

The Old Hickory

Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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For Our Good!

As Moses diligently labored to prepare the people of Israel to receive the land that God had promised, he clearly announced their duty to render faithfulness to the Lord and His statutes: "It will be righteousness for us if we are careful to observe all this commandment before the LORD our God, just as He commanded us." (Deut. 6:25). To persuade them to embrace the commitment, Moses pointed to the fact that it was certainly in their best interest to do so: "So the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God **for our good always** and for our survival, as *it is* today." (Deut. 6:24).

Survival! For the people of Israel, observing God's commands would result in their survival. No other nation had such advantages; no other nation was under the care and protection of such a wise lawgiver. God had done so much for them that they should have felt a great obligation to serve His law. Even without considering what God said to them through Moses, their own experience taught them that survival and even prosperous endurance was theirs when they obeyed God, but famines, pestilences and wars came to them when they rebelled.

Serving God was for their good always! Their highest degree of benefit and happiness was realized in faithful adherence to God's way of life. Some may not have understood why they were commanded: "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you," (Ex. 20:12), but it was for their own good to do so. Some may not have understood why they were commanded to not marry those who worshipped false gods (Ex. 34:16), but it was beneficial in its effect to refrain. [Their history depicted the resulting disaster when they ignored God's righteous instruction.] Some may have protested, "Unfair restrictions!" thinking that God was withholding something beneficial from them, but not so! Even David said concerning God's law, testimony, precepts, commandment and judgments: "They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned; **In keeping them there is great reward.**" (Psalm 19:10-11). His law was for their **good**, and for their good **always!**

For OUR good! This principle remains true today, under the New Testament. The promises that were made long ago to Abraham were

reliable, and the heirs of the promises given then are referred to as “we” in Hebrews 6:18, note: “we who have taken refuge would have strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us.” Truly, we can have “strong encouragement” and “hope” by our faith in Jesus Christ through His gospel (Rom. 10:15). This makes people under the New Testament “heirs according to promise” (Gal. 3:29). Heirs are the ones who enjoy God’s good blessings always (Rom. 8:17; Titus 3:7; Jas. 2:5)!

Available to all! Paul and Barnabas preached about the good that God showed to all men: “and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness.” (Acts 14:17). But the recipients of God’s greatest good, “eternal salvation,” are “all those who obey Him” (Heb. 5:9).

Not all will take advantage! Many will not obey God to receive His good and eternal blessings, but some will. Some will “have faith to the preserving of the soul” (Heb. 10:39). Some will realize that “Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,” (Jas. 1:17a). Those who obey God “know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” (Rom. 8:28). In preaching about Christ, Peter said, “... God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one *of you* from your wicked ways.” (Acts 3:26).

Yes, God’s word is for our good today! Paul said that the word of God “performs its work in you who believe” (1 Thess. 2:13). Peter referred to Christians who had been born again “through the living and enduring word of God.” (1 Pet 1:23). This is the word that is

preached to you (1 Pet 1:25). We encourage you to believe it today –
for your good!

- GFS

“AND THEY STOOD EVERY MAN IN HIS PLACE”

Israel had been oppressed by the Midianites for seven years when Gideon was called by God to deliver them. When Israel knew that he was to be their deliverer, 32,000 men gathered to him to help in defeating the great host of Midianites who were encamped in the valley of Jezreel. But to prevent their thinking that their own strength had defeated Midian, God wanted a much smaller army with Gideon. At last the number was reduced to only 300 men. These 300 were divided into three groups, each man being armed with only a trumpet and a pitcher containing a lamp, and were instructed to follow the example of their leader, Gideon. In the middle of the night these three companies surrounded the host of Midian. At the appointed signal every man broke his pitcher, blew his trumpet and cried, "*The sword of the **Lord** and of Gideon.*" The result is described in Judges 7:12. "And, they stood every man in his place round the camp; and all the host ran and cried, and fled."

Today spiritual Israel, the church of our Lord, is confronted with a great army, the hosts of Satan and sin. In comparison to that host we are but few in number. Like Gideon's army our weapons are not those ordinarily used in warfare. (Ephesians 6:11-17). The members of this church are varied in their talents and abilities as are the different parts of our physical body (1 Cor. 12:12-27), but each is expected to contribute his part in the great work of defeating the foe. As with Gideon's army, our success depends upon each individual standing in his place and implicitly following our leader, Christ. The light that will completely rout the enemy is God's Word, which is described by the Psalmist as "a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psa. 119:105). If each of us will find his place, get in it, and hold this light high even in the darkest hours, success is assured.

- Elam B. Kuykendall

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- > Spiritual sickness cannot be cured by religious quacks!
 - > Although God created man without man's help, He will not save man without man's consent.
 - > You cannot become a saint by comparing yourself with a sinner!

- > A lot of people spend six days sowing wild oats, then “go to church” on Sunday praying for a crop failure!
 - > Love that does not understand the language of sacrifice is not love!
 - > The first screw that comes loose in the head is usually the one that controls the tongue!
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SUNDAY’S LESSONS: Sunday morning: “*Murder!*” (text: Jer. 22:1-5, 8-9);
Sunday evening: Jesus Christ: A Closer Look – *Resurrection!* (Mark 16:1-13).