

Life... ..

A

Matter of

Choices

Soji Abidoye

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Foreword

This book is a discourse on the process of making choices and the consequences of the choices made. Dr. Soji Abidoye uses his personal experience and expertise as Bible scholar to engage readers on the topical subject of making choices. After a fascinating discourse on the various influences that help man to make a choice, taking copious examples from the Bible stories, the book explores the life of the Bible characters from Creation, as Cain makes a choice to kill his brother while Enoch chooses to walk with God, the patriarch Abraham chooses to separate from Lot, pay his tithe, rescues Sodom and Gomorrah because of his nephew Lot, and sacrifice his son Isaac in obedience to the instruction of God. Abraham's wife, Sarah, chooses to give her maid to Abraham because of the delay in the arrival of children. Rachel later chooses to steal the father's idols and Joseph's brethren chose to sell off their brother, Joseph, to slavery where the wife of his master chose to seduce him.

The author carefully analyzes the consequences of each choice made, accompanied inevitably by bitterness and triumphs, knowing that every person will reap what has been sowed. The author then expects the reader to make the necessary deductions.

The book has a message for every category, social background and age of reader. The central message is the value of a transformed life that will reject to make unwise and wrong choices. In an age of drug, sex addiction, perversion, adult delinquency, and adult carelessness, the book sends an important message, a warning to all. It reminds everyone that there is only one life and that living a reckless and derailed life has consequences with lasting results of regret.

The Almighty God Himself made it clear that consequences awaited all players as He listed benefits and losses of all choices in Deuteronomy 28. This book clearly encourages one to make a wise choice and celebrate choices so wisely made for life.

It gives me much pleasure to commend this book to youths, church ministers, and the general public. Everyone should pick copies of the book and pray fervently to be guided by the teaching contained in it.

The author is encouraged to get a second edition that will carry testimonies of those who have benefitted from the book.

—Emeritus Professor Michael Omolewa
University of Ibadan and Babcock University, Nigeria.
President, 32nd Session General Conference of United Nations
Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

Preface

The title of this book was an easy pick. Growing up I had the impression that God was somehow partial because things appear to be easier for some people than others. But a closer look at the Word reveals that God made everyone perfect for specific purposes. As children of God, we should believe we are all created equally and perfectly. The choices begin when one gets into the womb. These exercises shape our lives—that is, we are all equal but different. Wherever or however one ends up in life is a culmination of choices made, directly or indirectly. Until one understands that from the spiritual perspective, failure would be attributed to bad luck or somebody else but himself. One would also erroneously believe that success is only as a result of good luck without personal efforts. Choices we make determine how and where we end up. Life is not a matter of chances but a matter of choices.

Making choices was the first opportunity God gave to humans. This responsibility He gave to us for fulfillment of His plan in each individual life. Avoiding making a choice is in itself is a choice. Taking the responsibility wisely leads to success.

What comes out of a man is what defiles him and making choices come from inside of a man. And he said, “That which cometh out of the man, that defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:20–23).

God thought of creating heavens and earth before he spoke them out. So since we are made in His image, our choices are results of our thoughts.

Life... A Matter of Choices is written to help us actively participate, as spiritual beings, in making good choices. The Bible calls us “small gods” because we are made in the image of God. We are made to operate the way God operates to enable us fulfill individual purposes. The totality of making good choices brings one to God’s perfect destiny. On the other hand, the result of making wrong choices brings defilement and ultimate destruction.

I trust that as you read, you would be blessed with the grace to choose what is right in the sight of God so you can walk in His will to fulfill your perfect destiny.

I pray that as you read, prayerfully, the Holy Spirit, the best teacher, would reveal to you the truth in the Word of God so that you can possess your freedom and take responsibility for your choices because life is a matter of choices.

—Pastor (Dr.) Soji Abidoye
Atlanta

Acknowledgments

Over the years, many people helped me to write this book, particularly my family members. They are aware of my dislike and distaste for English literature and writing. However, to God be the glory, through the persistence of my family and the grace of God it became possible.

I want to give all the glory to God Almighty for making it possible because it is better late than never. He alone is worthy to take the HONOR.

My profound appreciation goes first and foremost to Emeritus Professor Michael Omolewa, OON, for accepting to write the foreword for this book. He accepted the responsibility with such efficiency reserved only for few distinguished men, on a very short notice.

My wife and children did contribute immensely in giving their time, money, effort, and emotional support. This is the first part of a series on this topic. So stay tuned.

—Soji Abidoye

1

The Act of Making Decisions

The Human Senses

After God created man, He gave him dominion and power to rule over all God created. Before creating man, God created everything else.

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.
(Genesis 1:31)

To ensure man realized his potential as a social being, God chose a helpmeet (not mate) for him, to complete the goodness and purpose of his creation.

However, after man sinned and blamed God for it. God stopped choosing for man and life became a matter of choices. Whether he lives or dies honorably becomes his choice.

Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord. (Proverbs 18:22)

Man from then had to find a good wife to obtain favor.

The power to choose was granted to man in the garden of Eden.

But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:17)

Sadly, man, who would have lived forever, chose death.

See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commandments and his statutes and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply: and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou

goest to possess it. But if thine heart turn away, so that thou wilt not hear, but shalt be drawn away, and worship other gods, and serve them; I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it. I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them. (Deuteronomy 30:15–20)

Our relationship with God is a partnership. He opens doors but gives us the choice of whether or not to walk in through those doors. The Lord went further to encourage man to choose (Deuteronomy 30:19). Whether he achieves his divine destiny or not becomes his choice. Whether he gets born again or not becomes his choice. Whether he goes to hell or not becomes his choice. Whether he makes those choices consciously or not becomes his choice. The choices add together to determine the course of man's life and where he ends up eventually.

The most important of all choices is the salvation of souls, According to John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Even that, God did not force it on humans.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

It is important to know how these choices are made and the process we go through to make them. We make numerous choices every minute, hour, and they run into millions in the course of our lifetime. Knowing these choices and how we go through them in making decisions will greatly help man to take full responsibility for them and even help make good choices.

Man does not and cannot *choose* what happens to him before his birth or after death. However, everything in between is shaped by his choices,

including those made on his behalf before he is able to make his own choices.

The first commandment (not part of the ten given to Moses) God gave to mankind contains five instructions:

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the *fish of the sea*, and over the *fowl of the air*, and over *every living thing* that moveth upon the earth. (Genesis 1:28;)

The second commandment is to *choose* to follow God's instructions to the letter. If man chooses not to, he receives the punishment, which is death.

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:16–17)

Since then, the consequence of all wrong choices by man eventually leads to death. This death can either be physical, spiritual, or both. Only those who are born again of the Spirit can escape spiritual death, which is the second death.

The physical birth carries a mandatory death sentence for all human beings. The physical birth is synonymous to the first birth, and the second birth is the spiritual birth.

Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. (John 3:3–6)

Simply put, if a man does not experience the second birth, he would die the second death.

2

Man—A Tripartite Being

A man is called a tripartite being. This signifies that man is made of soul, spirit, and body (flesh). The three areas are involved in making choices on a continuous basis:

Flesh—Feeling

Soul—Mind or Intellect

Spirit—Conscience (inner voice)

The sequence of events is as follows:

All information that comes through the mind (soul) is processed and filtered to either the flesh or spirit. The flesh and the spirit are in constant battle to control the soul. If the soul yields to flesh, it brings corruption and death. If it yields to spirit, it brings life and peace, especially if that spirit is under submission to the Holy Spirit.

For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. (Romans 8:5–6)

The thought of the mind and heart are manifested through the flesh-mouth.

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. (Luke 6:45)

- a. The flesh tends toward evil when your feeling controls it. The flesh has the tendency to yield wickedness.

And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Genesis 3:6)

And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. (Genesis 6:5)

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9)

So whoever is controlled by their feeling/flesh will commit sins because God knows that a man's heart tends always to do wrong. No wonder almost the entire Ten Commandments are thou shalt not dos (8 out of 10):

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth,

the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's. (Exodus 20:1–17)

- b. The mind or intellect is the sowing ground of Satan. The thought that comes from the mind is imperfect and foolish when not guided by God. The outcome of our thought process, outside of God's direction, is not good for man. Your reasoning controls your natural responses:

Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. (Romans 2:15)

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron. (1 Timothy 4:1–2)

- c. Your spirit is the moral consciousness—that is, the conscience and inner voice that God speaks to through the Holy Spirit:

Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof,

but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. (John 3:5–8)

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. (John 3:9)

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. (John 5:18)

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. (Galatians 5:16–18)

Inside of us, there is a war between the spirit and the flesh to control the soul, which is the real you—your intellect (Galatians 5:16–17). When you are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you and controls your actions through your spirit, speaking to your conscience and your inner man in a gentle voice. The God-given moral consciousness is our conscience.

3

The Soul

The soul (sometimes refers to as the mind) is the actual being. The soul existed before birth (Jeremiah 1:5), and it will continue its existence after physical death. “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment” (Hebrews 9:27). “And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held” (Revelation 6:9). The battle to control the soul goes on between the human spirit and the flesh. For the soul to remain in the perfect will of God, a man must surrender his life to Jesus Christ. Then the Holy Spirit comes and takes control of the individual human spirit. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). The continued residency of the Holy Spirit in life of such individual is confirmation that his soul will live forever.

No Jesus Christ, no Holy Spirit and a man soul (life) is on his way to hell. When man rejects Jesus Christ, he essentially kills his own soul. A man can also destroy his own soul with sexual sins. “But who so committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul” (Proverbs 6:32). Before salvation, a man’s soul will therefore be working in unison with the human spirit and flesh. When the Holy Spirit takes over the control of (soul) man’s life, the lusts of human spirit and flesh are put to death. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever” (1 John 2:15–17). “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:15). This is because darkness and light cannot coexist. Henceforth, his thoughts and actions are of the Lord. “The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way” (Psalm 37:23).

The choices a man makes then become good and perfect in line with God's will. As powerful as Satan may think, he can not kill the soul. "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

4

The Flesh

The flesh itself is not evil. It is the lust of it that is evil. Lust of the flesh can be overcome if we walk in the Spirit. But the flesh is very strong as it fights against the Spirit for the control of our being. Why? Humans want to do those things they want. As believers, the flesh should not make us do what we do not want to do. But a struggle rages inside every believer who is yet to fully yield to the Holy Spirit.

The works of the flesh are categorized into these areas: sex, religion, society, and drink. The works of flesh are many and evil as compared with the fruit of the Spirit. We must crucify the flesh and let the Holy Spirit rule our life.

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (Galatians 5:16)

A believer can only win victory over the flesh through the force of the Holy Spirit. If a believer walks away from the prompting of the flesh and calls on Holy Spirit, he will win. According to Romans 7:15–20:

For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Paul finds himself doing what he does not want to do. This is Paul after salvation. Before salvation, Paul was doing the works of the flesh comfortably with impurity. After he got saved, the Holy Spirit took control.

According to 1 John 3:9, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” Any one born of God will not sin because the seed of God is in Him. Don’t fight the flesh alone; let the Holy Spirit help you.

The (body) flesh in itself is not sinful, but lust thereof is capable of corrupting the flesh. It is the temple of the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit can live in it, that means it is not evil. Remember also that the God created it, and everything God created was pronounced good:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.
(Genesis 1:31)

However, the works of the flesh (sins) are stored in the heart.

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.
(Matthew 5:28)

The problem starts when the heart overflows. If the sin (thought) does not stay in the heart, it won’t be acted out.

A Spirit-filled person will not have evil in his heart because it is not under struggle to obey the Law. The works of the Law does not govern his life. If we take it literally, no one will get to heaven. Lot is a case in point. He was guilty of incest and greed:

And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. (Genesis 19:35)

And Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered every where, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar. Then Lot chose him all the plain of Jordan; and Lot journeyed east: and they separated themselves the one from the other. (Genesis 13:10–11)

Yet he was considered a righteous person from Sodom and Gomorrah (2 Peter 2:8). If a man continually manifests the works of the flesh, he is

probably not saved. God is the only true Judge. Noah got drunk:

And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. (Genesis 9:21–23)

But he found favor earlier in the sight of God:

But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. (Genesis 6:8)

David committed adultery and murder, yet he was noted as a man after God's heart. Simon Peter denied Jesus, yet he became the rock on which the Church was established.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. (2 Peter 1:1–9)

If you do not exercise Christian virtues like self-control, that means you are lost and not saved. Those who openly exhibit works of the flesh are probably not saved in the first place. If it is a habitual thing, then they are not of God. Peace is inner gladness, and those who do not war constantly against habits experience it.

Those who live by the flesh are constantly satisfying the lust of the flesh. They may be happy occasionally, but joy or peace is far from them. If one does not walk in the Spirit, he will give way to the flesh. When we do things right, it is the Holy Spirit, but when we do wrong, it is our fault through flesh because we did not allow the Holy Spirit to take over.

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

He that sows to flesh will reap corruption, but he that lives in Spirit reaps everlasting life.

5

The Spirit

To understand the real existence of the Holy Spirit, one must first learn, understand, and agree to the truth of His personality. Those who deny His personality do not, however, deny His existence. They prefer to treat Him as a mere “thing” rather than the Person that He is.

The Bible shows us that the Holy Spirit possesses intellect:

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. (Ephesians 1:17)

The Bible shows us that He possesses emotions:

And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (Ephesians 4:30)

But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. (1 Corinthians 12:11)

The Bible shows us that the Holy Spirit performs the actions of a personality such as teaching:

But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. (John 14:26)

The Holy Spirit also guides:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. (Romans 8:14)

The Bible shows us that He possesses the ability to restrain:

And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. (Genesis 6:3)

The Bible shows us that He intercedes:

Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered. (Romans 8:26)

The Bible shows us that the Holy Spirit possesses many more abilities, which can only be performed by a personal being. He can also be blasphemed against as a Person:

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. (Matthew 12:31)

In His relations with other members of Deity, He is treated as a Person. The Holy Spirit's appellations, attributes, actions, and associations with other members of Deity are enough proofs that He is a Divine Person.

To illustrate the work of the Holy Spirit with biblical representations, with such emblem as dove, fire, water, wind, and oil, among others, we can explain the functions of the Holy Spirit. When we speak of the work of creation, including life, order, etc., which is generally ascribed to God, the Holy Spirit's distinct part is sufficiently supported by verses such as these:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. (Genesis 1:2)

Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30)

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. (John 6:63)

Concerning revelation, the Holy Spirit was the Single Author moving the human instruments in producing the Bible, so that God's complete message was recorded concerning inspiration according to 2 Timothy 3:16, "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*" The particular Person of the Godhead who bore along the human authors was the Holy Spirit. In His relationship to men in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit, though present on earth, He was selective in indwelling and restraint. The word *Holy Spirit* was limited in extent, duration, and effect. Our Lord Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, (Matthew 1:20)

He anointed, filled, and led Jesus through His ministry on earth. The Holy Spirit was directly or indirectly involved in His death and resurrection.

The sin against the Holy Spirit is eternally damning to the soul because such rejection is an evidence of a hardened heart, which can never be forgiven. When man withdraws himself from the Holy Spirit, he withdraws himself from all possible contacts with God. Every conceivable confessed sin is pardonable because of God's efficacious grace, which is the effective work of the Holy Spirit in moving men to believe in Jesus Christ as Savior. However, sin against the Holy Spirit is *not* pardonable

It is contrary to common grace, which cannot provide regeneration and/or sanctification as efficacious grace. God does not bestow His efficacious grace without purpose. The purpose is to enlighten, regenerate, and bring a sinner into fellowship with Him for the ultimate glory to His name.

Regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit in effecting a new birth. This act of God, which creates a new birth, is called regeneration. It instantaneously results in the new nature and new life. The Holy Spirit is the one who reveals to the Christian the indwelling of the Father in him. This indwelling is unrestricted but operates in all believers on a permanent basis in this post-Pentecost era. The baptizing work of the Holy Spirit joins us as believers to Jesus Christ at conversion once and for all. This makes baptism a ministry that is peculiar to this age. To experience what baptism does, one would require the filling of the Holy Spirit.

The sealing with the Spirit is for all believers. The sealing occurs at the moment a man receives Jesus as Savior. The primary reason of sealing is

security, and therefore the intent in sealing is to assure him of permanent security. So sealing is a promise and guarantee of eternal security.

A spiritual gift is defined as a God-given ability for service. It is a natural or supernatural ability, for the purpose of service. It is not primarily a place of service. An individual may have one or more of these gifts (no one has all), which must be developed through the ultimate source, which is the Spirit.

To be filled with the Spirit simply means being influenced by the Spirit. This filling is a repeated experience, unlike baptism, indwelling, sealing, or regeneration. It requires dedication and obedience to be continuously filled with Spirit to maturity. A Spirit-filled and controlled life will produce a Christlike character that would result in acceptable worship and praise, teaching of biblical truth, and effective prayer.

The Holy Spirit during the tribulation will continue to work, even though His work of building the body of Jesus Christ would have been finished. His work in believers during this period will follow the pattern of His work in the Old Testament. Also during the Millennium, the fullness of the Spirit will be evident and His ministry, along with other Persons of the Trinity will be abundantly manifested.

Understanding the Holy Spirit in terms of His personality, nature, and duty in the life of a believer explains to us the vital role He plays in our decision-making process. To achieve one's divine destiny, one needs to make right decisions. The infilling or the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is required for him to achieve his divine destiny. The continuing infilling of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer is the unmistakable proof of his genuine salvation. The Holy Spirit then has the veto power over every decision he makes. He can't go wrong, and if per chance the outcome of that decision is negative or unfavorable, God promised to work it out for good.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.
(Romans 8:28)

6

The Process of Decision-Making

The faculties of man are at least seven as follows:

1. Sight/Look—Eye
2. Smell—Nose
3. Hear—Ear
4. Think—Brain
5. Feeling—Skin/Body
6. Talk/Taste—Mouth
7. Move—Hands/Legs

These represent the *flesh* aspect of a tripartite man, of which the eye-component is the dominant one. You've heard of the phrase "out of sight, out of mind." When something new or strange happens to the body, the first thing you want to do is look. Information received is processed through the appropriate faculties to make each decision. Without the eye, choice is restricted because the effect on the flesh is reduced.

Example 1: Adam and Eve

Before Eve ate the fruit that God said they should not eat, her eyes saw it, lusted for it in her thought process, and concluded it was good. She later ate after the serpent (Satan) tempted her strength against her will. The choice to eat and disobey God was made before Satan came into the picture,.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”
(Genesis 3:6).

The statement that, “I did not think before I did it” is not correct because nothing comes out through the flesh without going through the thought (mind) process. What a believer must do to maintain victory over the flesh is to choose to yield, agree, and follow the Holy Spirit.

To maintain victory,...

- a. the Believer must die to this world,
- b. the Believer must abide in the Savior, and
- c. the Believer must yield to the Holy Spirit.

7

Case Study

Adam and Eve made a choice to disobey God. In Genesis 3:6, “When the woman saw it was good for food [lust of the flesh], was pleasant to the eyes [lust of the eye], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [like God, pride of life]... She did eat and *choose* to give her husband. Before God drove them out of the garden, they had a chance to repent or not. It was a matter of choice.

In the case of the first murder in Genesis 4:5–8, Cain got angry (flesh), and his countenance fell (spirit). Then God told him he had power “to rule over it” (flesh), but he *chose* to slay his brother Abel. It was a matter of choice.

But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell. And the Lord said unto Cain, Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him. And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him. (Genesis 4:5–8)

Cain later went out from the presence of the Lord and *chose* to marry on his own (Genesis 4:16–17). Later, he had the opportunity to repent but *chose* to complain about his punishment. It was a matter of choice.

And Cain went out from the presence of the Lord, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch. (Genesis 4:16–17)

Another person, Enoch (father of Methuselah, the oldest man who ever lived) *chose* to walk with God, and he was raptured to heaven. He was a foreshow of all those that will walk with God.

And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him. (Genesis 5:22–24)

He was also of the seven (perfect) generations from Adam, signifying that the Lord would come for His own (those walking with Him) at the perfect time.

And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints. (Jude 14)

In Genesis 6:2, the sons of God *chose* wives for themselves from the daughters of men. This started the beginning of the end for the first earth.

That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. (Genesis 6:2)

In Genesis 9:20–29, Canaan saw the nakedness of Noah, but he did not cover it. It was a matter of choice. He *chose* to tell his brothers. Consequently, he was cursed.

And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto

his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. And Noah lived after the flood three hundred and fifty years. And all the days of Noah were nine hundred and fifty years: and he died. (Genesis 9:20–29)

In Genesis 11:3–9, the whole earth was speaking one language, then they *chose* to build a tower (Babel) to reach heaven. God came down to confound their language.

And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth. (Genesis 11:3–9)

God told Abraham to leave home, but subsequently Abraham *chose* to make decisions for himself, beginning with Lot going with him, though he was not specifically told not to take him. I believe God was not against it because of the roles he played in the life of Abraham. The Bible recorded that Lot was a righteous man:

And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot,

vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;). (2 Peter 2:6–8)

In Genesis 12:10–20, during famine, Abraham *chose* to go to Egypt without asking God. He also chose to lie that Sarai was not his wife. As a result, she was almost taken away from him. See what transpired:

And there was a famine in the land: and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land. And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now, I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon: Therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife: and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister: that it may be well with me for thy sake; and my soul shall live because of thee. And it came to pass, that, when Abram was come into Egypt, the Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh: and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake: and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels. And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues because of Sarai Abram's wife. And Pharaoh called Abram and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? so I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way. And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had. (Genesis 12:10–20)

Abram *chose* (through part of the fruit of the Spirit namely, peace) to separate from Lot to avoid quarrel between his herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. God backed him up. In Genesis 13:8, Abram said to Lot, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee between me and between my herdsmen and

thy herdsmen; for we be brethren.” Due to this wise *choice*, the Lord backed up Abram with the confirmation of His Covenant with him.

And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the Lord. (Genesis 13:14–18)

In Genesis 14, Abram chose to go and rescue Sodom and Gomorrah because of Lot. He *chose* to give tithes out of the spoils of the war to Melchizedek—who is Jesus Christ, the Priest of Highest Order (Jesus Incarnate).

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace; Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually. (Hebrews 7:1–3)

In Genesis 16, Sarai *chose* to give Hagar, her maid, to Abram for a wife. Abram *chose* to accept. We are still suffering the consequences today.

And Sarai Abram’s wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. And Hagar bare Abram a

son: and Abram called his son's name, which Hagar bare, Ishmael. (Genesis 16:3–4, 15)

In Genesis 17, God made a Covenant of circumcision and changed his name and his wife's name to Abraham and Sarah respectively.

Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. (Genesis 17:10–13)

In Genesis 18, God manifested His presence in the life of Abraham as Trinity—three Persons in one.

And the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground. (Genesis 18:1–2)

Abraham *chose* to extend hospitality to them, and the covenant of child bearing was affirmed by God.

And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. (Genesis 18:10)

The encounter or dialogue between God and Abraham in Genesis 18:17–33 shows the importance of being persistence in prayer till our joy is full. Abraham *chose* to stop (after the sixth request) praying or asking God to

spare Sodom and Gomorrah. The seventh time would have been a perfect request.

And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. (Genesis 19:14–15)

And he said, Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord: Peradventure there shall be twenty found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for twenty's sake. And he said, Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once: Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake. And the Lord went his way, as soon as he had left communing with Abraham: and Abraham returned unto his place. (Genesis 18:31–33)

The revelation in this dialogue is that if Abraham had asked one more time, he would have asked for either *five* people or *none*, which would have covered Lot's sons-in-laws. The whole of Sodom and Gomorrah may have been saved. Lot's sons-in-law *chose* to reject his advice to leave Sodom and Gomorrah.

And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law. (Genesis 19:12)

And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father is old, and there is not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the

manner of all the earth: Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the morrow, that the firstborn said unto the younger, Behold, I lay yesternight with my father: let us make him drink wine this night also; and go thou in, and lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father. And they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. (Genesis 19:31–38)

Lot's daughters *chose* to make their father drunk and raped him.

Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. And the first born bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same is the father of the children of Ammon unto this day. (Genesis 19:36–38)

Abraham *chose* to lie again by saying his half sister was not his wife.

Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her. Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done

deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? (Genesis 20:5–10)

After God intervened, Abraham prayed for Abimelech.

So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife. (Genesis 20:17–18)

When Hagar *chose* to mock Sarah with her son Isaac, Abraham drove them away.

And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. (Genesis 21:9–12)

Later his mother, Hagar, *chose* a wife from Egypt. Abraham *chose* to sacrifice Isaac to God in obedience.

And he dwelt in the wilderness of Paran: and his mother took him a wife out of the land of Egypt. (Genesis 21:21)

And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then God sworn blessing to Abraham. (Genesis 22:3)

And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy

seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice. (Genesis 22:15–18)

Abraham *chose* to get a wife for Isaac from his root.

And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: And I will make thee swear by the Lord, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: But thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou camest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Lord God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter. (Genesis 23:2–9)

Before Abraham died, he *chose* to give all he had to Isaac.

And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country. And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. (Genesis 25:5–8)

When Esau lusted for food (flesh), Jacob also lusted for birthright (pride of life), and Esau *chose* to sell his birthright.

And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red pottage; for I am faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I am at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright. (Genesis 25:30–34)

Isaac *chose* to obey God by not going to Egypt, unlike his father.

And there was a famine in the land, beside the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went unto Abimelech king of the Philistines unto Gerar. And the Lord appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of: Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father; And I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws. And Isaac dwelt in Gerar. (Genesis 26:1–6)

Isaac, however, *chose* to lie concerning his wife like his father did.

And the men of the place asked him of his wife; and he said, She is my sister: for he feared to say, She is my wife; lest, said he, the men of the place should kill me for Rebekah; because she was fair to look upon. And it came to pass, when he had been there a long time, that Abimelech king of the Philistines looked out at a window, and saw, and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah his wife. And Abimelech called Isaac, and said,

Behold, of a surety she is thy wife; and how saidst thou, She is my sister? And Isaac said unto him, Because I said, Lest I die for her. And Abimelech said, What is this thou hast done unto us? one of the people might lightly have lien with thy wife, and thou shouldest have brought guiltiness upon us. And Abimelech charged all his people, saying, He that toucheth this man or his wife shall surely be put to death. Then Isaac sowed in that land, and received in the same year an hundredfold: and the Lord blessed him. And the man waxed great, and went forward, and grew until he became very great. (Genesis 26:7–13)

Rebekah *chose* to bring curse on herself by helping her son, Jacob to deceive his father and stole blessings meant for Esau.

My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing. And his mother said unto him, Upon me be thy curse, my son: only obey my voice, and go fetch me them. (Genesis 27:12–13)

Rachel *chose* to still her father's idols, but she lied to her father and did not tell Jacob her husband.

And Laban went to shear his sheep: and Rachel had stolen the images that were her father's. (Genesis 31:19)

And Jacob *chose* to run away pretentiously from Laban the Syrian.

With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live: before our brethren discern thou what is thine with me, and take it to thee. For Jacob knew not that Rachel had stolen them. And Laban went into Jacob's tent, and into Leah's tent, and into the two maidservants' tents; but he found them not. Then went he out of Leah's tent, and entered into Rachel's tent. Now Rachel had taken the images, and put them in the camel's furniture, and sat upon them. And Laban searched all the tent, but found them not. And she said to her father, Let it not displease my lord that I cannot rise up before thee; for the custom of women is upon me. And he searched but found not the images. (Genesis 31:32–35)

Jacob *chose* not to let the man he wrestled with go.

And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. (Genesis 32:24–31)

Dinah, Jacob's daughter, *chose* to wander into the outside world of strangers, and she got raped by Shechem.

And Dinah the daughter of Leah, which she bare unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land. (Genesis 33:1)

The sons of Jacob initially and deceitfully made a treaty with strangers.

And they said unto them, We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us: But in this will we consent unto you: If ye will be as we be, that every male of you be circumcised; Then will we give our daughters unto you, and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and we will become one people. But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised; then will we take our daughter, and we will be gone. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamor's son. (Genesis 34:14–18)

Eventually, Jacob's sons, Simon and Levi, *chose* to massacre the entire city.

And it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore, that two of the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, Dinah's brethren, took each man his sword, and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males. And they slew Hamor and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah out of Shechem's house, and went out. The sons of Jacob came upon the slain, and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister. They took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, And all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives took they captive, and spoiled even all that was in the house. And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house. And they said, Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot? (Genesis 34:25–31)

Reuben, Jacob first son, *chose* to lay with his father's wife.

And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father's concubine: and Israel heard it. Now the sons of Jacob were twelve. (Genesis 35:22)

Esau *chose* to marry from Canaan.

Esau took his wives of the daughters of Canaan; Adah the daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Aholibamah the daughter of Anah the daughter of Zibeon the Hivite. (Genesis 36:2)

Reuben *chose* to save Joseph from his brothers.

And Reuben heard it, and he delivered him out of their hands; and said, Let us not kill him. And Reuben said unto them, Shed no blood, but cast him into this pit that is in the wilderness, and lay no hand upon him; that he might rid him out of their hands, to deliver him to his father again. And it came to pass, when Joseph was come unto his brethren, that they stript Joseph out of his coat, his coat of many colours that was on him; And they

took him, and cast him into a pit: and the pit was empty, there was no water in it. (Genesis 37:21–24)

Later, Joseph's brothers *chose* to sell him based on Judah's advice.

And Judah said unto his brethren, What profit is it if we slay our brother, and conceal his blood? Come, and let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him; for he is our brother and our flesh. And his brethren were content. Then there passed by Midianites merchantmen; and they drew and lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver: and they brought Joseph into Egypt. (Genesis 37:26–28)

Judah lusted for sex (flesh) and *chose* to go to bed with his daughter-in-law, who gave birth to Pharez, an ancestor of Jesus Christ.

When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; because she had covered her face. And he turned unto her by the way, and said, Go to, I pray thee, let me come in unto thee; (for he knew not that she was his daughter in law.) And she said, What wilt thou give me, that thou mayest come in unto me? And he said, I will send thee a kid from the flock. And she said, Wilt thou give me a pledge, till thou send it? And he said, What pledge shall I give thee? And she said, Thy signet, and thy bracelets, and thy staff that is in thine hand. And he gave it her, and came in unto her, and she conceived by him... And it came to pass in the time of her travail, that, behold, twins were in her womb. And it came to pass, when she travailed, that the one put out his hand: and the midwife took and bound upon his hand a scarlet thread, saying, This came out first. And it came to pass, as he drew back his hand, that, behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken forth? this breach be upon thee: therefore his name was called Pharez. (Genesis 38:15–18; 27–29)

Potiphar's wife lusted for sex (flesh) from Joseph.

And it came to pass after these things, that his master's wife cast her eyes upon Joseph; and she said, Lie with me. (Genesis 39:7)

Potiphar *chose* to put Joseph in prison after his refusal.

And it came to pass, when his master heard the words of his wife, which she spake unto him, saying, After this manner did thy servant to me; that his wrath was kindled. And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. But the Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. (Genesis 39:19–21)

Joseph showed concern to his prison mates and *chose* to interpret their dreams.

And Joseph came in unto them in the morning, and looked upon them, and, behold, they were sad. And he asked Pharaoh's officers that were with him in the ward of his lord's house, saying, Wherefore look ye so sadly to day? (Genesis 40:6–7)

The chief baker did not remember until after two years when he returned to Pharaoh's palace.

The case of Peter and Judas (both disciples of Jesus) is a striking example of how choices determine one's destiny. While both disciples might have committed similar offenses, their different choices shaped how they ended up.

This is the case for everybody. In subsequent series, many biblical and modern day characters would be sited as examples.

8

Conclusion

Making right choices leads one to divine destiny and God's purpose in life. This is the will of God for each one of us. God does not have a plan B (what some people may call permissive will) because His only will is the good and perfect (Jeremiah 29:11).

We cannot make correct choices unless the Holy Spirit guides us. However, Holy Spirit cannot guide us unless He lives inside of us and influences our very being. On the other hand, the Holy Spirit cannot live inside of us unless we have a relationship with God through Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

Therefore, the answer is for us to accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and personal Savior, and then the Holy Spirit will take control and lead us in making all choices (Romans 8:14) to accomplish God's purpose and destiny in life (John 10:10, John 6:37). You cannot go wrong in making choices if the Holy Spirit that dwells in you have total control of your heart.

My final appeal to you is to ensure you have the Holy Spirit in you. If you are yet to have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit cannot live inside you and help you make correct choices. Please do the needful; do it *now*.

About the Author



The author is born to the royal family of Olupo Ajasegun/Amilede of Ile Asao, Ipoti-Ekiti. He attended Seventh-day Adventist nursery-elementary School Oke-Ogba, Ipoti-Ekiti and Seventh-day Adventist primary school Ipoti-Ekiti. He finished his secondary education at Titcombe College, Egbe, Kwara State. Dr. Adesoji Abidoye is a graduate professional engineer with both college training and graduate studies from George Washington University, School of Engineering, Washington, DC. He is a certified engineer in the state of Maryland USA and a registered engineer (COREN) in Nigeria. He also has a postgraduate certificate in project engineering from University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Before retirement to private practice, he had years of experience in different engineering disciplines, including, oil and gas industry, power and energy (both fossil and nuclear) generations. His professional experience and expertise also include computer engineering, of which he operated his own business for over twenty (20) years.

He was brought up in a Christian home and attended a Christian missionary high school that exposed him to Christian values. He has been married to Adenike Abidoye for almost twenty-five years, with godly children. He is called to be a teacher of the Word. He is a member of the pioneer graduating class of the Redeemed Christian Church of God Bible College, North America. He later attended another Bible college and seminary. He has a doctorate degree in Christian ministry. He has a unique anointing to teach the Word with special revelations. His teaching anointing

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