

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **The Word Made Flesh**

"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me."' For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (John 1:14-18 NASB).

Jesus, the divine logos, one with God from eternity, became flesh, one with us, humanity. The self-humbling Savior became a living, human being. At no time did Jesus stop being Deity; at the same time, He shared with us in "flesh and blood" (Hebrews 2:14); He "had to be made like His brethren" (Hebrews 2:17). There could be no going back. In Jesus Christ, God became man. The flesh didn't become the Word; the Word became flesh.

Jesus, Himself God, is the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18; 3:16; 1 John 4:9). Rather than thinking of the word beget, think of the word being. Isaac was Abraham and Sarah's only begotten son; Isaac was their unique and only son as per God's promise to them (Hebrews 11:17). If Jesus was not the only begotten Son of God, that is, of the same nature, then how could Peter, James, and John, and others see the glory of the Father when they looked at Jesus? Often in John's gospel, Jesus points to the Father by pointing to Himself (John 14:9).

The Word became flesh; salvation is now a reality. We have sinned; now, because God has acted toward us, we can be saved. Our salvation is possible only because Jesus came to die. This fact speaks to how we are viewed by God. In our sin, we feel unworthy; yet, God sent His Son to die. He alone can give life (John 5:26). Even John the Baptist is caught up in the wonder of it all! John said: He is higher than I am. I am six months older than the Word, but He existed before I was born. We need Him. Grace and truth come from Him. We need divine favor and we need to know which way to go in life. We follow

Jesus because Jesus exegetes the Father; He explains and clarifies the Father. Existing in the bosom of the Father, Jesus knows what to say and what to do that we might come to our heavenly Father.

The Word became flesh. Jesus knows all about our struggles. Can we take it all in? Jesus tabernacled in the flesh on this earth. One day we will put aside our fleshly tabernacles and meet Jesus and be like He is (2 Corinthians 5:1). Moses gave the Law; but Moses doesn't take us to the Promise Land. Only Jesus, the Word, the Only Begotten Son of God can do that. John, the cousin of Jesus, sounded like he was excited when Jesus came. Are we?

- Randy Harshbarger

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## The Common Salvation

In his short epistle, Jude, probably the brother of our Lord, wrote, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).

I cannot think of a more pleasant, nor a more serious, subject to write about than salvation. Sadly though, there is a lot of confusion about it. If you were to ask three different religious people how one is saved, you would likely get three different answers, none of which are in harmony with what the Bible says. That means that there are many people in the world today who think they are saved but are not. It reminds us of the passage found in Proverbs 14:12. The record says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We should make sure that we have truly been saved. The only way to do that is to compare what the Bible says about salvation with what we have done and make sure they are the same.

When speaking about salvation, Jude referred to a "common salvation." Strong says that the Greek word for common means, "shared by all." What is it about salvation that is common or shared by all?

### **Everyone is saved from the same thing.**

Sin is the thing from which people need saving. It is sin that sends people to hell and separates one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Sin is the most horrific thing that exists. There is nothing good about it. There is not one redeeming quality about sin. I am not just talking

about the grotesque sins of the world that even the ungodly deplore; I am talking about all sin, no matter what its form may be.

If there is anything that demonstrates the wickedness of sin, it is the cross of Christ. Just think to what extent God went to take care of the problem of sin. He watched as His only begotten Son died for the sins of the world (1 Peter 2:24). Sin is so terrible that Jesus was willing to give up the riches of heaven and become poor so that the price for sin could be paid (2 Corinthians 8:9).

Imagine Jesus hanging on a tree on Golgotha's hill, dying all alone in one of the worse ways imaginable. Then, remember that it was all necessary because of sin - our sin! That sin, with all of its tragic facets, will cause the majority of people to spend eternity suffering in a devil's hell.

Thank God for salvation through Christ. Everybody who obeys the gospel is saved from the sins that have condemned them before God. They are saved, not partially, but to the uttermost (Hebrews 7:25). All of us who have properly obeyed the gospel, should rejoice with joy unspeakable for the common salvation.

### **Everyone has been saved the same way.**

There are not a plurality of ways to be saved. The gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), and everyone obeys the gospel the same way. When one hears the word (John 6:45), believes in Christ (Mark 16:15-16), repents of his sins (Acts 3:19), confesses Christ with the mouth (Romans 10:9-10), and is baptized (Acts 2:38), that person is saved from his past sins. Every saved person who has reached the age of accountability has shared those things in common. There is no such thing as a saved person who has not believed, repented, and been baptized for the remission of his sins. The common salvation that Jude spoke of is obtained the same way by everyone.

Have you experienced the common salvation? You can if you would just turn to Jesus and obey the gospel. Why not do it today?

- Don Wright

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## **Look! Water!**

These were the excited words of an Ethiopian eunuch after listening to the Christ-proclaimer, Philip, who had begun preaching to him at the passage of Scripture that the eunuch was reading, Isaiah 53:7-8. Isaiah did not speak of water, and the Scripture

relating Philip's preaching and the eunuch's exclamation in Acts 8 says that "Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this Scripture he preached Jesus to him." (Acts 8:35). Notice the eunuch's response to the message concerning Jesus: "As they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said, 'Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?'" (Acts 8:36). To preach Jesus obviously includes preaching baptism (immersion) in water. Water baptism was required by the gospel. Upon hearing the gospel of Christ, the eunuch wanted to be baptized. "And he ordered the chariot to stop; and they both went down into the water, Philip as well as the eunuch, and he baptized him." Afterwards, "they came up out of the water" (Acts 8:38-39). This is consistent with immersion.

Being inspired by God, as the assurance for accuracy in the content of his preaching, Philip applied the prophecy in Isaiah 53 to Christ, just as the Lord Jesus had done (Luke 22:37). He is the One through whom those who hear His gospel can enjoy forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38-39; 3:26; 4:12; 5:31; 13:38). Christ is the authority who stated the requirements in order to receive the forgiveness that He died to procure (cf. Matthew 28:18-20), and baptism in water is one of those requirements (Mark 16:16). This is the gospel that Philip preached to the eunuch that made him desire to be baptized when they came to a place where they could both go down into the water. As soon as the eunuch learned what to do he sought immediate opportunity to do it (cf. Acts 16:33). He did not wait for a more convenient season (cf. Acts 24:25). His obedience demonstrates true faith in Christ (John 3:36).

When you and I realize what the gospel of Christ requires of us we are not likely to hesitate. We dare not die without believing the gospel and living in a sure hope. The devil will do all in his power to see to it that we hesitate and procrastinate, but the soul is more valuable than all the world, and now is the day of salvation (2 Corinthians 6:2). Be like this searching eunuch and look for the first opportunity to obey the gospel of Christ! You also will go on your way rejoicing!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "The man who gets too hot cooks his own goose!"

\* "Following the line of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked!"

\* "Killing time is a slow method of committing suicide!"

\* "The pleasures of youth often make the pains of old age!"

\* "You can never ascertain your real wealth by consulting your bank account!"

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# ***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)