

## Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith...

The apostle Paul simply "commanded" that each of us examine ourselves. Isn't it a whole lot easier to examine everybody around you instead. Why, you don't even have to have very good vision to see what is wrong with everyone else. That's what Jesus was talking about when he said, "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? (Matt. 7:3-4)" Though this passage, beginning with verse one is often used to teach that we should judge no man, actually it does just the opposite; it teaches us to judge all men, beginning without ourselves. We just need to put first things first, get the beam out of our own eye first, and then we will be better able to see the mote that is in our brother's eye and remove it (Matt. 7:5). So, we are back to examining ourselves, whether we are in the faith.

James, the half brother of our Lord, also dealt with the subject of self examination. He wrote, "For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass" (James 1:23). The illustration thus far is that to look into the word of God is to examine oneself by the mirror of God's word. But he then continues by saying, "For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:24). His point here is, what good is self examination if we are not going to make the needed corrections once we have seen them? That is the man that is a hearer only and not a doer, deceiving his own self (James 1:22). Just one more verse from James to complete the self examination point. James says, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). Oh, so the one who examines himself, by looking into the perfect law of liberty, which is the gospel of Christ, and then actually goes about correcting his problems, pulling out his beams and such is then in a position wherein his works, things like pulling the motes from the eyes of others will be a blessing from God. Yep, that's about the way of self examination. Self examination is a wonderful thing if one is then going to go on to clean up that which he finds spoiled, but of little value if one is going to continue on the same. *Tilis*

## Signs of the times!

Most of the time, when we hear the words, "the signs of the times", they refer to things that are happening in the world that according to those using the phrase mean that the time is approaching for the Lord to return to earth and set up his one thousand year reign on earth in Jerusalem. We could easily spend this space and more showing the fallacy of such, but we want to consider the term "signs of the times" from a different viewpoint. It is a fact there are signs all around us that have been put up for a specific purpose. Just try driving down the road and count the number of signs you see. I know there are advertisement signs along the roads ways, but most of those put up by the state are there for the safety of you and others. A complete lists would be impossible, but just let us consider a few.

A sign seen occasionally is "keep straight ahead". Another way of saying what this sign says is, "turn not to the right side nor to the left side". There are number of times in the word of God that His people have been warned with such a sign. Deuteronomy 5:31-33 is a good example of such.

It is not at all unusual to see a sign warning us to watch for children at play or crossing the street. There are just certain times when driving that one's attention should be fully focused on what may be the biggest danger ahead. Paul told the Colossians on one occasion that they needed to set their affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. 3:2). Watch out for those warning signs.

Speed limit signs abound along the road ways. There are minimum speeds, suggested speeds and allowed speeds. James has put up a couple of speed limit signs as well. He said, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James 1:19). Over the years we have often heard someone, usually someone older and wiser, say, "The Lord gave you two ears and only one mouth, so you ought to listen twice as much as you talk". Sounds like what the sign is saying, and that if followed would help with the last part about being slow to wrath.

As already stated, we could write long and hard looking for all the things said in the Bible that would apply to some man made sign along our roads, but why not just look through the driving manual for life (the gospel) and pay attention to the signs, not turning to the right side nor to the left and then end at the gates of heaven.

*Tilis*