

26 August 2018

Conscience – Pt 1 The role of our conscience.

Today we begin a new topic on a man's conscience. In this first study we will look at the meaning of the word "conscience" and establish three points from the scriptures – (1) conviction of sin takes place in our conscience, and (2) the Spirit of God speaks to a person's conscience, and (3) a person's conscience bears witness to their heart.

Preamble.

The Oxford dictionary's meaning for the word "conscience" is – "A person's moral sense of right and wrong, viewed as acting as a guide to one's behaviour".

Note – the word "conscience" occurs 31 times in 29 verses and once as a plural, and only in the New Testament.

Scriptures upon which this teaching is founded.

1. Conviction of sin takes place in our conscience.

"And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst" (Jn.8: 9).

2. The Spirit of God speaks to a man's conscience.

"I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 9: 1).

We know that the Holy Spirit was given to "reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement" (Jn.16: 8). Hence it makes sense that the Spirit of God speaks to our conscience and man is convicted in his conscience.

3. Our conscience bears witness to what is in our heart.

"Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Rom.2: 15).

An illustration to help apply the teaching to our life today.

When a preacher holds forth the word of God in a tract – some who pass by say "I'm good thanks", others will put their hand up to their heart as to say "peace be with you."

Then you have a Christian that walks past and says – "keep up the good work."

It is clear that each person who walks past knows that the material being handed out is a "religious" tract, they all know its about God, and His Son Jesus Christ.

Question to think about.

When a person says, "I'm good" – what is the state of their conscience?

My answer to our question from the scriptures.

The person who claims to be "good":has a conscience that is dead to sin, dead to the Holy Spirit convicting them, and their response is a witness to their heart – "that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen.6: 5). "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd" (Jn.3: 20).

Therefore, what a man allows according to his conscience is what is in his heart – whether it be good or evil. And as we study this topic we will cover the differences between a saved man's conscience and the conscience of an unbeliever. But for now let us remember that – conviction of sin takes place in our conscience, the Spirit of God speaks to our conscience, and our conscience bears witness to what is in our heart. Amen!