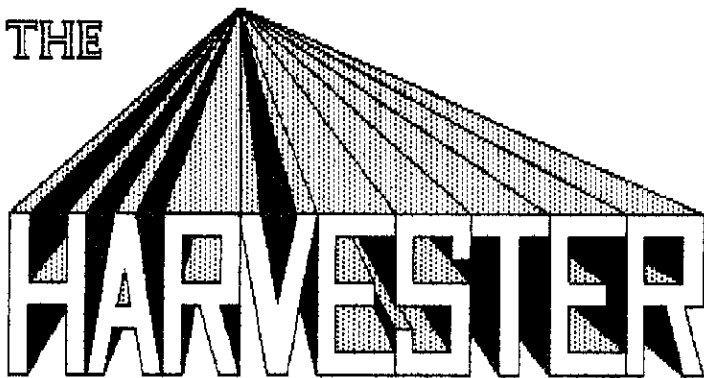


THE



"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)

JANUARY 1998

No. 145

WAITING FOR GOD

Friends, how much patience do you have these days? Would you mind waiting a long time for something good? Unfortunately a lot of people nowadays would not. They want things NOW! In fact, the people of our technologically-advanced society expect speedy service and even quicker results. No longer is the term "fast" limited to our vehicles and our drive-thru food establishments. It seems that everyday we demand our machines to process information and deliver products just a little faster than the day before. Who wants to wait?

THE HARVESTER
1120 Sun Hill Road
Birmingham, AL 35215-4106

NON-PROFIT ORG. U.S. POSTAGE PAID Birmingham AL PERMIT No. 4624
--

In the spiritual world we find an alarming but parallel trend. People have very little patience when it comes to religious matters. They want things NOW! They want salvation NOW. They want justice and mercy NOW. They want their crown of righteousness NOW. Who wants to wait for God, when there is so much happening now and so much more to do and so little time left to do it in.

However, there will be times when we must exercise patience. There will be situations when we must wait for God. As the Psalmist wisely put it: *"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass."* (Psa. 37:7) No matter how much we may disagree with the current conditions, it is our duty to be long suffering and to wait for God's will to pass.

Sometimes his promises for us do not appear immediately. Yes, to all believers God has promised: access (Rom. 5:2), eternal life (John 17:2,3), growth (1 Pet. 2:2), suffering (Acts 5:41), overcoming trials (1 Pet. 1:6-8), and victorious living (Rom. 8:37-39). But should we give up because we cannot see the fulfillment of these privileges? Of course not! Let us wait, much like the apostles did for the Holy Spirit. *"And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me."* (Acts 1:4)

Sometimes God's blessings for us do not come right away. That's okay because if we are truly due them, they will arrive in good time. We just have to learn to be more like Abraham and wait for God. How patient the patriarch must have been when he was informed at a very old age (Gen. 17:21) that he and Sarah would have a child of their own! That blessing arrived the following year. *"For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him."* (Gen. 21:2)

Sometimes we may think we don't have the patience to receive God's salvation. When the Israelites were in captivity, many probably had the same feelings. But God's prophet Isaiah kept the people's hope up. *"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."* (Isa. 25:9) Likewise, we must wait.

Sometimes his judgments are not as swift as we would like them to be. We are always quick to demand punishment to our enemies. But God operates on a vastly different schedule, doesn't he? He will mete out his judgments in due time. *"Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; the desire of our soul is to thy name, and to the remembrance of thee."* (Isa. 26:8)

Therefore, when we go to God in prayer and we do not hear from him immediately, do not panic! It is our duty to wait for

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:

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

God. Believe me, he will answer us at the appropriate time. And when we go out into the fields "white already to harvest" (Jn. 4:35) and invite the multitudes to worship the Lord with us according to the New Testament pattern and we see that the church building does not fill up as quickly as we think it should, don't give up! Again, it may be that God has a different timetable than ours and it is up to us to wait for him.

And although we preach the Word of God and plant the seeds of the Gospel in honest and fertile hearts and others more capable than us come to water the seeds, and still the plant has not broken through the ground, we must continue to have an abundance of patience. In God's own time he will give the increase (1 Cor. 3:6).

Just imagine how long God's people had to wait for the Messiah. In Genesis 3:15 our Savior was promised. Two thousand years later, the Redeemer appeared on earth (Matt. 1:21; Luke 2:25-30). That is a long time to wait for God. Would we have patiently endured that long, too?

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. David became famous after killing how many Edomites in the Valley of Salt?
2. What happened to the fig tree cursed by Jesus?
3. What did the Law of Moses command for those committing the sin of adultery?
4. What does Proverbs say is more precious than rubies?
5. What did Esther request of the king when she went into his court?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Samson belonged to a special group dedicated to God. What was this group? NAZARITE (Judg. 13:5)
2. Where did Jesus spend the night of the day He entered Jerusalem triumphantly? IN BETHANY (Mark 11:11)
3. What is like a proverbial kiss on the lips? A RIGHT ANSWER (Prov. 24:26)
4. What chapter is commonly known as the "faith" chapter? HEBREWS 11
5. To whom did a donkey speak in the book of Numbers? BALAAM (Num. 22:28)

GO RIGHT OR GET LEFT.

LIVING IN LAODICEA

A husband and wife have a child. The mother stays home with her newborn for 2 months, but gets restless and decides that staying home with her child is not really what she wants to do. Mom looks around and sees that everyone else has bought new cars, a new house, and the latest fashions and she knows that she can never have these things by staying home and raising a child. And besides, no one will really appreciate her if she stays home with her child. She is never quite sure what to say when someone asks her where she works. But she is sure that simply being a wife and mother is not good enough for her. So mom goes back to work and sends her 2 month old to daycare for someone else to raise.

A couple is planning a wedding. The two young people are so excited about getting married and are making big plans. She will wear white and they will get married in a church, even though they never go. They will buy each other a gift for their wedding day, but why, when they have already given away the most important and precious gift two people can give each other. They already live in the same house and share the same bed. So what is there to look forward to after the wedding?

The people above do not know it, but God talks about them in the Bible. Jesus said in Rev. 3:17-18, *"Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and*

knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see."

Some people think that if they have material possessions and wealth that they have everything they need to be content. But Christ tells the church at Laodicea that material wealth can never bring true contentment, only He can. People think today that because they have new cars, nice houses, and the latest fads in fashions that they are rich, but Christ says they are not. Christ says that if we do not know Him we are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Today, man still behaves just like he has during all of the 6000 years which have already passed. Men and women still do what is right in their own eyes. (Deut. 12:8) Many people would rather have material wealth in this life than spiritual wealth in the next. Christ knew this situation well and had this to say about it, *"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?"* (Mat. 16:26)

Man has changed very little since the two verses above were written. The one

(continued next page)

(continued from page 7)

change that has taken place is that man is now living in the last days. We are living in the last era of time before Christ returns to take his children home and deny those that have denied him. We are living in Laodicea. (Rev. 3:14-22) It is only when Christ returns that man will realize that there are no material possessions on this earth that can even come close to comparing with the riches in Heaven. But there are at least two things that come close -- saving yourself for that special person on your wedding night, and raising your own children.

Submitted by TONY WHIDDON
12459 Mudd Road
Brooklet, GA 30415

[Editor's Note: As we begin our 13th year of publication, many thanks to every one who has contributed to this paper. We appreciate the articles, the donations, and your hard labor. Special gratitude goes to the Sun Hill Road congregation for their financial support with mailing costs and to each member who helps with the monthly folding and labeling.

If anyone would like to donate an article of edifying value, please send it in and we will try to feasibly work it in our schedule. Also, now is a good time to discuss possible gospel meetings for 1998. Advertise it through this paper for free by sending the appropriate information at least one and a half month in advance. May God bless each of you and our efforts through this paper.]