

Valley of Decision

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Abraham and Isaac on the altar: Abraham's decision: Social morality, relative to man's ethical nature, is subjective to his sense of entitlement of his right to choose. Unlike man's modern morality, the righteousness of God is not subjective. To the Christian it is not a matter of choice. In our culture today if we do not like the guilt of an ethical fabric we change the moral fibers. **Isaac's decision:** Isaac was taught to choose based on the righteousness of God in relationship with God instead of the morality of man.

I want to present to you that we are in and facing a Valley of Decision. Will we stay the course, move forward, and continue in the vision and hope God has given or will we become complacent, lethargic, go backwards or go no further? Webster defines "**Steadfastness**" as firmly fixed in place; not subject to change; firm in belief, determination, or adherence; faithful, immovable and loyal. By its definition there is a standard of moral integrity and reliability that is the foundation of one's "**stability of character**". **In it I find not simply a description given us but a decision given each of us as to who we have been, who we now are, and who we intend to be. It is much more than a resolution, of which you may have good intention, but instead a resolve with unshakable determination. Growth only comes with positive change. Change only comes when we make a decision to move in that direction.** Each day we awake with knowledge of yesterday's failures and successes, today's trials and tribulation, and tomorrow's obstacles and expectations. My father and I spoke the other day and he said God was revealing to him how we may fall into temptation, but we choose to walk in sin. God does not tempt a man. Temptation comes from the flesh. To fall into temptation is to be faced with a choice to choose the flesh or righteousness regardless of your intention to face that choice or not. Joseph did not seek out temptation, he just found himself there with a choice. David did not seek out temptation, he found himself there with a choice. Joseph fled the temptation. But David returned again and again until he walked in sin against God. Every day and in every situation or circumstance of your life you will be faced with a choice to either live in righteousness or walk in sin. In every moment of every day you will find yourself in the Valley of Decision. **It is the decision you make that will determine if you walk in the valley of the shadow of death or live upon the mountain of God.**

In **1 Kings 13:8-10** we find a young prophet who is faced with a decision to do exactly as God said or to be enticed with fleshly desire. *"8And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place: 9For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest. 10So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel."* At this point this young prophet made the right decision and stood firm in his conviction.

I believe that this coming year will hold many challenges for people. It will be **a defining point of their convictions or a lack thereof. Will they stand firm on righteous principle or find justification for compromise.** Their decisions will be a turning point for our nation, their families, the church and how God will respond to their decision. We can look historically at the decisions we have made in this nation concerning our honor and dishonor to God the Father and the consequences that have resulted from those decisions. Decisions to throw God out of the public square has resulted, not in the social utopia they continue to promise in deceptive humanism, socialism, and multiculturalism, but instead in the murder of our children in schools, shopping malls, and even our churches. **Choices stem from ideas and both have consequences. God defines your destiny but your decisions determine your destination. Your decisions speak of the principles and priorities that undergird your life.**

Mordecai faced such decision in **Esther 3:2** *"2And all the king's servants, that were in the king's gate, bowed, and revered Haman: for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai bowed not, nor did him reverence."* In the ancient days bowing was an act of demonstrating respect. The lesser bowed to the greater. It was also means of demonstrating humility or an attitude of homage. In Genesis 23:7 Abraham bowed before the Lord to show honor and reverence. He bowed before the Hittites to show thankfulness. In Genesis 33:3, Jacob bowed to Esau seven times in humility and respect. This would keep with Christ telling the disciples in Luke 17:4 that if a brother comes to you seven times saying I repent, forgive him.¹ Here we find Mordecai was faced with **a great choice that could cost him his life or his compromise of something much deeper than an act of tradition but the honor due only to God. Will he bow and give homage to those who oppose God and people of righteousness just because it benefited him for the moment or**

would he put his whole life on the line for a greater principle? It was a decision of just how much his integrity and loyalty to God was really worth. It was a decision that no one else could make for him.

We find another example in a mighty young man of valor, **Joshua 24:15** *“15And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

Joshua had not only resolved for himself but for his family as well. He goes further to admonish all of God’s people to make the same choice. Who will you serve? Who will you worship, follow, make the most important thing in your life? **Who will you make the sovereign authority of your every choice, action, attitudes, desires, ambitions and obligation?** The people’s response to Joshua’s challenge of decision we find in **Joshua 24:16** *“16And the people answered and said, God forbid that we should forsake the LORD, to serve other gods;”* The sad part is that in their decision they yet failed. They missed a principle Joshua was trying to teach them before his death. **Joshua not only purposed that he had chosen to serve the Lord, but that his children would be taught to make the same choice. It is a principle of generational continuity of ethical and moral decision making with our lives that we much teach our children. It does not come simply with a resolution or a proclamation. It only comes through the demonstration of righteousness in our daily choices of who we are, what we say, and what we do or fail to do.**

Failure to understand and embrace this principle as a people and apply it to our families results in the same choice consequences we find in **Judges 2:7-12** *“7And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. 8And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. 9And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. 10And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. 11And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: 12And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.”* Even though Joshua and the parents resolved and proclaimed that they had chosen to follow God, their children did not. **First, it is not enough to say we have chosen God and His Word as our sovereign authority. We must live it. Second, it is not enough to just tell our children to choose to follow God and His Word. We must show them how and teach them how to choose with our lives daily in every opportunity.**

Joel 3:2,9-16 *2I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land. 9Proclaim ye this among the Gentiles; Prepare war, wake up the mighty men, let all the men of war draw near; let them come up: 10Beat your plowshares into swords and your pruninghooks into spears: let the weak say, I am strong. 11Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye heathen, and gather yourselves together round about: thither cause thy mighty ones to come down, O LORD. 12Let the heathen be wakened, and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat: for there will I sit to judge all the heathen round about. 13Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great. 14Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision: for the day of the LORD is near in the valley of decision. 15The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining. 16The LORD also shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the heavens and the earth shall shake: but the LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.*

I believe that the church, God’s people, this nation, our families, all the earth will experience a shaking. God is calling a time of preparedness. It is not a time to get prepared; it is a time to be prepared. The time of preparation is over. You are either prepared or you are not. You either have enough oil or you are bone dry. You are either equipped for war or you are empty handed and empty hearted. Either your soul is ready or you will be found desolate in your soul. Time is of the essence. The dispensation of God will not stay on hold forever for you to take your sweet time to decide who you and your family will serve. **The day is coming when you will have to stand in the valley of decision like Mordecai and face your Haman. Will you bow down or will you stand in honor of God for all His glory.** I believe that in this year we will see and hear God calling to the mighty men and women of righteousness to awaken and stand in the valley of decision. I believe God will gather the multitudes and place them in the valley of decision. I believe God will call His people to stand in the valley of decision and the decisions that are made will either bring consequences of increase and

the manifestation of God's glory or wages of sin and death like never before. In the Valley of Decision, where do you stand? When trials come, when all hope seems lost, when the world around looks and seems so devastating – where do you stand? If you look at your children today, where would you say they stood? How have you helped them learn to choose? How will you help them choose? What has been your life's choice? Choose you this day. Help someone else make the right choice quickly.

1 James M. Freeman, *The New Manners and Customs of the Bible*