

LET THE BIBLE SPEAK SERIES

Ronny F. Wade, Speaker

LIFE CHANGING DECISIONS

We are all called upon to make decisions. We all stand in the valley of decision, and have our hour of decision. Some of the decisions we make don't matter much. They are about things that will make little difference in our lives. There are, however, some decisions that do matter. In fact they may mean the difference between life and death or heaven or hell. Such decisions are truly life changing. Today, we would like to study with you some decisions revealed in the Bible that made a real difference in the lives of the people who made them.

Moses was born at a time when the king of Egypt had passed a decree that all male children born to the Israelites would be put to death. Like all parents his mother and father loved him and did not want to see him die. They hid him for three months and finally when necessary his mother took him in a little basket and placed him in the Nile river. That day when the daughter of the king came to bathe she heard the child crying. Upon looking she discovered this beautiful little child. She immediately fell in love with him and proposed to take him home with her. The sister of Moses who was near by asked her if she needed a nurse. Of course she did. The girl got his mother, the best nurse any little child ever had. It seems certain that as the child grew his mother told him of his real identity. The bible tells us that when he was come to years he "refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the (passing) pleasures of sin for a season;" Hebrews 11:23-25. What a powerful decision. He gave up all the advantages of being raised in a palace in order to serve God. He turned his back on all that splendor in order to fulfill the wishes of the Almighty. Why? The answer is found in verse 26 "he had respect unto the recompense of reward." In other words he looked ahead and realized he would be better off serving God and ultimately being saved, than serving sin and self and being lost. A lesson many of us need to learn today.

Adam and Eve also made a life changing decision. In fact the results of their decision are still being felt today. After being created by God they were placed in a beautiful garden and told that they could eat of the fruit of every tree but one. In the day they ate of it, they would die. Genesis 3 tells us that "So the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her and he ate." What a horrible decision. They actually decided to disobey God. Prompted by the lie of the devil they did the very thing they were told not to do. How sad. As a result they were driven from the garden. They became dying beings. Today we still suffer because of what they did. We die, our loved ones die. This is a point that we all should ponder well. The decisions we make today can affect our children and grandchildren years from now. In fact many today are where they are morally and spiritually because of a decision made by others years ago. That can be

bad or good depending on the decision we make. The problem with Eve's decision was that she made it for all the wrong reasons. So do we today. We decide to do things based solely on what we want or like rather than what is right. This is why we must be careful and decide wisely.

In 2Kings chapter 5 we read about Naaman. He was a mighty and very popular man, an outstanding Captain in the Syrian army. He was well liked by the King. But he was a leper. A leper had nothing to look forward to but death. Before death he would be separated from the rest of society and live his remaining days in a leper colony. The Syrians had gone on raids and brought back a captive girl from Israel. She waited on Naaman's wife. One day she remarked "If only my master were with the prophet who is in Samaria. For he would heal him of his leprosy." When the King got word of such he agreed to send a letter to the King of Israel to bring about this healing. Naaman left for the place and when he arrived he gave the letter to the King. The King was suspicious. He thought the King of Syria was trying to pick a fight. But the prophet Elisha heard about this and gave order for the King to send Naaman to him. When he came the prophet did not come out to meet him, but sent a servant who told the man to go and dip seven times in the river Jordan. Naaman was insulted and became furious. He thought the prophet would come out and perform some kind of ritual over him. When that did not happen he decided to go home. Beside he reasoned we have rivers much better than the Jordan where I live. However one of his host reasoned with him "if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, you would have done it. Why not do this?" In other words "you have nothing to lose. Why not do what he commands?" Upon reflection Naaman decides to do just that. He goes to Jordan and dips once, twice, three and finally seven times. When he comes up he is clean. His leprosy is gone. Don't you know he was glad he made the decision to comply with the command of the prophet? So we today should always comply with God's requirements. It is always wise to do so and very unwise to do otherwise.

In Genesis 22:1-13 we have recorded one of the most amazing decisions ever made. It involved Abraham the friend of God. God had promised him a son through whom he would be blessed. Finally that son was born. His name was Isaac. However in these verses we are told that God tested Abraham. He commanded him to take Isaac and offer him on an altar as a sacrifice to Him. Without questioning Abraham gathered his son, some wood, and two fellow travelers. He sets out for the place God had commanded him to go. One might wonder why any man would agree to sacrifice his own flesh and blood. But we are told that Abraham had faith in God. When they reach the site where God commanded him to go, Abraham tells the two men to wait while he and the young man go and we will return to thee. With this they start for the spot where the altar is to be built. Once constructed the young man asks "where is the sacrifice?" "God will supply" is the reply. Finally Abraham binds the young man and places him on the altar, raises his hand to slay the lad, when the Angel of God speaks to him to stop. "Now I know you believe in Me" says God. An animal is then provided and used as a sacrifice. Abraham and the young man then return to the two men who are waiting at the designated place. Why would Abraham do such a thing? The answer lies in the fact that he believed God would keep his promise. And that if Isaac was killed, in some way God would bring him

back because it was through him that the promise was to be fulfilled. Hebrews 11:17-19 explains it like this "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said "In Isaac your seed shall be called, concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense." What great faith. What a great decision. Friend, do you have the faith to do what God commands you? Would you comply with the commands of God in order to be saved. Why not trust God and obey today?

Joshua was a great man, and a great leader. The children of Israel had crossed the Jordan and were now in the land of promise. The people among whom they lived served strange god's. They were given to idolatry. Hence Joshua issues the following challenge: "Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord. And it it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, 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, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." What a wonderful statement and decision. Think about it. As for me I will serve the Lord. What about you. Will you make that decision? Will you turn your back on other gods, other pleasures, other people and serve only the Lord? It will be a decision that can change your life. One you will never regret. Why not do so today?