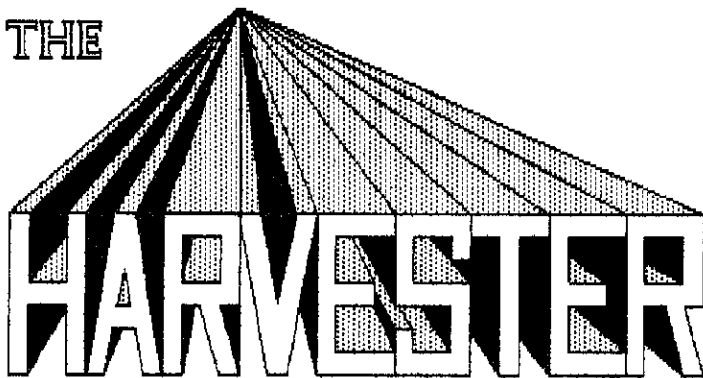


THE



"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)

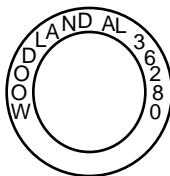
MAY 2000

No. 173

PERILOUS TIMES

The Apostle Paul lived through some perilous times. In his letter to the Corinthians he listed some of the dangers he faced. *"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In*

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weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (2 Cor. 11:24-27)

Today we also live in a perilous era. However, it is not a dangerous time because of the horror stories we read about every morning in the newspapers. It is not a dangerous time due to the rampant crime we view on the television each evening. These are perilous times because, spiritually speaking, people are losing their souls every day. When a person neglects God's Word and then dies in that condition, his soul becomes eternally lost (Matt. 7:21; Rev. 21:8, etc.).

How terrible that such things happen but they do occur all around us! The most important thing that a man has is his soul and to lose one's soul is the ultimate defeat. *"For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Matt. 16:26) Paul told us days such as these would eventually arrive. *"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come."* (2 Tim. 3:1)

These are dangerous times because our children's souls are at risk. Young people are exposed more to the god of this world than to the God of the Holy Bible. They are being fashioned according to the material world and not to God's Word. Again, through Paul the penman, our Lord warned us: *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind,*

that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2) This advice applies not only to Christians but to those who have a desire to walk in a godly manner.

These are perilous times because Satan is kidnapping our children from right under our noses. He has certainly obtained his share of souls through wily devices like "gangs" and "drugs" and "violence" and "sex." But he has other methods to lure young people away from serving the Lord. Some of these are not so obvious but consider the following list of ways that the devil uses to steal souls: disregard for any authority, indifferent attitude, peer pressure, lack of honesty/integrity, murmuring and complaining, materialistic outlook, pride, vengeful attitude, lack of control when angry, overly concern for physical appearance, lying and deceitful, worrying, partying and rioting, self-centered attitude, self-excusing, desire for popularity, etc. Did any of these sound familiar? Perhaps they are a warning that a soul is headed on the broad way that leads to destruction (Matt. 7:13).

These are dangerous times because of our apathy. We know the warnings in the Scriptures: "*Behold, now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation*" (2 Cor. 6:2) and "*Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Pet. 5:8). We realize the danger to our soul and to the souls of others. But we dare not move from our comfortable positions. We stay put because we don't want to "rock the boat".

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address and all correspondence to:

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These are perilous times because we do nothing. We ourselves are indifferent to the dangerous situations surrounding us. We are "lukewarm"; we are "one-talent." We think nothing is wrong, therefore nothing needs to be changed. "Well, it happens to other folks but not to us!" Then when it hits close to home, we are ready to lift a finger, to do something about it. Hopefully it will not be too late for you. Why not just do all we can to save souls NOW?

These are dangerous times, brethren. These are the "last days" Paul spoke about it in 1 Tim. 3:1. Nobody knows exactly when the end will come but it is definitely sooner than we think. *"Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come."* (Matt. 24:42) Have we done all we can to save a soul? What would you do to rescue your children from the second death: teach them the Truth, take them to church, share God's love, or demonstrate a Christian life before them? Whatever must be done, it will be accomplished in these perilous times. May God be with your every effort.

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which prophet bought a field to symbolize that Judah would return from exile?
2. Which apostle was a Roman citizen?
3. Which prophet had his lips touched with a live coal?
4. Who was the disciple known as the one whom Jesus loved?
5. Which son of David tried to set himself up as king when David was near death?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What was the name of the servant girl that Sarai gave to her husband? HAGAR (Gen. 16:1,2)
2. Which of the following is the time Jephthah allowed his daughter to weep for her virginity: two days, two weeks, or two months? TWO MONTHS (Judg. 11:37)
3. To what object did David liken God for strength? A ROCK (Psa. 62:2)
4. In what book of the Bible is the fall of Jericho recorded? JOSHUA (ch. 6)
5. With what two things did Gideon equip his men before the attack on the Midian camp? TRUMPETS AND PITCHERS WITH LAMPS INSIDE (Judg. 7:16)

THE SAVOUR OF DEATH AND LIFE

In Paul's second letter to the Corinthians there are some rather unusual comments recorded in chapter 2 verses 15 and 16, "*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life.*" But however unusual, there is in these words a vivid description of the important role we humble Christians play in the grand plan of God.

The word 'savour' denotes what we might term fragrance or smell, and this odor could be either sweet and pleasant or foul and undesirable. Christ's giving of Himself as "*an offering and a sacrifice*" is referred to as a "*sweet-smelling savour*" (Eph. 5:2). In speaking of the things sent from Philippi through Epaphroditus, Paul terms them "*an odour of a sweet smell*" (Phil. 4:18).

In the preceding verse of our passage (14) we are told by Paul of the triumph which we enjoy in Christ and the savour (or fragrance) of the knowledge of Christ which is made evident by us in every place. Wherever God's children might happen to go, there should go with them the gospel message. This fragrance of the knowledge of Jesus should be present wherever we are present. Just this very evening a sister passed near where I was standing and her presence was evident by the favorable smell of some fragrance she was wearing. So must the knowledge of Christ be present with us as we pass through life.

Then verse 15 extends the thought. As the children of God, we are to Him "a sweet savour [fragrance] of Christ" both "in them that are saved" as well as "in them that perish." The savour of Christ in us as we walk among men is going to be noticed by both the saved and the lost.

But verse 16 explains that to those who perish our presence is the odor of death, for surely rejection of Jesus can only offer prospect of eternal death. To the contrary, our presence among those who humbly respond in obedience to the Saviour presents a sweet smell of life which is eternal. Whether those who see in us the presence of Jesus (respond and are redeemed of Him, or reject the gospel and are lost) the knowledge of Jesus is thus presented and God smells that sweet odor.

Paul continued, "*And who is sufficient for these things?*" We cannot glory in ourselves. In the next chapter (3:5) Paul explains, "*Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.*" All praise, honor, and glory is due God; but how rewarding it is that God has allowed us to have even this small part in the noble cause of our Saviour.

Contrary to "*many who corrupt the word of God,*" we speak sincerely of Christ as is our responsibility before God (verse 17).

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GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
May 1 - 5	Chestnut Grove Church Parksville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 8 - 12	Van Lear, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 15 - 19	Hopkinsville, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
May 15 - 21	Ashlock, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
May 26 - 28	Mt. Zion Church near Crab Orchard, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 4 (Sunday)	Taylor's Crossroads Roanoke, AL	Chad/Brad Prince (Oxford, AL)
June 5 - 9 TN) (M-F)	Taylor's Crossroads Roanoke, AL 7:00 each evening	James McDonald (Woodbury,
June 11 - 16	Mt. Carmel Church Woodland, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June McDonald 18 - 23	Ephesus, GA	James (Woodbury, TN)
June 25 - 30	Hokes Bluff Church near Gadsden, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 26 - 30	Winchester, OH	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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