

CHOICES: ARE YOU BEING ROBBED

unto life everlasting. The difference in the consequences is very great. If we try to save our lives and take them into our own hands, the robber succeeds. He takes away our eternal life and brings spiritual death upon those who listen to him, destroying any possibility of a relationship with, and the blessing of, Almighty God in our lives.

It is really subtle; the serpent was described as being more subtle than any other creature. It is subtle in that when we make our own choices we think we are free. When we make our own choices we think we are being very clever, and yet all the time we are serving the principle of wrongdoing in our lives. This actually reaps destruction upon us spiritually and that works out into our emotional and mental wellbeing. When we choose ourselves before God the consequences are huge. 'The wages of sin is death'; as the rejection of God rapidly increases in these times, so do the consequences in many lives. So many wars, so many disasters and so many damaged lives

Happily, God loves us, He still does, and still stretches His arms out to receive us. Jesus told a wonderful parable of the young man who took his inheritance and went away and wasted it all. He made a choice, a bad choice, and off he went and supposedly had a great time. But he had chosen the robber, and everything was stolen from him. He had nothing left, not even his own integrity, as he had to feed pigs and they had more food than he did. So he made a choice to go back to his Father. He came, we are told, 'back to his senses'. His father saw him coming a long way off, father's arms were stretched out, the young man was welcomed back and everything that had been stolen was restored. The consequences of all his bad choices were removed.

So, the love of God, 'God so loves us he gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life'. We can accept Jesus and not reject Him. We can choose the Saviour and not the robber, we can be saved and not destroyed, we can receive eternal life and not be killed for ever. Please look, who are you choosing at this time? You may be rich, and you may be poor, you may think everything is fine or everything may be a disaster as the result of many wrong choices. Your 'life' may have been stolen and you see that. You need to come to Jesus for eternal life and life more abundant here on the earth. On the other hand, you may think you are fine, and managing well on your own and all is well, but without Jesus Christ you are without God and without eternal hope in this world. Already your eternal life has been stolen from you, the robber has won.

Come to Jesus, receive Him, don't reject Him anymore. Do not choose the robber who will steal everything you have eternally and destroy any hope you have of a blessed eternity. The consequences of that are great. Please see the consequences and see the love of God for you in that He gave His Son for you. God chose to make a way of salvation for you, He chose a costly way to give you eternal life. He chose His Son to lay down His life for you. He sent Jesus so he could choose you. If you will choose Jesus then you agree with God, and the Saviour of the world will be your saviour; you will have come home to God and eternal life will be yours. Everything which the robber took will have been restored.

Turning the Nation
back to Jesus Christ



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Our lives are made up of lots of choices, from simple things like what we want to eat to things of greater importance such as our jobs and our futures. When we pull out into traffic in a vehicle we are making choices even though perhaps we don't realise it. Some decisions are made for us. Our parents choose our names, we are just too young to do that at the time, and we have to live with their choices. Our appearance and what we look like is not our choice either, it is determined for us by our genetic make-up even though those that hate their looks do try all sorts of things to try and improve them. Democracy is meant to be about choice too. Who do you want to be in charge of your country? In theory, we have a choice, but in practice the options may not be all we want them to be, but in the main what we would all choose is a peaceful and quiet life, enough to eat and some happiness with our families. Such things are of great value. Sometimes the choices we make are not good ones and we live to regret them. Oh! If only I could go back and start again. Oh! If only I had not decided to go to that place, or if I had not had a relationship with that person. Oh! If only I had forgiven that person and not behaved so badly towards them. If only I had not made such a bad choice. The choices we make of course affect other people too, and bad ones can cause us regret for the hurt we have caused others. Good choices, of course, have the opposite effect, bringing us joy and contentment; we are often then grateful for making the right choice. The writer wanted to be a dentist and chose that career, and looking back almost 50 years is very grateful for making such a decision, and as a Christian is grateful to God for helping with such a choice. God knows what is to come in our lives when we don't. So, we see how important it is to make choices and make the right ones. We are human beings and actually quite vulnerable in our feelings when we make bad choices. It is clear then those choices we make and decisions we take affect our wellbeing, they affect us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, for good or for bad. It is the way our choices affect us spiritually we are to look at, but as we are complex beings then spiritual effects work out in us emotionally, mentally, and even physically at times. There is a surprising choice that was made at the end of the life of Jesus Christ on the earth, which had, and still has, huge consequences, showing us an example of the choices so many make and have made about Jesus. Jesus had been taken captive and sent to Pontius Pilate the governor, in order that Jesus's execution could be ordered. Jesus, and we can read it all in the four gospels, had been preaching and teaching in Israel, around lake Galilee in the north and in Judea in the south, for 3 and a half years, healing many sick people and bringing blessing and freedom to many. The blessing he had brought was amazing and many followed Him. He even fed them when there was almost no food available. Yet he was hated by the rulers as he threatened their position, they were afraid of him, even though he had brought such blessing. Pilate, finding no fault in Jesus, offered to release Him, as it was the custom at that time for the Romans to release one prisoner who had been sentenced to death. The people were given a choice - Jesus or Barabbas. They chose Barabbas



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to be released and required Jesus to be executed. John tells us in his gospel that Barabbas was 'a robber', he was a thief. They chose the thief and required the 'blood of Jesus,' in other words, the responsibility and consequences for Jesus' death to be on them and their descendants. The consequences of that choice have been huge for the past 2000 years. Jesus knew all these things would happen to Him and had already made His choice; 'Not my will but your will be done', to follow His Father's command to go to the cross for us. He chose to save us and not Himself. To give His life to us and not to rob us. Jesus tells us that He had come to 'give life and that more abundantly.' However, there is another who comes in 'another way', who has come to steal, to kill and to destroy. There are two choices in our lives, the destroyer, or the Saviour. Technically it is called a 'Binary Choice', when we have the choice between two options with subsequent consequences. It is helpful to look at how choices are made; it depends on whom we listen to. To see the effect of listening to the one who 'steals, kills, and destroys' we need to go back to the book of Genesis and the account of Adam and Eve, and their bad choice. God had warned Adam that they should not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It would allow them to make their own choices and not follow the wisdom of God, but at the same time it would bring spiritual death upon them, it would destroy their relationship with Him. So the serpent, the snake, the personification of the devil, comes along and gives Eve and then Adam a choice. To eat or not to eat? To obey God or follow the temptation? They chose to eat, and what the Bible calls sin, disobedience and rejection of God, entered into them. Spiritually they were dead. Eternal life had been stolen from them and their whole future destroyed. They chose the robber, just like those people in Jerusalem did many years later; the thief stole from them everything of eternal value, and upon human beings came sorrow, separation, and what could be described as 'blood, sweat and tears'. In the world today people are still making the same choices. Wonderfully for us, the death which Jesus died was not the end of it. Yes, he was what the Bible described as 'despised and rejected of human beings', but at the same time God put all our wrongdoing, all our rejection, all our anger and bitterness, all our disobedience and all our making of wrong choices, on to the Lord Jesus. Because Jesus made the right choice, to lay down his life for us and obey His Father, God was able to raise Him from the dead. All the consequences of all our wrong choices are taken away, our sins, our wrongdoing is forgiven and we can be free. So, we have a choice, a binary choice, to come to Jesus Christ or to reject Him. It is amazing and yet so sad that in this world so many love to reject Jesus and choose the robber. They think they know better than Jesus does. They use their own judgement, but the judgement is flawed as it comes from when Adam and Eve listened to the robber and lost everything of eternal value. Those who reject Jesus choose themselves and their own way and their own life. Jesus said, as a warning, if we save our lives, we lose them!. We lose them for ever! If we lay them down for Jesus' sake and for the will of God, we save, or keep, our lives