

# The Old Hickory Bulletin

## Old Hickory Church of Christ

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### The Undesirable Jesus

Isaiah spoke of one who had "no form nor comeliness" - "no beauty that we should desire him" - "despised and rejected of men", and "as one from whom men hide their face, he was despised and we esteemed him not" (Isaiah 53). It may shock some to learn that this is the description of the one identified by inspired men as being Jesus, the Son of God and Saviour of men. But such is the case for both Philip, the evangelist, and John, the apostle; others so apply the prophecy. In answer to the eunuch's question, "Of whom speaketh the prophet this?", Philip "preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:34,35). John quoted Isaiah 53:1, "Lord, who hath believed our report? And to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed" along with Isaiah 6:10 and then stated, "These things said Isaiah, because he saw his glory; and he spake of him." (John 12:41). When Isaiah spoke the things recorded in Isaiah 53, "he spake of him" (Jesus). Thus both Philip and John interpret the prophecy as fulfilled by Jesus.

Jesus is not now, nor has he ever been, despised and rejected because of any flaw in Himself. He "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (1 Peter 2:22); He was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15); His public challenge was "which of you convicteth me of sin?" (John 8:46); and Pilate's verdict was, "I find no crime in him." (John 18:38). God from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17). Cumulative evidence to the same point abounds in the scriptures but this will suffice to prove the proposition that Jesus is not despised and rejected due to any personal defect.

Why?

But why is there no form or comeliness, no beauty that we should desire him? Why is he despised and rejected of men? As the fault is not in Jesus, we must search for the answer by an investigation of man. Jesus is not attractive to the worldly-minded. Neither materialism, sensualism, pride nor any other thing which sets the mind on "the things which are upon the earth" can discover beauty in Jesus. The "lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye and the pride of life" blind those in their clutches to the superior beauty of Jesus.

"When we see him" through lust-tinted glasses, "there is no beauty that we should desire him."

The "many" who are traveling the road to destruction are doing so because of their ignorant insensitiveness to the "beauty of holiness". When those who trust in numbers observe that the majority despise Jesus, they adopt the attitude of the many and come to despise Jesus and despising Jesus, they join the crowd. Jesus must be rejected in order for one to "go with the crowd." Pride, confidence in self, prevents personal conviction of sin. And until such conviction of personal guilt exists, one could hardly "care less" that "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities."

Lacking conviction of sin, conviction of righteousness, and conviction of judgment, man cannot see Him in His beauty. Conviction of sin, that "all have sinned", is indispensable to one's appreciating how beautiful and desirable Jesus is. For when a person is aware that he is lost in sin, he is eager for the one who is "able to save...all who come unto God by him". Nothing can be more desirable. The realization of the fact and ugliness of personal guilt leads to appreciation of the beauty of Jesus, the one "by whose stripes we are healed". Coupled with the conviction of sin, and just as indispensable is the conviction of righteousness. God through the Holy Spirit justified Christ by raising him from the dead, thus refuting the charge of unrighteousness implied by his death on the cross, Jesus was "declared to be the Son of God...by the resurrection from the dead" (Romans 1:4). The resurrection of Jesus demonstrated that he was "with God elect, precious". Seeing Him as the Son of God, we are not dismayed at the realization that the world despises and rejects Him. Rather than dismay there will be boldness to rely on Him to justify all who come unto God by Him. Our Lord also included the conviction of judgment in His statement of what the Holy Spirit would accomplish when he came to the apostles. Conviction of the defeat and punishment of the prince of this world, along with all of those who follow him, makes Jesus extremely desirable. The attractiveness of Satan wanes as one views the destiny of Satan and his admirers.

#### The Other Side

Men must come to regard meekness and lowliness of heart as strengths rather than weaknesses before Jesus has beauty and comeliness for them. Jesus said, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your soul..." (Matthew 11:28-30). Until a person realizes that the burden of his soul is sin, that the feeling of lack of fulfillment, the anxieties, the feeling of insecurity, and all the other elements that contribute to making life miserable are part of the burden of sin; in other words, until he is conscious of personal guilt he will not seek the relief of soul offered by Christ.

Overwhelming awe accompanies awareness of the glory of Jesus. The wisdom of the world rejects the idea that "glory" is compatible with meekness and lowliness of heart. If pride and high-mindedness were characteristics of Jesus, the invitation to "come unto me..." would never have issued from His lips. But such is not the case for Jesus explains, "I am meek and lowly in heart". The magnificent beauty of the Son of God will not awe anyone, to the point of repelling him, when he has the assurance of the one who is "acquainted with grief", that He is "meek and lowly in heart".

According to Isaiah Jesus "was oppressed, yet when he was afflicted, he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7). The Holy Spirit spoke by Peter, saying, "For hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for you...who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:21-23). Such reaction to oppression does not appeal to the proud and arrogant. This is not, according to their view, "the stuff of which heroes are made". They rather applaud the person who when he is reviled, reacts with bitterness, expressed in "four letter words". Isaiah explained why Jesus "was despised and rejected of men..." this way: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way..." (Isaiah 53:6). All who are straying around, following their own way are blinded to the beauty of Jesus; they fail to see in Jesus anything that is desirable.

Few are they that acknowledge in thought, word and deed, that "the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). All who are in the world and many who are listed as members of the Lord's church have never learned the lesson that, "there is a way which seemeth right unto a man; but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

That the Ethiopian saw comeliness and beauty in Jesus that caused him to desire Him, is evident from his action of being baptized, by the authority of Jesus for the remission of his sins. He did not despise and reject; he believed and was baptized and then went on his way rejoicing in the beauty of holiness.

How do you rate Jesus?

- Robert H. Farish, via Expository Files Vol. 9, No. 11, 11/2002 (from Vanguard, April, 1975)

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## **"When I drink it new with you"**

In the gospel of Jesus Christ, the inspired writers recorded that the Lord Jesus initiated a special and important celebration of worship to the heavenly Father in remembrance of the death of His Son: "the Lord's Supper" (1 Corinthians 11:20). Details of this memorial feast are found in Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:17-20, and 1 Corinthians

11:23-26 (cf. also Acts 2:42; 20:7). Jesus commanded His disciples to "do this in remembrance of Me." (Luke 22:19; cf. 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). In observing this "breaking of bread," Christians "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes." (1 Corinthians 11:26).

The gospels record an interesting statement made by the Lord at this time: "But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom." (Matthew 26:29; cf. Luke 22:18, "until the kingdom of God comes.").

Notice that the Lord indicated that He would drink it again "in My Father's kingdom." (cf. "until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God" – Luke 22:16b). We notice that the Kingdom of God came with power on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Christ (cf. Acts 1:1-8; Acts 2; Matthew 16:18-19; Luke 24:45-49). All who believed and obeyed the teaching of the apostles beginning on that day were added by the Lord to this number (Acts 2:47). This body of people is identified as "the church" (Acts 5:11; 8:1). It is the same body into which believers were "transferred", "the kingdom of His beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13; cf. Colossians 4:11; Revelation 1:9).

The Lord's promise to "drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" is fulfilled in the church, "when you come together to eat" and "when you come together as a church" (1 Corinthians 11:33, 18). The Lord drinking it "new" is not a literal drinking, but a figurative one. It is a feature of the kingdom of God. It figuratively expresses the "sharing in" or "communion" (1 Corinthians 10:16) which Christ has with His disciples while they are eating the Lord's Supper. Thus, all Christians participate in the benefits of Christ's death, they jointly participate in the body and blood of their Lord. This was the "new" that the Lord referred to in His promise (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Hebrews 10:20; 12:24). The Lord Jesus is drinking the fruit of the vine "new" with His brethren in His Father's kingdom when His church assembles for that purpose!

- Gary Smalley

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\* "The word of God is the seed of the kingdom. However, the seed must be sown!"

\* "Everybody is liable to make mistakes, but the foolish practice them!"

\* "Can your life stand an eternal audit?"

\* "Powerful praying is not pretty phrases, but persistent prevailing!"

\* "Wealth does not insure happiness, but neither does poverty!"

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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)