

# Neither Ignorance Nor Arrogance Is Pleasing/Acceptable to the Lord...

Our thoughts today will examine some reasons that men might not obey the Gospel, and also, why some in the Lord's body ought to reconsider the attitudes we might have unconsciously developed. Given the conditions of our (and every) society, biblically uninformed Christians will undoubtedly find themselves with the same difficult task of repelling the considerable dualities of ignorance and/or arrogance that so many in the world will display with reference to God. The Scriptures certainly speak of both as unacceptable with regard to (and in light of ) the Day of Judgment.

In II Thessalonians 1:7-9 the Scriptures speak of those who (1) "know not God," and those who (2) "obey not the gospel." Clearly there are two distinct classes of people being discussed to be judged: those who have no knowledge of the heavenly creator (resulting from any variety of reasons), and those who have had the opportunity to hear the Gospel and have (for whatever reason) rejected it.

In Romans 10:3 the apostle Paul writes of those who are ignorant (not having information) of God's righteousness. In the very next chapter he mentions that the brethren should not be ignorant of the mystery, and in the 1 Corinthians epistle (chapters 10 & 12) Paul states that he does not want the believers to be ignorant of important revelation.

Paul says in Philippians 3:10 that one of the most important things in his life (and we hope our life as well) is to know God ("that I might know Him"). We are also exhorted to grow in the knowledge of Him (Eph. 4:13; Phi. 3:8; Col. 1:9; to name a few). This we can do through a continual study of the Scriptures. It will not be an acceptable excuse on the Day of Judgment to tell the Lord that we did not have/give/take time to know (learn of, about, and from) Him. We will not be able to lay the blame to anyone else: we will all have to give an account to Jesus for our own actions. Paul summoned the elders of Ephesus to Miletus (Acts 20:28-30) so that they might not be ignorant (unaware) of grievous wolves that would not spare the flock. Paul no doubt surprised them when he told them that some of those "wolves" would come from among themselves. Jude likewise warned against the ignorance allowing false doctrine to seep in among them. God wants us to "rightly divide the word of truth."

Knowing the Lord's Word does not give us the prerogative to be arrogant (or full of pride) with or about it. Our Christian responsibility is to "search the scriptures," making certain that the things that are said (preached and taught) are in accord with divine truth (Acts 17). In order to discern truth correctly we must "study" the inerrant Word of God diligently, so we might "rightly divide" it (handle it properly—for ourselves and others). Arrogance is a characteristic of pride. The word means to have an exaggerated sense of one's own importance or abilities. God resists such people (Jam. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). When we impart the engrafted Word that saves souls (Jam. 1:21), it is to be in the spirit of meekness and humility. Humility is also warranted when we find that our own opinions or biases are not consistent with (or have the authority of ) the holy and divine Scriptures.

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## What Saith the Scriptures?

I have received the following question by way of the Internet when I wrote a column in *The Gospel Preceptor* where this question was submitted. It is a thought provoking question.

### The Question

In Daniel 2:36 begins the interpretation of the king's dream of the great image. Question: does this dream foretell that there shall be no world empire after the divided Roman kingdom/empire?

### Answer

We must remember the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar wherein he dreamed of the monstrosity of a being, but he could not remember the dream and he did not know the interpretation. Daniel was a prisoner in Babylon at the time and his name was taken to the king explaining that he (Daniel) could tell what the dream was and give the interpretation of the dream. Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar of five kingdoms. Yes, we are aware that it is normally said that there were four kingdoms, but that is incorrect.

The first four kingdoms were all similar but had some peculiarities. In these four kingdoms the strongest kingdom would be Babylon. A lesser kingdom would rise up and conquer Babylon and that kingdom would be the Medo-Persian kingdom. After this kingdom, really under the rule of Persia, there would arise a weaker kingdom that would overtake and conquer it. The third kingdom was that of Alexander of Macedonia (the great). Alexander would begin to rule the world in about 331B.C. The fourth empire that would start to rule over the world was the divided Roman Empire. Each of these was similar in that each was weaker than the one that was conquered. They were peculiar in that each ruler reacted somewhat differently.

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**“Heads or Tails?”**

Have you ever flipped a coin with someone to decide an issue? Maybe who goes first, or who cleans up the toys (children, you know), or something like that? It is sheer luck that determines the outcome of a coin-toss (whatever *luck* is). Of course, one may cheat another in such an ordeal, but all things being equal, a coin-toss is a matter of chance. There is no skill involved. The outcome of a fair and equal coin-toss says absolutely nothing about the qualifications of the ones participating in the exercise.

What would you be willing to jeopardize on the flip of a coin? As a child, probably many things. As an adolescent, fewer. As an adult, I would hope nothing! And yet, many are letting far more important things than they realize ride on something with even less propriety than the toss of a coin. Take, for instance, heaven and hell. Would you be willing to allow a coin-toss to determine your eternal destiny? You know, heads you go to heaven or tails you go to hell. You'd have a fifty-fifty chance of making the street of gold...but, of course, you'd also have a fifty-fifty chance of roasting on an open fire forever...Fifty-fifty—not bad, as odds go...

I do not think I would like to allow a coin-toss to determine my eternal destiny. In fact, I know I would not like that at all! Too much rides on the outcome. I want to be sure. Now, you may ask, who is wagering their eternal destiny on the toss of a coin? No one specifically (at least of whom I am aware). What is the point, then? Here: When you do what you do religiously because grandma and grandpa did it, or because mom and dad did it, or because your preacher said to do it, or because the church of which you are a member does it, you do not even have the fifty-fifty chance afforded you in a coin-toss. Since there are more than two possible answers to most questions, for every possible answer you are one more step removed from the fifty-fifty odds of a coin-toss. If there are ten possible answers—only one of which is the right answer—to a question, and if you allow someone else to decide the correct (?) answer for you, then at best you have a one-in-ten chance of ending up with the right answer. But I have some bad news for those in the ten percent category—even if you get lucky (?) and end up with the right answer, because you failed to study the issue for yourself (II Tim. 2:15), the correctness of the answer will do you no good! It is not your correct answer. It may be the right words, but such words grow empty when not acquired properly.

Which will it be: will you toss a coin or depend on someone else or will you study and learn and do the will of God? No one will enter heaven on a coin-toss. No one will enter heaven on what the preacher said. No one will enter heaven because “we” have always done it that way. Study. Apply. Obey. May God bless you as you study and obey His Word.

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**NEWS AND NOTES**

News and notes will return when Ken Chumbley returns from England. Please keep Ken Chumbley and the work in England in your prayers.

**WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES? Continued from page 1**

The background is that Israel and Judah had gone into captivity never to return as the mighty force they once were. They would never be a nation again because they had failed to glorify God.

The fifth kingdom that Daniel saw was the kingdom of the Lord that would have its beginning in Jerusalem (cf. Isa. 2:3; Acts 2). The first four kingdoms were physical the latter is spiritual. Under the power and sway of the Roman Empire our Lord was born and was crucified under Roman law, but His kingdom, nonetheless began under the rule of the mighty Romans. They could not stop it. The physical Roman Empire tried to destroy Christianity and totally failed though, by some accounts, two million Christians perished while Rome tried to stamp out the Lord's people. When we walk through the Catacombs in Rome we are told that there are six hundred miles of tunnels under the city where Christians lived and were buried as they were persecuted. It is also said that Nero would light the streets of Rome at night with the bodies of burning Christians. Polycarp, a convert of and disciple of John, was burned at the stake and could have saved his life if he would denounce Christ. He refused and died at the stake without a blindfold because he refused it. He was not ashamed of the Gospel and was willing to die for it. This kingdom did not take up arms and fight a physical battle. Christianity, the Lord's church will stand forever until it is delivered up to the Father (cf. 1 Cor. 15:24). The “stone” that Nebuchadnezzar saw (cf. Dan. 2:45) would grow into a mighty bedrock that could not be destroyed by any empire or earthly kingdom.

Daniel's prophesy did not indicate that there would not be other empires or kingdoms. The United States defended a rather small empire a few years ago known as Kuwait. Other kingdoms or empires exist, but the main point is, that in the end of time all the empires or kingdoms of men will have fallen, but the Lord's church will continue until the end of the world. The answer to the question obviously is no since we have had and do have other empires and kingdoms presently in our world. This being the case, if Daniel had said that no other empires/kingdoms would exist then his prophesy would be false and he would be found to be a false prophet.

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