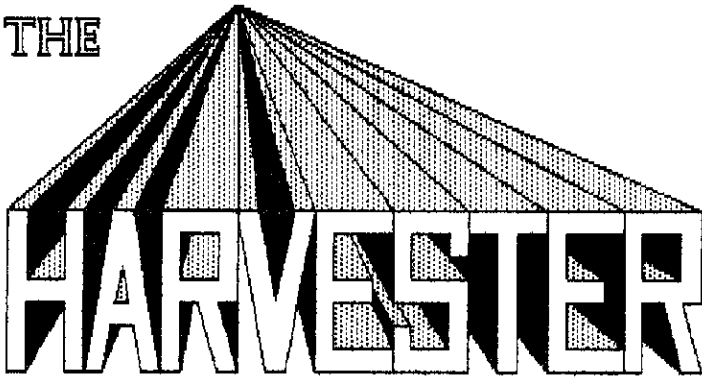


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"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

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TIME AND CHANCE

It has long been my belief and teaching that everything which exists in this material universe came into being as a result of the purpose, design, and provision of a Divine, Supreme Being. This does not allow for a "big band," evolution, or the slightest possibility of existence apart from creation. It completely dismisses the possibility of something happening just by chance. The universe did not just HAPPEN to come into existence. As the writer of Hebrews clearly states, *"Things which are seen were not made of things which do appear"* (Heb. 11:3). With definite purpose, "God

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said ...and there was!" (Gen. 1:3). "God saw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31).

Closely related has also been my belief and teaching that the idea of "luck" is foreign to the Bible and is not proper in Christian usage. These thoughts and related proofs have been presented at several places with favorable acceptance. After such an address at one place, however, one brother confronted me with the fact that the Scriptures do, indeed, mention "*time and chance*" (Eccl. 9:11). At another place and another time, another brother called attention to the fact that in six passages of Scripture the word "chance" is used. Let us take a look at those passages.

Old Testament Passages in Which the Word Chance is Used

Deut. 22:6, "*If a bird's nest CHANCE to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones, or eggs, and the dam sitting upon the young, or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young.*"

1 Sam. 6:9, "*And see, if it goeth up by the way of his own coast to Beth-she'mesh then he hath done us this great evil: but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that smote us; it was a CHANCE that happened to us.*"

2 Sam. 1:6, "*And the young man that told him said, As I happened by CHANCE upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.*"

Eccl. 9:11, "*I returned, and saw under*

the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but TIME and CHANCE happeneth to them all."

The word "chance" in these Old Testament passages is from the Hebrew word QARA (kaw-raw') and means to encounter (Strong 7122). Note how this same Hebrew word is translated in other passages:

Gen. 49:1, "And Jacob called unto his sons, and said, Gather yourselves together, that I may tell you that which shall BEFALL you in the last days."

Exo. 5:3, "And they said, The God of the Hebrews HATH MET with us."

Job 4:14, "Fear CAME upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake."

Jer. 44:23, "Therefore this evil is HAPPENED unto you."

Also in Exo. 1:10, Lev. 10:19, and Joshua 11:20.

In the New Testament

Luke 10:31, "And by CHANCE there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." In this verse the word is from the Greek SUGKURIA (soong-koo-ree'-ah) and means to happen, accidentally (Strong 4795, Thayer p. 593). This is the only time the Greek SUGKURIA is used in the Bible.

1 Cor 15:37, "And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may CHANCE

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of wheat, or of some other grain." The word in this passage is from TUGCHANO (toong-khan'-o) and means to attain, to happen, perchance (Strong 5177). Also used in Acts 28:2, 2 Tim. 2:10, Heb. 8:6, and Heb. 11:35.

To Clear the Matter for Deeper Understanding

Let it be readily admitted that by common usage the definition of words often change in their meaning. The word "bet," for instance, does not NOW always refer to gambling, but it is used to express a person's inclination.

"I bet you'll be late for your appointment."

"This is a wonderful day, isn't it?" "You bet!"

"I bet it'll rain this afternoon."

"I'll bet you can't guess what happened to me today."

So it is with the word "luck." Many times this word is used by Christians to mean simply a BLESSING -- not at all to suggest something contrary to nature, beyond expectation, or mystical.

"We'll be lucky if it doesn't rain today."

"You're lucky to have never been in the hospital."

Words such as these are at the focus of our attention. Used in this sense they are acceptable and convey the thought of a blessing -- but not everyone uses them with this understanding. To many the idea of chance or luck refers to the mystical, to some strange fortune, and to the supernatural. In none of these passages is suggested an existence, action, cause, or consequence without the prior presence, knowledge, and provision of an all-powerful Supreme Being.

But It Must Also be Understood that God Set in Motion Certain Observable Laws of Nature

These features are readily evident in our material existence. Those who are overcome by water suffer the consequence of drowning. Heb. 11:29, "*By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.*" Absence of rain results in droughts. 1 Kings 17-18 -- Elijah and Ahab. Shortages bring about severe needs, Acts 11:28-29.

Situations which might appear to some to be chance or luck may be correctly understood as simply that which naturally occurs under given circumstances. The laws of nature were set in motion by God at creation and continue to function in accord with His wise design. Chance and luck have nothing to do with it: one drowns when he is overcome by water, droughts result from absence of rain, hunger follows shortage of food.

But God Has the Ability and Sometimes It is His Will to Change the Course of Nature

Contrary to nature, Jesus walked upon the water. *"And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid"* (Mt. 14:26-27).

Peter healed the lame. *"Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk"* (Acts 3:6). Paul overcame the viper's bite (Acts 28:3-6).

These were miracles -- not chance, not luck, not something which mystically happened, but rather God's intervention. He can and does still intervene today! *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* (1 Peter 3:12).

Contrary to Chance and Luck, the Scriptures Teach of God's Presence Among His People

"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5-6).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7). Read also Matthew 6:25-34.

The Christian does not live by chance and he is not lucky -- but he does enjoy the presence of his God in his life.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who was the first child born to Adam and Eve?
2. According to Rev. 11 there was a great earthquake after the two witnesses went up to heaven. How many men were killed?
3. By whom does God swear?
4. What happens if one member of the body suffers?

(continued next page)

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Nov. 9 - 13	Verona, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

* * * * *

WHAT IS THE MYSTERY OF CHRISTIANITY?

(continued from page 7)

5. When did God start being David's God, according to Psalm 22?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who did God raise up to deliver Israel from the King of Mesopotamia, according to Judges 3? OTHNIEL (Judg. 3:9)

2. In Pharaoh's dream, interpreted by Joseph, how many ears of corn were there? FOURTEEN (Gen. 41:5-6)

3. What happened to the baby in Elizabeth's womb when Mary came to see Elizabeth? THE BABY LEAPED IN HER WOMB (Lk. 1:41)

4. For what is "The Pavement" noted? THE COURT WHERE JESUS WAS TRIED BY PILATE (John 19:13)

5. Did Joshua complete the conquest of the promised land? NO (Josh. 13:1)