

Title:            **“WHO IS ON THE LORD’S SIDE?”**

Text:            Exodus 32:25-29

Subject:        *Surrender to Christ*

Date:            Tuesday Evening — August 18, 2008

Tape :        Exodus #105

Readings: *Bob Poncer and Larry Criss*

Introduction:

I am here tonight to press the claims of Christ upon your heart and mine. I am calling for a decision from each of you. I have set before you, as consistently and plainly as I know how, the Person and work of Christ. I have preached the Gospel of Christ to you for 30 years, pressing upon you the claims of Christ. Three times a week, for 30 years, you have heard the glorious good news of redemption accomplished by Jesus Christ our Lord. I take you to record before God, I have declared unto you the all counsel of God. Have I not? I have kept back nothing that was profitable to you. I have told you plainly....

- Of the glorious sovereignty and strict holiness of God.
- Of the total depravity of your heart.
- Of God’s electing grace in Christ.
- Of our great Savior’s accomplished redemption.
- Of the Holy Spirit’s irresistible, saving grace.
- Of the certain security of God’s elect in grace.

To you who love Christ and love the truth of Christ, whose hearts rejoice to hear the Gospel preach, — I am calling for a reaffirmation of your commitment and allegiance to Christ. But some of you have, thus far, heard the gospel of the grace of God in vain. As the Spirit of God puts it, you have, thus far, received the grace of God in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1). You refuse to believe God. You trample under your feet the blood of the Son of God. You despise His grace. You resist His Spirit. And you rebel against His rule.

You may even profess faith in Christ, nominally; but you are yet an unbeliever. Your profession of faith is a sham, a mockery of Christ. Your heart’s allegiance is not to Christ, but to yourself and to the world.

Once more, this hour, I set before you life and death, Christ and the world. And, if God will enable me, I am going to press you to make a decision. Like Elijah, I say to you, *“How long halt ye between two opinions? If the*

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*Lord be God, follow him*” (1 Kings 18:21). Like Joshua, I say to you, *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve”* (Joshua 24:15).

You will find my text in Exodus 32. Let’s read verses 25-29 together.

(Exodus 32:25-29) “And when Moses saw that the people *were* naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto *their* shame among their enemies:) (26) Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, *Who is on the LORD’S side? let him come* unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him. (27) And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, *and* go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour. (28) And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. (29) For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.”

While Moses was in the Mount, receiving the law of God for Israel, Israel rebelled against the Lord. They did not openly deny God. In fact, they pretended to be worshipping the Lord (See verse 5!). But they persuaded Aaron to make them gods which they could see, and feel, and touch. So Aaron made them a golden calf. You know the story!

When Moses came down from the mount and saw their idolatry, he was furious. He smashed their “god” to pieces, burned it, scattered it upon the waters, and made the children of Israel drink it. He rebuked Aaron sharply. And the children of Israel, fearing God and fearing his prophet, went to their tents.

But there were some, about three thousand, stout-hearted rebels, who brazenly defied Moses and the God he represented. Moses, knowing that the rebellion had to be crushed and the rebels punished, issued a summons. He called for a decision – *“Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.”* He raised up a standard, even the name of God the Lord. He drew a line in the sand; and called for those who would follow the Lord to cross the line. A decision had

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to be made, a life and death decision. And it had to be made right then –  
“*And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.*”

There is a dreadful conflict going on today, a warfare between Christ and Satan, light and darkness, truth and error.

- Gnosticism (Parker & Wimer)
- Compromise (Bignal & Andrews)

You must decide between the two. If God will speak by me to your heart, neutrality will be impossible. You will decide today either to follow Christ or to pursue the world. May God be pleased to reveal Christ in you and give you a heart to follow Him.

**Proposition:** At the outset, I want you to know that – If you follow Christ, you must be prepared for spiritual warfare all the days of your life.

So, while I am here, seeking recruits for Christ, I will tell you plainly what the cost will be. Before you make your decision, I urge you to count the cost. I do not ask you to enlist blindly in the King’s army. He will have only willing, loyal-hearted volunteers. Before I am done, I hope you will see that the cost is high, but also that you will see that Christ is worth the cost.

**Divisions:** Using the illustration before us in Exodus 32, I will divide my message into four parts.

1. The Engagement
2. The Eligibility
3. The Encouragements
4. The Enlistment

**THE ENGAGEMENT**

First, let me describe the engagement to which the Book of God calls us. It is a warfare. I am seeking recruits for war. But before you volunteer, you have a right to know what the warfare is and who the enemy is which you are about to engage. I am calling for you to take sides with the Lord Jesus Christ against all His enemies.

**I am calling for you to choose the path of faith and oppose all unbelief.** Skepticism is the way of the world. Unbelief is the way of the flesh. Faith is

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the way of life. If you would live in Christ, you must believe God (Hebrews 11:6).

(Hebrews 11:1-6) “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. (2) For by it the elders obtained a good report. (3) Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear. (4) By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh. (5) By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. (6) But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

**To believe God is to rely upon him. It is to trust and rely upon...**

- The revelation of God concerning His Son the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John 5:10).
- The promise of God in Christ (Romans 8:32).
- The Word of God in the face of trial, temptation, opposition and heresy (2 Timothy 3:16; Hebrews 11:1-3).

**I am calling for you to choose the Gospel of God’s free and sovereign grace in Christ and reject all the religious superstitions of the world.** If we would follow Christ, we must turn our back upon the world, the religion of the world and those who will not follow Christ (Galatians 1:6-8; 1 Corinthians 16:22).

(Galatians 1:6-8) “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: (7) Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. (8) But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

(1 Corinthians 16:22) “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”

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The religion of Christ is the Gospel of pure, free, sovereign, unconditional grace in an all-sufficient, effectual Substitute (Ephesians 2:8-9; 1:3-14). The religion of this world is any deviation from or addition to grace alone (Galatians 5:2-4). **You cannot follow Christ unless you turn your back upon antichrist and come out of the great whore** (2 Corinthians 6:16-18).

(2 Corinthians 6:16-18) “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (17) Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you, (18) And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

(2 Corinthians 7:1) “Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”

**I am calling for utter surrender to King Jesus. Let us give our allegiance to Christ alone and deny ourselves** (Luke 14:25-33).

(Luke 14:25-33) “And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, (26) If any *man* come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. (27) And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (28) For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have *sufficient* to finish *it*? (29) Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish *it*, all that behold *it* begin to mock him, (30) Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. (31) Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? (32) Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. (33) So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.”

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If we would give allegiance to Christ, we must give ourselves, in unreserved surrender to Him and set our hearts in opposition to...

- Our own fleshly desires
- The world’s allurements and charms
- The devil’s temptations

This is the engagement I set before you. It is a life long warfare, a bitter conflict in hostile, enemy territory, from which there is no reprieve and no truce as long as we live in this world.

### **THE ELIGIBILITY**

In order to enlist in any army, you have to meet certain requirements of eligibility. So, second, let me talk to you about the eligibility to enlist in this warfare. If we would follow Christ, we have to meet certain requirements. Now hear me, if you do not meet these three requirements, you can never be “*on the Lord’s side.*”

**FORGIVENESS** — Because we are sinners, justly condemned by the law of the Lord, our sins must be forgiven before we can serve the Lord. These sons of Levi were as guilty of idolatry as the rest of the people. They could not be accepted of God until their sins were forgiven. Therefore, Moses interceded with God for their forgiveness (v. 32).

We are all guilty, justly condemned sinners; but there is forgiveness with God (Psalm 130:4; 1 John 1:9).

(Psalms 130:1-4) “Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. (2) Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications. (3) If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? (4) But *there is* forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.”

(1 John 1:9) “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- Free forgiveness!
- Full forgiveness!
- Immutable forgiveness!
- Eternal forgiveness!

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**ATONEMENT** — The only basis upon which the Lord God can or will forgive sin is satisfaction by blood atonement. God cannot forgive sin without atonement. And there can be no atonement without satisfaction. And there can be no satisfaction without blood. “*Without shedding of blood is no remission*” (Hebrews 9:22).

These Jews could never have been accepted without atonement. — “*Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make atonement for your sin*” (v. 30). In a word, you and I are not eligible for grace except by blood atonement. We cannot obtain mercy, except we come to God through faith in the precious blood of Christ.

(Hebrews 7:25) “Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

- Our hope is in the merits of Christ’s blood as the God-man, our Mediator.
- Our hope is in the efficacy of that blood – “*Finished!*”
- We must trust that blood – “*God be merciful!*”

**CONSECRATION** — And eligibility for service in the kingdom of Christ is decided consecration (v. 29). Faith in Christ is nothing less than the willful, deliberate, voluntary, decided consecration of my heart to him as my Lord and Master.

(Exodus 32:29) “For Moses had said, Consecrate yourselves to day to the LORD, even every man upon his son, and upon his brother; that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.”

These Levites were required to openly declare their allegiance to the Lord, and so are we! **When we identify with God’s truth, God’s church and God’s messenger, we identify with Christ.** The opposite is also true. **When a person identifies with Christ’s enemies, a false gospel and a false prophet, he identifies with antichrist.**

What does this consecration to Christ involve? I will show you what it involved in the case of these Levites...

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- **They had to be willing to be aligned with the minority.** — They were one tribe against eleven! — God’s people are always an minority!
- They had to be **prepared for stern conflict** – “*Put every man his sword by his side*” (v. 27).
- **Their love for Christ meant hatred of their own kinsman.** They had to choose between Christ and family. And they chose Christ (v. 27).

(Exodus 32:27) “And he said unto them, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, *and* go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour.”

- **They had to obey the Lord.** – Their heart allegiance demanded that they do the will of God, regardless of cost. — “*The children of Levi did according to the word of Moses*” (v. 28).

Eligibility for the kingdom of God requires these three things:

1. Forgiveness
2. Atonement
3. Consecration

**THE ENCOURAGEMENTS**

Third, let me set before you some encouragements. I’m calling for the kind of commitment that possessed Jephthah’s soul, the kind of commitment that these Levites exemplified, the kind of commitment that holds back nothing.

**Illustration:** Ignatius (About 100 AD) — “Now I begin to be a Christian.”

I make no promises of a happy, peaceful, easy life in this world. Allegiance to Christ is costly. It is a constant aggravation to the flesh. And the way of faith, more often than not, is a path of isolation, trouble, temptation and trial. I have tried to show you the cost and the conflict of faith in Christ. Now, let me encourage you to pay the price.

**The cause I hold before you is the cause of Christ in this world.** It is the cause of His glory and His truth. It is a cause with a sure foundation and certain end.

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**Illustration:** “*Is there not a cause?*”

**Illustration:** “Mr Lincoln, God is on our side.”

To which Mr. Lincoln replied, “Are we on God’s side?”

Our cause is the cause of Christ – You know it is! — Christ himself is with us (Matthew 28:18-20). — The angels of God hold guard over us (2 Kings 6:17; Hebrews 1:14).

(2 Kings 6:15-17) “And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth, behold, an host compassed the city both with horses and chariots. And his servant said unto him, Alas, my master! how shall we do? (16) And he answered, Fear not: for they that *be* with us *are* more than they that *be* with them. (17) And Elisha prayed, and said, LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see. And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man; and he saw: and, behold, the mountain *was* full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha.”

A great cloud of witnesses in heaven has led the way and marked it for us (Hebrews 12:1).

- The Patriarchs
- The Prophets
- The Apostles
- The Martyrs.
- Our Lord himself

Your own conscience bears witness with me – “*This is the way!*” — I call you to enlist in an army at war, but an army whose victory is sure, whose reward is eternal glory (Revelation 19:14).

(Revelation 19:1-14) “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: (2) For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (3) And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. (4) And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God

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that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. (5) And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. (6) And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. (7) Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. (8) And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. (9) And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God. (10) And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. (11) And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. (12) His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head *were* many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. (13) And he *was* clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God. (14) And the armies *which were* in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.”

I set before you the strait gate — Will you enter it? And the narrow way — Will you walk in it?

**THE ENLISTMENT**

Fourth, I press upon you the claims of Christ and call for you to join the enlistment. — “*Who is on the Lord’s side? Let him come unto me.*” Have you made a decision to join ranks with the Son of God? Have you, in your heart done so? If you have, then put on the colors of the King’s army by confessing Christ openly in baptism. Come out publicly for the Son of God!

**All who take sides with Christ against hell and antichrist, all who take His cause to be their cause, all who come to Christ, are like these Levites who came to Moses** (Deuteronomy 33:8-11).

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(Deuteronomy 33:8-11) “And of Levi he said, *Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;* (9) Who **said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him;** — **neither did he acknowledge his brethren,** — **nor knew his own children:** — for **they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant.** — (10) **They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law:** — **they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar.** — (11) **Bless, LORD, his substance,** — and **accept the work of his hands:** — **smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.**”

These Levites who came to Moses, these men who publicly avowed and demonstrated their allegiance to the Lord were all...

- Divinely chosen men.
- Accepted, priestly men.
- Greatly blessed men – Eternally blessed! Daily blessed!
- Proved, believing men.

**I call for you and call upon myself, let us now commit and consecrate ourselves this day unto the Lord, let us commit and consecrate ourselves this day to the Lord Jesus Christ our Savior as decided, loyal soldiers in the cause of Christ** (Romans 12:1-2). Put on the whole armor of God (Ephesians 6:13-18).

(Ephesians 6:13-18) “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour (CHRIST) of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. (14) Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth (CHRIST), and having on the breastplate of righteousness (CHRIST); (15) And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace (CHRIST); (16) Above all, taking the shield (CHRIST) of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. (17) And take the helmet of salvation (CHRIST), and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (18) Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;”

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Make your first concern a matter of civil war – Wage war against your own self — Make no provision for the flesh. Engage the enemy – Go to war against your own hearts’ lusts!

And make it your business to oppose every proud hissing serpent of hell, who dares raise his head in opposition to Christ and His Gospel, who dares oppose the glory of our God and savior. Our Master’s cause, His glory, His truth, the souls of men are at stake. We must engage the enemy!

**Illustration:** *Martin Luther* once said: “If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, then I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Him! — Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and to be steady on all the battle front besides is merely flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point.”

The gates of hell will fall before us. — God will again send the Spirit of Life upon his Church. — Moses’ prayer for Levi is my prayer for you (Deuteronomy 33:11).

(Deuteronomy 33:11) “Bless, LORD, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again.”

Amen.