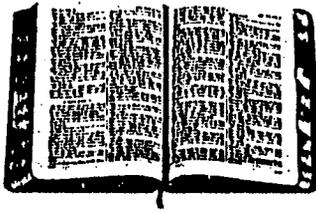


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for *reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*" (2 Timothy 3:16)

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Number 2

"SIX UNCONDITIONAL PROMISES"

There are a number of promises in the Scriptures that God has given. Some are *conditional* and others are *unconditional*. Salvation is promised in Mark 16:16, but it is promised *conditionally*. Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." "*Shall be saved*" is the *promise* and *belief* and *baptism* are two conditions set forth in this passage. NOTE: Other passages may show that there are other conditions that must also be met.

An *unconditional* promise is one that was given without God stipulating any conditions whatsoever. Let us consider some *unconditional promises*.

NO MORE FLOOD

God has *unconditionally* promised that the people and animals of the earth will never again be destroyed by a universal flood. As a token of the covenant that God set a bow in the cloud. See Gen. 9:8-17.

DESTROYED BY FIRE

Although God has promised He will never again "destroy all flesh" with a flood, He has *unconditionally* promised that He will destroy the earth, the works therein and the heavens that

surround the earth, by fire. See 2 Peter 3:10-13.

DEATH

God *unconditionally* appointed that all must die. Heb. 9:27 says: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Paul said: "For as in Adam all die,..." (1 Cor. 15:22). Also see Eccl. 3:2; 9:5; 12:7).

CHRIST WILL COME AGAIN

In John 14:2-3 Jesus said: "...If I go...I will come again..." Also see Acts 1:9-11; Mt. 24:44; Heb. 9:28. John said: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him..." Rev. 1:7 This promise is *unconditional*!

RESURRECTION

In John 5:28-29 Jesus very clearly taught an *unconditional resurrection of all the dead*, both good and evil ones. In Acts 24:15 Paul clearly taught an *unconditional resurrection of the dead*, both the just and the unjust. Also read 1 Cor. 15:12-28; 15:35-55.

JUDGMENT

God has promised a judgment *unconditionally* & Jesus will be the Judge. See Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:11-15 & Acts 17:31.

Your attitudes, words and actions will not keep any of the above things from occurring. God promised them! (CRS)

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Editorial...

SOME SINS OFTEN OVERLOOKED (NO. 9)

In view of the fact that many of God's children overlook a number of sins due to ignorance, a careful study of the Scriptures should be of benefit to us along this line. Let us continue our study of some sins often overlooked.

XXX. THE SIN OF LOVING PREEMINENCE IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED. In 3rd John 9-10 John said: "**I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.**" The expression "*loveth to have the preeminence*" is from a word that means "*to be fond of being first, i.e., ambitious of distinction:--love to have the preeminence*" acc. to Strong (word # 5383).

Diotrephes was fond of being first. He loved the preeminence. It seems from the text that he had influence, power and control in the church to which John wrote. He prated against John and others "*with malicious words.*" THAYER'S LEXI-CON says that the word translated "*prate*" means "*to utter nonsense, talk idly,...to bring forward idle accusations, make empty charges... to accuse one falsely with malicious words, 3 John 10...*" (P. 655). Diotrephes would not receive John and others and forbade others to receive them and he cast those would have received them out of the church. NOTE: Obviously, the *prating* was prompted by *the love of preeminence*.

Loving preeminence was not limited to Diotrephes and the first century. There are some to day who love to have the preeminence. They indicate this by their attitudes and actions. A preacher in a congregation may seek preeminence in that congregation. When there are no elders his attitude, words and actions may indicate such. He may think he should be in charge of all the "business meetings" and all of his suggestions should be made the "policy" for that congregation. He may even refer to the pulpit as "my pulpit" because he feels that he alone should decide who preaches there. When there are elders the preacher may think that they should never make any decisions without first consulting him. After all, in his mind, he is the preeminent person in the congregation. As was the case with Diotrephes, he wants to control what takes place in the church there. His influence should be greater than anyone's and he should have more power and control.

When a person *loves to have*

preeminence he may put forth ungodly efforts to undermine the influence of others. He may do as Diotrophes did. He may *prate* against others. In so doing he may accuse one falsely with malicious words. He may even utter nonsense as he makes empty charges. A lover of preeminence obviously feels "threatened" by others. He may be afraid he is going to lose his influence, power and control. *A lover of preeminence* in a congregation will, in time, sow discord and create strife.

Instead of seeking preeminence we should, as Paul said in Rom. 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." We should "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." (Phil. 2:3-4). Peter's advice in 1 Peter 5:5-6 should help all of us from being guilty of overlooking *the sin of loving preeminence*. It says: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." NOTE: Let us apply these principles so that we will not overlook and be guilty of *the sin of loving preeminence!*

XXXI. THE SIN OF TAKING VENGEANCE IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED! Under the Old Covenant God at times commanded his people to take vengeance. For example, in Numbers 31:1-2 we read: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites: afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people." The following verses describe the slaughter of the Midianites by the Israelites. Under the New Covenant God

forbids His people to take vengeance. Read the following passages.

Romans 12:17-21- "**Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**"

Mt. 5:44 (Jesus said)- "...Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."

NOTE: The above passages certainly teach that Christians are not to take vengeance!

Although we are taught not to take vengeance we should keep in mind that God's Word clearly teaches that God is a God of vengeance as well as a God of goodness and mercy. Read the following passages.

Romans 12:19- "...Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord."

Hebrews 10:30-31- "For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

2 Thess. 1:7-9- "...When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

Romans 3:5- "...Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?..."

NOTE: These passages clearly teach that God is a God of vengeance and that He will take vengeance on evil doers.

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

We should examine ourselves and make sure that we do not overlook the sin of our taking vengeance and become guilty of doing that which only God has the right to do. *Vengeance belongs to Him!*

XXXII. THE SIN OF FEAR (i.e., timidity & cowardice) IS OFTEN OVERLOOKED! In 2 Tim. 1:7 Paul said: **"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."** Vine's Dictionary of NT Words states that the word translated "*fear*" in this verse "denotes cowardice and timidity and is never used in a good sense..." It is obvious that the spirit of *cowardice* and *timidity* does *not* come from God. God gives the spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind.

In Mt. 8:23-27 Jesus implied that their fearfulness (or timidity or cowardice) indicated that they were "of little faith".

Some people are too "fearful" (i.e., timid or has cowardice) to accept and obey the gospel of Jesus

Christ. They are not willing to stand up and be counted for truth and righteousness. The criticisms and insults they must suffer are too much for them in view of their timidity and cowardice. They are not willing to endure the afflictions that come along with serving God faithfully. They love the praise of men more than the praise of God. (See John 12:42-43).

What is the eternal destiny of "the fearful"? Rev. 21:8 says: **"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."** NOTE: Those who are too timid (or fearful) to believe and obey God's Word will be cast into hell fire to be tormented forever and ever!

Let us make sure that we do not overlook the sin of fear! (CRS)
(To be continued)

GOSPEL MEETINGS at Camden, TN March 3-8, 2002. Carrol R. Sutton preaching. Make plans to come and be with us. If nearby, tell others!

SENTENCE SERMONS

When God has spoken, don't raise doubts in people's minds about what he said.

* * * * *

The church should be preaching the gospel to save sinners, not building kitchens to serve dinners.

* * * * *

Wild oats will grow without fertilizer.

* * * * *

Confidence is built by many acts but it can be lost by one!

* * * * *

It doesn't take a lot of talent or wisdom for a person to toot his own horn.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

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