

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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November 28, 2021

Volume 41, # 48

The Summary of It All

"I, Jesus, have sent My angel to testify to you these things in the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star. And the Spirit and the bride say, 'Come!' And let him who hears say, 'Come!' And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:16-17). In this, the gospel age, we have access to a summary of God's entire plan, which He has revealed to us through the Holy Spirit. What does this summary confirm for us?

Jesus fulfilled all prophecies. "Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me'" (Luke 24:44). There were more than 300 prophecies concerning the Messiah - the Christ. Jesus fulfilled them all.

Jesus is Divine. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1-3). One needs only to study John's gospel to know the truth - that Jesus truly is God's son. John wrote his gospel to substantiate that fact (John 20:30-31).

Universal salvation is only through Christ. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). Jesus came to earth and died to enable every sinner to be saved. God's wonderful, eternal plan was in His mind before He created the world. Through Christ, all can freely receive salvation.

This revelation is final. "Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). God will not give the

world another message. There'll be no more sacrifices, no more plans, no more chances; this is all there is! How sure is this truth? "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9).

Jesus will come again. "But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power" (1 Corinthians 15:23-24). The Lord is coming again, not to establish a kingdom, but in judgment to receive His own and take them back to His heavenly kingdom. Also read John 14:1-3.

Grace is with His disciples. "He who testifies to these things says, 'Surely I am coming quickly.' Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus! The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all" (Revelation 22:20-21). The grace that can save men was given by the apostles and passed down to us through the work of the Holy Spirit - the inspired Bible. God has done everything He can do to save a sinful world - the next move is up to the sinners.

Pray that we always believe what God wants us to believe. Dear readers, He has revealed all you need to know. What else will it take to convince you to act today?

- Keith Greer

SOME BIBLE PRINCIPLES TO LIVE BY

We should always strive to obey and live by the principles laid down in the Word of God. Let us consider Seven Divine Principles to live by:

(1) Acts 5:29 - "Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men." When a conflict arises between the laws of men and the laws of God, we have no choice but to listen to what God has to say.

(2) Romans 14:23 - ". . . For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Therefore for a thing to be "of faith" it must be taught in the Word of God.

(3) 2 Corinthians 5:7 - "For we walk by faith, not by sight." The walk of a Christian is most definitely a walk of faith. One may not always know why God has commanded a thing, but when we walk by faith - we do it anyway!

(4) Colossians 3:17 - "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." When this passage is obeyed, one will do all things by the authority of Christ.

(5) Romans 12:1 - "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." God demanded animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, but in the New, He demands of us, that we ourselves become a Living (not a dead) sacrifice.

(6) 1 Thessalonians 5:21 - "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." We must not accept just anything but prove all things and after we find that which is good and right: hold on to it.

(7) 1 Thessalonians 5:18 - "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." The ingrate is noticed and rejected by God (Romans 1:21 and Luke 17:17).

(8) 1 Thessalonians 5:17 - "Pray without ceasing." Need I say more?

- Wendell M. Powell

Share a Quote ...

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). We are in the habit of saying that God has given us in the gospel, everything that is essential to life and godliness, but Peter goes a little farther than that and affirms that God has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness. There is a difference. To illustrate: There are certain things that are essential to an automobile, and there are other things that pertain to an automobile but are not essential to it. When you have all things that are essential to an automobile, you can go to a supply house and purchase a lot of extras that pertain to an automobile. But suppose you have all the essentials of an automobile, and then you add all the things that pertain to an automobile, nothing else could be added that would make it any more complete. God has not only given us all things that are essential to life and godliness, but He has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness.

But do religious people believe it? If so, why all these flummeries that God has said nothing about? If you will read the verse again, you will notice that He has given us all these things through the knowledge of Christ. The knowledge of Christ means the knowledge that has been revealed about Him -- the gospel of Christ. Hence, through the gospel God has not only given us all things that are essential to life and godliness, but all things that pertain to life and godliness. If there is, therefore, anything in your religion that did not come to you through the gospel, it does not so much as pertain to life and godliness. Is it not time to check up on our religion and see if we have anything that we cannot find in the New Testament? Any person of intelligence can do that for himself.

- R. L. Whiteside, in *The Kingdom Of Promise And Prophecy*, p. 42

Giving and Receiving Mercy

Some of the best known words of Jesus Christ are these: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy." (Matthew 5:7). Easily remembered when we contemplate these are: "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions." (Matthew 6:14-15).

Life has many settings that are not conducive to the demonstration of mercy: the elementary school playground, the alley frequented by the neighborhood bully, the teenager cliques, and the social gatherings of children of divorced parents. A person who is merciful has been well-taught and has acted out of great determination to live this way. He has the greatest incentive for doing so: the nature of the God of heaven and His demonstration in the giving of His Son to redeem a sinful and lost world. Our world of selfish concerns fights against the desire to seek the best interest of others by being charitable to them. Real men just don't show such weakness!

One might conclude that mercy could always be found inside a church building, but even the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day lacked this precious spiritual character trait. Shockingly, religious people were self-righteous, arrogant, proud, self-centered, and judgmental. The same is found today among those who claim the closest of relationships to Jesus Christ!

True disciples will so speak and so act with the recognition that they will face the Judgment bar of One who knows and sees all things. "For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy;" (James 2:13a). Because of God's great mercy, He does not give us the punishment we rightfully deserve. Because of God's wonderful grace, He gives us the forgiveness we do not deserve. It has been said that some people find fault

in others as if they would be rewarded for finding it. It has also been said that people needing mercy have no business being merciless to others. Ponder that!

Hasten the day when we finally learn to treat others as we wish to be treated: with mercy!
- Gary Smalley

* "God provides food for every bird, but He does not place it in his or her nest!"

* "Let a pig and a child have everything they want, and you'll get a good pig and a bad child!"

* "The best thing to save for your future is your soul!"

* "Believe in the power of prayer!"

* "If you read history you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next." – C.S. Lewis

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)