

REVIVAL NEWS

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THE CONSCIENCE

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God created us with a *conscience*. It is the *faculty by which we apprehend the will of God, as that which is designed to govern our lives* [from the best of Vines Dictionary in the Strong's Concordance, Greek #4893]. It is a powerful faculty that resides in our spirit giving us a *moral consciousness*, the ability to know what is right and wrong. In the Greek language it is the word *suneidesis* and literally means *a knowing, a co-knowledge with oneself*. The *conscience* is the place in our spirit where we know things, not because we were taught them, but a knowledge intrinsic in our being due to our being created in the image and likeness of God. God had always intended that we be governed in our lives by the *conscience* He had created us with.

Being convicted by our conscience

The Scribes and Pharisees brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus with the intent of trapping Him and accusing Him in regards to the law of Moses (**John 8:1-6**). Jesus had a word of wisdom by the Spirit, ***“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first”*** **John 8:7**. After writing on the ground and speaking this word, it says of those Scribes and Pharisees, ***“Then those who heard it, being convicted by their conscience, went out one by one, beginning with the oldest to the last”*** v.9.

They were *convicted* by their *conscience*. The word *convicted* has the meaning: *admonished, refuted, brought to light, exposed, chided, reproved, chastened* [Strong's Concordance Greek #1651, also Thayer's]. I am sure we have all experienced this at times. It is shockingly powerful to be exposed, admonished, reproved and chided by our conscience. This is when we know that what we have done is so wrong and we then feel the sense of shame beginning to cover us like a blanket. It can be so strong that it completely changes our course of action!

Commending ourselves to every man's conscience

The conscience is powerful! These men were using this woman as leverage to try and accuse Jesus; a very corrupt and wicked scheme. They were willing to sacrifice this woman, have her killed and shamed for their own malicious ambition! This changed dramatically with a single word of wisdom from God. The Word exposed the truth. The conscience of the men convicted them and their behaviour changed immediately. Oh, may we speak like Jesus and see this effect on those around us also! May we speak in such a way that convicts the consciences of those who hear us! The apostle Paul said, ***“but by manifestation of the truth***

commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" 2 Corinthians 4:2.

By speaking the truth of the Word we actually commend ourselves to the conscience of man, bringing that person's conscience into the presence of God where their thoughts and actions are exposed in His Light!

Having a conscience without offense

When the apostle Paul was on trial before Felix the Governor he said, ***"I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men" Acts 24:15-16.*** The hope we have in the resurrection and the judgement to come should stir us to live free of offenses and accusations in our conscience.

Interestingly Paul says these offenses can be towards ***God and men***. It is important that we do not hold on to any accusations we may secretly carry towards God, charging Him with wrong in our conscience. Many of us have had things happen in our lives that have caused pain and heartache and we have possibly blamed God and carry an offense toward Him. Maybe we have prayed for people and nothing happened, and we got disappointed with God and began to carry a grievance in our heart toward Him. It is important to deal with this and drop all the offenses. Stephen, the martyr, did not carry any offenses with him into the glory. His last recorded words were, ***"Lord, do not charge them with this sin" Acts 7:60.***

Doctrine is important to our conscience

The apostle Paul told Timothy to ***"charge [command] some that they teach no other doctrine" 1 Timothy 1:3.*** He then says, ***"Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith" 1 Timothy 1:5.*** The purpose of the command to teach nothing other than the ***"apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42),*** is to produce love ***from a good conscience.*** True doctrine living in us results in a lifestyle of genuine love from a conscience that is clear due to the motives of a ***pure heart.***

Do not sear your conscience

The opposite is also true that if we ***"give heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons"*** we end up ***"speaking lies in hypocrisy, having our own conscience seared with a hot iron" 1 Timothy 4:1-2.*** Beware of denominational, religiously binding "church" doctrine! Unfortunately, some can be trapped teaching and preaching things they ***know in their conscience is not true!*** If you continue doing this, you can ***sear your conscience with a hot iron.*** This means that it becomes less and less sensitive to the truth. You have every right and are even obliged to listen to your conscience and not preach and teach contrary to it. The more you hear the true Word of God, the more tuned your conscience is to the truth and the more your conscience will prick you when something is against the truth. Listen to your conscience.

CLEANSING OUR CONSCIENCE

Having a perfect conscience

Under the Old Covenant the Tabernacle services were ***"symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the***

service perfect in regard to the conscience” Hebrews 9:9. The sacrifices and service performed under the Old Covenant could not make us *perfect in regard to the conscience*. God wants us to have a *perfect conscience*. This means having a *mature, complete, whole and perfect* conscience. The sacrifices of animals under the Old Covenant could not do it as these were *“imposed until the time of reformation” Hebrews 9:10.* We are now in the reformation! What was *symbolic* now takes form. Jesus has become the ultimate sacrifice and is able, through that sacrifice, to *perfect our conscience*. It is possible to live with a perfect, undefiled conscience toward God!

No more consciousness of sins

In **Hebrews 10:1-2** the emphasis again is on the inability of the Old Testament sacrifices to make us perfect, as the law only has *“the shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things” (v.1)* and so cannot make us perfect. If it could make us perfect then *“would they not have ceased to be offered? For the worshipers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins” v.2.* This is amazing! The word *consciousness* is the same Greek word [Strong’s Greek #4893 – ‘suneidesis’] translated as *conscience* elsewhere. God’s plan has always been to finally remove in us the very *consciousness of sins*. The sacrifice of Jesus is the *“very image”* of the shadows that were the animal sacrifices under the law.

The sacrifice of Jesus takes away the *knowing* of sins in our life. We are no longer conscious of our sins. We become more and more aware of the power of Jesus’ sacrifice and the righteousness that has now been imputed to us by faith in Him! We are now more conscious of *“Christ in us; the hope of glory” Colossians 1:27.* We are no longer conscious of sins committed because the sacrifice of Jesus has dealt with them all and now *“Jesus Christ is in you” 2 Corinthians 13:5.* We do not need to live being reminded of our sins anymore. *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” 1 John 1:9.* We live in the consciousness of being forgiven, redeemed, justified, placed as sons, and glorified! (**Eph.1:5-7, Rom.8:30**) What a freedom! We have an *“Advocate with the Father” 1 John 2:1.* His sacrifice is enough! We are now conscious of Jesus and what He has accomplished!

Cleansed from dead works

The sacrifices under the Old Covenant could only *“sanctify for the purifying of the flesh” Hebrews 9:13b.* They could only make one ceremonially, religiously and externally clean. It could not deal with the conscience. But *“how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God” Hebrews 9:14.* Because Jesus was God in the flesh, He could offer Himself *“through the Eternal Spirit”*. The blood of Jesus can work in the invisible parts of us, in our spirit, affecting our *conscience*. The blood of Christ works spiritually and deals with the issue of an unclean conscience.

To serve the living God

The blood of Jesus is able to *cleanse our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb.9:14b).* Many Christians make the mistake of trying to serve God in order to

cleanse their conscience. “If I just do all these things for God then my conscience will be clear”, “If I go to church and pay my tithes then I will be right with God in my conscience”. This is wrong thinking. Those are **dead works**. No amount of *trying to live for God* will ever cleanse our conscience. It is only the **blood of Christ** that can cleanse our conscience. We walk by faith!

As we put our trust totally in the power and ability of the blood of Christ to cleanse our conscience we will find a great release of freedom! We will have a clean, clear and good conscience and then we will be able to **serve the living God!** We are cleansed from trying to do religious works to clear our conscience. We get our conscience cleansed by the blood of Jesus so that we are then able to serve God being cleared of guilt and condemnation. The apostle Paul, even after his violent history against believers in Jesus, was able to say, “**I thank my God, whom I serve with a pure conscience...**” **2 Timothy 1:3**. May we also learn to serve with and out of a pure, cleansed conscience! Then you will be bold to declare and testify the wonderful works of God in your life!

Sprinkled from an evil conscience

Due to now having “**boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way**” (Heb.10:19-20a) we can “**draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience**” (Heb.10:22). The *sprinkling* referred to here is the “**sprinkling of the blood of Christ**” (1 Pet.1:2) and is also referred to as the “**blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel**” Hebrews 12:24. Our hearts are sprinkled by the blood of Jesus and we are “**sprinkled from an evil conscience**”.

The word *evil* is an interesting word. It is the Greek word *poneros* and it means: *hurtful, evil in effect or influence in contrast to being essentially evil. It means calamitous, diseased, culpable, mischievous, vicious, annoying, full of hardships, pressed, harassed, causing pain and trouble* [Strong’s Concordance Greek #4190 & Thayer’s].

God does not want you to live with a conscience that is harassing you, being vicious towards you, causing you pain or trouble, annoying you or being mischievous and playing up on you! He wants you free from regret, and the torturing effect of past sins and bad decisions we have made! Let the blood of Christ sprinkle your heart from this perilous conscience that never leaves you alone. It is time to be free from **an evil conscience** and to learn to walk in a cleansed and good conscience! Sometimes we think the devil is harassing us but it can actually simply be our own conscience. If it is the devil you can get rid of him. But you cannot get rid of your conscience! You need it sprinkled by the blood of Jesus! It is the only remedy!

The answer of a good conscience

The apostle Peter explains that the salvation of Noah and his family in the ark during the flood has an “**antitype [a counterpart or fulfilment] which now saves us – baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ**” **1 Peter 3:21**. Baptism does not save us by removing the filth of the flesh. It is the **blood of Christ** which **cleanses our conscience** and **sprinkles us from an evil conscience!** But then the **answer of a good conscience**, a conscience cleansed, is to be **baptised** into the resurrection power of Jesus so that you can “**walk in newness of life**” **Romans 6:4b**. By believing in Jesus death and resurrection, the blood of Jesus works to cleanse

our conscience from sins, dead works and harassing us. The result and answer of that conscience is to enter resurrection life through baptism into Christ and live with ***no more consciousness of sins!***

Living in a good conscience

When apostle Paul spoke to the Hebrews upon his arrest in Jerusalem he said, ***“I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day” Acts 23:1.*** We are to keep a good conscience before God. Does this mean we never sin? Of course not. But it means we take responsibility for our sins when our conscience makes us aware of sin and we repent, confess our sins and believe in the blood to cleanse us and forgive us. A ***good conscience*** makes us bold in the faith and able to walk straight and confidently in the knowledge that God is with us, ***“having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed” 1 Peter 3:16.*** Listen to your conscience. Remember that the true doctrine is to produce ***love...from a good conscience (1 Tim.1:5)*** and that we are to be ***“confident that we have a good conscience, in all things desiring to live honourably” Hebrews 13:18.***

And finally, dear brethren, allow God to ***perfect, cleanse and sprinkle your heart from an evil conscience so that you can be free to serve the living God!***

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