

# It's Your Choice

#0416

Study Given by W. D. Frazee—June 23, 1978

Isn't it amazing that the general manager of the universe is running everything in heaven and in earth just for our benefit? He's making all things work together for good.

Now, I have something to study with you tonight that I believe is going to be of special benefit to somebody here. It could be you. You listen and see.

Before I turn to the study, I want to ask the boys and girls if they have a special coin that I'm looking for, a penny, or a nickel, or a dime, or a quarter, or any other coin. The particular coin that I'm looking for is one that is so thin that it has only one side. If any of you boys and girls have that coin, I'm very anxious to get it. In fact, I'll pay you a great big price for it, a coin that is so thin that it has only one side.

And I want you to be thinking of that as we go ahead with our study tonight. All the coins that I've seen so far, whether they're thick or thin, have two sides. Is that the way with ones in your purse or pocket? Every truth, every truth is like that coin.

You look at it, and you say, "Oh, it means this."

And it does. But you turn it over, and you say, "Why, does it mean that, too?"

Yes, it means that, too. Well, which is it? Well, it's both. It takes the top side of the coin and the bottom side of the coin to make the whole coin, right? All right.

The first side of the coin that I want to look at tonight is this. Nothing in this world can keep you from being a successful Christian—nobody, no circumstance, no man, no devil, no combination of men and devils. It is your privilege as a free moral agent to take hold of the grace of God and to be all that heaven has planned for you to be.

The other side of the coin is this. There is nobody, no group, no circumstance, no environment that can make you a success. There is no factory that turns out Christians or medical missionary workers like the Ford factory up in Michigan—pour in so much raw material, and out come the automobiles.

You know, there are people who have the idea that if an institution were what it ought to be, it would *do* that. They're looking for such institutions. They hear of them from far away. The farther away they are, the better the reports sometimes are. Sometimes, of course, it works the other way.

But my point is this. There *is* no such institution, my dear friends. There is no institution that you can feed in raw material, such as students, and turn out automatically or guaranteed a product that will carry on what the training is for.

Let me go further. There are people who have the idea that if parents do their work as they should, their children will, all of them, be what the children ought to be.

“Well,” you say, “isn’t that so, Brother Frazee?”

No, it isn’t.

“Oh, it isn’t?”

No. No, that isn’t so.

I was talking with some young people not long ago, a long way from here, and I said to them, “Do you know what’s going to happen in the next few years?” I said, “You are either going to make your father and mother very happy, or you’re going to break their hearts. And you’re the only ones that can decide it.”

“Oh,” somebody says, “I thought that if parents did their work right that their children would *surely* be true Christians and be in the Lord’s work.”

I was about to say I wish that were so. No, I don’t wish it were so because it would deprive the child of the power of choice, and that’s what God’s plan is all about is the power of choice. God’s plan is centered around that power of choice.

Now, let me get right into the heart of this so that you’ll see. Where did all this sin problem start anyway? Why, Revelation 12:7–9 says it started where? In heaven. In heaven? In heaven?

Who did it start with? Some poor waif out on the fringe somewhere that wasn’t getting very much attention? Who’d it start with? Lucifer, the brightest of the sons of the morning, the one closest to God, the one who had every advantage that infinite wisdom and love could give him. Is that correct? Is that what happened?

But that’s only the beginning of the story. He shared his doubts, his questions, his suggestions. And by and by, as the infection spread, how many of those angels joined with Lucifer in rebellion against God? One-third. That’s what Revelation 12 says. He drew one-third of the bright stars of heaven with him [a paraphrase of Revelation 12:4].

Did you ever hear the expression, “Where there is so much smoke, there must be some fire”?

What do people mean when they say that? Well, they mean, as it might be applied in this, that if one-third of those angels rebelled, there must have been at least *some* cause for it. That’s what they mean. *Was* there any? Well, we’ll all shake our heads “No.” We all believe that God is all right. But why, why would Lucifer be successful? Why didn’t God do better work in preventing this? And why

didn't He do better work in curing it after it started? Why didn't He call those angels in and talk to them? Why didn't He explain? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why? Why?

If you and I had been there, we would have handled it in a different way, wouldn't we? Probably, we would. Now, let's take something on the plus side to put with that.

Are there are other places in this universe besides heaven and this world where created intelligences live? Are there? Millions, billions of worlds? Are there people on those? Do they have choice? Do they have a test? Is there a tree of knowledge of good and evil on those worlds, as well as a tree of life?

Has Lucifer way back in the ages of his rebellion, has he visited some of those? Has he tried to involve them? How many of them did he succeed in? Not one? You mean he got one-third of the angels and not a single one of the planets anywhere, except this little world, of course? We'll come to that. How do you explain that? You don't explain it. Even if you try, you don't explain it. Even if you *think* you explain it, you don't explain it.

One-third of the angels of heaven right there under the eye of God in the presence of God, with God available to answer every question and meet every objection, one-third of them rebelled against God and said that God's government was so tyrannical they couldn't take it any longer, and they were determined to throw off the yoke and get by rebellion what they couldn't get by negotiation. One-third of them did it. And yet, out in the universe, millions, billions of worlds voted with God.

Then, we come to this world. Adam and Eve, created right at the time that this controversy was coming into being, how the universe watched, how the angels, the loyal angels watched, and how Lucifer and his rebellious angels watched. What would Adam do? What would Eve do?

And what *did* they do? Both of them, each one in a definite decision, both of them voted with Lucifer, with the Devil, and against God, didn't they? Well, why, why did God allow that? Why didn't God stop it before it started? Why didn't He warn them?

"Well," you say, "He did warn them."

Yes, He did. He did everything that infinite love and infinite wisdom could do, *short* of the thing I'm talking about, short of interfering with their choice. Having made man free, He left him free. Free not only in muscle but in mind. Free not only to control his actions but to control his thoughts as to whether he would lean toward God or lean toward selfish indulgence. Ah friends, it's an interesting mystery, an interesting mystery.

It's a wonderful satisfaction to a parent, a father or mother in this world, to see their children grow up and serve God, isn't it? And probably there's no sorrow, this side the brokenhearted sorrow of Christ, that compares with the sorrow of a brokenhearted father and mother whose child has chosen to go the wrong way.

And many hands are rung, and many hearts are rung by the question, “Oh, what should I have done differently? What *could* I have done? What would I do if I had it to do over again?”

And it’s right, my dear friends, that as human teachers and human parents, we should learn all we can from our experience and the experience of others. But don’t forget the lesson I’m studying with you tonight, dear friends. The greatest Father of time and eternity had to stand by while one-third of His family rebelled against Him and started in a vicious and unjust, and unreasonable war against Him. He had to stand by.

And so, I come back, my dear friends, to this first proposition. Nothing can keep you from being saved. But on the other hand, nothing can *make* you be saved. You have the decision, you have the decision.

In Romans the 15<sup>th</sup> chapter and the 4<sup>th</sup> verse, we have a wonderful text that I want to read at this time:

“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope” Romans 15:4.

In the Bible from Genesis on down through, there’s quite a bit of narrative, isn’t there? Stories, stories. Do you know why? God arranged it that way because that’s an interesting way and an effective way of teaching. And the lesson that I’m studying with you tonight stands out on page after page, in both the Old and the New Testaments. Nobody can *make* you do right, and nobody can make you do wrong.

Satan would like to make you do wrong, but God won’t let him if you’re willing to accept God’s rulership. God can *cause* you to do right, but He won’t do it unless you choose. Unless you’re attracted by His love and put your will on His side, He’ll never force. If He’d been willing to force the will, Calvary would have been altogether unnecessary.

The plan of salvation is God’s wonderful arrangement to reach rebellious beings and draw them back to Himself. But you and I are not like the steel which has no choice, which must be drawn by the magnet. We have the choice, each of us, as to whether we will respond to that infinite drawing appeal of the love of God, or whether we will resist, refuse. And I repeat, friends, there’s nobody in Heaven or earth that can *make* you. You hold the choice.

Now, this Scripture that I’ve just read says that we are to get some comfort and hope from reading the Scriptures, the things that were written aforetime [a paraphrase of Romans 15:4].

You know, I think of Joseph. I’ve always loved the story of Joseph. When I was just a little fellow before I could read, I remember poor as we were, we had a few books. And on Sabbath afternoon, the time I’m thinking about, every Sabbath afternoon in my memory at a certain time, mother read that little gray-backed story of

Joseph. The letters on the front cover were red. I can still see them, “The Story of Joseph.”

It’s a wonderful story, isn’t it? Joseph was just a teenager when he was snatched from home, betrayed and sold by his own brothers. And they weren’t very good boys. They’d been involved in quite a number of things they shouldn’t have been. But they added to all their crimes this capstone: that they sold their own brother for 20 pieces of silver as a slave.

And as he went with that group of Midianites, Ishmaelites, down to Egypt, then was the time for Joseph, as he wept in desperation, then was the time of all times for him to have naturally said, “What good is it to try to walk straight? My own brothers, older than I, whose example ought to be good, they’ve done this to me. What good is it? And where is God? Where is God?”

Well, where was God? God was around, friends. But now, watch. Watch how Joseph demonstrates day after day and year after year that nobody, I mean nobody can *make* a man do wrong. Nobody can make a *boy* do wrong. If there was anybody in Egypt to help him, I never heard of it.

There was no church elder there to visit him, no Sabbath school teacher to call him up and say, “Joseph, we missed you last Sabbath.”

There was no pastor to write him a letter. As far as Joseph was concerned, he had no human help whatsoever. And God wasn’t sending angels to him every night to comfort him, I mean visibly, audibly. God let Joseph sweat it out. And all Heaven looked on, and all the universe looked on.

And there must have been cheer after cheer through the galleries of the universe as Joseph time after time withstood temptation and demonstrated that the grace of God is strong enough and the love of God mighty enough to hold a teenager true to God when every influence on earth is against him.

Well, you know the sequel of it. You know the temptations he later went through, the unjust treatment he received, the ingratitude, in the prison, and all the rest. But in God’s own time and way, after all those years of test and trial and temptation and persecution, he came to the throne. What for? To be—don’t miss it—the Savior of those very men that had sold him. He saved their lives, forgave them all. Isn’t it a wonderful story, friend?

And you can be like that. You don’t have to be like Lucifer. You don’t *have* to be. You have a choice. True, you can’t do it without God. Equally true, God won’t do it in you without you. If you are willing, all the power of Heaven is waiting to *fill* you, to make your muscles move in harmony with God’s law instead of in transgression, to illuminate your mind and energize your will. But you must choose, you must choose.

I want to repeat what I said a while ago. Some people have the idea that if an institution would only do a proper job, all its product, or at least nearly all, would turn out successful, productive workers. And carrying the same theme, some people

have the idea that if parents only do their work the way they ought to, that their children will grow up loving and serving the Lord and become workers for Him. Some do, dear friend.

But I bring you back to the Garden of Eden. Can you think of anybody that ever had a better start than Adam and Eve? Can you think of anybody that ever had a better teacher than Adam and Eve? Anything wrong with their genes? Was their hereditary okay? Any disadvantages? And yet, they *both* went with the Devil. Explain it? No. But face it, my friends, face it.

Let's go a little further. Here's Adam and Eve, they repented all right, repented bitterly, and they needed to. They spent 900 years of repentance. And it may be that there was never a day but what they wept over their failure. They were developing characters to hate sin.

Now, along come their children, Cain and Abel. And will you explain to me how those first two boys, one becomes the first murderer and the other the first martyr? What did they do wrong with Cain, and what did they do right with Abel? Did they attend the same family worship, eat the same food, have the same environment?

Ah, my dear friends, we come again to that mystery of choice. Abel *chose* to love God and respond and do what God said. And Cain did the opposite. And don't waste time trying to figure out *why* this one did that and why the other one did that because there *is* no answer.

And I tell you this, while there are a million questions God is going to answer in eternity, God will never explain why it is that Lucifer rebelled, and why this one sinned and rebelled and this other one didn't, because there is no explanation. To explain sin—don't miss this—to explain sin would be to excuse it. Whenever you give a reason for something, then it becomes reasonable, at least to a degree, doesn't it? And there is no sense in sin, my friends.

And do you know what's going to happen when this great controversy has run its course, and all the millions and the billions that have ever lived upon this planet are gathered at one time at the final judgment day? When on that great TV screen of the heavens, the entire great controversy is replayed, not in some acted make-believe, but the reality of it (as is on the records of Heaven) is put there for everyone to see.

Do you know that every creature in this universe, including Adam and Eve, including Lucifer and all the angels that rebelled with him, *every* creature in heaven and in earth is going to say, "God was right all the time, and there never was any excuse for sin."

That's true. That's the finale. I can tell you that tonight, but I can't *make* you see it. And God won't make you. No, He won't. He'll appeal, He'll give you advantages.

You remember Jacob and Esau? Esau, well, he wanted to please himself, his physical craving. Did he get what he wanted? Yes, he got it. Did those boys have the same father and mother? They were twins, weren't they? Did they go to the same school? Attend the same family worship? How come that Jacob became the prince of God, the head of the great nation of Israel, and Esau was a rebel against God all his life? How come? Same home, same father and mother, same opportunities, same environment.

Do you see what I'm getting at here, friends, from the Word of God? Be slow then, be slow to be so quick to assume that if something turns out bad, there must have been some wrong cause, must have been something lacking in the opportunities.

The federal government, now for a generation, has been engaged in a marvelous attempt to bring up things in this country, living conditions. Get away from crime. Get away from poverty. Get away from illiteracy. How? By pouring in the millions and the billions, it'll soon be the trillions, to give everybody better opportunities. Isn't it wonderful how well it's paying off? Isn't it? No, my friends. No, no.

There are many times that God, in His infinite wisdom and love, allows people to have what look like hard circumstances, like allowing Joseph to be down there in Egypt, in order to bring out the gold character, in order to develop that character.

So, thank God this evening, my dear friend, nobody can make you do wrong. But remember the other side of that coin. Nobody can make you do right.

I read a little sentence in *Volume 2* that I want to share with you, page 396:

“...Excuse not your defects because others are wrong. In the day of God...” *Testimonies for the Church, Volume 2*, page 396.

That means at the judgment.

“In the day of God you will not dare to plead as an excuse for your neglect to form a character for heaven, that others did not manifest devotion and spirituality” *Ibid.*

Shall I read that again?

“In the day of God you will not dare to plead as an excuse for your neglect to form a character for heaven, that others did not manifest devotion and spirituality” *Ibid.*

So, dear ones, let's do the very best we can to make this campus and your home and my home, wherever you live, let's do the very best we can to make the surroundings and environment as near like Heaven as is possible. What do you say? And when we do it, let's never nurse the delusion that, *if* we do that, that guarantees a hundred percent that anybody that breathes that atmosphere is wafted

to heaven, because the heavenly atmosphere was breathed by all those angels up there and one-third of them became what? Devils.

“Devils? A devil factory in heaven?”

It happened. Terrible? Terrible. It broke God’s heart. But there’s one thing worse than that, my friend, and that’s what it would be for God to take away the power of choice from His creatures.

Dear parents, do your best with your children, but you can’t make their final choice. There is a time, of course, with the infant and with the child, when you must make some decisions for him. And don’t be too fast about turning over decisions to your young people that don’t belong to them to make.

But remember, somewhere, sometime, someday they’re going to make choices and *will* make them and *must* make them in the plan of God, that you have absolutely no control. And that God has no control. He’s left it with the individual.

And you can pray for them. You can work for them as earnestly as Hannah did for Samuel, and as Elizabeth did for John the Baptist, and as Manoah and his wife did for Samson. And if that boy of yours turns out like John the Baptist, how happy you’ll be. And if he turns out like Samson, he’ll break your heart.

“Oh, I want a John the Baptist. I don’t want a Samson.”

How do you guarantee it in advance, whether you’re a parent, a teacher, or whatever? There is no way to guarantee it. There are two sides to this coin, you see. If nothing in this world can keep you from developing a Christian character if you choose, then nothing in this world can keep you from developing a devil’s character if you choose. If no amount of unfavorable environment can sink a soul to hell, then no amount of favorable environment can guarantee a person entrance to Heaven. Do you see? It’s vital that we remember it, friend.

So I repeat, let’s do everything we can to encourage people to live the life of Heaven. Let’s make it as attractive as possible, as attractive as it *is*. Let’s do all we can to surround our homes and our institution and churches with the very best atmosphere possible.

But when we’ve done it all, the very best we can, and God knows the best we do is poor and weak and God has to make up our deficiencies. But even when God makes them all up, there’s still a choice that has to be made by whom? By each individual.

Thank God, friends, the Bible, while it abounds in these stories such as I’ve been mentioning, it also abounds in stories of people getting back on the track. One of my favorites is the story of Manasseh. Are you acquainted with Manasseh? It’s an almost impossible-sounding story. Good King Hezekiah was greatly used of the Lord to bring revival and reformation to Judah. And after a long reign, usually following the Lord quite strictly, he went to sleep.



Along came his son and he immediately plunged Judah into all kinds of idolatry. And for year after year and decade after decade, he carried the people of God farther and farther from the ways of Heaven and more and more into the ways of the heathen. He set up heathen idols in place of the worship of God. And he became so cruel that he filled Jerusalem with blood. He even took the prophet Isaiah, that wonderful Gospel prophet, had him put in a hollow log, and then that log sawed through. Thus perished the great prophet, Isaiah. And remember, he was the son of one of the best kings Judah ever had.

But thank God, friend the prayers of that father were answered long after he was dead. Finally, adversity came upon King Manasseh. He was carried in chains to Babylon. And there as a prisoner, he learned in the shadows of affliction what he had not learned in the pride of prosperity. His heart was humbled, and he turned to God. Yes, that man with that awful record, that bloody record, that cruel record was converted there in the prison cell in Babylon, my friend.

Parents, take courage. If your boy, your girl rebels today, if your young man, your young woman, your son, your daughter will not listen, do all you can but never give up. Keep praying. They may have to learn in some prison cell like Manasseh did. It's a hard way. Thank God, he learned it. Thank God, he learned it.

Look it up. Read the story of Manasseh. It'll encourage somebody. But friends, you who have life to live, you who have a choice to make, why will you go the hard way? Why will you break the heart of God? Why will you break the heart of your father, your mother, your dear ones, your teachers? Why do it? Oh, friend, no devil can *make* you do it. Your young friends can't *make* you do it. If you do wrong, it's because you choose to.

But remember, all the parents and teachers and preachers and Sabbath school teachers in this world altogether, they all could form a circle and put their arms around you and pray for you night and day. It cannot make you a Christian. You've got to seek for yourself. You've got to pray and seek God yourself. Jesus is ready to help you. He respects your choice, your choice, your choice. Do you see?

Ah friend, remember, this holy rite, this sacred privilege is so valuable that Jesus died upon the cross to give you another chance. We're born into a race that had already made its choice in rebellion. But God in His infinite love and mercy and hope that if we have another chance and another one and another one, that somewhere along with the line, people will turn back to Him. He gave that infinite price. That's how much it's worth, friends. That's how much you're worth. Let's not cast it idly aside. Ah, let us let God do what He paid such a price to give us. What do you say?

Is there anybody here tonight that Jesus has been speaking to, you know that you need to make a decision? You know there aren't devils enough in hell or people enough in this world to keep you from doing it. You also know there aren't angels enough in Heaven and people in this world enough to make you do the right thing.

But here tonight, of your own free choice, as you see what Jesus has paid for you and how much He loves you and how much depends upon your choice, you'll

stand and say, “Brother Frazee, pray for me. I’m going to seek God for myself to go the heavenward way.”

If there’s somebody that God’s been talking to that’ll stand just now, I want to pray for you. Just remain standing a moment as God speaks to your hearts. Just close your eyes, dear ones. Forget about the others. Think about Jesus, talk to Him.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find;  
knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that  
asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him  
that knocketh it shall be opened” Matthew 7:7–8.

“Come, every soul by sin oppressed,  
There’s mercy with the Lord,  
And He will surely give you rest,  
By trusting in His word.

[Chorus] Only trust Him, only trust Him,  
Only trust Him now;  
He will save you, He will save you,  
He will save you now.”  
*Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal, #279, first stanza.*

Yes, thank God, He will. He’s in the saving business. God bless you, my dear young friends. Somebody else that God’s talking to? Oh, souls are precious, so precious. Each one worth so much that Jesus would pay the price of Calvary just to get you. That’s how much you’re worth.

And remember, nobody can keep you from it, but nobody can make you do it.

“Behold, I stand at the door, and knock...” Revelation 3:20.

Why doesn’t He tear the door down and come on in? Ah, He won’t. He respects that choice. The latch is on the inside.

“...if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come  
in to him...” Revelation 3:20.

“...I will come in...” *Ibid.*

Oh, let Him in, friends. He brings the light of God, the power of God. He’ll help you. I know He will. I’ve seen Him do it for hundreds, yes, for thousands, friends. I’ve seen Him do it for thousands. I know He can do it for you.

Somebody else that God’s talking to that says, “Tonight’s my night to make a decision. I will.”

It may be your first time, might be your hundredth time. Friend, if you've slipped and fallen, if you've stubbed your toe, fallen down, Jesus holds out His hand, "Get up."

He'll help you. He'll help you. I know He will. Thank the Lord. He loves you.

"Come, then, and join this holy band,  
And on to glory go,  
To dwell in that celestial land,  
Where joys immortal flow.  
[Chorus]"  
*Ibid.*, fourth stanza.

Now, we're going to have our closing prayer. You who are standing, any of you that would like to, I invite you to come forward and stand here as we have this closing prayer.

Will the entire congregation stand. And you who have been standing, if you'd like to come forward, we'll have this prayer for you especially, as we close this service. And if there's anybody else that hasn't come yet who would like to come now, you come right now. Thank God for each one.

Isn't it wonderful to be worth so much? Each of you worth so much that heaven would empty itself of every angel in glory rather than let you be lost. You just choose tonight and keep choosing. Remember, there's no devil can bring you down, and there's no human being who can make you do wrong.

Joseph was true in Egypt, Daniel was true in Babylon, John the Baptist was true in Judea, Jesus was true in Nazareth, Paul was true in Philippi and Rome. You can be true wherever you are in God's providence. Isn't it wonderful to have that assurance, dear friends?

All right, dear ones, we're ready to pray, aren't we?

Dear Father, as we stand here in Thy presence, we thank Thee for the solemn fact, the joyous fact that the destiny of each soul is in his own hands. True, Lord, we can't do it without Thee, but Thou hast emptied Heaven already in the great gift of Thy love. All the armies of Heaven are enlisted to bless and help us, and for this, we thank Thee just now.

And Lord, here are men and women and boys and girls that have made decisions tonight. Seal these decisions, we pray. Thou hast told us that:

"As the will of man cooperates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings" *Christ Object Lessons*, page 333.

We hold this promise up to Thee tonight, and we claim it in behalf of each seeking one. May we go every one of us from this chapel tonight strong in the

strength of Jesus, recognizing that we need not be weak and wavering, driven like reeds before the wind, that we can be like Joseph, like John, like Daniel, like Jesus, dear ones. Make it so for everyone, and send us out to tell others the good news, for Jesus' sake, amen.

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