

“In A Strait Betwixt Two”

by Wayne Goff

“For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you.” (Philippians 1:23-24, KJV). Having grown up with the King James Version of the Bible, I had indelibly impressed upon my mind the phrase *“strait betwixt two.”* After all, you don’t hear that every day. And I still like the terminology. Paul was *“hard-pressed” (NKJV)* between two choices: (1) going to heaven and being with Christ; or (2) remaining on the earth to continue to build up the brethren and the churches. Maybe in my mind *“strait betwixt two”* conjures up the idea of being caught in the middle between two opposing forces. It just seems to set well with me.

If you were faced with these two choices, *what would you choose?* The obvious one is going to heaven to be with Christ! I’ve often said that if I knew I’d die and be with Christ, then I’m ready to go now! That’s what we call a *“no brainer”* (it doesn’t require much thinking).

But on the other hand, consider **the less selfish choice** — remaining on earth to help others get to heaven. After all, that is the job of the gospel preacher, as well as every concerned Christian. Think of all your friends, family and acquaintances that you might be able to help get to heaven. Would you just want to leave them all behind to fend for themselves? When I think of it that way, then I think it best for me to stay on earth as long as God wishes so that I might influence someone, anyone to go to heaven. But no matter how long I live, I will never be able to persuade some — even those I love the most, to choose Jesus. It’s just a sad fact that many, many people have little or no faith, and just cannot *“see”* it!

The interesting thought is this: none of us get to choose *how long* we will be here. Some seemingly very righteous people departed this earth far too early. Like those of **Hebrews 11**, concerning them *“the world was not worthy” (v. 38)*. And the wicked of the earth stay way too long! I suppose God is longsuffering toward them, hoping that something, some way may prick their hearts to repent. So here I am, standing in the same shoes as the apostle Paul: *“I am in a strait betwixt two.”* So be it.

370304