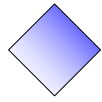


The Voice of Truth



March 9, 2014

The Eyes Of The Lord By Jimmy Pettigrew

God is watching! *“For the eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, And his ears unto their supplication: But the face of the Lord is upon them that do evil”* (1 Peter 3:12). The righteous are the ones over whom God watches to bless them. They are here contrasted with *them that do evil*. God’s protection, guardianship, and care are so meaningful for the Christian. God sees all that happens on the earth. We are prone to accept only that which is visible, and since we cannot see God watching, we are unmindful of His constant surveillance!

So, it is difficult for any of us to remember always that there is an all seeing eye watching our every our every act at all times. Yet, we’re told, *“Jehovah looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men; From the place of his habitation he looketh forth upon all the inhabitants of the earth, He that fashioneth the hearts of them all, that considereth all their works”* (Psalm 33:13-14). God sees and knows all that takes place in the world. *“The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good”* (Proverbs 15:3). There is no possible way to escape this all seeing eye of God! Job says, *“For his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings”* (Job 34:21). God sees all! The ungodly try to forget it and often succeed in banishing Him out of their thoughts (Psalm 10:4). Yet, despite all their efforts to hide, still He sees them. His eyes are in every place. Heaven, hell, and the secret places of the earth are all open before Him (Proverbs 15:11; Psalm 139:8). He is watching the evil; whether the king is on his throne (Acts 12:23); or in his palace (Daniel 5:5); or the servant indulging in his secret sin (2 Kings 5:20). Yes - he may shut out the sun, but he cannot shut out the eye of God, no darkness or deep shadow can hide man (Job 34:21-22; Jeremiah 16:17). Reckless indeed is he to do or think that he could hide from God; and then - such is the root of atheism (Psalm 14:1) - thinking he can do so (Isaiah 29:15).

Since God knows all our goings, we should be aware of this, and live accordingly! We should have the same con-

viction as Hagar in saying, *“Thou God seest me”* (Genesis 16:13). Are you conscious of this as you plan and proceed in your daily affairs? God sees and reads us constantly! *“Hell and destruction are before the Lord: how much more then the hearts of the children of men?”* (Proverbs 15:11). Hell and destruction; every recess of the vast Hades; the state of the dead, and the place of the damned - are before the Lord, before His eyes; completely known to Him. How much more, then, the hearts of the children of men (1 John 3:20), no matter how unsearchable they are (Jeremiah 17:9-10)! There's no depth in them that He cannot fathom; no deceit so complicated, that he can't track them. Words aren't needed in order for Him to lay open the heart. He perceived Aaron's rebellious feelings as easily as Moses' angry words (Numbers 20:12, 24). The inward hypocrisy of His people was as open before Him, as if it had been stamped upon their foreheads (Deut. 5:28-29; Zeph. 1:12).

Yet, what a mass of practical unbelief there is in this plainly conclusive truth! For would men dare to tolerate their vain thoughts, light notions, trifles, impurities, if they really believed that the Lord searches their hearts? Would they attempt to conceal anything from His eye (Isaiah 29:15)? OH! Isn't it an overwhelming moment when a man has to stand the test of this searching eye? Brethren, make no mistake about it, your heart is open before your God. No covering of deceit can ever stand His searching eye. And all refuges of lies are pierced and laid bare. Though many of these passages are so well known, yet, how much have they really influenced our personal lives? Are we conscious throughout every day that God is silently observing our deeds and hearing our speech?

We can no more hide from God than could Adam and Eve in the garden. God knew why the prophet (Elijah) was hiding in the cave. Jonah was not hidden from God in the ship, nor yet in the belly of the great fish. Man cannot escape from Him. There is nothing that can hide from God!

Continued on Page Two

In This Issue...

Pages 1 to 2 - The Eyes Of The Lord
Pages 2 to 3 - “Are All Religions Equal?” | MOST OF THE TIME

Page 4 - Just A Matter Of Wanting To! | THINK! THINK! THINK!
Page 4 - What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Continued from Page One, "The Eyes Of The Lord"

And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do (Hebrews 4:13).

God is observing all we do, and hearing all we say. Just remember that God is really watching! ♦

"Are All Religions Equal?"

By Jarrod Jacobs

In our land of freedom, we are well aware of the fact that our Constitution enumerates various freedoms, including the freedom of religion. Folks in our country can worship Jehovah, or nothing at all. We can worship nature, or the stars. We can worship self. Our country affords us the right to worship or not worship as we please. This is a man-made law, true, but I am thankful to God for it because such a right allows me to preach, teach, write, etc., and spread the gospel in this country in freedom. In this country, I do not have to worry about retaliation taken by the government or others in authority against me simply because I am spreading God's word. The apostles would have loved to have seen a day when they could preach the gospel and not be in danger of a prison cell or death.

In this society, though, such a right is a "double-edged sword." This is because while we have the right to spread the gospel, so also do people have the right to spread the doctrines of men and call it "religion." Therefore, we see various religions of men taught and promoted as "good" and often presented on an equal plane with the gospel found in the New Testament. Yet, can we say that any religion one chooses is as good as, or equal to the religion found within the pages of God's word? Absolutely not! Sadly, I observe people who have a tendency to consider each religion "equal". Their attitude is, "Put all religions in a sack, shake them up, and accept whichever one falls out." Friends, beware!

Many Religions In The World Today.

There are literally thousands of religious groups these days. Their doctrines vary, as do their practices, but they are nonetheless available to the "seeker." We could go from Astrology to Zoroastrianism, and do nothing but further the confusion most folks feel when it comes to spiritual matters. How can we know what (if anything) is true religiously? Is there such a thing? In our culture, we are encouraged to believe that anything and everything can be categorized as "religious" so long as we believe in God. Social movements called "pluralism" encourage people to believe whatever they want. There is a cry today for "religious tolerance," wherein we are told that all religions are equal, worthwhile, and produce good things in people, in society, etc. Therefore we are told that we need to accept all religions. Yes, man tells us that all religions are

equal in purpose and function.

In such cases, for someone to even suggest that there is only one true religion, this person is considered a bigot, narrow-minded, prejudiced, and the like. It is interesting for me to observe that the only "intolerance" that the religiously "tolerant" people tolerate is being "intolerant" to those who say there is only one true religion which worships the one true God!

A Standard Is Needed.

If we are ever going to learn about true religion, then we cannot merely claim to follow the one true God. Following the one true God demands that we submit to the right standard of authority. In other words, as John told us to not only love in word, but also in deed and truth (**I Jn. 3:18**), so also, we need to claim respect for God's authority, and also submit to that authority (**Col. 3:17**). Therefore, upon what will we base our standard of authority? Will our authority be the U.S. Constitution? Will it be a denominational creed book? Will we follow the writings of Confucius? Will we encourage folks to listen to other philosophers? What will it be?

Many in our culture answer this question of authority in a variety of ways. However, if we are going to follow the religion God prescribes, then we need to follow what He says in the Scripture! How can we know what God wants? We can know what God wants when we listen to Him. In order for this to happen, we need to be reading and following the Bible (**Eph. 3:4; Mk. 4:23**).

What Has God Said About Religion?

When we read and study the Bible, we see that God allows for only one true religion. The religions invented by men are not to be considered "equal" to, or similar to what God made. This fact is made clear when we read the Scriptures, and find God condemning folks for perverting pure worship. Such actions began with Cain (**Gen. 4:5-7**), continued through the times of the Israelites (**Ex. 20**), into the time of the kings (**I Kings 12-13**), and finally the condemnation of the Jews who had perverted God's worship (**Mal. 1:7-8, 10, 12-14**). When Jesus walked the earth, He told the woman at the well, "*Woman, believe me, the hour*

Continued on Page Three

Continued from Page Two, "Are All Religions Equal?"

is coming when neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him" (Jn. 4:21-23). On another occasion, He condemned the Pharisees for their false teaching. He told them, "You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said, "This people draws near to me with their mouth, and honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:7-9). Obviously, He thought there was only one religion which was pleasing to God!

Today, it is the same. "God is a Spirit: and those who worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth" (Jn. 4:24). That word "must" is a key word. When we see that word "must" in the Bible, we know there is no option except to do it exactly as God prescribes. Too, we must worship "Him" (God) "in spirit and in truth". God our Creator makes sure that we understand that we worship Him, and in so doing, we worship Him a certain way! This was true with Cain and Abel. Remember, one was accepted, and the other rejected (Gen. 4:1-11). This fact was true in the days the Jews lived under the law of Moses. In like manner, it is true today for those of us who live under the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2; Col. 2:14; Heb. 8:13). We are subject to this "new" law, this "better covenant established upon better promises" (Heb. 8:6). When we understand this, then we will be open to listening to what God has said in terms of true worship and true religion.

All Religions Are Not Equal.

Having learned what we have about God's word, and the need for respecting His authority, we can be assured that all religions are not equal! When we remember that God has only one religion, then we know that all religions cannot be equal.

For further proof that all religions are not equal, remember that Jesus promised to die for His church, and nothing else (Matt. 16:18). His blood was shed to redeem His people (Matt. 26:28). No other world leader, or religious philosopher made such a claim. In addition to this, let us be reminded that many religions (ex: Islam) use carnal force in order to press and promote their precepts. Yet, the Bible tells Christians, "For though we walk in the flesh, we are not waging war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5). Study what James was inspired to write: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world" (Jas. 1:27). This definition is far different from what much of the world describes as "religion." No, all religions are not equal. There is only one true religion, and it was authored by the one true God!

Conclusion

Don't be fooled by men into thinking that all religions are equal. There is **only one** religion God endorses, and it has its origin with Christ (Matt. 16:18), the founder of His church (Rom. 16:16). His people wear His name (Acts 11:26), and live faithfully for Him (Rev. 2:10).

Credit: The Old Paths - 2/16/14 ♦

MOST OF THE TIME

One day I was talking to a man who was supposed to be a Christian. He told me he attended services "most of the time," and seemed to think this put him in a good relationship with God ... Now, please, think about it!!!

What if a husband was faithful to his wife most of the time?

What if your car started most of the time?

What if your heart beat most of the time?

What if you showed up for work most of the time?

What if you received your pay-check most of the time?

What if.....?

Then, WHY, should one think he can please God by being faithful most of the time?

From "The Voice of Truth", July 9, 2006 ♦

**A faith that will not take us to
Every services of the Lord's church
Will not take us to heaven! ♦**

Just A Matter Of Wanting To!

A man can get out of bed at three o'clock on Saturday morning to go fishing, but when you talk to him about Sunday morning Bible class, he can't get up that early on Sunday!

Why The Difference???

A man can go a hundred miles on Friday night to a ball game, but is too tired to get out for worship on Sunday and Wednesday night?

Why The Difference???

A man can take his family to a circus and spend considerable money, but can't afford to give more than a dollar to the Lord!

Why The Difference???

A man can be on the membership committee at the civil club but cannot make the right approach when asked to do personal work for the Lord!

Why The Difference???

A man can take an aspirin and go to work despite an annoying headache, but a similar headache is considered a good reason for missing the worship!

Why The Difference???

THINK! THINK! THINK!

What sort of church would the Lord's church be if every member were just like me? ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

About the Hillcrest church of Christ

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Our Address

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Schedule of Assembly

Bible Study: Sunday, 9:00am
Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

www.hillcrestchurchofchrist.com