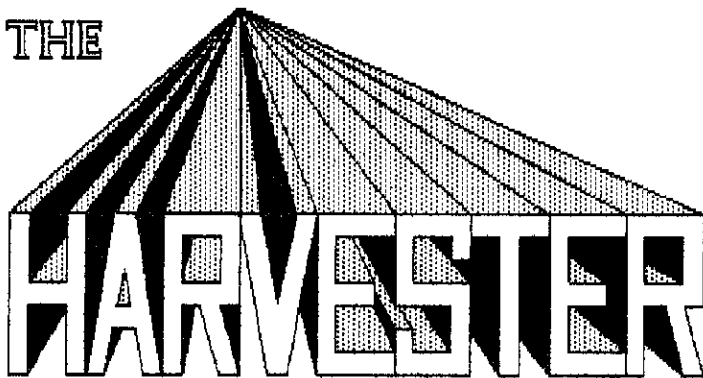


THE



"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)

MARCH 2000

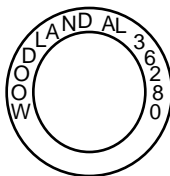
No. 171

HOME AT LAST!

Have you ever thought about how Abraham must have felt when God told him to pack up all his belongings and move to another country? Yes, one day the Lord informed Abraham that he had to leave his home and parents and to head toward an unknown destination (Gen. 12:1). What faith Abraham must have had, to travel not knowing exactly where he was going (Heb. 11:8). He fully trusted in God.

Imagine how Abraham felt when God lead him to the land of Canaan and told him that one day *"all the land which thou*

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seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever" (Gen. 13:15). Even as Abraham grew very old and had no son to receive his inheritance and his wife Sarah was barren and he had not yet settled in the "Land of Promise," Abraham still knew God would fulfill his covenant (Gen.17:1-8). And as Abraham drew near to the end of his life while his descendants continued searching for a permanent home, he "died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off" (Heb. 11:13).

Have you ever wondered what went through Jacob's (also called Israel) mind when he moved his entire family out of Canaan and into Egypt to be with his son Joseph? Why should he leave the land that was promised to his people? Nevertheless the Lord told him it was all right because God would be with him and one day they would all return to the Promised Land (Gen. 46:1-4). Like his grandfather Abraham, Jacob fully trusted in God.

Now try to picture how the children of Israel felt as they hurriedly left Egypt and its plagued countryside. For 430 years this great nation of Hebrews was in bondage to the Egyptians. For 430 years they somehow made Egypt their dwelling place, realizing it was only "temporary." They knew about the agreement God made with Abraham and they sincerely believed God would one day take them "home." That day was now at hand! Even Joseph, centuries earlier, shared in this matter of faith. He had made them promise that they would take his "bones" back to Canaan when they would eventually depart (Exo. 13:19).

Imagine the Israelites as they crossed the Red Sea, waited at the foothills of Mount Sinai, wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, and as they approached the Jordan River from the east. Each day they were reminded of God's covenant with Abraham and how they were "supposed" to possess Canaan. Each step they took they knew they were closer to coming "home"!

Last month I also got to experience some of the feelings that the Israelites surely had as they were getting ready to "settle down." Last month my family and I finally moved into the house we had built in Woodland, Alabama. It was a long time in coming and we felt like we were "home" at last! Perhaps many of you have encountered a similar emotion. Maybe there was a long trip involved and you felt so relieved when you finally arrived "home" and slept in your own bed.

When my wife and I got married 18 years ago we knew we wanted to eventually settle in Woodland. But in our quest to become financially secure (as most young couples yearn to do), we accepted the many transfers and relocations offered by our employer. In 18 years of marriage we moved a total of eight times throughout this state of Alabama! I know that is not any kind of a record but I think it is probably above "average." (My dad was in the Marine Corps and we moved about 20 times during my first 24 years of life!) Yet with each move, I sensed it would not be our last. My wife wasn't so sure, though, most of the time. I only hoped God would help us reach our goal of ending up in Woodland. Last month he blessed us as such.

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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Personally, it feels good to know that the many boxes we had packed will be unpacked for the last time, if it be God's will. A sense of peace begins to fill my heart because everything seems to have a greater permanency to it. We humans tend to like stability in our lives. We can now grow stronger roots in our lives and develop lasting relationships with the people around us. We won't have to worry about transferring the kids to another school system. Now I can start all those projects I put off because I know I'll have time to finish them, Lord willing! Home at last.

But while I speak physically about arriving "home," there is a spiritual application as well. As Christians we live on this earth on a temporary basis. We are very similar to the Israelites who wandered in the wilderness. This world will not be our final place of abode. It is not a permanent rest stop. As long as we are alive, we will labor here for Christ. However, God has made this special promise: a rest in heaven awaits all those who will be saved. By faith we will enter that rest (Heb. 4) and God will see to it that promise is fulfilled just as he kept his word about the

Promised Land for Abraham's descendants. At times heaven may look like a million miles away or even a million years away, but Christians, one day we will all come "home" at last!

RAY McMANUS

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Saul had been wounded by whom before he took his own life?
2. How long did David rule over Israel?
3. Jehoram did evil in the sight of the Lord yet the Lord would not destroy Judah. Why?
4. Through what power is the believer kept?
5. What was Joshua's signal for the ambushers to invade Ai?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. What man made Solomon king over Israel? DAVID (1 Chr. 23:1)
2. What will happen to everyone who exalts himself? HE WILL BE HUMBLLED (Luke 18:14)
3. What does Exodus 28 say would happen to Aaron if he did not wear the robe into the holy place of the tabernacle? HE WOULD DIE (Exo. 28:35)

4. Which bird is not mentioned in the Bible: Dove, Falcon, Hawk, or Seagull?
SEAGULL

5. From what family did Esau take his second wife? ISHMAEL, ABRAHAM'S SON
(Gen. 28:9)

RE-DISCOVERY

The other day I was reading some old religious texts when I realized that I was really enjoying what I was doing. Then I thought to myself, "Hey -- I'm probably not going to use this for a thought or in a lesson, but it's pretty neat stuff! This is kinda fun!"

A moment or so passed, and then I realized the conclusion I had come to: we shouldn't do our studying ONLY for the purposes of presenting materials to an audience -- we should study and learn for ourselves, and in areas of our own interests. A real no-brainer. Something we hear time and again (and something you have heard from me a lot). Still, at that moment, a light came on and I understood more clearly than ever before: "I'm always looking for some good idea for starting a thought or a lesson, but I can and should try to learn things even if I'm not trying to present the information immediately".

Perhaps this comes as a big surprise to you since I have written time after time about gaining knowledge. I have gained

knowledge and a great appreciation for spending time in study, but it came through the intentions of presenting material to an audience. This beauty of spending time with the Word is now even more splendid. I have re-discovered that I can read and ponder on things and not write about them immediately. The deeper subjects can be tackled now -- slowly, over a longer period of time.

(2 Tim. 4:2) "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

(2 Tim. 2:21) "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

(1 Pet. 5:2) "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;"

(1 Pet. 3:15) "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:"

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**One way to get ahead and stay ahead
is to use a head.**

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
March 5 - 10	Jigger, LA	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
March 17 - 19	Valley, AL 6:30 pm C.S.T.	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
March 24 - 26	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 24 - 26	Gilstrap Church Morgantown, KY	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
March 27 - 31	Goochtown Church near Eubank, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
March 27 - 31	Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
April 2 - 7 (Su-F)	W. Broad Street Wedowee, AL 7:00 pm each evening	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)

* * * * *

THE PLAN OF SALVATION

... according to God

1. Hear the Gospel (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe the Gospel - Faith in God and Christ (Heb. 11:6)
3. Repent of your Sins (Acts 17:30)
4. Confess Christ as the Son of God (Rom. 10:9-10)
5. Be Baptized for the Remission of your Sins (Acts 2:38)
6. Be Faithful unto Death (Rev. 2:10)