

# CHOOSE WISELY

by Pastor Robert M. Reid



We live in a culture of indecision. When someone makes a moral choice, he or she is apt to be viewed by many as naïve, even morally intolerant. This notion is deeply rooted in the belief that we cannot live under the restraint of moral absolutes. Such a spirit flourishes as humanity displays a conscious effort to dismiss the reality of God as manifested in creation (see Romans 1:18-25).

Yet moral choices define us.

In the Old Testament, Joshua issues a challenge to the nation he has successfully led just as the Israelites are settling down in the Promised Land they have conquered. Joshua urges, “Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River [the ancestral gods beyond the river Euphrates in Ur; cf. Joshua 24:3], or the gods of the Amorites [the gods of Canaan], in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord” (Joshua 24:15). Perhaps Joshua sees the drift of his nation toward accommodating and accepting the “gods” of the surrounding people. He may see complacency beginning to infiltrate their decision-making process. He realizes that the choice he is calling for will define all their other choices.

So as an old man, perhaps 110 years old, (Joshua 23:1-3) Joshua stands before all of Israel and calls for them to remember what the Lord has done. He urges them to choose to serve Him exclusively. Such a commitment should then direct their choices, defining them as the people of God.

Chris Tiegreen insightfully notes,

Every one of [our choices], in a sense, is a test. Why? Because they reveal our desires...our taste for obedience is exposed...our deepest loves come to the surface in the choices we make. Even when we deny our strong desires, we demonstrate that we must have had even stronger ones directing our choices.

Joshua knew this, and he called for the Israelites to be bold in choosing Jehovah God alone. He even issued a warning of the danger associated with not doing so (24:19-20).

Joshua then issued a follow-up challenge. “Therefore, put away the foreign gods which are among you, and incline your heart to the Lord” (24:23). Contamination had already spread; commitment had already waned. Choices are not to be barren assertions but bold actions that reflect our commitments. So the people who listened to Joshua declared their choice: “We will serve the Lord” (24:21-22).

One generation, however, cannot make choices for another generation. Evidence of this is seen in the book of Judges, where a new generation arose that did not “know the Lord nor the work which He had done” (Judges 2:10). The previous generation’s choice did not impress them. Thus they made a choice that defined them—they chose to serve other gods (2:11-12), and as a result “everyone did that which was right in his own eyes” (17:6). The previous generation had failed to demonstrate the value of following Jehovah God; they failed to call the next generation to choose allegiance to Him alone. The result was chaos and judgment for that new generation of God’s people.

What do our choices at Calvary Monument Bible Church reveal about us? Does the coming generation see a deep love for the Lord reflected in the prior generation’s decisions? Is the generation that is passing off the scene calling the coming generation to serve the true God and to lay aside the false ancestral and cultural gods that surround us? Or do they see us as people who, as one person put it, “Prefer to satisfy wrong desires over obeying him”? We need to make godly, biblical, clear, and bold choices now, while challenging the next generation to do the same.

