

Careful to Answer

By Robert Turner

When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were called before the king and faced charges of refusing to worship the golden image he had erected, Nebuchadnezzar asked, "Who is that god that shall deliver you out of my hands?" Things looked pretty dark.

But they replied, "We have no need to answer thee in this matter" (AS). The King James version reads, "We are not careful to answer thee in this matter" (**Dan. 3:15-16**). The thought seems to be, we will not choose our words carefully — concerned lest we offend; we will not try to "talk our way out of" this situation. And they added, "Our God is able to deliver us" (if it suits His purposes to do so) "but if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up."

Several years back a preacher said John (the Immerser) "lost his head" because he "lost his head" — he was not tactful in his criticism of Herod. John had said, of Herod's marriage to his brother Philip's wife, "It is not lawful for thee to have her" (**Matt. 14**).

John was not "careful to answer," someone might say. Well, he certainly was not trying to "butter up" the king. On the other hand, John and the captive Jews of **Daniel 3**, were very careful to maintain their faith in God and to court His approval. John lost his head, and the three Hebrews were thrown into the fiery furnace, but each gained more than he lost. We "have no need" for any man's approval as we have need for God's approval.

Jesus said, "Fear 'not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell" (**Matt. 10:28**).

We are not advocating crudeness! Daniel's brethren were respectful to the king; and love for souls will forbid our becoming a bully with the truth. Shouting, stomping pronouncements of Damnation are often signs of weakness, while genuine strength is accompanied by humility. But genuine strength speaks truthfully, directly and clearly, regardless of temporal consequences — and because of inevitable eternal consequences.



The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (**Matthew 5:16**)

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The Search for Assurance

By Paul Earnhart



Thought to Ponder

When Jesus Christ is in control of your life, you need never fear change or decay. The decay of the material only hastens the perfecting of the spiritual.

It was a discussion between preacher friends. We were wrestling with the question of how confident Christians ought to be, moment by moment, about their salvation. Some were arguing for an absolute assurance, others for a more cautious one. There is perhaps no concern which weaves its way so pervasively through the history of God's people as does the desire for assurance in one's relationship with God. Christians seem to vacillate between two contrasting themes of Scripture—assurance (**1 John 5:3**) and warning (**1 Corinthians 10:12**).

The subject of assurance has been hotly debated down through the centuries, especially in the Calvinist-Armenian controversies. Are all who have been converted to Christ unconditionally assured of their eternal salvation, or is the life of a Christian one of probation in which his relationship to God is conditioned on faithfulness? Nothing is more clearly established in Scripture than the possibility of apostasy. As certainly as the wicked can turn and be saved, so can the righteous fall and be lost

Remember that "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things" (**1 John 3:19-20**). Put confidence in His promises, not your feelings.

(**Ezekiel 18:21-26**). A Christian's fellowship with his Father is dependent upon an ongoing spirit of obedient **faith (Romans 11:19-22; 1 Corinthians 15:1-2; Colossians 1:22-23; Hebrews 3:6, 14)**.

Does this mean that we must live our lives in daily uncertainty about our relationship with God? Are we never, on this account, to experience any moment-by-moment assurance of our hope? This is a question which troubles many Christians and deserves study.

The evidence of Scripture on this *(Continued on page 2)*

Do You Have a Bible Question?
Call (334) 734-2133 or
E-mail:
LarryRouse@aubeacon.com



SCHEDULE OF SERVICES Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

Ask about our home Bible Study Groups!

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

Classes this Week

Kid's Class at the Building at 5:15 All Are Invited	Wed. AM Ladies' class at 10 at Manna Jones	Thursday Night Class at Jillian Petty's on Acts at 7 PM
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Fran Snyder (Mother of Carla Humphrey)	Pam Dial (Laura Weldon's Mother)	May Birthdays 1 - Barrett Gilbert 2 - Emily Anne Rouse 9 - Andrea Cason 10 - Ian Norman 11 - Caleb George 12 - Leslie Bridges 13 - Janna Hall 15 - Bryce Daniels Kerri Pender 16 - Shawna Harris 26 - Fallon Hartsell 28 - Candy Long 29 - Rebekah Parks
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Jared Nixon	
Adriana Mininno (Haley Chittam's Cousin)	Dave and Betty Bradford	
Ed Mort (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	"Grandmama" Odessa Wyatt (Dyle's grandmother)	
Gerald White (Christopher's and Wesley's Father)	Dave Brown (Friend of the Lanier's)	
Marty and Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Carrie Chavers (Friend of Sharon Bailey)	
Johnny Adrian (Friend of Sullivan's)	Lori Holloway	
Wes Bowen	Chick Wade	

News and Notes

- Let's remember our expectant mothers: Laura Weldon, Anna Miller and Nicole Pender.
- The Burton Family has identified with the University church! Let us all get to know Jared and Terria and their children.
- If you are willing to assist in working with new contacts from the community please see brother Rouse. We are expecting to have several new opportunities in our efforts in evangelism.
- All are encouraged to use and share our website. www.aubeacon.com
- Audio CDs of Today's Sermon will be immediately available.

(Continued from page 1)

matter is unequivocal. The heavenly Father clearly intends for His children to know assurance. The cry of "Abba, Father" is a cry of joy and confidence which comes from being sons, not slaves, of the living God (**Romans 8:15**). Paul affirms that the very essence of the kingdom is "righteousness, peace and joy" (**Romans 14:17**) and names "love, joy and peace" as among the "fruit of the Spirit" (**Galatians 5:22**). It goes without saying that there cannot be peace without assurance, and no joy without peace.

The apostle Paul himself is a great illustration of the confidence a Christian may have of his relationship with God. In the final hours of his life, he confidently affirms that "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day" (**2 Timothy 4:8**). In his heart there was a certainty about his destiny, an assurance of his salvation.

It may be objected that the case of Paul, as an apostle, is different than our own. It should not be. As a sinner, he was saved by the grace of God just as you and I must be. Having no righteousness of his own (**Philippians 3:9**), he was "justified by faith in Christ" (**Galatians 2:16**).

There are only two ways to be justified before God—by my own perfect righteousness or by God's grace. Since all men have sinned (**Romans 3:10, 23; Ecclesiastes 7:21**), seeking to find peace with God through our own righteousness is a dead end street. Confidence in our salvation and the peace it produces can come only from God's grace and assured promises. It is what God has done, not what we have done, which gives assurance of salvation. We are justified by faith—looking up to God, not to ourselves (**Romans 3:21-26**).

Does this mean that we no longer have to be

concerned about sin in our lives? To the contrary, the person who truly trusts in God as Father has never before fought sin so ferociously nor hated it so intensely (**Romans 6:1-14**). True faith works the will of God (**Romans 1:5; Galatians 5:6; James 2:14-26**). True love keeps the commandments of Christ (**John 14:15**). Any failure to please our Savior will bring grief (2 Corinthians 7:10) and result in penitent confession (**1 John 1:9**).

But what if I am deceived and sin ignorantly? A single-minded will to do God's will (**John 7:17**) and a genuine love of His truth (**2 Thessalonians 2:10**) are an absolute defense against deception. If we trust in God with a whole heart, all that we yet need to know of His way will be revealed to us (**Philippians 3:13-15**). It is our task to bring to our Father a true heart. It is His task to redeem His trusting child, and He is liable to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (**Ephesians 3:20**).

But what if I study God's word and do all I know to do to serve Him and still can't find peace in my heart about my salvation? Remember that "if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things" (**1 John 3:19-20**). Put confidence in His promises, not your feelings.

God intends that the heart of every humble child of His be guarded by a peace which passes understanding (**Philippians 4:7**). The assurance of our hope comes to us moment by moment as we live our lives in faith. But it is not an assurance which is arrogant, cocky or heedless. No true servant of God, trusting Him, loving Him, ever dealt fast and loose with temptation or sin. The same one who said that nothing "shall be able to separate us from the love of God" also said, "I buffet my body and bring it into bondage lest after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected" (**1 Corinthians 9:27**). The assurance of God is a holy confidence joined to a sober vigilance, in order that what we now assuredly hold, by His grace, may never be lost.



God-Consciousness

By Bill Hall

A truly godly man is one who lives with a constant realization of God's divine presence. He is God-conscious. When he awakes in the morning, there is God. As he dresses for work there is God. As he goes in to breakfast with his family, as he drives to work, as he works through the day, as he drives home, as he spends the evening hours, as he lies down on his bed at the close of the day, there is God.

How fortunate is that man who has developed within himself this God consciousness. It is easy for him to pray, for God is to him a close, ever near, companion whose "ears are open unto his prayers" (**1 Peter 3:12**). His talking with God is as natural as his talking with any companion.

Enoch was a man who was God-conscious, for he "walked with God" (**Genesis 5:24**). He enjoyed constant companionship with God. Wherever Enoch went, God went with him, and Enoch was always aware that He was there. He could not flee from God's presence (**Psalms 139:7**), nor did he seek to do so. He was a godly man.

How fortunate is that man who has developed within himself this God consciousness. It is easy for him to pray, for God is to him a close, ever near, companion whose "ears are open unto his prayers" (**1 Peter 3:12**). His talking with God is as natural as his talking with any companion.

He does not fear, for he just places his hand in God's in his times of trouble. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear. ..." (**Psalms 46:1, 2**). Even when walking "through the valley of the shadow of death," he can "fear no evil," for God is with him.

The power of temptation is greatly reduced, for he never forgets that "all things are naked and

opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (**Hebrews 4:13**). His desire to please his ever present God is greater than the power of temptation.

He is thankful, recognizing God, with whom he walks, to be the source of "every good gift and every perfect gift" (**James 1:17**).

He loves God. He talks to God. He walks with God. He is always conscious of God's presence. He is never without God. Yet, this relationship never degenerates into a "buddy-buddy" relationship, for he reverences God; he recognizes His awesomeness; he gratefully acknowledges his own personal unworthiness of such a relationship with Almighty God.

This is the very essence of godliness. Some one, years ago, observing the similarity between "godliness" and "God-like-ness," assumed that the two words meant the same. That false assumption was passed on to others, and has now gained a strong foothold in the thinking of a great number of people. W. E. Vines says that godliness "denotes that piety which, characterized by a godward attitude, does that which is well pleasing to Him." A godly person, then, is one who has a godward attitude, and whose constant consciousness of God leads him to be obedient to Him.

While visiting in a hospital, recently, we observed this sign, "Have you said Thank you, God today?" A godly person probably would have done so. Have **you** said, "Thank you, God" today?

