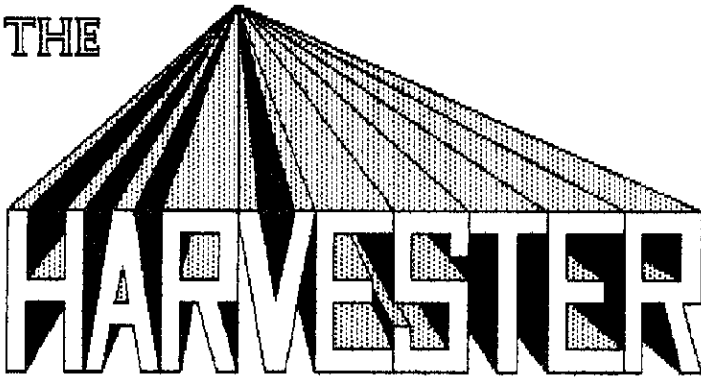


THE



"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)

FEBRUARY 1999

No. 158

BIG ROCKS


One of my professors presented this idea to us just the other day. I thought it was great, and so I pass it along to you now.

First, imagine your life as being an empty glass jar. Then pick out a few good sized rocks -- one for each very important thing in your life. Be sure to pick carefully, for all of these rocks have to fit inside the jar! Put these "big" rocks inside the jar -- it probably looks pretty full. But, it's not full yet.

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Get some smaller rocks. Maybe gravel or pebbles. Let the smaller rocks represent the less important things in your life. Think about this carefully too; only so many will fit. Now the jar, your life, looks even more full. But, it's not full yet.

Take sand -- very little rocks. Let this represent the things that are even less important in your life. And when the sand is in the jar, the jar looks even more full. But it's not completely full yet!

Water comes last. Let water represent everything else that happens in your life that really isn't important at all, but that you can't avoid. NOW, the jar is full.

A full life. And one that is well balanced. Those things that are truly important (the BIG rocks) take up the most of your time. Family. Religion. Relationships. Then those things that are a little less important take their time. Work. School. Then comes the things the sand represents, and the water. Priorities in order.

But when the sand and water come first, everything goes wrong. The jar becomes full! And then there is no place for the truly important things to go. Time is lost. Opportunities are missed. Or perhaps we are mistaken about which things should be the big rocks. Instead of spending our time and energies on God and on our families, we spend it on hobbies or work. Either way, our

priorities are not in the order God intended.

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33)

"Time is life -- nothing more, nothing less. The way you spend your hours and your days is the way you spend your life." -- John Boykin

Perhaps we should look at our life closely and see just what things are in our jar. Let's always make sure there is room for the big rocks!

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which of these characteristics describe Abigail: beautiful, intelligent, wealthy?
2. Why did Paul shave his head in Cenchrea?
3. According to Lamentations, why has the Lord brought grief to Judah?
4. What book records Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman?

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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5. What kept the livestock from drinking of the well Jacob saw in Haran?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. There was one place in the land of Egypt where the plague of hail did not fall. Can you name this protected place as recorded in the book of Exodus? GOSHEN (Exo. 9:26)

2. With what measure does God give to all men? LIBERALLY (Jas. 1:5)

3. From what can God raise up children to Abraham? STONES (Matt. 3:9)

4. How does Habakkuk say he will react even in the face of adversity? HE WILL REJOICE IN THE LORD (Hab. 3:17,18)

5. What physical sense did Isaac lose in his old age? SIGHT (Gen. 27:1)

The kind of religion that makes a man look sick
can't be expected to cure the world.

BAPTISM

(Editor's Note: The following article was written in response to the claim that baptism is not essential for salvation.)

I, too, can share your joy in claiming kinship with Jesus in the Father's family. I was born into this world on June 13, 1930, but born again on November 6, 1946 in accord with Jesus' comments to Nicodemus in John 3:5. That new birth involved two elements, water and the Spirit. Thus I became a member of God's family, the church of Christ, as did those who responded to Peter's instructions in Acts 2:47.

It was the blood of Jesus which washed away my sins, and not the water of baptism. Peter explains in I Peter 3:21 that in baptism the filth of the flesh is not under consideration. Water could not erase my sins, or otherwise I would be renewed every time I took a bath.

Please don't misunderstand my directness to be lack of respect or lack of love. It is neither of these, but rather genuine concern. I wish to point out something which seems to me to be extremely important regarding your understanding. In your letter you correctly mentioned four items relating to our salvation: new birth, blood, repentance and trust. In addition to these four, the fifteen tracts and clippings you sent mentioned belief, confession, grace and the death of Christ. In your letter you used some thirty-six Scriptures, and on your

stationery was imprinted two more. But in all these tracts, references, and comments, there was not a single mention of what the Bible answered to the direct question asked three times in Acts by those seeking salvation: Acts 2:37, Acts 11:14, and Acts 16:30.

In Acts 2:37 those on Pentecost asked, "*Men and brethren, what shall we do?*" Peter unmistakably answered, "*Repent and be baptized*" (verse 38). Did Peter tell them wrong? Can we not tell people today exactly what Peter told them then?

In Acts 10:33 Cornelius said to Peter, "*Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.*" Acts 11:14, in referring to this incident, states that Peter would "*tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved.*" Acts 10:48 states, "*And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.*" Was Peter wrong in what he commanded them? Can we not correctly say today the same thing Peter said then?

Acts 16:30 records where the jailor "*brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" Paul told him to "*Believe*" (verse 31), after which the jailor "*was baptized, he and all his, straightway*" (verse 33). Is it not significant that, even under the stress of that night, Paul proceeded to baptize those who had believed?

Let me repeat myself -- it is the blood of Jesus which washes away sin and not the water of baptism. But who of us has

ever actually seen the blood of Jesus? Who has had its cleansing powers actually touch our sins? Jesus' blood is not understood as having to be physically present, of course. It cleanses through its sacrificial nature. And this is precisely where baptism enters the scene.

As the flesh and blood of Jesus is symbolized by the bread and fruit of the vine (1 Cor. 11:23-28), and as the woman's subjection to man is symbolized by her long hair (1 Cor. 11:5,15), even so is the death, burial, and resurrection symbolized in baptism. Paul unquestionably teaches this in Romans 6 where he says that the action of baptism both puts us "*into Christ*" and "*into his death*" (verse 3). Where is Jesus' blood contacted? In His death, of course, and that state is reached by us through baptism. Verse 4 pointedly says, "*Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.*" The water of baptism absolutely does not wash away our sins -- only Jesus' blood can do that. But we contact Jesus' blood only in baptism. Perhaps this will be more clearly evident when we note that in every instance of conversion after Acts 2 (the beginning of Christianity) and where the details are mentioned, baptism is always mentioned.

It is symbolism to which Peter refers in 1 Peter 3:20-21 when he writes of those who were saved by water in the flood and then explains, "*The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the*

(continued next page)

INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR BY PERSONAL EXAMPLE

The eye's a better student
and more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing,
but example's always clear;
And the best of all the preachers
are the men who live their creeds,
For to see the good in action
is what everybody needs.
I can soon learn how to do it
if you'll let me see it done;
I can watch your hands in action,
but your tongue too fast may run;
And the lectures you deliver
may be very wise and true,
But I'd rather get my lesson
by observing what you do.
For I may not understand you
and the high advice you give,
But there's no misunderstanding
how you act and how you live.

-- Forrest H. Kirkpatrick

(continued from page 7)

flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." What more fitting symbol of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection could be used than this used by Peter in baptism? What words could more clearly say it than Peter's, "Baptism doth also now save us"?

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