



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

Volume 6

December 8, 2019

No. 50

## Responsibility in Hearing God's Word

Stan L. Caldwell

There is a responsibility on the part of the hearers of God's word to take heed how they hear! We often emphasize the importance of the speaker and his work is important. But it is just as important that the one's listening do their part well. We do not assemble together just to be entertained. Are you fulfilling your responsibility as a hearer? In reading chapter eight of the book of Nehemiah we learn from a group of people who were good listeners, how to hear God's Word. There are several criteria listed:

**1. They heard intellectually!** Verse 2 read, So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation, of men and women and all who could hear with understanding..." The next verse again mentions this fact speaking of "those who could understand". The religion of Jesus Christ is the one of intellect. It is rational. Paul told the Ephesians that, "when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ" (Eph. 3:4). We must put our minds into gear then we hear God's Word.

**2. They heard attentively!** Verse 3 says, "the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law". Many times people pass notes, let their minds wonder on other things, talk, run to the restrooms or water fountain, etc. when they should be listening to the Word of God. It is obvious they are not attentive to their hearing! Could this be you?

**3. They heard respectfully!** Note verse 5 where "all the people stood up" when Ezra opened the book.

Verse 6 says, Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' These things show respect in the traditions of their day. Often people are not respectful when one is trying to teach them and thus show disrespect for the teacher and the Word of God. One cannot learn if he is not respectful.

**4. They heard emotionally!** Verse 9 says they "wept" and verse 12 says they greatly rejoiced". They were listening to the Word with all their heart! They were not letting their emotions guide them but the things Ezra was saying guided their emotions. When they heard God's Word they appropriately wept and rejoiced, depending on the content of God's Word. Are your emotions involved in your hearing of the word of God? Do you put your heart into it?

**5. They heard conformably!** Verse 13 to the end of the chapter shows their keeping the Feast of the Tabernacle because of their hearing the word of the Law. They responded to what was being said. They acted upon it and obeyed it. What good is hearing the Word if we do not obey it? We must hear with a view of conforming our lives to it. Is this you?

## The Most Hated Book

- by Rick Duggin

A principal in New York scolded a five year old for handing out gospel tracts. A teacher in another school rebuked a child for writing "I love God" on her hand. Some schools supply contraceptives to students but prohibit Bible studies on campus. Why do so many hate the Bible and what it stands for?

- 1) It speaks with authority from God (Heb. 1:1,2). While the Christian enjoys certainty in an uncertain world, the sinner despises authority that threatens severe punishment.
- 2) It speaks the same message to all without favoritism (Heb. 2:1-4). God is not impressed with our popularity, our bank accounts, or our social standing. All have sinned (Rom. 3:23). All must repent (Acts 17:30,31).
- 3) It knows what is in man (Heb. 4:12,13). The last thing a sinner wants is for someone to spotlight his transgressions (John 3:19-21).
- 4) It condemns the evil in man (Heb. 3:4). Our permissive society condones the worst crimes and winks at criminal behavior by blaming circumstances for the state of lawlessness.
- 5) It cuts to the heart (Heb. 4:12). A guilty conscience is an unpleasant companion.
- 6) It warns of judgment on the disobedient (Heb. 12:23; 13:4). Most people dislike the thought of being judged for their sins.

## Asleep in the Wheel

Jeff Himmel

When our children were small, they had a pet hamster named Rowdy. We got him one of those fancy plastic hamster mansions with multiple rooms and tunnels. Among other things, this provided the little critter with any number of suitable places to sleep.

So where did Rowdy usually like to nap? In his exercise wheel.

That little bit of irony got me thinking. The writer of Hebrews said that mature Christians are those “who because of practice have their senses trained [exercised, NKJV] to discern good and evil” (5:14). That training comes through several avenues: worship, Bible study, teaching, self-examination. Could it be that some of us are sleeping where we should be exercising?

Sometimes people do actually doze off during a worship assembly or Bible class. More troublesome are folks who are awake, but are so inattentive they may as well be sleeping. Sometimes you can see looks on their faces that vary from mildly distracted to willfully disinterested. They could be expanding their knowledge, increasing their faith, and strengthening their convictions, but they’re not. Their bodies are present, but their minds are elsewhere. That’s the spiritual equivalent of sleeping in the exercise wheel.

Sometimes we overlook great opportunities for spiritual growth because we’re busy and distracted. And so we miss out on a gospel meeting or a special Bible study. We pass up a chance to speak out in a spiritual discussion at the office, or to teach a friend about Jesus. We get an opportunity to build our spiritual muscles, and we let it go by. We’re asleep in the wheel.

If we’re going to be spiritually fit, we have to wake up and exercise our senses. “For this reason it says, ‘Awake, sleeper, and rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.’ Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:14-16).