

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Father of Spirits

"Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Hebrews 12:9)

"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)

Jesus declared that "God is a Spirit." Also, from the book of Hebrews, we learn that God is the "Father of spirits." Now, this brings us to an important principle in understanding our relationship with God. Our relationship to Him as our Father is not physical in nature but spiritual. When God created man in His image (Genesis 1:26), the part of us that is in His image is our spirit and not our physical bodies. To help better understand how God is the Father of spirits, there is law given by God in the beginning. That law is referred to by some as the "Seed Law."

"And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." (Genesis 1:11)

The "Seed Law" that God created is that everything will bear after its "kind" through its seed. This is a principle that we readily see in nature and understand. Farmers know that if you want to have a specific crop, you must plant the specific seed that will produce that crop. So, what is the seed that God uses to produce after His kind?

"Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God." (Luke 8:11)

In the "Parable of the Sower," Jesus illustrates how God produces "spirits" after His kind. When His word (seed) is sown into an honest and good heart, it brings forth a spiritually born person who is living in the image of "the Father of spirits." This principle of the "Seed Law" from nature is used to illustrate what happens spiritually.

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." (1 Peter 1:22-23)

God's seed (His Word) will only produce after its kind. Think about it! It takes another kind of seed to produce something different from the Father. Jesus illustrates that exact point in the "Parable of the Tares" where an enemy sows bad seed in the same field where the good seed had been sown (see Matthew 13:24-30). Notice the explanation of Jesus about the parable:

"... He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear." (Matthew 13:37-43)

My friend, God has placed the power of His seed (Word) in His gospel to save souls (Romans 1:16). When planted in a good and honest heart, God's seed (Word) will always produce after His kind. Faith is produced when one hears God's Word (Romans 10:17) because the seed has the power to germinate, grow, and produce what God created it to do. It is a "Seed Law" that is not just true in the physical realm but in the spiritual as well.

We are here to help others learn more about the Word of God so that they can live as the spiritual person of which God is the Father. Please, if we can help you in your study of the Word of God, do not hesitate to let us know.

Please join us for Bible Study and worship each Sunday.

- Keith Hamilton

There Will Be a Rapture

If we consider that the words "caught up" in 1 Thessalonians 4:17 are translated "rapture" in Latin, then there is going to be a "caught up" (rapture) moment. So, the word is there

in Latin, and since the verse says we will be "caught up together with them in the clouds," then it will happen, and I believe in THAT kind of rapture.

However, many denominations have distorted this verse and teach that there will be a secret rapture, a snatching away of the saints from the earth, while sinners go through a seven year tribulation period on earth, and people won't know what happened to those Christians. THAT doctrine is not taught in the Bible. In this text there is nothing secret about it. "The Lord HIMSELF will descend from heaven with a SHOUT, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God" (v.16).

These are all attention getters, not secretive at all. So, the being "caught up" (rapture) will have everyone's full attention. The dead in Christ will rise first and the living saints will be caught up together with them. It won't be for mere 7 years. The text says the saints will "meet the Lord in the air. And thus we will ALWAYS be with the Lord." Now this text is telling what will happen to the righteous. Other texts show that the unrighteous, those who neglect so great salvation (Hebrews 2:1-4) will be judged (John 12:48; Acts 17:30, 31) and sentenced to the lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:33-ff).

There will be one resurrection of the just AND the unjust (Acts 24:15). A (singular) resurrection of the just and unjust. Not one resurrection of the just, then seven years of tribulation on earth, then another long period on earth, and then another resurrection. There is one last day of mortal life on earth. When Jesus comes, He will pour out vengeance on the ungodly (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9) and reward the faithful.

I hope you are planning on the heavenly reward and are preparing for the Day of the Lord so that you can be among those who are "caught up" together to meet the Lord in the air, and live forever in immortal bliss with the Lord Jesus Christ. That will be most glorious for the people of God, but a day of great misery for the unprepared. Use your time wisely to prepare!

- Terry Wayne Benton

Clippings . . .

William Newell published his commentary on the Revelation in 1935 before World War 2 began and he wrote these "prophetic" words: "It is our profound conviction that not only in Russia and Germany but in other countries there are terrible days of trial directly ahead for the Church of God. It is our proper portion—all the day (of grace) long are we to be killed, counted as sheep for slaughter. Therefore, remember the exhortation of

Peter (who at the first, fled and denied, but later was crucified for his Lord): "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered in the flesh, arm ye yourselves also with the same mind," or "thought," "intent," "resolution" (1 Peter 4:1), that is, with the same "expectation," when necessary." (Revelation 2).

Worship and the Requirements of God!

Only when we believe and obey what the Lord God has commanded in His word are we acceptable to Him in living our lives as His children, servants of the Most High God. This has been true in every dispensation of time: the Patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. The principle is easily demonstrated by considering the subject of worship.

In the Patriarchal age, worship was not acceptable to God just because a person offered it. The worship of Cain and Abel indicated that pleasing God meant obeying His requirements (cf. Genesis 4:2-5). Abel and his offering were regarded; Cain and his offering were not. [Note that Cain's reaction to the truth was anger instead of self-correction.] The New Testament reveals why Abel's worship was accepted: Abel was righteous and his gifts were offered through faith (Hebrews 11:4). Faith comes by hearing and obeying the word of God (Romans 10:17). Faith was seen in his behavior and his worship sacrifices; God told him how to live and worship acceptably. He conformed and was pleasing to God.

In the Mosaic age, God-pleasing worship was also required. Two priests, sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, "offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them." They went beyond the instructions from the Lord as to the source of fire to be used in their firepans. Notice God's reaction: "fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD." Please ask yourself, "Were these instructions insignificant?" Why was such a severe punishment placed upon them that cost them their lives? They left the word of God and became presumptuous in their thinking, departing from proper authority.

In the Christian age, is the worshiping person also bound to abide in God's requirements, in the faith ("the faith" being what we obey, Acts 6:7; Romans 16:26; and what we continue in, Acts 14:22), being careful not to depart in any detail? Christ Jesus declared the requirement regarding worship: "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." (John 4:24). What is truth? The word of God (John 17:17). To worship in truth means to worship in obedience to the requirements of God as revealed in His word.

Today, if we are to worship God acceptably, we must worship Him according to His commandments. In commissioning His apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel, He emphasized that they were to teach disciples to "observe all that I commanded you;" (Matthew 28:20). John wrote, "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son." (2 John 9). Friend, when you worship the Lord God, do you want to have both the Father and the Son? If so, you must abide in the teaching of Christ.

- Gary Smalley

* "No matter how good a friend is, they're going to hurt you every once in a while and you must forgive them for that!"

* "You can do something in an instant that will give you heartache for life!"

* "No road is long with good company!"

* "Maturity has more to do with what types of experiences you've had and what you've learned from them and less to do with how many birthdays you've celebrated!"

* "One cannot be envious and happy at the same time!"

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)