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### Conscience and Reconciliation

W. O. Vaught

*Ouachita Baptist University*

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## CONSCIENCE AND RECONCILIATION

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF HEBREWS  
NUMBER 145  
HEBREWS 13:18-20

Dr. W. O. Vaught  
Immanuel Baptist Church  
Little Rock, Arkansas

We have already studied the first phrase of verse 18, "Be praying about us." Now we come to the matter of conscience. This verse says, "For we trust we have a good conscience." The word "for" is the explanatory use of the particle gar. This command for prayer needs an explanation and that explanation is now going to be given.

### Prayer Rather Than Criticism

It is quite evident that the people to whom this message is being sent have been quite critical of the writer (whoever this writer happened to be) and he is asking them to pray for him rather than to be critical of him. The idea is this--you can't be critical of someone and pray for them at the same time.

The words translated "we trust" come from the present, middle, indicative of peitho and it means "to be persuaded." This is an historical present and means a past event viewed with the vividness of a present occurrence. The next is the present, active, indicative of echo with hoti so we translate this "that we keep having." The words "good conscience" come from kalos and suneidesis so it means "an honorable conscience." The writer is simply saying in a very nice way to these recipients of Hebrews that he is right and they are wrong in their criticism of him.

Thus far in this part of this verse we have, "For we are emphatically persuaded that we keep having an honorable conscience."

### THE DOCTRINE OF CONSCIENCE

#### 1. DEFINITION.

Conscience is a norm or standard which resides in the mentality of the soul.

Self-Consciousness

Mentality--Left lobe called mind or nous  
Right lobe called heart or kardia

Volition

Conscience

Emotion

Old Sin Nature

These are the elements in the soul and the conscience is simply the sum total of the norms and standards of the soul. Even a criminal has some norms and standards. The conscience is located in the right lobe of the mentality and this is found in Romans 2:15 and Titus 1:15.

2. THE CONSCIENCE HAS TWO SETS OF NORMS AND STANDARDS.  
One set of these norms and standards is for human relationships and the other set of norms and standards is for divine relationships. (Acts 24:16)
3. THE CONSCIENCE TELLS YOU WHAT IS WRONG AND WHAT IS RIGHT.  
Your conscience convicts you of evil. (John 8:9)  
These norms and standards in you cause you to say something is right or wrong. Learn to make a distinction between your conscience which tells you whether a thing is right or wrong, and your volition where there is a negative and positive pole and where you make the decision to go right or wrong. The old sin nature tells you to never follow your conscience in anything but follow the old sin nature. The old sin nature tells you that he will tell you what is right and what is wrong and that's right where the inner conflict comes. When you violate your own conscience and you do it long enough, then you have some kind of mental breakdown. It starts out with what we call a guilty conscience and it turns into a guilt complex.
4. THE CONSCIENCE ESTABLISHES NORMS FOR MORALITY.  
It also establishes norms for laws of establishment and determines our relationship with God. (Romans 2:15)
5. FALSE NORMS AND STANDARDS IN THE SOUL LEAD PEOPLE ASTRAY.  
This is the way to get into legalism and self-righteousness. (1 Cor. 8:7)  
Immediately after man fell in the Garden false norms and standards were present. Once the old sin nature moved in, immediately some false norms and standards came into being. They thought if they could get right with each other, then they could get right with God and we have what we call "operation fig leaves." But instead of their problems being over, their problems had just begun. "Operation fig leaves" turned into self-righteousness. Sooner or later every person in the world is tempted to put a fig leaf over his soul. This is the way socialism or communism or any other kind of false system moves in. False standards can wash away the right standards. Don't destroy a whole lifetime of fun and happiness just for one night of momentary pleasure. It takes the right norms and standards to have maturity.
6. THE CONSCIENCE SETS UP LAWS FOR LIVING.  
The laws of liberty and expediency and supreme sacrifice come into their proper place when the conscience is filled with correct norms and standards. (1 Cor. 10:24-29)
7. CONSCIENCE IS THE BASIS FOR PATRIOTISM.  
(Romans 13:5)

8. A TRUE CONSCIENCE GUIDED BY TRUTH AND HAPPINESS GO TOGETHER.  
You can't go against the standards of your own conscience and be happy. You can't violate your own standards and be happy. (2 Cor. 1:12)
9. PROPER NORMS AND STANDARDS COMMUNICATE TRUE DOCTRINE.  
(2 Cor. 4:2)  
This is the way to avoid dishonesty and academic snobbery.
10. UNDERSTANDING GRACE GOES WITH A TRUE CONSCIENCE.  
(1 Timothy 1:5 and 19, 1 Timothy 3:9)
11. NEGATIVE VOLITION TOWARD DOCTRINE CAN DISTORT THE CONSCIENCE.  
Scar tissue on the soul can destroy the right norms and standards in the conscience.
12. CONSCIENCE ESTABLISHES NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR SERVING GOD.  
(2 Timothy 1:3, Hebrews 9:14)
13. CONSCIENCE IS WHERE YOU GROW TO HAVE CAPACITY FOR LIFE.  
(1 Peter 2:19, 1 Peter 3:16)  
This is the way to successfully handle all your problems in the Biblical way.

CERTAIN THINGS THAT FEED THE CONSCIENCE

- a. Original environment.  
You can't blame everything on environment, but it is vitally important. Your original norms and standards come out of your early environment. The genes of our parents give us certain things, but early environment has much to do with our lives. A stabilized early environment gives us a strong conscience to build on.
- b. Right kind of discipline  
Someone has said if parents give children love before they are 21, then the children will hate them after they pass 21. But if they give them discipline before they are 21, they will love them once they are past 21.
- c. Hero Worship  
Hero images come along to normal children and this greatly influences their conscience.

In this passage we have the words "an honorable conscience." Then we have "In all things" and this means in every facet of life. The next word is the present, active, participle of thello and it means "desiring." This is the use of the volition of the soul. This is a retroactive present, something that began in the past and continues on into the present. We also call it the present tense of duration. This participle shows the purpose. The words "to live" is the present, middle, infinitive of anastrepho and it really means life-style. Then we have the adverb from kalos meaning "noble."

So this complete verse says, "Be praying for us, for we are persuaded that we keep having an honorable conscience in all facets of life, constantly desiring to have a life-style in a noble manner."

HEBREWS 13:19 "But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner." The little particle de which begins this sentence might be translated "Now then." "I beseech" is from parakaleo and means "to urge." The next word "rather" comes from pressos and is a comparative and should read "even more." So thus far we have, "Now then, I urge you even more." Next we have the aorist, active, infinitive of poieo. It carried the concept of beginning to do something they have not been doing. This is an infinitive of command. The word autos translated "this" refers back to the command to pray for him. Next we have hina translated "that." He wants them to pray for something specific. This writer of Hebrews, whoever he was, wanted to come back to Jerusalem and be with them when Jerusalem would be destroyed. "I may be restored" is the aorist, passive, subjunctive of apokathhisteimi. It means to restore something to its former estate. This lets us know that he had been their pastor at one time in the past and he wants to come back to Jerusalem to be with them in those last sad declining days just before their destruction. Jerusalem had become the Satanic headquarters.

#### This Tells Us Something About The Author of Hebrews

This lets us know he had once been pastor in Jerusalem. He wanted to return to them. He wanted one last chance to teach them some doctrine before they went down. He knew they had been totally wrong and his doctrine was sound and true. So how do you recover your poise when you have been totally wrong? The way to do it is to pray for the one you have wronged. You build an altar in your soul and every day you offer the sacrifice of prayer. This all comes out of this aorist tense of this word apokathhisteimi. The passive voice means that he will receive this restoration. The subjunctive means that their volition was involved in this. He wanted to be restored "to all of you." Then we have a greek word that is misspelled. It is tacheio and should be tachion and it means sooner, but a better translation is "without delay."

So this 19th verse says, "Now then, I urge you even more that you do this in order that I might be restored to you without delay."

#### Summary

1. Noted in this original language is the idea of urgency. Urgency comes out of the idea that in three years Jerusalem will be destroyed.
2. The writer wants to stand by his congregation in times of disaster which he knows is coming soon.
3. The doctrine he has taught them in Hebrews is pertinent, but he wanted to be there in person to teach them additional doctrine.
4. Furthermore, he knows if they respond to his teaching some of them will clear out of there and be spared the destruction that is coming.

5. The writer of Hebrews and Jeremiah are parallel cases. Jeremiah ministered during the administration of the fifth cycle of discipline when it came the first time, and the author of Hebrews will be preaching to them at the time when the fifth cycle of discipline falls the second time.
6. According to verse 24 of this chapter the writer of Hebrews was in exile in Italy but he was ready to return to Jerusalem.

#### The Dramatic Conclusion Of Hebrews

In the New Testament we have the book of Ephesians to set the stage for our spiritual advancement. Now Hebrews picks up where Ephesians left off and goes on farther into the super grace life.

HEBREWS 13:20 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant." I call this a royal benediction. It begins with the little particle de and should be translated "In fact." Then we have ho Theos meaning "The God" and it is referring to God the Father, the author of the plan. Next we have the word eirene and that means prosperity, or blessing, or hello. Just like Shaloam in Hebrew means exactly the same thing. Either can mean "Don't be afraid I'm not going to kill you." It means there is no antagonism between us. So "The God of peace" means reconciliation.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF RECONCILIATION

##### 1. DEFINITION.

Redemption is directed toward sin, propitiation is directed toward God, and reconciliation is directed toward man. It is the removal of antagonism between a perfect God and a sinful man. Reconciliation is the removal of the barrier between sinful man and a perfect God. (Eph. 2:16, Col. 1:20-21, 2 Cor. 5:18)

##### 2. RECONCILIATION IS A PART OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

Three words are used to describe the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is the saving work of Christ on the cross. Redemption (toward sin), reconciliation (toward man) and propitiation (toward God). The blood of Christ is a synonym of the saving work of Christ on the cross.

Col. 1:20

The work of the cross is associated with reconciliation.  
(Ephesians 2:16)

##### 3. RECONCILIATION AND MANKIND.

In the concept of reconciliation, mankind is regarded as the enemy of God. (Romans 5:10 and Col. 1:21)

##### 4. PEACE IS A SYNONYM OF RECONCILIATION.

Reconciliation discovers man and finds he is the enemy of God, but the saving work of Christ on the cross makes peace between them. Eph. 2:14 compared to Ephesians 2:16, Col. 1:20, Heb. 13:20.

5. RECONCILIATION IS PORTRAYED IN THE LEVITICAL OFFERINGS.  
We see this in the peace offering of Leviticus 3. This depicts the entire doctrine of reconciliation as it was portrayed in Old Testament times. It presents Christ as removing the barrier between man and God. (Lev. 7:11-38, 8:15)
6. APPLICATION OF RECONCILIATION TO THE ROYAL FAMILY OF BELIEVERS.  
Every Church Age believer is an ambassador representing the Lord Jesus Christ here on this earth. The ministry of reconciliation touches every believer. (2 Cor. 5:18-20)
7. THE PROPHECY OF RECONCILIATION  
(Isaiah 57:19)
8. THE MECHANICS OF RECONCILIATION  
There is an impossible barrier, man on one side and God on the other.

Six items in the barrier

- a. Sin--All have sinned. The doctrine of redemption cancels out sin. (Gal. 3:13, Col. 1:14, Eph. 1:7, 1 Peter 1:18-19)
- b. The penalty of sin. The penalty of sin is removed by the doctrine of expiation. (Col. 2:14, Psalm 22:1-6)
- c. The problem of physical birth. This problem is solved by regeneration. (John 3:18, 1 Peter 1:23, Titus 3:5)
- d. The problem of relative righteousness. This is removed by imputation and vindication.  
Imputation---(Rom. 3:22, 9:30, 10:10, 2 Cor. 5:21, Phil. 3:9) He takes our minus R and gives us his plus R.  
Vindication--This is justification. (Rom. 4:1-5, 4:23 and 5:1, Gal. 2:16, Titus 3:7)
- e. The problem of the perfect character of God. God's essence cannot be compromised. He is immutable and never changes.
- f. Man's position in Adam. The problem is removed by positional sanctification. (1 Cor 15:22, 2 Cor. 5:17, Eph. 1:3-6)

This is what is meant by the term, in fact, the God of peace.