

Which Way Now?

WE often read about the help available to navigate the modern world. This may be very welcome when life is complicated.

Teenagers are offered guidance on their routes to different careers and life choices. The more senior may be given plans on their options for care or independent living. People recovering from illness or addiction are shown pathways to recovery and rehabilitation.

In the wider world, we hear about nations being 'at a crossroads': the USA in their politics; the UK and their relationship to the EU; states suffering civil war; and countries struggling with terrorism. For all of these, the way forward is unclear, and decision-making is difficult.

Life Paths

As we grow and our circumstances change, we often need to make choices. Where to live? What to study? What job to do? Other decisions will be forced through circumstances, such as relationships, family and finances.

The most important decision we will ever make is whether to trust and obey God, or not. It will affect our life today and our prospects for the future. To those who believe and obey Him, God promises everlasting life in His Kingdom on earth.

The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23).

This is the choice God has always placed before men and women, from the Garden of Eden down to today. Thankfully, He has made the choice clear and provided guidance on how to make it.

Israel's Choice

The people of Israel had journeyed for forty years under Moses' leadership, and were on the borders of the Promised Land. He explained how God was offering them this very choice:

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil... I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live (Deuteronomy 30:15,19).

If they chose to obey God, He would bless them, and give them peace and prosperity in the land. If they did not, He would use their enemies and the natural environment to afflict them and eventually remove them from the land.

It was a clear choice, easy to understand, and it was written down for them. Moses emphasised this:

For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off... But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it (v11, 14).

Israel could never claim that they did not understand their options. God had laid out their choices and His prophets continued to offer guidance. They had to believe God.

Jesus' Choice

Jesus Christ lived a life of total obedience to God. He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God and showed compassion to the men and women he met. Yet he knew that he was destined to die a horrible death.

Jesus began to show to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day (Matthew 16:21).

He knew this because the Old Testament had foretold it in detail. Read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 for graphic examples. They mapped out how he would suffer and die, but also that God would raise him from the dead after three days.

He could have avoided the pain, by stopping his work and avoiding the Jewish leaders who wanted to kill him. But when the time came, he chose to obey God, and...

...he steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).

He was killed, but God raised him from the dead as promised, and later Jesus ascended to join his Father in heaven.

For the joy that was set before him [Jesus] endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).



Our Route Now

We have to make a choice too. The Bible provides a simple roadmap to bring us into His family. The route takes us through faith to baptism.:

Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Hebrews 11:6).

He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned (Mark 16:16).

God promises a place in His Kingdom, eternal life in a perfect world, if we respond in this way. If that becomes the goal of our life, then we can live today with purpose and hope. It is the right and only way.