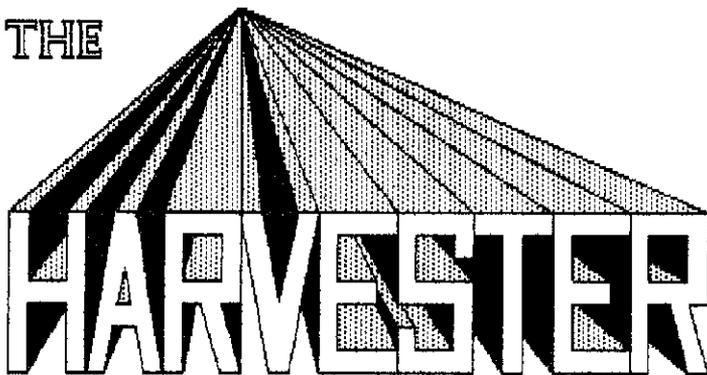


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)*

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## FOLLOWING THE RULES

Apparent at almost every turn is the fact that people enjoy sports. Manufacturers of sporting goods find a ready and competitive market for their products. One of the most popular features of larger newspapers is the sports section. Individual and team competition is an accepted part of school activity, with national championships in basketball and football being of significant acclaim for major universities. Beyond those days of academic loyalty and partiality, professionalism enters the picture and athletic competition reaches its height

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of seriousness. For those so involved, sports then becomes a business as well as a sport.

Early explorers found the natives of our Western Hemisphere engaging in athletic contests, and it is well known that the Olympic Games had their origin in the city-states of ancient Greece. The apostle Paul bases his comments in 1 Cor. 9:24-27 on a competitive race, "*Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away.*" One ever-present and essential factor in sporting events, whether such contests be ancient or as current as this season, is a recognizable set of rules. Unless there is a standard to go by, utter confusion will result. One must play according to the rules if he expects to win the contest.

It is even so in spiritual matters. God's rules must be obeyed. To do otherwise is to forfeit the Christian hope. In 2 Timothy 2:5 Paul wrote, "*And if any man strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.*" Differences of opinion do not alter the law, and we do not possess the wisdom or ability to change God's law.

God has established the pattern by which the game of life is to be played, and we must comply with His requirements.

An example of basic requirements in regard to Christ, His church, and eternal life are beautifully presented in the book of Acts, chapter 2. The Bible here teaches that those of honest heart who believed and repented were baptized, thereby being added to the Lord's church. Notice the simplicity of this action. Belief prompted repentance, which caused them to submit to baptism, and through baptism they became part of Christ's spiritual body, His church. This is the Bible pattern which results from following the proper rules. It is the pattern which was set and followed in the early days of Christianity, and it is the Lord's pattern for this day. Have you conformed to this pattern, my friend, being thereby added to the Lord's church?

It is so sad that through the ages some have appeared to want Christ as a Saviour but they have been unwilling to have Him as the Lord of their lives by completely surrendering to His requirements. Note John's comments about the reaction of some in regard to the teaching of Jesus (John 12:42-43), "*Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.*" These were hindered by social acceptance from complying with God's rules. To the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 15:6 Jesus said, "*Thus have ye*

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*made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."*

In all kindness, my dear friend, why are you what you are in religion? Is it because of social acceptance or tradition? This is why most people follow in religion the course they do. But God's design for redemption, as revealed in Acts 2, stands clearly before us as the proper course to follow. Have you been baptized into Christ and thereby added to His church? This is the Bible pattern. This is the result of following God's rules. This is what the Bible teaches and what God requires.

HARRY COBB  
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THE ONLY TIME YOU MUST NOT FAIL  
IS THE LAST TIME YOU TRY!

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. On the day Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry ground, who did the Lord exalt?
2. How many days away was Passover when Jesus told His disciples He would be crucified in Matthew 26?
3. What will happen to the one who humbles himself?
4. According to Psalm 8, what is the son of man crowned with?
5. What did Jacob say he would take for his wages from Laban?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who asked God, "Am I my brother's keeper?" CAIN (Gen. 4:9)
2. According to Deuteronomy, when a man married, how long was he to stay home? ONE YEAR (Deut. 24:5)
3. What does God call friendship with the world? ENMITY WITH GOD (Jas. 4:4)
4. Name one of the three rewards promised Daniel by Belshazzar for interpreting the sign? CLOTHED IN SCARLET, GOLD NECKLACE, AND THIRD RULER IN KINGDOM (Dan. 5:16)
5. Who was the father of Peter and Andrew? JONAS (Jn. 21:15)

## A MOTHER'S LOVE

Someone once imagined a story about God who sent an angel down from heaven to find the most beautiful thing on earth and bring it back to heaven. When the angel saw the flowers at springtime he said, "These must be the most beautiful things on earth"; and he gathered them up to take with him back to heaven.

Then he met a child of wondrous beauty and golden hair and a lovely smile. When he saw the child he said, "This must be the most wonderful thing on earth. Nothing could be sweeter than the smile of that innocent child."

But farther along, in a remote valley, he came to a humble cottage where a mother sat in the doorway with her baby in her lap. As he watched her tender and beautiful care for the little baby, he said, "This must be the fairest thing on earth. I will take the mother's love back with me to heaven."

When he reached the portals of heaven the flowers had faded and were dead, the smile on the child's face had changed into a scowl -- but the mother's love was unchanged. Truly this is one of the most beautiful things on this earth!

Of all the people in the world, mothers are very special to each one of us. They seem to love us through thick and thin, no matter what. And unfortunately, a lot of times we take our mothers for granted. We expect them to be there everyday, day in and day out. They cannot afford to

take a day off, can they? Whenever a mother gets sick for one day, the whole household becomes a mess. They pick up after us, they cook all that delicious food that we enjoy and they wait on us hand and foot when we become sick. They do all this because they are our mothers and they love us dearly.

Perhaps a mother's love for her child is best illustrated in the story of Moses. As the book of Exodus tells us, the children of Israel had become slaves in the Egyptian empire. But the Pharaoh of Egypt feared the Israelites would one day rise up against him. So to keep the foreigners under control, he ordered that every male child born to the Israelites should be killed (Exo. 1:22).

But one mother decided that she could not commit such a horrendous crime. For three months she hid her newborn son. Then she set him adrift by the river in an "*ark of bulrushes*", later to be rescued by the daughter of Pharaoh (Exo. 2:1-10).

Why did this woman choose to disobey the Pharaoh's order? What motivated her to risk her life for the sake of her baby son? She simply did not have the heart to allow him to be killed. She only had a heart full of love and respect for the tiny child who would grow up to become the prophet Moses.

It is hoped that all through the year we will honor and respect and cherish our mothers, and not just on Mother's Day.

RAY

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
May 1 - 3	Second Avenue Church Opelika, AL	Kevin Mills (Georgia)
May 4 - 8	Chestnut Grove Church Parksville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 11 - 15	Hopkinsville, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 24 - 29	Liberty Church Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
June 1 - 5	Winchester, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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[Editor's Note: HELP! We desperately need new articles for publishing in this paper. If a brother could spare one or two, it would be greatly appreciated. Also, do not forget to send the announcement of your gospel meeting at least a month and a half in advance. Please continue to pray for us and our efforts.]