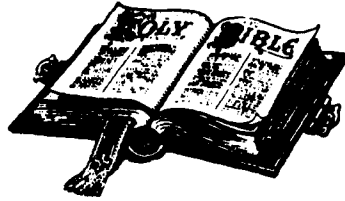


THE INSTRUCTOR



"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

Volume 31

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Number 9

WHY PREPARE TO MEET GOD?

About seven or eight hundred years before Jesus Christ was born, the Lord spake through Amos the prophet to the children of Israel who obviously were steeped in sin, saying: "**Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.**" (4:12). Since Israel was in a "lost" condition, it was imperative that the Israelites make **preparation** to meet God! Like Israel of old, every responsible person should **prepare to meet God!** WHY should you and I make preparation to meet God? There are a number of reasons. Here are some of them.

I. LIFE IS VERY BRIEF AT THE LONGEST! A sincere reading of the following passages should impress upon us the **brevity** of life.

Job 14:12: "**Man that is born of woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.**"

Job 7:6: "**My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, . . .**"

Psalms 39:5: "**Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-**

breadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: . . ."

1 Peter 1:24: "**For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.**"

James 4:14: "**Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.**"

Not only do we learn from **revelation** but also from **observation** that man's life upon the earth is **short in duration!** NOW is the time to make preparation to meet God!

II. DEATH IS INEVITABLE! Death follows life! It is a natural process or event. There is "**A time to be born, and a time to die.**" (Eccl. 3:3). All "**the living know that they shall die . . .**" (Eccl. 9:5). A long time ago the Lord said unto Moses: "**Behold, thy days approach that thou must die . . .**" (Deut. 31:14).

Death is, indeed, an appoint-

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THE INSTRUCTOR

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Editorial . . .

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE. . . ?

(No. 3)

In our previous studies we asked: I. DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO BECAUSE THE MAJORITY BELIEVES IT? II. DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO BECAUSE OF YOUR FEELINGS? III. DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO BECAUSE OF TRADITIONS? As we considered each of those questions, it was pointed out by the Word of God that **none** of those things are **reliable standards** upon which our **faith** should be based!

Let us now continue our study of the question: "**Why do you believe what you do?**"

IV. DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU DO BECAUSE OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE? Is "**a good conscience**" the basis of our faith? Is a thing right because a person can engage in such with "**a good conscience?**" Would you try to justify a belief or practice on "**a good conscience?**" Would you contend for any of the following:

1. "**One can go to heaven in a denomination — IF he has a good conscience!**"

2. "**An alien sinner can be saved without water baptism — IF he has a good conscience.**"

3. "**It is alright to call a man**

'Reverend', 'Father', 'Rabbi', 'Doctor', 'Brother', etc. (as religious titles) — **IF one has a good conscience.**"

4. "**It does not matter how one worships God IF he has a good conscience.**"

5. "**It is alright for a church to engage in recreation, entertainment and secular business IF all the members have a good conscience.**"

6. "**It is alright to dress immodestly IF a person has a good conscience.**"

7. "**It is alright to cheat IF a person can do so with a good conscience.**"

8. **It is alright to lie IF a person can do so with a good conscience.**"

9. "**It is alright to commit adultery IF a person can do so with a good conscience.**"

10. "**It is alright for a person to commit murder IF he has a good conscience.**"

Please consider the fact that IF a person can justify **one** of the above things, why can't he justify **all** of them on the same basis? If having "**A good conscience**" is the **standard** that justifies **one** of these things, why can't it be the **standard** that justifies **all** of them? The truth is simple. "**A good conscience**" is NOT the **standard** by which right and wrong are decided! Consider Saul of Tarsus. When Stephen was killed, Saul held the clothes of those who stoned him and consented to his death. (Cf. Acts 22:20). He "imprisoned and beat in every synagogue" those who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ! (Cf. Acts 22:19). Hear him (now known as Paul) before the chief priests and all their council when he said: "**Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience**

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WHY DO YOU BELIEVE. . . ?

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before God until this day.” (Acts 23:1). Consider the fact that later before King Agrippa that Paul declared: **“I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities.”** (Acts 26:9-12). Please observe the following facts:

(1) Saul did **“many things contrary to the name of Jesus!”**

(2) Saul **“shut up in prison”** many saints!

(3) Saul **“punished”** saints often **“in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme.”**

(4) Saul was **“exceedingly mad”** against the saints and **“compelled”** them to **“blaspheme.”**

(5) When saints were put to death Saul gave his voice against them!

(6) Saul **“persecuted”** saints even unto strange cities.

(7) Saul **“lived in all good conscience before God”** while engaging in the above things!

(8) Saul **“verily thought”** with himself that he **“ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth.”**

Although Saul had a **“good conscience”** and **“verily thought”** he was faithfully serving God, he was, in fact, **sinning!** In view of the facts, we must conclude that **one’s conscience is NOT the proper**

standard upon which one should base his faith!

We should learn **GOD’S WORD** which is the **standard** of right and wrong! (See 2 Tim. 16:17; 1 John 3:4; James 1:25; 2:12; 2 John 9). We should believe what we do because it is taught in the **Scriptures!** **When properly taught, our consciences will condemn us when we do wrong and will not condemn us when we do right!** (See 1 John 3:20-21). We should not violate our consciences! As Paul admonished Timothy, each of us should **“war a good warfare; Holding faith, and good conscience, . . .”** (See I Tim 1:18-19). We, like Paul, should exercise ourselves **“to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.”** (Cf. Acts 24:16).

When asked: **“Why do you believe what you do . . .”** you should not say. **“Because I have a good conscience!”** Please keep in mind that **“a good conscience”** is not the basis of our faith!

(To be continued)

(CRS)

WHY PREPARE TO MEET GOD?

(Continued from page 1)

pointment! The Hebrew writer declared: **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment. . .”** (9:27) No one can avoid death! Our bodies are not designed to live on earth forever. They are mortal and thus subject to death and decay. The apostle Paul said: **“For as in Adam all die, . . .”** (1 Cor. 15:22). In death **no preparation can be made to meet God!** Preparation must be made while we are living and still have time and opportunity.

III. THE RESURRECTION IS SURE! Death does not end us! There

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WHY PREPARE TO MEET GOD?

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will be a **resurrection!** Jesus declared: **"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."** (John 5:28-29). We, like Paul, have hope **"that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."** (Acts 24:15). Without doubt, there will be a resurrection of the dead!

IV. JUDGMENT IS CERTAIN! Each of us are responsible for our actions and will give an account unto God for them! Paul declared: **"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or evil."** (2 Cor. 5:10). Our Lord shows the surety of the judgment in Matthew 25:31-46 and the eternal consequences of it. There is a graphic judgment scene pictured in Rev. 20:12-15!

It is **sobering** and **very thought provoking** to think seriously about **death, the resurrection and the judgment!** Each of us should diligently prepare to meet God!
(CRS)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

The following preachers will be preaching in a series of GOSPEL MEETINGS at EAST ALBERTVILLE beginning on Wednesday October 5 and continuing through Sunday evening October 9, 1994 at 7:30 p.m. except on the Lord's Day we will meet at 9:30 a.m.; 10:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Wednesday p.m. — Thomas N.

Thrasher of Decatur, AL

Thursday p.m. — Richard Boone of Chattanooga, TN

Friday p.m. — Huey Hartselle of Jasper, AL

Saturday p.m. — Jim Deason of Killen, AL

Sunday 9:30 a.m. — Mike Webb of Hayden, AL

Sunday 10:30 a.m. — O. C. Birdwell, Jr. of Athens, AL

Sunday 6:00 p.m. Doug Matlock of Athens, AL

Make plans to be with us and tell others!

CORRECTION: In the last INSTRUCTOR the expression ". . .into the grave of my son. . ." should have read ". . .into the grave unto my son. . ." on page two, paragraph three.

— SENTENCE SERMONS —

Experience may not be worth what it costs, but we can't seem to get it for any less.

* * * * *

When it comes to seeing the faults of others, we all seem to have 20-20 vision.

* * * * *

More people are run down by gossip than by automobiles.

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