

## WHO IS YOUR GOD?

**A Sermon By Dr. Charles S. Price**

“CHOOSE YE THIS DAY WHOM YE WILL SERVE!” Joshua had reached the end of his earthly pilgrimage. He knew the time had come for him to lay down his leadership of Israel; and so he gathered all Israel together at Shechem. He called into his presence the elders and the judges and all who were in authority, *and they presented themselves before God.*

Then Joshua began to speak to all the people, “Thus saith the Lord God of Israel” and he went over the ground of yesterday--step by step--proving that from the very beginning they had been victorious--when they had acknowledged the Lord; and that they were defeated when flesh prevailed. When human wisdom was substituted for the leadership of God, they were smitten before the tyranny of the oppressors; and one could not help but come to the conclusion that though human means were, from time to time, employed, yet there was some Power back of the human means which brought them through.

And so it was that the appeal which came from Joshua's heart was climaxed with the challenge: “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!” It did not mean that they literally fall down and worship at some shrine--pagan or otherwise; but the truth must be emphasized that many Christians are really *half* pagans. Their very *concept* of God is pagan. The fact that they label their lives with Christian names and definitions does not detract from the fact that it is really pagan in *spirit*.

Is it not true that many accept their Christianity as an investment? Do they not live merely for the sake of rewards, and “give” for the sake of what shall be given in return? That is pagan! Quite a few regard their religious experience as nothing more than a penance. Instead of denying self, they practice self-denial; and along the paths of their own self-mortification, they travel so far as to deny themselves many beautiful things the Lord would add to them if they would only learn in *sincerity* first to SEEK THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS!

Where a man's treasure is, there his heart is also. There are many things in life which are not wrong in themselves, but they become wrong when the desire for them takes *first* place in mind, in heart, and in will. The true Christian ought to be perfectly content with nothing more than the operation of the perfect will of God. It is when we seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness that “other things *are added unto us.*”

The natural man instinctively reaches out for the “other things” because he

believes they are essential to his life. Perhaps they are to the *natural* man, but when we are lifted out of the realm of the natural into the *spiritual*, we arrive at the place where we can know the will of God concerning every department of life.

### **Love Slaves**

To have no other gods means that we become LOVE SLAVES OF THE LORD JESUS! We want nothing more than to do His will. We do not put aside His will in order that we might gratify the sensual, or for the following out of our selfish purposes; but instead we lay *all* on the altar before Him in complete surrender, and ask for the light of His plan and purpose to illumine our way. That then becomes our path and *it shines more and more unto the perfect day!*

The man in the business world does not necessarily have to put aside his business to live a life completely dedicated to God. He does not live, however, for his business alone; for when the one burning, flaming passion consumes the soul, then all else begins to dovetail into the plan of the infinite and eternal purpose, and a sweet and serene peace permeates both heart and life. We can say, like Paul, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Before we can arrive at this lovely place, however, there must be the voluntary surrender of our Adamic nature. We cannot serve *two* masters. We cannot live in both spheres at once. We cannot live in flesh and climb out of it--once in a while--to worship in the realm of the Spirit. The two spheres are antagonistic. It must be one or the other.

That is what Joshua meant when he cried, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!" He wanted the *consecration* to be perfect. He wanted the *surrender* to be *absolute*. He knew of Israel's mountaintop and valley experiences. They, like we, had been the recipients of the supernatural manifestation of His glorious power; but recurrently they turned back to their own ways. One day they were eating manna from heaven. The next they were lusting after the flesh pots of Egypt. One day they were trusting in *His* wonderful leadership and the next day they were crying for the crowning of an *earthly* king. We--as they--must make our choice.

Isaiah, the prophet of the captivities, catches the same thought when in the 60th chapter and the first two verses he declares:

"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee."

What a declaration that is! Was it the light of conduct? It was not. Was it the light of attainment of flesh? It was not. Was it the light of wisdom? It was not. Was it the light for which men strive? It was not. It was the LIGHT OF THE LORD, HIMSELF--the Light which is inseparable from His Presence--the Aura which ever attends the glory of the Person of the Lord Jesus. It was not the glory of human

achievement which would crown the heads of successful men. IT WAS THE GLORY OF THE LORD--the glory that streamed from the Presence Divine!

How helpless we are without HIM! How weak we are without His strength! How void without His fullness! How absolutely and completely dependent we are upon His guidance and the daily revelation of His will. That is in accordance with His will and purpose. Men have other gods, they, bow at the shrines or their own intellectualism. They even make circumstance a god and proclaim environment to be lord. They argue that they are helpless in the face of certain circumstances and impotent because of the pressure of environment. Have they not heard of the EMANCIPATOR? Do they not know of the power of the great DELIVERER?

“The glory of the Lord is risen upon thee!” The darkness shall not be upon the redeemed! It may cover the *earth* and gross darkness the *people*; but that will not be the lot of the redeemed and the Spirit-filled! “The Lord shall rise upon thee and His glory shall be seen upon thee!”

Did not every one of the disciples who loved their Lord confess that they walked with Him because of the light of a supernatural revelation? He was the Light that came into the world; but the world comprehended it not. He came into the darkness and the darkness did not receive Him; neither did it understand Him. Every one of these men, whom the Lord called His disciples, saw Him as *the Light of the World* only when Light from *heaven* streamed across their path!

Christ Himself remains unseen Light unless the Light of the Spirit reveals Him! Did He not come into the darkness? But did the darkness know Him? Did He not come to the ecclesiastics and did they not behold Him and yet remain in ignorance regarding Him? Does He not come to people today in all the various manifestations of His lovely presence, and yet how blind they are to the glory of the Lord! It is a hard thing to say; but it is perfectly true that only a *comparative few* have DISCERNED HIM AND BEHELD HIM in the ineffable light of His splendor and in the spotless white of His holiness.

When once Jesus stands revealed in His redemptive glory--when the beauty of the Saviour begins to unfold as you gaze upon the wonder of His matchless, saving grace--when you hear His voice whispering what He wants to do with you and for you now--you will turn from the things that are sensual and earthly, and your heart will rise on eagles' wings of love and praise to meet Him! How blind we have been! How deaf our ears! How darkened our understanding!

We are very much like the people of the olden days who looked at Him and saw Him not; who heard His voice, yet heard Him not; who listened to His words of wisdom and yet continued to live in darkness! There they were at the threshold of Truth. Jesus looked at them and said, “I am the Door.” But they laughed Him to scorn and refused to enter. He said, “I am the Way,” but many who had followed Him part of the way, stumbled over what He said and refused to go any further.

Then He declared, “I AM THE LIFE.” Do you hear that declaration? HE IS

LIFE! Did He not declare it by the side of the grave of Lazarus? Did He not try to impress His dearest friends with the potency of this eternal declaration; this divine fiat that left His princely lips? Their eyes were closed. They could not see. Their ears were stopped. They could not hear. They loved Him, even as many love Him today, and yet they were blind to the *potentialities* which are wrapped up in the eternal Son of God.

Through Him the riches of eternity become our inheritance! Because of His love, His infinite graces *can* become our possession; but instead of reaching out with the hands of faith and *taking our inheritance*, we go along the trivial round and common task of our everyday lives as if we were slaves to circumstance and captives of environment!

Christ can lift us above these things! He has power to so lift us in the Spirit that these “other things” which He has promised to add unto us--because they are *necessary*--become merely *servants* of the spiritual. They are subsidiary to the flow of the River Divine which is Life--*Life*--LIFE, coursing through our very beings and making us daily conscious of the *majesty and glory of our Lord!*

### **The Mystery of Life**

There is near Los Angeles, in Glendale, a statue called “The Mystery of Life.” Typical figures have been placed in this statue by the consummate genius of a great sculptor. He has portrayed in the cold marble eighteen representatives of humanity from the tiniest babe to the aged. There they are, grouped around the mystic stream of life, which is a river of real water flowing down from the heart of the statue.

A little boy is holding in his hand a chick which has just emerged from the egg and upon his face is the interrogation, “What is life?” He looks up with inquiry at his aged grandmother. All you can see on her face is an expression of the inexplicable. Then there are the lovers who believe that they have found the answer to their question in their *love* and in the nearness of each other!

Yonder is the girl who is dreaming; and in her dream she finds many treasures but not the solution to the greatest problem of her soul. Then there is the scientist with a troubled look on his face. He knows that all his discoveries have never solved the mystery. He understands that his great contribution to the material good and comfort of mankind has not brought to mind or heart the answer to the eternal question.

And there is the learned philosopher, and the monk and the nun groping with their ritualistic religion, but still reaching out and searching and seeking for what seems to be the unattainable. The stoic sits in silent awe and helplessness, and by his side is the atheist in his hopelessness.

But the river *flows on!* Not one of the group has solved the mystery. Not one of the mystified can answer the question. *In spirit*, I have seen the Saviour approach

that wonderful statue and, holding out His nail-pierced hands, look at that crowd of representative people with the lovelight of Heaven in His kindly eyes. I have heard Him speak--words that would have dispelled every shred of doubt and banished every bit of darkness; words that would have fallen like shafts of heavenly light across each troubled spirit!

The answer would have come--not in creed, not in an understanding of some ritualistic religion, not in a mental appreciation of ethical codes, but in the Form of the One who hung upon Calvary's Cross and who, by such death, became the *Deliverer* for captive humanity!

How willing we are to accept Him as our *atonement for sin*, and yet how unwilling to accept Him as our RESURRECTION LIFE! Theologically we believe in the great exchange He made possible by His death upon Calvary's Cross. We know that He took our *sins*; but are we as fully aware that He *gave us HIS LIFE*? Why will we not accept it? Why do we worship Him from afar instead of discovering Him in the confines of our own spirit, which--if we only knew it--is His CHOSEN DWELLING PLACE!

### **The Light**

It is only when we live in the *revealing light of the Lord* that the full consciousness of the vileness of our flesh breaks upon us. Ephesians 5:13 and 14 tell us: "But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light; for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore He saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

To stop doing things, merely because somebody else tells us those things are wrong, may in some cases be satisfactory to the laws of man; but it alone is not acceptable unto God. We have many times put ourselves in untold bondage because of our walking in other people's so-called "light."

It is only the light which streams from the lovely presence of the Lord Jesus which will MAKE MANIFEST the sordid and the ugly in our own lives. The revelation may not be instant. It can be just as *progressive* as our sanctification. Reading the text and taking into consideration the context of the Pauline epistle, we discover that *reproof* comes *only* when we *continue to keep* the thing which the light of His presence has made manifest as being harmful, dark and sinister!

So, this is the DAY OF CHOICE! This is the hour--perhaps the FINAL HOUR--in which we can crown Him as *King of our lives*, and Lord of all that we are or ever hope to be! Everything we lay at His blessed feet! This is indeed the time when He is calling us to that surrender which will give Him complete supremacy in every department of our being.

Is it not tragic that we should have to *persuade* men to do this? What a *marvelous inheritance*--what a *glorious privilege* this! To live a life *guided* by the LORD--*controlled* by

the HOLY SPIRIT, and *lifted up* continuously before the *Throne* of the ETERNAL FATHER! To have Him *protect* us! To have Him *illuminate* the mind! To have Him *guide* us in paths which we do not know! To have Him *guard* us from dangers we have never seen! To have the *wisdom* which is BORN FROM ABOVE! To know the *light of illumination* which streams from that *holy contact* which we are privileged to have with HIM!

BUT HE MUST COME FIRST! We must have only ONE GOD! The things which have mastered us and controlled us in the past must now be subjugated to HIS eternal and infinite RULE. HE IS OUR LIFE! He is the Light of our lives! He is our Wisdom! He is our Salvation! He is our Sanctification! He is our Righteousness!

The tones that thundered through the corridors of the soul, in the days of Law, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," now ring with the appeal of a harbor-bell, guiding a derelict soul into a haven of rest! Still He is calling us to make HIM God!

In these days when we are privileged to live in the infinity of His abounding grace, it *can* be our experience to live in the Spirit and to know the heavenly glory of having the *Spirit live in us!* How we have struggled in the past to try to do what we thought was the will of God! What disillusionment has often been ours!

There is a difference between *our doing* the Will of God and the Will of God being *done through us!* One is a *battle!* The other is *victorious living!* Wherever you turn, *you will see Him!* If you will live that kind of life, you will make the discovery that you have a hard time finding *yourself*, for you are hidden! Your life will be literally HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD!