

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Jesus: The Revolutionary

Our world has witnessed many a revolution, but none as effective as the one that divided history into "B.C." and "A.D." Every revolution involves the shedding of blood. So did the revolution by Jesus Christ. This mission of Jesus began with a cross and swayed men of every tongue with the message of suffering love.

Many in our day are depicting Jesus as a social reformer. They would prostitute the mission of the church by engaging its primary concern in social, cultural, political, and economic reforms. Such liberal advocates would seek to change the individual only by changing his social order through human means. The crusade for civil rights, prison reform, housing, integration, and the ecology, have their basis in the liberals' *social gospel*. This emphasis was *never known* in New Testament times.

The Bible declares that man's chief predicament is sin. The Scriptures address themselves primarily to the sin problem as they portray man as a doomed sinner under the just condemnation of God. (Rom. 3:9, 10; Gal. 3: 22.) The consciousness of sin was once the starting point for all preaching. (Acts 2:36, 37.) Men must be made to see that their basic human problem is not being three months behind on the rent, nor that they cannot live in the neighborhood of their choosing. They must rather come to grips with the transgressions in their lives.

The key prophecy in the Old Testament that holds forth the mission of the Messiah is Genesis 12:3, "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." This seed of Abraham that was to bless all nations, in future times, was Jesus, the Son of God. (Gal. 3:16.) Therefore, the future revolution was to center in Christ. Christianity was to be about a person. (Acts 2:36.) He was to be man's fulcrum - his center of certainty. (Phil. 4:13.)

The real issue pertains, however, to the nature of Christ's blessings to the world. Was Jesus to bless all men by lifting them from squalor with a guaranteed annual wage? Was He to be the cure for all physical ailments? Let the Bible speak! The Holy Spirit revealed

the nature of Jesus' mission, at Solomon's Porch, when He declared, "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." (Acts 3: 25, 26.) Jesus' mission on earth was a redemptive one! He came to save us from our sins. (Luke 10:19; Matthew 1:21; 1 Timothy 1:15.) He did not arrive in Palestine to change social customs, the form of government, or the standard of material prosperity. His fundamental concern was one of Savior-hood. We must not, therefore, dilute the blood-bought document to a social gospel. We must not present Jesus to dying men as a glorified social worker whose primary concern was for social reform. Jesus' mission was not to put a new coat on the man but rather to put a new man in the coat by reconciling him to God. (Eph. 2:13-16.)

- Harold G. Taylor, via The Graphic Evangelist, 4/1/1984 [Edited – GFS]

The Eyes of The Lord

"The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." (Proverbs 15:3)

In thundering tones, Solomon tells us of the utter uselessness in attempting to hide or conceal anything from God. Not only does He see all things but His omnipresence is everywhere (Psalms 139:1-2; Proverbs 5:21). Just think about this, not only does the Lord see all but He knows the thought, and the motive behind everything we do (Psalms 94:11). This is one of the great lessons that all people need to learn. Some in time past have been brought to a realization of this attribute of God in a very awesome way. Adam learned that God knew what he had done, and that it was futile to attempt to hide from God (Genesis 3). Achan coveted some Babylonian garments, some silver and gold, took them, and then tried to hide what he had done (Joshua 6:17-19; Joshua 7:19-27). Neither Adam nor Achan could hide from the eyes of God what they had done. Both had to account to God for their conduct and they suffered the consequences of their transgressions.

What tremendous emotion should be stirred within each of us today as we come to the realization that we are exposed completely, laid bare to the all seeing eye of God. The Hebrew writer expresses it this way, "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). All things naked and opened, every thought, every act, every motive, everything simple laid bare to the eyes of our God.

This is both a fearful thought and a comforting thought. Fearful for those who harbor secret, unrevealed thoughts, acts, desires that are sinful. Unknown to man perhaps, but not unknown to God! Fearful to those who do not love, obey and serve God. The judgment day could be faced calmly by these people if somehow all sinful acts could be kept secret from God but alas that is impossible (1 Corinthians 4:5; Romans 2:16; Romans 14:12; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

It is a comforting thought to the faithful child of God because it assures that we are always visible to our God and because He knows our circumstances He is able to defend, comfort, guide and sustain us always. As a child of God we find hope and confidence in the knowledge that there is an all seeing, all knowing God ever hovering over us (Psalms 34:4, 7, 15, 17-19; 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; Hebrews 1:14; 1 Peter 3:12-13; 2 Peter 2:9; Psalms 48:14).

- Charles Hicks [Edited – GFS]

Someone Is Always Watching

It is not uncommon for children to look up to those who are older or wiser than they are. For this reason, little brothers and sisters will never cease to imitate their older siblings. These scenarios, however, are not exclusive to older and younger siblings or even younger or older people. The truth of the matter is that just as you and I look up to certain individuals, there are some looking to us for guidance and example.

If young people and new Christians do not have strong examples to follow as they test their wings, the chances of them growing into strong Christians decrease. It is our responsibility as Christians to help one another grow, and we can do a great deal by simply setting a good example. Many Christians do not feel confident enough to talk to someone about the Bible and, because of this, feel like they aren't doing what they should. If you are living in a way that is pleasing to God, you are reaching people. Though you may not always realize it, there is someone learning from you. If you are behaving in a way a Christian should, then those around you are getting a good message. If you are not living as you should, then those lessons, too, are being learned by those around you. We can be a great help to those who imitate us if we will do as Paul suggested to the Ephesians and "be imitators of God as dear children" (Eph. 5:1).

- Joshua Ellis

No Fence Riding Allowed!

Following your death, your departure from this life, you will appear before the Judge of all men, Jesus Christ, who will possess the evidence of the content of your life prior to that great day (Matthew 16:27; 25:31-46).

The way most people are talking and behaving, it seems they are so full of themselves that they believe they will be able to determine every detail of life beyond the grave should they decide to even exist at that point. The Creator of all mankind has already stated that they will exist (Ecclesiastes 12:7), and that there are only two types of existence, one of happiness, and one of sad regret (Matthew 25:31-46). It is not possible that these will change or be altered (Luke 16:26). A good thing is that this truth is available for people to know without doubt, so that appropriate preparations may be made.

Our Creator "has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world." (Hebrews 1:2). Jesus Christ "was declared the Son of God with power by the resurrection from the dead, according to the Spirit of holiness," (Romans 1:4). He gives the assurance that we can be prepared – He has made the way to enjoy His everlasting blessings!

These things have been said in order to make this point: we cannot be neutral about Christ! There is no middle ground upon which any will stand. Neutrality is impossible. Jesus Christ said, "He who is not with Me is against Me;" (Matthew 12:30). His key position is mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). He is the only one who dispenses salvation to men (Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 5:9). He will be the Judge of all men (John 5:22-23, 27, 30; Acts 10:42), and He will judge by the words He has spoken (John 12:48).

The Judge said, "unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." (John 8:24). The Lord Jesus said, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36). Christ has been presented to all men – men must decide what they will do with Him, but they must be careful to decide rightly. This decision is the most vital of man's existence – it concerns eternity! You must never pass Him off with a shrug of the shoulders.

Jesus Christ stands before us in His gospel, the good news that has the power to save us for eternity with Him (Romans 1:16). We have to make the decision of what we will do with Him. Upon our death, He will make the decision of what He will do with us. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed

for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Friend, decide what you must about Christ today! If you will, He will decide for you in the last great day!

- Gary Smalley

* "Are the things you are living for worth Christ dying for?"

* "A world of love makes a world of difference!"

* "A smile is the shortest distance between two people!"

* "A person who hungers for money will starve to death spiritually!"

* "A good friend is one who keeps up with you - but never looks down on you!"

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

HEAR THE GOSPEL

(Romans 10:14-17; John 20:30-31; Romans 1:15-17)

BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST

(Acts 8:37; John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6)

REPENT OF PAST SINS

(Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30)

CONFESS CHRIST

(Romans 10:9-10; Acts 8:37)

BE BAPTIZED

(Romans 6:3-4; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:36-39; 1 Peter 3:21)

LIVE A FAITHFUL LIFE

(Revelation 2:10; 2 Peter 1:5-11; John 15:1-8; Hebrews 10:23-25)