

## FOR WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?

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In Romans 4:3, the Apostle Paul asked "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Again in Galatians 4:30 "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." In both passages under consideration Paul made an appeal to the scripture. How different that is from what happens today. Many make appeals to almost everything imaginable before even considering what God says. What a tragedy this is. Such practices lead to, not only a disregard for what the bible says, but an emphasis on things that in the final analysis can never settle the real issues of life.

Many today appeal to social standards. Instead of asking "what saith the scriptures", they ask "what saith society?" Are other people doing it?, do they believe it?, is it popular? Society can never make determinations of right and wrong. Only the bible can do that. Any sense of security that comes from being in step with the rest of the world, is short lived and false. Social standards change from time to time, creating uncertainty and doubt about what is right or wrong.

Others appeal to family beliefs and traditions. What do my ancestors think? What has our family always believed? These are the questions asked by many. Such reasoning overlooks a very important point i.e. if we follow what others have believed before us, we never change. We never learn from past mistakes. Suppose the son of an atheist became one just because his father had been an unbeliever? Suppose a Hindu remained one because of his ancestors? Such reasoning would cause us to remain in error and never allow us the opportunity to learn truth and change when necessary. These are false approaches to a determination of what is right.

Our appeal must always be to the bible and only the bible. "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." (1Pet.4:11) This simply means that when men preach they should preach only that which is revealed in the word of God. No more, no less. Our attitude should be that of Peter and John who when "they were commanded...not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus," replied "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard." (Acts4:18-20) What the world needs today, are men who will boldly declare the scriptures in their fullness and plainness.

### THE GOSPEL PREACHER

The Gospel preacher is commanded to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2Tim.4:2) In delivering the sacred message preachers should have the following qualities:

### QUALITIES AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOSPEL PREACHERS AND PREACHING

### 1. LOVE, A PURE HEART, AND UNFEIGNED FAITH.

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (1Tim.1:5). Preaching the gospel demands that the message come from a pure heart; from a man whose faith is sincere. Any man who does not love the Lord and His word cannot be successful as a preacher. Today those who preach for fame or money do great harm to the cause of truth and right.

### 2. A GOOD SOLDIER.

Those who preach must be good soldiers and war a good warfare. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." (1Tim.6:12) The preacher must be faithful to his position and responsibilities. He cannot drawback from confrontation. Nor can he run from the enemy. He must stand up and fight to the end. In spite of foes, disappointment, or discouragement, his duty is clear. We need more fighters today. More men who are not afraid to stand up for the right.

### 3. A PURE EXAMPLE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FAITH.

"Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (1Tim.5:22). "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God" (1Tim.3:15). "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1Tim.4:16). All of these scriptures testify to the necessity of a pure life for those men who preach the gospel. He cannot share in the sins of others. He must realize the high price of becoming involved with wrong doing. Not only does his own reputation suffer, but the truth and Church suffer as well. Behavior is a part of the preacher everywhere he goes, and often speaks louder than his sermons. Those who preach one thing and practice something entirely different, send mixed signals which confuse and mislead. Scandals in religion are regrettable and extremely hurtful.

### 4. NO LOVER OF MONEY

Far too many have fallen into this pitfall. Preaching for money has spelled the doom of men who otherwise could have been useful to the cause of truth and right. Men who beg for money over the air-waves, betray their real reason for preaching. Men who grab from their listeners every penny they can are a disgrace to the lofty position they claim to occupy. When men ask for donations, promising to send a "prayer cloth" or "bottle of oil" that is supposed to heal one of all infirmities, LOOK OUT, for you are about to be taken. Neither the cloth nor the oil will heal you, and your money will be gone forever. We are taught in the scripture that "godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a

snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows(1 Timothy 6:6-10). Shame on any man who uses preaching for worldly gain.

#### 5. MUST NOT BE ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16). The man of God cannot be ashamed of the commands or promises of the gospel. We should take glory in its power and prospects. The fact that it can transform the vilest of sinners causes us to stand in awe of its power.

#### 6. MUST PREACH THE WORD.

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."(2Tim.2:4) Timothy was commanded to preach the word. Not his opinion. Preaching the word is not telling stories, not sharing personal ideas as opposed to God's ideas. Far too many spend valuable time talking about what famous people think, rather than telling what God says.

#### 7. Study the Bible.

Finally the man of God must study the bible. "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2Tim.2:15). Studying the wrong thing or source will result in the wrong thing being preached. When a man preaches for thirty minutes and never reads or quotes one bible verse, something is wrong. The man has been studying the wrong material. Much preaching today is made up of human wisdom and relies on human sources. The result is false religion. Friend, WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES?

Does that concern you? Are you interested in what God thinks of matters? You should be. The next time you ask your preacher a bible question, be sure his answer is from the scriptures and not from his opinions or human sources.