

# **The Old Hickory Bulletin**

## **Old Hickory Church of Christ**

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### **Hear All The Testimony**

The story is told of a country judge in an East Texas town who knew very little law or anything else. He was called upon to sit on the bench at the trial of a man on a misdemeanor charge. When the prosecuting attorney had finished his testimony and rested, the defense lawyer arose to present his side of the case. The old judge pushed his glasses down on his nose to where he could conveniently look over them and said, "We don't care to hear anything from you at all." The defense attorney insisted that he had the right to be heard, whereupon the Judge replied, "If I listen to you, I will only become confused. I have my mind made up and know what I want to do with this man now. I won't know what to do if I listen to you, so we won't hear any more testimony."

That is the attitude of so many people toward the word of God. They have their minds made up and they are satisfied with what they have heard; they don't want to hear any more for fear they will become disturbed. Such is tragic. It manifests no reverence for God's word and not enough concern for one's soul.

If a juror were to arise in the midst of a trial and say, "Your Honor, we have heard all that we need to hear; we know already that this man is guilty," the Judge would have to declare a mistrial, for the juror would not be living up to his oath to hear all the testimony admissible under the law. He would not be trying the case or attempting to reach a verdict upon the basis of all the evidence giving due credit to the weight of the testimony given.

We need to give the Bible and its testimony a fair hearing. Do not just take a passage or two that you like on some particular subject and reject the rest of what God has said. No man can learn the truth by such an attitude or method of study. Neither should we cut a passage of scripture in half and make it serve some purpose that the whole passage would make impossible. Let us look at some instances of this method of studying and applying the scriptures:

## The Great Commission

There are three records of the Great Commission of our Lord to the Apostles. They must be combined in order that all the truth may be learned, or all the testimony be heard. Matthew says, "And Jesus came to them and spake unto them, saying, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This record does not mention faith or repentance. Mark records the same commission in these words, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16.) Here we have faith added to Matthew's testimony, but repentance is not mentioned. In Luke's record we have the following, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." (Luke 23:46-47.) Here we have the additional testimony that repentance is to be required, and the execution of the commission is to begin in Jerusalem. All three records must be studied together.

## How Are Men Justified?

In studying this question men often make the fatal mistake of hearing only part of the testimony. They read until they come to some passage like Romans 5:1, "Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and right here they stop, and conclude that justification is by faith only. But neither this passage nor any other says so. It says indeed that we are "justified by faith," but it does not say "justified by faith only." If we read on in the testimony of God's word, we come to James 2:24, the only passage in the Bible that mentions the theme of justification "by faith only." And here we read, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Faith that works by love is the only kind of faith that will justify anyone. (Galatians 5:6)

## Sinless Perfection

The Nazarene Church Manual quotes from 1 John 2:1 to try to prove that men are to live without sin, a life of sinless perfection. Such a claim, of course, is ridiculous. You can prove by a man's family or his next door neighbors (if they will tell you the truth) that no man lives above sin. But the word of God is misused in trying to teach the doctrine of sinless perfection. A passage is quoted and only half of it is used. Here is their quotation: "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye may not sin." The last half of that

verse (unquoted in the Manual) demolishes their doctrine by saying, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." The passage admits the possibility and probability or fact of sinfulness by the very provision offered.

These are but a few instances. Many others could be cited. Let us give the word of God a fair hearing by hearing ALL the testimony.

- Roy E. Cogdill, Via The Gospel Guardian, May 8, 1958

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## **SENSIBLE REASONING**

Jesus said: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." (Matthew 5:6). Did you ever think about how strong that statement is? The most forceful and compelling passion one can have is to satisfy his thirst and hunger. This desire is so strong that people will satisfy it at any cost as the pangs of hunger and thirst grow upon them. Jesus was mindful of this fact, and so He made the statement found above in Matthew 5:6.

Now think, if you can, of the person thirsting and hungering after righteousness who never attends church. Think again of how poor and weakly the person is who attends church only once in a while. Again we might think, "How truly hungry and thirsty is one for righteousness who attends only one service a week with God's people?" Think about the person who does not attend Bible classes on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening and forsakes the Sunday evening services, hungering and thirsting after enough righteousness to be saved. Impossible to have such thoughts, isn't it? We should think about eternity. We are not here in this world long. Eternity is NEVER-ENDING and NEVER is a mighty long time. When we leave this world we are going to one of two places, and whichever one we go to, we are going there to NEVER leave. Which will it be? HEAVEN, or, WILL IT BE HELL IN UNQUENCHABLE FLAME?

- John N. Ford, via *The Instructor*, June, 1968

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## **The Clouds are the Chariot of the Lord!**

Because of the familiarity of warriors riding in chariots to do battle in an attempt to defeat enemies, the Lord is pictured in prophetic symbolism as riding upon a transport of His making, the clouds, when coming in judgment to execute punishment. The Psalmist stated, "He makes the clouds His chariot;" (Psalms 104:3). Notice what is said of Jehovah's punishing the guilty: "The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way,

And clouds are the dust beneath His feet." (Nahum 1:3). Notice what is said of Jehovah's coming against Egypt: "The oracle concerning Egypt. Behold, the LORD is riding on a swift cloud and is about to come to Egypt; The idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence, And the heart of the Egyptians will melt within them." (Isaiah 19:1; cf. Ezekiel 30:3, 18; 32:7).

The prophet Daniel spoke of divine visions he had received wherein the Messiah, coming "with the clouds of heaven" was given "dominion, Glory and a kingdom, . . . one Which will not be destroyed." (Daniel 7:13-14). Riding on the clouds was an indication of divine dominion (cf. Psalms 18:9-15).

The apostles of Christ witnessed His ascension: "He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight." As they were observing, they heard this: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11). Recall that the gospel writers stated this very symbolism: "they will see the SON OF MAN COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF THE SKY with power and great glory." (Matthew 24:30; cf. Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27). Recall further a statement that Jesus made to the high priest during His examination: "you will see THE SON OF MAN SITTING AT THE RIGHT HAND OF POWER, and COMING ON THE CLOUDS OF HEAVEN." (Matthew 26:64; cf. Mark 14:62).

Certainly this prophetic symbolism is one of the most pervasive images of divine judgment in the Bible (cf. Revelation 1:7). In the final coming of Christ on the clouds signaling Judgment Day (cf. Acts 1:9), the events of that day will strike fear in the hearts of the wicked and unbelieving (cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10), but faithful servants of Christ will "stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy," (Jude 24), they will "rejoice with exultation." (1 Peter 4:13). For these, a crown of righteousness is laid up, "to all who have loved His appearing." (2 Timothy 4:8).

- Gary Smalley

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\* "The only difference between a grave and a rut is the dimensions!"

\* "The best place to find a helping hand is at the end of the arm!"

\* "You can't push yourself forward by patting yourself on the back!"

\* "Ideas do not work unless you do!"

\* The influence of affluence is very dangerous. We should be sober and take heed! "In everything I showed you that by working hard in this manner you must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35).

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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)