



15 And if it seem evil unto you to serve the LORD, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Josh 24:15)

16 Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein. 17 Also I set watchmen over you, saying, Hearken to the sound of the trumpet. But they said, We will not hearken. (Jer 6:16-17)

Two men, both bearing the same name, are prominently mentioned in the New Testament by our Lord Jesus Christ. Their names are indelibly etched in the hearts and minds of the people of God. Their name? Lazarus! What profound point distinguishes these two men from all others? Both died, and both are mentioned as examples of a Great Divide of souls before God. Lazarus of Bethany died and was buried in a stone tomb for four days. The other died and found rest in the bosom of Abraham. Both men had passed beyond the suasion of the world to tempt or distract for they slept in the same peaceful sleep in the bosom of Abraham. One man, Lazarus of Bethany, was called back to life by the Lord whose Voice penetrated time, space, and the stone walls of the tomb to beckon him forth. He then was able to enjoy the pleasant life he had left with his two precious sisters, Martha and Mary. The other, Lazarus the Beggar, had crossed over the Great Divide and Abyss to Abraham's Bosom having been escorted there (as are all of the saints of God) by angelic escort. Lazarus the Beggar had no reason to return to his beggarly life. The bosom of Abraham suited him just fine, thank you very much. Death is a Great Divide. On one side is our mortal existence, and on the other side is eternity – either with God, or with the damned of the world. There are not return tickets to either destination.

High up on the crest of the great Rocky Mountains is a position marked by a huge marker and sign that reads: The GREAT DIVIDE. That means that the very point marked is the very watershed of the North American Continent – all waters on one side cascade down the eastern slopes and eventually into the Atlantic Ocean. All waters on the western slope are destined to the waters of the Pacific Ocean. There is no in between destiny. Every snowflake and raindrop is destined to one side or the other depending upon which side of that geographic point they fall. What a small beginning of the raindrop to form great rivers, lakes and seas as it is joined by others of its kind. Life is very much the same.

Every human being born of woman must arrive, sooner or later, at that Great Divide of Life! On the way to that Great Divide, you may drift in many directions with the winds of the atmosphere. But the Great divide of Life is not calculated on Geographic's of east or west; but by the quickening of our dead souls in trespasses and sins (Eph 2) by the Holy Ghost to life Eternal with God; or the more heavily populated destiny of Hell to which that Broad and crowded path upon which the greater portion of men always prefer to travel. No matter our wit and cunning, God is not mocked by our contrivances to evade His Holy Word. Unfortunately, those contrivances are more common in the churches of our day than on the known wicked paths of the world. It is a terror to the soul to have known the Lord but to turn away from Him.

The natural world itself is provisioned with many divides. Take the darkness of night. The Creation of the world was begun during the darkness of night; but it ended in glorious Light when God spoke it into being. Light and Darkness provide a knowable contrast between good and evil. There was darkness upon the earth before God spoke Light into being. *1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 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. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.* (Gen 1:1-5)

From the above passage from Genesis, you will observe that darkness was not created. It always exists in the absence of Light because it is not, as Light is, a force but rather the absence of a force. Light requires energy to generate – darkness does not since it is merely an absence of any value at all. The lives of the wicked are that way. When the gaping jaws of death consume the wicked, that is the end of their days of mirth and gay abandon. Their names will be remembered no more forever in the Annals of god's book of Life (read LIGHT).

The wicked heart of man is so easily distracted from the lighted path when sensual sins appeal from the shadows. Satan drops his little temptations and fleshly delights along the path of the man that he knows most vulnerable to follow them.

I have read an interesting story of Rowland Hill, an English clergyman of the 18th century, who was going down a street one day and saw a number of pigs following a man. This, said Hill, excited my curiosity so much that I determined to follow. I did so; and, to my great surprise, I saw them follow him to the slaughterhouse. I said to the man: 'My friend, how did you induce the pigs to follow you here?' He replied, 'I have a basket of beans under my arm, and I dropped a few as I came along, and so they followed me.' And so it is, added Hill, that Satan has the beans of pleasure, lust, passion, folly, and sins-innumerable and unnamable – in his basket; he drops them as he goes along, and what multitudes he induces to follow him to an everlasting slaughter-house! *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.* (1 Peter 5:8-9)

Now, friends, every man has a master – if not God, then certainly it is the Prince of Darkness. If our faith is quickened by the grace of God to acknowledge Christ as Lord and Savior, and to follow Him, we are admitted on good ground to the benefits of the Kingdom of Heaven. To claim the Prince of Darkness as our master, we need do nothing whatsoever for we are damned already, and all of our best and most commendable deeds are but filthy rags before God. *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.* (Isaiah 64:6) *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God*

and mammon. (Matt 6:24) By the way, there is no neutral ground in this matter. Just as the raindrops falling east or west of the Great Divide, we are on one side or the other – no in between point. A sinner cannot balance between two paths (the Straight and Narrow, or Broad Path) any more successfully than a raindrop can defy gravity and balance on the mountain peak.

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. (Gal 6:7-8) If one visits the churchyard at Watford, Hertfordshire in England, he will find a large square tomb through the top of which is growing a strong and healthy fig tree. The grave and tomb reportedly belonged to a woman whom claimed to be an atheist. While on her deathbed, the woman declared, If there is a God, then will He cause a tree to grow out of my grave. The massive stone atop the tomb has been split completely in two by the growth of the tree. *But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.* (Acts 5:39) But for the self-proclaimed atheist, the broken tomb is the least of her worries. She has crossed the Great River of no Return.

There is a similar tomb in Spring Place, Georgia where my mother was raised (near the Chief Joseph Vann House). The old man, whose name I do not recall (and neither does God) claimed he desired “no so-called holy hands praying over his dead body – there is no Heaven or Hell.” Well, whether by coincidence or not, his tomb stone, after being placed there for a few days, began to exhibit what seemed to be a likeness of the dead man with flames of fire about him. Those who knew him claimed the image was an exact likeness. You may go have a look – the tombstone is still there after these one hundred years. But we do not need a tree-busted tomb stone, or one bearing the image of its owner in Hell, to know that God is our Father if we belong to Christ – if we are on the heavenward side of the Great Divide. Perhaps those signs are intended for the desperately wicked as a warning of what comes next when they come down on the wrong side of God our Maker.