

Choice

by Hendrik Joubert

By choice God created man with the ability to choose. Without options choice would be irrelevant. As soon as God announced that Adam could eat of any tree in the garden *except...* (**Genesis 2:17**) choice came alive. The ability to exercise free will is not a power usurped, it is a privilege granted by God. With it comes man's responsibility to demonstrate submission to his Creator: ***"If it is disagreeable in your sight to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."*** (Josh 24:15)

The consequences are direct opposites. One side is so drastically undesirable that one may argue that it is not a legitimate choice. Adam learned that disobedience will result in death; however a play on words allowed Satan to persuade Eve, and ultimately Adam, to make the wrong choice. In the same way the words of God are still being distorted – to one's own destruction. (**2 Peter 3:16**) As a result many make the wrong choice believing that they will not suffer the consequences, and herein lies the deceitfulness of sin. (**Hebrews 13:3**)

A comparison between **Genesis 3:6** and **1 John 2:16**: demonstrates that the conditions surrounding the original sin and our sin remains the same; ...***the lust of the flesh (the tree was good for food) and the lust of the eyes (it was a delight to the eyes) and the boastful pride of life (the tree was desirable to make one wise)*** Men fall under the same temptation and make the same wrongful choices. ...***for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...*** (**Romans 3:23**)

Through the apostle Paul we learn more about the progression from innocence to guilt: ***I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;***... (**Romans 7:9**) The apostle was born many years after the Law was given, however it came to him when he could ***listen with understanding***. In **Nehemiah 8:2-3** we learn more about the onset of this awareness and the resulting spiritual death. Like Adam, and like Paul we all start out *alive*. Of this condition Jesus says: ...***for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.***" (**Matthew 19:14**) The *innocence* of a child is a quality to be emulated: ***Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature.*** (**1 Corinthians 14:20**)

Because of their own hardness of heart two things caused confusion among the Jews, the first was that they were chosen in the ultimate sense because they were the seed of Abraham. (**Matthew 3:9**) In **Galatians 3:16** God (through the apostle) points out the misunderstanding that the nations of the world would be blessed through them as a nation. With this misconception also came the idea of a physical kingdom over which the Messiah was to reign, instead of the spiritual kingdom, the church. (**Matthew 16:18-19; John 18:36; Acts 2:38; Colossians 1:13**)

The second was the idea that salvation was through the Law. The statement made by Paul in **Romans 7:9** forms part of an effort to illustrate that salvation was not obtainable through the Law of God given through Moses on Mount Sinai. The Law causes death, as it merely makes one aware of sin. As such it was to be a schoolmaster to lead them to Christ, (**Galatians 3:24**) to bring them to the same point of realization: ***Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?*** (**Romans 7:24**) The answer immediately follows: ***Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!*** (**Romans 7:25**)

Salvation is obtainable only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Salvation ***in Christ*** was not a spur of the moment decision, a decision made along the way. It was a decision made before creation as God anticipated the disobedience of man. (**Ephesians 1:3ff**) In this chapter we find as many as twelve "***in***" statements confirming that salvation is available only ***in Christ*** (**1:1,3,10,12,20**), ***in Him*** (**1:4,7,9,10,13**), ***through Jesus Christ*** (**1:5**) ***in the beloved*** (**1:6**). In the words of the Lord: ***"I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me."*** (**John 14:6**)

In Christ is where God chose to save, not through the Law, not because of physical inheritance as the seed of Abraham or in *any other way*, or through any other *source*. The source is *predestined*, and in the gospel sinners learn how to gain access to Christ: ***"He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned.*** (**Mark 16:16**) The two consequences are obvious from these words of the Lord Jesus Christ.