

"HAUNTED BY BAD CONSCIENCE"**Introduction**

1. The miraculous power of Christ: here all work
2. The reaction of King Herod
3. The reason for his reaction (v.17-29)

1. GOD HAS PUT A CONSCIENCE IN EVERY MAN

- 1) Herod's behaviour might seem strange:
 - (i) No army attacking
 - (ii) No threat of poison – just a rumour re. Christ's miracles + of the disciples
- 2) Why then was Herod so uneasy?
 - (i) he could not forget what he had done
 - (ii) he had an accuser in his own breast
DOCTRINE: Every man has an accusing conscience
- 3) The function of conscience is to put us in fear:
 - (i) Adam + Eve: hid from God
 - (ii) Joseph's brothers: they had a hidden secret
 - (iii) David's experience (Psalm 51); Peter's tears
- 4) Not voluntary: **Illustration**: MacBeth's wife – the case of Judas Iscariot
APPLICATION: In hell – "their worm dieth not": terror

2. CONSCIENCE TORMENTS ALL SINNERS

- 1) People try to bury their terror – but it comes back to life to haunt them: Herod here.
- 2) What does this show us?
 - (i) God sees all our actions – conscience is put in us to remind us of this
ILLUSTRATION: the man + his son in a field

- (ii) All sin deserves God's wrath + curse
- (iii) No sin is forgotten – all will be brought to light in the end:
ILLUSTRATION: Matthew 25: judgement day
- (iv) Past sins may terrify us: **Illustration**: Saul

- 3) This is one reason why people ruin themselves:
 - (i) with drink and drugs – to drown the memory
 - (ii) with irreligion – to get far away from God
 - (iii) with suicide – they fall into despair
- 4) All this proves how true the Bible is:
 - (i) all men have conscience: Romans 2
 - (ii) there must be a Judgement Day
 - (iii) all our sins are fearful when viewed in the light of God's holy presence
DOCTRINE: This is what makes a sinner's death terrible
APPLICATION: Do you realise this? Does not your own conscience tell you you are a sinner?

3. THE ONLY WAY TO QUIETEN CONSCIENCE IS BY FAITH

- 1) This all brings us to see what is man's greatest problem: How can I get rid of my guilt?
APPLICATION: Do you see this: not just money / health / happiness – but guiltiness before God
- 2) There are many false answers:
 - (i) Become a good church-goer
 - (ii) Be baptised
 - (iii) "Turn over a new leaf"
 But all are insufficient.
- 3) Understand: The problem is – how can we get rid of past sins?
- 4) Only true answer: faith in Christ
 - (i) Who he is
 - (ii) what he has done
 - (iii) how he can give us peace with God

CONCLUSION

1. Pilgrim's Progress – at the Cross
2. The woman in Luke 7
3. The thief on the Cross

APPLICATION: What about you?

PSALM

90: 1 – 5

51: 1 – 7

32: 3 – 6