

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

December 13, 2015

Volume 35, # 51

Jesus is Gonna' Win!

The Book of Revelation is filled with mystifying signs and symbolic language describing great scenes of conflict, judgment and ultimate victory. It is without doubt one of the most unusual and perplexing books in the NT. Because of this, most Christians have either totally ignored it or have dissected even it's most minor details. In both cases, we fail to see the great message of the Bible's final chapter.

I'm no expert on Revelation; much about the book continues to confuse me. However, one message from Revelation of which I am certain is this: Jesus is going to win! In Chp. 1 Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega, who has the keys of Hades and Death. In Chp. 5 He is the One who has prevailed to open the scroll. In Chp. 19 He rules the nations as the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. In the book's final chapter He is still the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

Clearly, when all is said and done, Jesus is going to win.

- Simon Harris

What If Jesus Had Returned Yesterday?

The title of this article is a question of no little importance. And when we reflect upon Jesus' own words that "many" will choose to walk the way of eternal destruction and that "few" will ultimately make it to the gates of Heaven (cf. Matthew 7:13-14), this question becomes even richer in significance. While our busy schedules might often prevent us from doing so, we should actually reflect upon His return every day! Could it be that the Lord has chosen tomorrow as the day of His return? If that be the case, in what condition will you find yourself to be in the day after tomorrow? Only the wise will bother to seriously ponder this thought.

We all need to live every day as if we actually had access to information that told us that Jesus' return was imminent; that it could occur at any moment "in the twinkling of an eye." But it is most interesting to consider the fact that in a very real way, that is actually true. We know that Jesus promised us that He would return, and we know that we are closer to that day than any day that has yet dawned upon this earth; but we also know that this very day could be that day!

The world is nearly 2000 years closer to His return than it was during His earthly walk when He often spoke of that fateful day involving His impending return. "Watch" was the word of caution that Jesus often used when He spoke of that inevitable day of His assured return. Later today, we will close out another day on earth (Lord willing!). Each of us will then welcome the dawning of a new day. May we all be living our lives as if we knew for a

guaranteed fact that tomorrow would be that final day of mankind's existence in this rapidly passing world.

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13).

- Milton Smith

"Teachers After Their Own Lusts"

"For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3, 4).

It has always been true that there have been those who will refuse to listen to the truth of God's word. It is an attitude of rebellion on their part. They do not respect the authority of God's word and they are unwilling to be taught. Such was the condition in Isaiah's day. Jehovah described His people in these words: "For it is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of Jehovah; that say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits . . ." (Isa. 30: 9, 10).

When people are determined to have their own way, follow their own sentiments and emotions, and refuse to be taught God's will, they will rally around a preacher who will preach what they want to hear.

- Hoyt Houchen

Try to Remember

In Revelation two, there is a letter to the church at Ephesus, dictated by the Lord and written by the apostle John. In this letter the Lord commends this church for many things: their works, their labor and their patience; they could not bear those who were evil; they had tried those who posed as apostles and found them liars; they had borne and had patience, they had labored and for His name sake had not fainted. Moreover they hated the deeds of the Nicolaitans which things also the Lord hates. Outwardly they were faithful. It is not likely that human perception could detect the spiritual condition of these people. But the Lord knew. And all their good works and outward manifestation of faithfulness were overshadowed by one sin. What might have been a good church was rendered unacceptable by one sin. The Lord said if you don't remember from whence you are fallen and repent and do your first works, I will come and remove your candlestick out of his place. They were on the verge of losing their identity as a New Testament church. What was the sin that threatened them? They had left their first love.

Many a marriage has failed or has become just a boring arrangement for the same reason, and often the parties involved don't really know how it happened or when. They know that somewhere along the way their marriage lost its meaning, and now is a marriage only in name. In many cases these unhappy couples could restore life to their marriage if they were willing to try, but they are not. This would require that each party take an honest inventory of his life, assume his part of the blame and work at trying to correct it. Not many people are this honest. It is

easier to blame someone else and offer excuses for our own failure.

There are people in every church, of any size, who are like the members of the church at Ephesus. They have lost their first love. Some never had much to lose. They were never really converted to Christ. They "joined the church" just about like they would join a club and for about the same reasons. But there are some who once were faithful; they could be depended on to carry their part of the load. They were interested in leading others to the Lord; their lives were an inspiration to those who knew them. But somewhere along the way they lost their first love. They have stripped their religion down to a bare minimum. They sit in the church building one hour and fifteen minutes a week, most weeks, to be served the Lord's Supper. This, they think, is all that is absolutely necessary - this is the bare minimum - and they will do no more. No lost soul will ever be led to Christ by their example or effort; the worship is a dull routine, they share little or none of the financial responsibility of the congregation. If every member of the church were like them, the church would disappear from the earth in two generations. I could tell them why they have lost their first love, and how to find it again, but they don't want to be told. It is easier to find an excuse or to find some other sorry church member to measure themselves by. We lose our first love by not working at the job of being Christians. Something gets in the way, a job or an unfaithful or unbelieving companion, and we begin to slack up. Like the wife who seems to think that being married to a man relieves her of any responsibility in regard to her personal appearance as far as he is concerned, or, the man who expects his wife to live the rest of her life on the memories of the flowers

and presents he gave her and the words of love he spoke to her before the marriage, these members of the church expect to be saved because they have "been baptized" and "go to church" every Sunday.

A happy marriage is a wonderful thing. If you have one, then work to keep it that way, and don't ever let up. But infinitely more important is your marriage to Christ. When you quit working at it, you will begin to lose that enthusiasm you once knew, and the love that made your service to God a pleasure rather than a cold formality. If you find yourself losing interest in the church then do something about it before you reach the place where you don't want to do anything about it.

- Luther Blackmon

FAITH IS A WORK. WE CANNOT BE SAVED WITHOUT IT!

Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal." Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (John 6:26-29).

-
- > "The person who believes he will live forever, lives best!"
 - > "This generation is trying to drink its way to health, spend its way to wealth, fight its way to peace, and enjoy its way to heaven - but it can't be done!"
 - > "The best way to enjoy regular dividends in friendship is to invest in courtesy."
 - > "The real skeptic is the man who has so little faith in his own position that he is afraid to have it critically examined; who has so little confidence in truth that he fears to have more of it discovered; who is tormented by the fear that if he knew more he might believe less!" - E.F. Tittle
-

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*Worship Is ...!*" (Text: Psa. 42:1-2); Sunday evening: "*Learning From Judas!*" (Acts 1:15-26).

GOSPEL MEETING 2016: Our Gospel Meeting is scheduled for July 24-29, with Josh Thornhill, of Wildersville, preaching.