

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### Will the Righteous "Scarcely Be Saved?"

In 1 Peter 4:18 (KJV, NKJV, ESV - TN) we read, "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?" What does this passage mean? Does it mean that even the righteous will barely make it into heaven – by the skin of their teeth? If so, how can Peter say in 2 Peter 1:11 that "entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom..."? Will the entrance into heaven be supplied just barely or abundantly?

The word translated "scarcely" in 1 Peter 4:18, *molls*, is also translated "with difficulty." In Acts 27:7-8, 16 it is used in this sense: they sailed "with difficulty" because the winds were against them. I believe it should be translated similarly in 1 Peter 4:18, making the passage read, "if the righteous one is saved with difficulty, where will the ungodly and sinner appear?" (It is similarly translated in the NASB, NIV, HCSB - TN). Thus the point is not that the righteous will be saved "by the skin of his teeth" but rather that the righteous will be saved because he is willing to put out the effort to obey God and be saved. The Bible never denies that being a Christian will be difficult, in fact we are warned of that repeatedly. The reward offered far outweighs the efforts we make. If my intention is to please God in all that I do and I do my best to learn and then put into practice His will, ample entrance should be supplied to heaven for me.

What should we take away from this passage of Scripture? That being a child of God is not an easy life. The devil is ever present, seeking whom he may devour. And while he doesn't forget those in the world, he doesn't spend as much on them because he already has them. No, his stronger efforts are against those who have left his kingdom – that's you. He will use anyone or anything he can to get you to pull away from God. He may use your family, your friends, your coworkers, your boss to pressure/lure you back to his service. He is so canny he can use tragedy (sickness, death of a loved one, financial problems, physical weakness) or success (good health, good job, riches) toward the same end. No matter what situation you are in, he will find a way to tempt you. Nor does he give up or diminish the pressure as you mature – "be faithful unto death."

You may ask, "How can I resist the devil?" By yourself you can't, but with the Lord's help you can. How did Jesus resist the temptations of the devil? "It is written." The better we know the Word of God, the better we can resist the devil. The Lord has limited the power of the devil, so with His help we can overcome him. James tells us, "Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). The more we resist him, the quicker he will flee from us. In verse 8 we are told, "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." If we want to be one of those who enjoy eternity with God, at home in rest, we must choose to draw near to Him. The closer we draw to God the farther we will be from the devil.

Will Christians just barely make it to heaven? NO!! Will it require effort on their part to make it to heaven? Yes, great effort. But along with this great effort comes great reward, not only in heaven, but on earth too. They also have the Creator of the world as their helper, His wisdom is revealed for their benefit, and His great love for them to cheer them on.

- Tol Burk

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## Why I Am A Member Of The Church of Christ

I didn't join the church of Christ. I didn't select the church of Christ as "my choice" from among many churches. It never occurred to me that I had a choice nor that I desired to make a choice of churches.

I started thinking about my spiritual condition down in Tennessee some years ago - several years ago - and made up my mind that I should do something about it. I began to consider what the Lord wanted me to do. I started to study my Bible.

I found that I was a sinner and that Christ was THE Savior. I found that if I were ever saved it would be by Christ. I considered HIS word relative to what to do to be saved. He said I should repent, Luke 13:3. I did. He said I should confess HIM, Matthew 10:32. I did. He said I should be baptized, Mark 16:16. I did. He had said if I would do these things I would BE SAVED. I was. But the BIBLE taught that when I was saved the Lord added me to the church, Acts 2:47. He did.

Now, WHICH CHURCH did he add me to? HIS, Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16. Thus I am a member of the Church of Christ because I had NO CHOICE and wanted none. I just wanted to be saved. And I was.

- A. C. Grider, via *The Instructor*, January, 1975

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# CHAINS

(a.) The Bible describes many types of CHAINS:

- Golden, worn as a Badge of Office (Gen. 41:42; Dan. 5:7, 16, 29).
- Brass, used in the Temple (1 Kings 7:17); used to bind Samson (Judges 16:21).
- Silver, used for Idols (Isa. 40:19).
- Iron, used to bind Joseph as a slave (Psa. 105:18).

(b.) The Bible describes many uses of CHAINS:

- As Ornaments (Num. 31:50; Song of Sol. 1:10; Isa. 3:19-20; Ezra 16:11).
- Put on High Priest's Breastplate (Exod. 28:14, 22, 24; 39:15, 17, 18).
- In the Temple (1 Kings 6:21).
- Worn on Camels' Necks (Judges 8:26).
- Bound with (Jer. 40:1, 4; 52:1; Nahum 3:10; Luke 8:29; Acts 12:6-7; 21:33; 28:20).
- As Fetters [shackles] (2 Kings 25:7; 2 Chron. 33:11; 36:6; Jer. 39:7; Mark 5:4; "fetters of iron, Psa. 149:8; fetters for the feet, 2 Sam. 3:34; Psa. 105:18; cf. Mark 5:4).

(c.) The Bible uses CHAINS in illustrations (Psa. 73:6, NASB - "necklace"; Prov. 1:9, NASB - "ornaments"; Lam. 3:7; Ezek. 7:23-27; Rev. 20:1).

(d.) The New Testament records incidents of Apostles being chained because of their preaching.

- Peter was bound to two soldiers with two chains (Acts 12:6).
- Paul was bound with two chains in Jerusalem (Acts 21:33).
- Paul was transferred to Rome from Jerusalem as a prisoner, "for the sake of the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:16-20; cf. 2 Timothy 1:16).

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## ACTIONS AGAINST GOD'S TRUTH

Jesus revealed in His prayer to the Father that God's word is truth (John 17:17). The origin of God's word should command the greatest of respect and honor for His revelation in Christ Jesus. Sadly, many people choose the wrong attitude toward the Bible. What things are done by them?

1. SUPPRESS THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS (Romans 1:18). "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who

suppress the truth in unrighteousness," Ungodly and unrighteous men actually serve as a barrier to the advancement of the gospel. By their godless conduct they stifle the truth, they restrain it from having heaven's desired effect in the lives of others. Sadly, the wrath of God's condemnation will be coming their way.

2. EXCHANGED THE TRUTH OF GOD FOR A LIE (Romans 1:25). Of people who refused to honor God and be thankful to Him, Paul declared, "For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." (Romans 1:25). Strange indeed is the person who deliberately gives up the truth in order to embrace a lie. And the lie has to do with what men, in their futile speculations and foolish darkness of plotting their own way, will worship. Men deliberately gave up worship of the true and living God, turning to idols, "an image formed by the art and thought of man." (Acts 17:29).

3. HINDER OTHERS FROM OBEYING THE TRUTH (Galatians 5:7). "You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?" (Galatians 5:7). Paul uses the illustration of runners in a race to depict living the life of a Christian (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; 2 Timothy 4:7). The Hebrews writer also uses the illustration (Hebrews 12:1-3). The gospel was first preached in a world where many devout Jews were determined to enslave Christians to the Law of Moses. Many Christians were progressing in the Way until the Judaizers began impeding their progress. They were admonished to obey Christ, not Moses (Galatians 5:1-12; cf. 1:6-10).

4. OPPOSE THE TRUTH (2 Timothy 3:8). "Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these men also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith." Just as Pharaoh's magicians opposed Moses who was sent by God to deliver His people from bondage, false teachers dug in with their resistance to the gospel. When their lives and teaching were compared to Christ and His gospel there was no match. Upon examination they were rejected as enemies of Christ.

5. TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH (2 Timothy 4:3-4). "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths." The fact that faithful teachers were admonished to adhere to and maintain sound doctrine indicates that there would be those unfaithful who would reject wholesome doctrine for teachings that arose from their inordinate desires. They would refuse to tolerate the rigorous demands of Christ's gospel and would secure teachers who would be more pleasing to them. They selected the course and then found someone who would guide them in it. Only the truth makes one free (John 8:32).

6. MALIGNED THE TRUTH (2 Peter 2:2). "Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;" It remains a great tragedy that people will more zealously follow error than truth. Here the appeal is sensual and lascivious as moral

restraint is cast off. Teachers who destroy the fear of judgment find it less difficult enticing people to abandon purity, holiness and righteousness. When people who once followed the gospel of Christ begin following a course that denies Him the truth will be blasphemed. Those who desert the truth to follow immorality cause the truth to be evil spoken of (cf. Titus 2:4-5).

True Christians do everything within their power to secure a firm hold on the truth and never let go. They hold fast the word of truth (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 2 Timothy 1:13)! Let us encourage one another in this vital endeavor.

- Gary Smalley

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- \* "An old man was asked what had most robbed him of joy in his life. His reply was, 'Things that never happen!'"
  - \* "If you think you have no fault, that is possibly the worse one!"
  - \* "If some preachers tried as hard to save men as they do to please them, there would be fewer empty meeting houses and fewer lost souls!"
  - \* "To be angry with a weak man is proof you are not very strong yourself!"
  - \* "The measure of a man's real character is what he would do if he knew he would never be found out!"
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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)