

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## ***Old Hickory Church of Christ***

*841 Old Hickory Blvd.*

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### ***Better Not To Be Born!***

Such is the statement of condition with regard to Judas Iscariot, the infamous betrayer of the Lord Jesus Christ: “For the Son of Man *is to go just as it is written of Him; but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.*” (Mark 14:21). Indeed, it was prophesied in Scripture that God’s Messiah would be rejected as the “suffering servant.” (Isa. 53; cf. Luke 24:44-46). But God’s foreknowledge of the event did not release Judas from responsibility in receiving the consequences of his actions. “Woe,” or misery will come to that man! Sometimes, as in the case of Judas, men can play into the hands of Satan and fall from their own steadfastness into a cavern

so deep they never find the avenue of genuine repentance. What Jesus said is true of that person: "*It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.*"

Many times Jesus warned of conduct that would result in a punishment far worse than physical death. "For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a terrifying expectation of judgment and *the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries.* Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses.* How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "*Vengeance is Mine, I will repay.*" And again, "*The Lord will judge His people.*" It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. 10:26-31; cf. Luke 12:4-5; Matt. 23:31-33; Rev. 20:15).

It can be said of those who reject Christ, whose sins are not forgiven, that it would be better for them to never have been born. What types of people are these?

- **People who betray Christ.** The text refers specifically to the traitor Judas, but there have been many others who sold out the Lord for the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). Not a few have betrayed the Lord's people, His church, for selfish desires and convenience.
- **Those who fall away from the faith.** Many who have been believers at one time have failed to grow, allowed their love for Christ to grow cold (Matt. 24:12), made shipwreck of the faith (1 Tim. 1:19-20; cf. 1 Tim. 5:12), or in other ways renounced the

Lord. Peter said, “For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and are overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. For it would be better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn away from the holy commandment handed on to them.” (2 Pet. 2:20-21).

- **False teachers who lead people astray.** Peter warned of those “who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” (2 Pet. 2:1).
- **Atheists who deny God.** There are many “enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction” (Phil. 3:18-19). There are those who arrogantly boast of their self-avowed atheism. There are also “practical atheists,” people who live as if there is no God by leaving Him out of their lives (Jas. 4:11-17).
- **Hypocrites who dishonor Christ.** There are many who display religious devotions, but they are nothing but pretence. Of those who do such things to be seen of men, Jesus asked, “how will you escape the sentence of hell?” (Matt. 23:33).
- **Factious people who divide His church.** Paul advised, “Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.” (Rom. 16:17-18). He went further in his warning of the factious man: “knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.” (Titus 3:10-11). Factions and divisions are works of the flesh, and “those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Gal. 5:19-21).

Judas squandered his opportunities and died a self-indicted traitor. He had regret, even remorse, but it was not enough! Friend, your destiny is in your hands. Will it be better for you to never have been born? Be certain of the receipt of forgiveness by obeying the gospel. May we baptize you into Christ? Or may we pray with you and for you as a wayward child, that God may wipe your sins away for you today?

- GFS

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## **STOP Means STOP!**

Perhaps you heard about the man who was traveling down a country road and saw an intersection and STOP sign ahead. As he approached the sign he looked both ways on the crossing road and, not seeing any traffic, drove through the intersection without stopping.

A highway patrolman saw the man and stopped him in order to give him a ticket. The driver argued that he did not deserve a ticket since he slowed down, looked both ways and went through the intersection safely. Although he did not stop, he accomplished the same goal.

The officer asked the man to step out of the car. When the man was out the officer began to beat him with his night stick. The man yelled for the officer to STOP. The officer replied, "Do you want me to STOP or just slow down?"

The officer made his point, and the driver accepted the ticket.

The drivers argument is very much like the one made by man in the religious world. That is, as long as one achieves the goal of God's commands, the specifics of how they are carried out is unimportant. This has been described as keeping the "spirit of the law" rather than

the "word of the law". This concept is the mainstay of the protestant world and those teaching the "new hermeneutics" among the churches of Christ.

Can we obey the "spirit of the law" without adhering to the "letter of the law"? Jesus asked, "But why do you call Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46). Can one rightly claim allegiance to Christ without "doing the things" He commands? Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15).

Obedience involves doing what is said in the way we are told to do it. One who claims to follow the "spirit of the law" (serving Christ through work and worship) without following the letter of the law (working and worshipping in the manner described in the New Testament) is actually following neither. When the Lord says "STOP", we must stop.

- Jamie DeLong

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God's delays are not denials;  
He has heard your prayer;  
He knows all about your trials,  
Knows your every care.

God's delays are not denials;  
Help is on the way;  
He is watching o'er life's dials,  
Bringing forth the day.

God's delays are not denials;  
You will find Him true,

## Working through the hardest trials What is best for you!

—*The Believer's Magazine.*

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- > Remember, Noah—he was 486 years old before he knew enough to build an ark.
  - > Always, always, do the right thing.
  - > The biggest troublemaker you'll probably ever have to deal with, watches you from the mirror every morning.
  - > Live a good and honorable life, then when you get older and think back, you'll enjoy it a second time.
  - > When you wallow with pigs, expect to get dirty.
  - > Every path has a few puddles.
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**SUNDAY'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"Tests of Character!"* (text: 1 Cor. 3:11-15); Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *The Failure of Friends!* (Mark 14:27-31).

**SCHEDULE:** Our Fall Gospel Meeting is scheduled for Sept. 18-23, with Eric Reynolds.