

# Building A House

by J. T. Smith

While we are on this earth we are all building our spiritual house. Jesus said in His concluding remarks in the sermon on the mount, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: <sup>25</sup>and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup>Now everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: <sup>27</sup>and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall” (Matthew 7:24-27).

The floods represent the trials and temptations of life. The ultimate reward for accepting or rejecting Christ’s words will be the final judgment. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (II Corinthians 5:10).

You will observe that the both builders had the same opportunity. Both of them *heard* the Lord’s words. One *did* them – the other did them *not*! We could characterize every choice we make as “another nail in our building.” Every choice we make is very important. It goes into the making of who we are.

## Two Kinds of People — Two Ways to Travel

The Lord in His word is very clear on the subject of the kinds of people who live in this world. We are reluctant to make distinctions. We want “gray areas.” The Bible teaches “right or wrong,” “good or bad.” Many passages teach this very clearly. “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. <sup>14</sup>Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it” (Matthew 7:13-14).

## Only Two Destinies

Again, God has made it very clear that we will arrive at one of two destinies. However, again, the choice is ours. “Who “will render to each one according to his deeds”: <sup>7</sup>eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; <sup>8</sup>but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness – indignation and wrath, <sup>9</sup>tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; <sup>10</sup>but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>11</sup>For there is no partiality with God” (Romans 2:6-11). We all make choices. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16).

## How Do We Get To Be One or The Other?

We try to blame our destiny on some person or circumstances. Some claim, “If I had had a better environment when I was growing up, I would be a better person.” But remember, Adam and Eve lived in Paradise. What better environment could they have had – yet they sinned!

On the other hand, Lot lived in Sodom. This was a place where ten righteous souls could not be found (Genesis 18:20). Yet God characterized him as a righteous man. God gave him, his wife and two daughter’s opportunity to flee the city before He destroyed it with fire and brimstone.

It is important that we recognize and accept responsibility for the choices we make.

### **Importance of Our Decisions**

Our decisions have a cumulative effect. The person we are now is due to choices we have already made. “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went home. And in his upper room, with his windows open toward Jerusalem, he knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days” (Daniel 6:10). Even though we may not now be the kind of person God wants us to be, that doesn’t mean that we cannot change. That’s what becoming a Christian is all about. None of us are standing still — we are either moving closer to God or away from Him. As we have already noted from Romans 6:16, “to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants we are to whom we obey” whether to God or Satan is our choice.

### **Consider the Choices We Make**

Paul said in Ephesians 4:17-19 “This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, <sup>18</sup>having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; <sup>19</sup>who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.” Paul warns those at Ephesus. “Do not walk as other Gentiles walk. Their choice has brought about ignorance. It has caused them to have an understanding that is darkened. They have hardness of heart and are past feeling.”

Jesus described these kinds of people in John 8:44. “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.” He said such people fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah. “And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; <sup>15</sup>For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, And their eyes they have closed, Lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, Lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, So that I should heal them.’” (Matthew 13:14-15). Yes, they made choices — wrong choices. But notice also, God did not force them to make these choices. They closed their eyes and ears to the truth.

### **Hell Is the Choice of Some**

Hell is not a place where God sends people simply because he doesn’t like them. It is a place of their choosing. “What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death” (Romans 6:21). “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9). I think none deliberately set out to travel that road. Yet through the “lusts of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life” we allow Satan to lead us a way from God (I John 2:15-17).

Robert Stevenson said, “Soon we will sit down at the banquet of our choices.”

It Is Dangerous to Say “NO” to God

“See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him who speaks from heaven” (Hebrews 12:25).

As we know from the Scriptures, we do not have to ‘build our house on the sand’ as we have shown from the above passages. We can choose to build on “the rock” – Jesus Christ. The choice is ours.

If you are now building on the sand, I urge you, change your ways, follow Jesus and build your spiritual building on the rock that will stand for time and eternity. ☞