saying that death has passed unto all because one man (Adam) sinned. This is not what Paul says. He says that through one man (Adam) sin entered into the world, and death through sin. That simply means that Adam died because Adam sinned. He then goes on to say, *"and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned."* When we make the same bad choice (sin) that Adam and Eve made we suffer the same disastrous consequences; separation from God.

Another choice we read about in the Bible is the one made by Joshua as recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of the book of Joshua. Joshua stands before the people and presents them with the great challenge: *"choose you this day whom ye will serve"* (v. 15). Joshua was not asking others to make a choice that he himself had not already made. He says, *"as for me and my house, we will serve Jehovah."* This was indeed a good and wise choice which had far reaching effects. Not only did it mean that Joshua was pleasing unto God, but his Godly influence was so felt in Israel that the Bible says that *"Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua ..."* (Joshua 24:31). This is a point that is often over-looked by many when they make their choices. They fail to give any thought to how their choices may affect others. All of us have influence to some degree upon the lives of others. That influence will be either good or bad, depending upon the choices we have made in our own lives. Let each of us strive to imitate the choice made by Joshua.

Also, as we make choices each day we must recognize the necessity of accepting the consequences of the choices we make. Eve was so blinded by the immediate "pleasures" to be had that she failed to consider the consequences of her disobedience. On the other hand, we read of Moses *"choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season"* (Hebrews 11:25). In these two examples we see the main difference between the making of good choices and the making of bad choices. When we become so concerned with the here and now that the only desire we have is the satisfying of the desires of the flesh we will make bad choices. When we set our affections on things above (Colossians 3:2) we will make good choices which may bring immediate hardship but will, in the end, result in eternal bliss.

I am sure many men would consider the choice made by Moses a very foolish one. In their eyes he "had everything" at his command. He could have lived a life of ease, wealth and pleasure. He could have enjoyed everything that men may view as a sign of success. Why would he turn down all this? The Hebrew writer tells us that he accounted *"the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he looked unto the recompense of reward"* (Hebrews 11:26).

The appeal of the "social gospel" is to the "here and now." Choices are made, not in view of eternity, but in view of immediate pleasure. The Christian looks beyond this life and any sufferings or hardships he may encounter. He knows *"that the sufferings of this present time or not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward"* (Romans 8:18)

✍ James Hahn