

THE



# HARVESTER

"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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No. 103

## A CELEBRATION OF FREEDOM

(Editor's Note: This fine article was written in 1991, shortly after the Persian Gulf War. I apologize that I am just getting around to finally publishing it.)

The crowds gathered in eager anticipation. Excitement could be seen on the faces of young and old alike. Around us the world slowly darkened as the sun set quietly beneath the serene waters of the bay. The outline of an old WWII battleship was the only thing breaking up the otherwise ordinary horizon. There were over 100,000 people watching this year, the biggest crowd ever. Patriotism was higher now than it had been in decades, due of course to the recent Persian Gulf war. Everyone was proud to be an American on this day.

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As the darkness finally swallowed up the last rays of amber sunlight the serenity of the scene was shattered as music started to play. Not just any music, but music which would stir the pride of any red-blooded American. A few moments later it began. Two loud booms followed by two streaks of light rocketing into the star strewn night sky. Seconds later two more booms were heard high overhead and the blackness of the sky above us began to glitter with beautiful shades of gold, red, yellow, blue, and other colors. For nearly twenty minutes thereafter the sky continued to dance with brilliant colors as the music played triumphantly on.

All around the sounds of approval could be heard. The crowd stood there in awe uttering numerous oohs and ahs. Every once in a while a really big one would go off and the crowd would roar its approval. There is nothing quite like a majestic fireworks show on the 4th of July to build patriotic fervor in people. It's a time when Americans swell with pride for their country and the ideals for which it stands. A time to proudly remember past military victories. Everyone leaves feeling good and with a smile of satisfaction on their faces. I'll have to admit that an event like this even makes something within me stir a little bit.

But I'll also have to make another confession. Patriotism wasn't all that was on my mind. I am very thankful to be an American, but I simply cannot accept many of the things this country stands for. Freedom is one thing, but condoning abortion, divorce, pornography, homosexuality, and such things is not freedom, it's sin. It doesn't matter who says it's legal, sin is still sin.

As I walked around I could see everyone just bubbling over with pride and excitement. But

isn't it a sad commentary on this country when you can get that many people so worked up over a few moments worth of pyrotechnics, yet almost no one cares that Jesus Christ died for them? It seems that we have now reached the point where people are more interested in being entertained than in being saved.

It was also sad to think that I had never seen a group of Christians get so excited about being Christians as these people were about being Americans. Christians should be the happiest people on earth. Christians have everything to look forward to, and nothing to be afraid of. They shouldn't become distressed when problems arise. They should always be optimistic. *"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!"* (Psalm 32:11 NKJ) David certainly had the right attitude! Is your life like this?

It's sad to say, but many Christians today just don't seem to be as happy as David was. They don't share that same wonderful outlook on life. Why is this? Anyone who gets too involved with the affairs of this world will tend to be pulled up and down like a yo-yo by the events of their life. But on the other hand, a person who is very spiritually minded and doesn't spend time worrying about temporal things, will not be bothered nearly as much by problems, and will be a very happy person. Christ spoke well of the problem faced by many in His parable of the sower. *"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful"* (Matt. 13:22 NKJ) Yes the world, including many Christians, is just too wrapped up in the cares of this world.

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

Ray McManus  
 301 Varden Hill Rd.  
 Birmingham, AL 35214-1947  
 Phone: (205) 791-1399

Most people are too concerned with material possessions, family, friends, careers, hobbies, etc. God's Word warns us that we must put Him above everything and everyone else. Our true citizenship must be in the Kingdom of God. Yes we will also be citizens of an earthly nation, but this is very unimportant. Now I do not mean to diminish the importance of being in a country where we are free to worship God as we choose, but this is really just a luxury and not a necessity. The early Christians offer proof of this. They were repressed and often were even killed because of their beliefs, yet the church grew and flourished as it never has since. Those people weren't concerned with the obstacles facing them. They put their Christian citizenship far above that of their national citizenship.

Most people put too much emphasis on being patriotic and supporting their country. But America is but one of countless nations which will exist during man's time upon the earth. America is neither the largest nor the strongest nation to ever exist. And many nations have lasted much longer than we have. This country is no better than the rest; it too will fall in time. But Daniel offered us hope of a far better nation to be a citizen of; a nation truly worth fighting and dying for; a nation

which would know no end. *"And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."* (Dan. 2:44 NKJ) Doesn't this sound much better than any other offer you have ever had? Daniel is of course referring to the Lord's kingdom, the church.

When we become Christians Paul said that God, *"has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love."* (Col. 1:13 NKJ) We are then citizens of His kingdom. Many countries around the world today require that you renounce citizenship in any other country before you can become a citizen of their country. God is the same way. He requires that we, in effect, renounce our earthly citizenship in order to become a citizen of His kingdom. We may still be Americans or some other nationality, but in name only. We really don't care about those types of things any longer. Our priorities and our loyalties have changed.

The freedoms we enjoy in this country are indeed a blessing, but there is one freedom that no president or any government in any country can grant: freedom from sin. Only through Jesus Christ can this freedom be obtained. *"Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed!"* (John 8:36 NKJ) Which country do you want to be a citizen of? The freedom from sin which Christ offers is indeed something to celebrate.

TONY WHIDDON

7350-F Howells Ferry Rd.

Mobile, AL 36618

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What was Laban's oldest daughter's name?
2. Where will Christ put all His enemies?
3. What did the Lord command Moses to do when he drew near to the burning bush?
4. Does the Levitical law state that anything coming in contact with a consecrated article thereby becomes consecrated?
5. Name the three accounts of the gospels that record Jesus' temptation in the wilderness?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who was Shem's father?    NOAH (Gen. 6:10)
2. In the book of Revelation, after the seventh seal was broken, how many minutes was it silent in heaven?    ABOUT THIRTY MINUTES (Rev. 8:1)
3. To what is righteousness likened in the armor of God?    BREASTPLATE (Eph. 6:14)
4. What did Hananiah take from Jeremiah's neck and break?    A YOKE (Jer. 28:10)
5. Why would Abraham's servant not eat when he was offered food by Laban?    HE HAD TO TELL HIS ERRAND FIRST (Gen. 24:33)

### ATTACK!

During one of the battles at Shiloh of the Civil War, a young boy, who was serving as the drummer for a Northern regiment, was ordered to beat "attack." Responding to his sharp summons, the troop stormed up a hill, but met

fierce enemy fire and came to a halt. The captain called to the boy to beat "retreat." The boy drummed, but again he beat "attack." "I said 'retreat,' " the officer shouted. Tears came to the boy's eyes. "Captain," he answered, " 'attack' is all I know. They never taught me to beat 'retreat.' " Hearing the familiar signal, the men resumed their onslaught, and to their own surprise captured the hill.

Frequently we, as Christians, must remind ourselves that our only order is to "attack!" Not in a single verse or passage has the Bible taught us to "retreat." Our enemy is that fierce opponent, the Devil, *"as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Pet. 5:8). As wily as Satan is, however, we must continue to attack him with *"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"* (Eph. 6:17). Never, never "retreat!"

Sometimes we may get tested beyond what a normal man can stand, but don't succumb to the temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). Sometimes we may suffer an extra lot in the heat of the battle, but don't give up (Rev. 2:10). Sometimes we may get fatigued and tired of doing good all the time, but don't stop to retreat (Gal. 6:9). Sometimes we may even lose our footing or slip a time or two, but don't give an inch to Satan nor throw in the towel (1 Cor. 15:58).

Our only order is to "attack." Our duty is clear -- to always go forward, serve God, and fight sin. If every Christian will do his part, then eventually it will be the devil who will have to retreat!

RAY

<p><i>MANY CAN RISE TO THE OCCASION BUT FEW KNOW WHEN TO SIT DOWN.</i></p>
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# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place &amp; Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
July 8 - 10 (F - Su)	Second Avenue Church Opelika, AL 7:00pm Fri. & Sat.	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)
July 8 - 10	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL	Marty Livingston (Oxford, AL)
July 10 - 15	Claud Church near Wetumpka, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 10 - 15	Valley Church Valley, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 17 - 22	Oak Grove Church Woodland, AL	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
July 24 - 29	Napolean Church Woodland, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 24 - 29	Temple Hill Church Smithdale, MS	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
August 5 - 7	Fairview Church Oxford, AL	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
August 7 - 12	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 14 - 19	Rainsville, AL 7:00 each evening	Sam Dick and James McDonald
August 26 - 29	Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

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**PREACH THE WORD;**

*be instant in season, out of season;*

**REPROVE, REBUKE, EXHORT**

*with all longsuffering and doctrine.*

2 Tim. 4:2