

Preaching Fear

One of the strange phenomena of our day is the spectacle of religion dropping the appeal to fear while other human interests have picked it up. Just look around. Everybody is preaching fear except the church.

We are being taught to fear everything from AIDS to radon, from the hole in the ozone to the cutting down of the rain forests. We see fear as a good thing - something worthwhile and productive.

We want people to fear except when it comes to religion. Then it becomes a "no, no." We are enjoined to talk exclusively about the love of God. Don't mention the wrath of God. Don't talk about hell. Don't warn the disobedient. So, we are told, don't preach the fear of God.

". . . Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear" (1 Peter 1:17). Living in fear! It's the right thing to do!

- by **John Gibson**

Counting Noses

One of the most common devices of the advocates of error in all ages has been that of counting up the number of persons who adhere to, or have adhered to a certain theory or system, as proof that it is true.

In the days of Ahab, there were four hundred prophets claiming to be prophets of Jehovah who said that if he and Jehoshaphat went up to Ramoth-Gilead to battle, the Lord would prosper them, While Micaiah alone said the opposite. Ahab had four hundred to one in favor of his enterprise, yet he went and lost his life, as the one prophet said he would.

- by **J. W. McGarvey**

What about Reincarnation?

The concept of reincarnation is becoming increasingly popular. Oriental religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism, have taught it for centuries. More recently it has been popularized by the New Age movement and the entertainment industry. The doctrine says that, when a person dies, his spirit will be reborn in another body -- perhaps as a person of a different social level, an animal, or even a god.

Does this idea agree with the Bible? Hebrews 9:27 says: "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Notice that each person dies only once. He does not experience a repeated cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. Then after death comes, not another life on earth, but rather judgment.

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5: 10). Everyone will be judged according to what he has done in the body. This shows that each person will have only one body -- it says "body" (singular) not "bodies" (plural).

What happens after judgment? Do we then receive another physical body or another life? Will there be another chance to make up for evil done in this life? Matthew chapter 25 describes the judgment, showing the wicked will be separated from the righteous. Verse 46 concludes that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

God's plan provides for each person to have one life in one body. Our eternal destiny is determined by how we live this one life. The concept of multiple lives is fundamental to Oriental idolatry, but it is as foreign to the Bible as the heathen concept of multiple gods!

- by **David E. Pratte**

So Much Time to Read the Bible

How much time does it take to read from Genesis to Revelation? If you would read the Bible at a standard pulpit speed (slow enough to be heard and understood), the reading time would be seventy-one (71) hours. If you would break that down into minutes and divide it into 365 days , you could read the entire Bible, cover to cover in only 12 minutes a day. Is this too much time to

Traditional vs. Non-Traditional

It seems that many of our brethren are determined to be 'non-traditional' in their beliefs and practices. It has almost reached the point where being 'traditional' is now the uncommon thing! The approach and mindset of some is apparently: 'If this is the way it has always been done, it must be wrong – let's change it.'

Concerning this 'non-traditional' way of thinking, let us offer these observations:

1. If any 'tradition' is being bound in place of, or in favor of, God's law, then such 'tradition' should be immediately exposed, denounced, and discarded. In rebuking the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said: "For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men . . . Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition . . . Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition . . ." (Mark 7:8-13). Let us never be guilty of binding our human traditions as they did.
2. Remember that some 'traditions' are handed down to us by divine inspiration, and these are important and necessary to our salvation. Paul said: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thess. 2:15). And he instructed this: "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (2 Thess. 3:6). Therefore it is essential that we honor every God-given 'tradition'.
3. Finally, think about this: Things that are done 'traditionally' (based upon lawful areas of judgment) have become 'traditional' for a reason. Basically, these specific ways and means have been chosen because they work well. Good and wise brethren have seen the expediency of these methods over time, and thus they have grown to be the 'norm'. Changing these things just to demonstrate that we are 'non-traditional' is neither prudent nor necessary. Think!

- *by Greg Gwin*