

A CONSCIENCE WITHOUT OFFENSE

Introduction

- 1) **Psalm 32** – a contemplation of David (meditation, reflection, observation)
 - a) Vv. 1-2 = the blessedness and joy of the forgiveness of sins
 - b) Vv. 3-4 = the state of David’s mind when he kept silent about his sins
 - i) Bones grew “old,” groaning all day, God’s heavy hand, vitality dried up
- 2) What was his problem – Sickness? Accident? Depression? It was a **guilty conscience!**
- 3) A guilty conscious is hard, but is normal functioning of a healthy, well-trained conscience
- 4) What is my “conscience”? How do I deal with a guilty conscience?
- 5) **Our goal:** a “conscience *without offense* toward God and men” (Acts 24:16)

I) **The Conscience is a Personal Judge**

- A) Everyone has some personal standard of right and wrong, and the conscience judges, or governs, our actions in light of this standard
- B) A good conscience persuades us to do what **we believe** to be right (Rom. 13:5)
 - 1) The same conscience will weigh guilt on us when we do wrong (“how live with myself?”)
- C) Gentiles of old were aware of God’s moral law and were help responsible (Rom. 2:14-15)
 - 1) Their conscience bore witness to this fact by internally judging their actions
- D) Paul’s conscience bore witness that he told the truth (Rom. 9:1); not lie in good conscience
- E) **John 8:7-9** – the conscience in action; their consciences made a judgment that they could not continue in their hypocritical actions

II) **The Conscience is NOT our Standard of Truth**

- A) Paul had a good conscience even while he was acting in error (Acts 24:16; 26:9; Jn. 16:2)
 - 1) A conscience can be judging our actions according to a false standard – this is a misguided, misinformed conscience (dangerous!!)
 - 2) Doing what one **thinks** is right does not make the action itself right!
 - 3) Truth is objective and absolute, not subjective and changeable
 - 4) This is why our conscience is **not** our standard, but simply a judge of how consistent we are with the standard we accept; the “judge” must follow the **right standard**
- B) The word of Christ is the **only** right standard for man to follow to please God today

III) **Truth will Confront the Guilty Conscience – Two Choices:**

- A) **Searing** (1 Tim. 4:1-2)
 - 1) Still do what is wrong, but not feel pain of a guilty conscience – bad condition!
- B) **Purging** (Heb. 9:14; 10:22)
 - 1) A good conscience will heed and obey the call of God’s word, turning from wrong to right, and will be purged from the guilt of sin (1 Pet. 3:21)
 - 2) A truly good conscience will obey God’s word and **know** that we are right in what we say and do regardless of what others say (1 Pet. 3:13-17)

IV) **Confession and Forgiveness – The Cure for the Christian’s Guilty Conscience**

- A) **Psalm 32:5** – confession and forgiveness bring relief and blessedness (vv. 1-2)
 - 1) We are to repent and confess our sins (1 Jn. 1:9; Acts 8:21-24)
 - 2) If we refuse, the weight of sin on our guilty conscience will be enormous, and should be!

Conclusion

Do not bring a guilty conscience to the final judgment! Do you desire a conscience without offense, or the horrible weight and guilt of a conscience burdened with sin? Obey God today.