

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## *Old Hickory Church of Christ*

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

[oldhickorycofc.com](http://oldhickorycofc.com)

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## ***Our Confidence in Jehovah***

**"Jehovah is in his holy temple . . . his throne is in heaven; his eyes behold the children of men. Jehovah trieth the righteous ... upon the wicked will he rain snares . . . the upright shall behold his face" (Psa. 11:4-7).**

What are the righteous to do when their faith is ridiculed and questioned by their enemies? David answers that in this psalm. He was evidently being disparaged by the sneers of his detractors who were "shoot[ing] in darkness at the upright in heart [David]" (verse 2). When the same thing happens to us, we must understand the things that David utters in this psalm.

**1. There is a God in heaven (verse 4).** "Jehovah is in his holy temple." The Lord may be out of our sight, but we are never out of His. The enemies of the saints should know that we have a God, and we know where to find Him. We must, in such situations, direct our prayers and petitions to Him. He sees, knows, and understands what we endure for His cause.

**2. This God governs the world (verse 4).** "His throne is in heaven." God is on His *throne*—a place of rule or government. "Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; and his



kingdom ruleth over all" (Psalm 103:19; see Job 38:33). When we are abused by our enemies we must, at all times, see God on His *throne of judgment*, rendering to every man according to His works; and on His *throne of grace*, to which His people boldly come for mercy and grace. Then we will have no reason to be overly distressed and discouraged by the enemies of the cross.

**3. This God perfectly knows every man's character (verse 4).**

"His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men." He not only sees them, but He sees through them. Not only does he know all they say and do, but what they think, plan and pretend. We may know what men seem to be; He knows what they are—as the refiner knows what is gold and what is not when he has tried it.

**4. If He afflicts good people, it is for their trial and, therefore, for their good (verse 5).**

"Jehovah trieth the righteous." Why? The Lord tries all the children of men, that He may do them good in their latter end (Deuteronomy 8:16). When these trials come, it should not shake our foundations or discourage our hope and trust in God (James 1:2-4).

**5. However evil men may prosper here, they will finally perish under the wrath of God (verses 5-6).**

Why? First, because God is a holy God and He hates evil men (verse 5b). However, man himself is responsible for this (Proverbs 8:36). Secondly, God is a righteous judge, and must punish evildoers (verse 6). Their punishment will be inevitable—it will be "rained upon them from heaven," against which there is no defense and from which there can be no escape (Job 20:23; 1 Samuel 2:9-10).

**6. Though honest and righteous people suffer abuse at the hands of the wicked, God does and will own them (verse 7).**

"The upright shall behold his face" (ASV) or "His countenance doth behold the upright." See Zechariah 2:8-9. God loves his people. He Himself is a righteous God and, therefore, loves



righteousness wherever He finds it. "Jehovah executeth righteous acts, and judgments for all that are oppressed" (Psalm 103:6). He also looks graciously upon them like a tender father and they, like dutiful children, are pleased by His approval.

The great lesson we learn from this psalm is that we must not be discouraged when things seem to be unfair in life. We must trust in God at all times and depend upon him to protect our innocence. And we should dread His frowns, His disapproval as worse than death—and desire His favor as better than life!

- Brent Lewis

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## **THERE IS ONLY ONE CHURCH BELONGING TO CHRIST!**

Tragically, many rely upon current, culturally-biased thinking and prevalent, popular practices mixed with shifting emotionalism and perversions of scripture to compose their religious beliefs. We must learn that the inspired word of God is that which must guide every soul in belief and practice, as it has been provided to teach and correct (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

1. THE LORD PROMISED TO BUILD ONE CHURCH, HIS CHURCH. In Matt. 16:18 Jesus said, "I will build my church." Notice that the Lord did not say that He would build many churches (plural), with each one free to follow their own leaders, creeds, traditions and rules. Christ said that He would build His church (singular). The popular concept of "Join the church of your choice" implies that men have been divinely authorized to choose a church of their liking, without aim to find and be in the church that the Lord built. Pleasing the Lord



provides no such choice. We are either members of the church He built or we are not.

2 . THE LORD DIED FOR ONE CHURCH. Acts 20:28 says, "...feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood." Paul declares in Eph. 5:25 that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." Only perversion and wresting of scripture can make these passages teach that the Lord gave His life and shed His blood for all of the differing denominations and religious bodies of human origin found in the world today. The Lord did not die for churches of human origin!

3 . WHEN APOSTLES OF CHRIST LIVED THERE WAS ONLY ONE CHURCH. Though many LOCAL churches existed in various places, they all believed and practiced the same things. Local churches were established by preaching the gospel of Christ, just as it was certified from heaven. They were not of different faiths or orders. No one asked, "Of what faith are you?" There was only one faith in the days of the apostles (Eph. 4:5), and any belief system that differed was described by the Holy Spirit as a perversion, or distortion of the gospel (Gal. 1:6-10). No protestant denomination can trace its origin back any further than 1517. The Roman Catholic Church, as well as protestant denominationalism did not exist in the days of the apostles.

4 . THE PURE GOSPEL WILL PRODUCE ONLY ONE CHURCH. When the gospel was preached (the seed of the kingdom - Luke 8:11) the result throughout the world was always churches of Christ (Rom. 16:16). The gospel seed produced the same plant wherever it was scattered. Every seed brings forth after its kind (Gen. 1:11), not different kinds. The gospel NEVER produced different kinds of churches! When the pure gospel is preached today the Lord's church is the result. Protestant denominations of today exist because some other seed besides the pure gospel of Christ was sown. (See 2 John 9-11.)



## 5. NEW TESTAMENT DESCRIPTIONS CLEARLY SHOW THAT THERE IS ONE CHURCH.

A. The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24). There is only one body (Rom. 12:4-5; I Cor. 12:13, 20; Eph. 2:16; 4:4; Col. 3:15). The church that Christ built was a single body with a single head. If there is only one body, then there is only one church.

B. The church is the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-33; Rom. 7:4; 2 Cor. 11:2). There is only one bride. Christ taught that the marriage relationship is monogamous (Rom. 7:1-4). This vital relationship of Christ to His bride is reflected in such truths as this.

C. The church is the fold or flock of God (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2). Jesus taught in John 10:16 that His sheep would make up only one flock. He also taught that this one flock would have only one shepherd. If it can truthfully be argued that there is more than one fold, then there can also be more than one shepherd. If not, why not?

D. The church is the family of God (I Tim. 3:15; Eph. 3:14-15). God has only one family. We are either members of God's family, or we are not. Together, as a family, we are to strive for the faith of the gospel (Phil. 1:27).

Friend, do you not want to be a member of the church that the Lord Jesus Christ built? Will you not be a member of the church that Jesus purchased with His precious blood? He has promised to save this body and this body alone (Eph. 5:23). If we would be saved we must be in His body! May we assist you today?

- GFS

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# "JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS"

Some time ago there was a faithful dog, who was a constant companion of a small child. One day, both dog and child disappeared. A diligent search by parents, friends, and neighbors proved to be fruitless. The child could not be found.

After several hours the dog returned home, but was covered with blood. Naturally, the father jumped to the conclusion that the dog had become vicious and killed the child. The dog must be destroyed, so he got his gun and killed the dog.

A little later, the child was found in the woods unharmed. Nearby was the body of a panther that the dog had killed in his struggle to protect the child.

So often we are guilty of conclusion jumping. We take action, or at least express our opinion before considering all the facts. The result is usually unpleasant and at times irreparable damage is done.

So, be careful about what you think, say and do. You might be guilty of shooting a dog that ought to be praised.

- Unknown

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➤ "We cannot be apostles, but we must by all means endeavor to have the heart of an apostle as we do the work of Christ today." - L.A. Mott

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**THIS WEEK'S LESSONS:** Sunday morning: *"The Encouragement of the Scriptures!"* (text: Rom. 15:4-6); Sunday evening: *"Salvation is from the Lord!"* (text: Jonah 2:9).