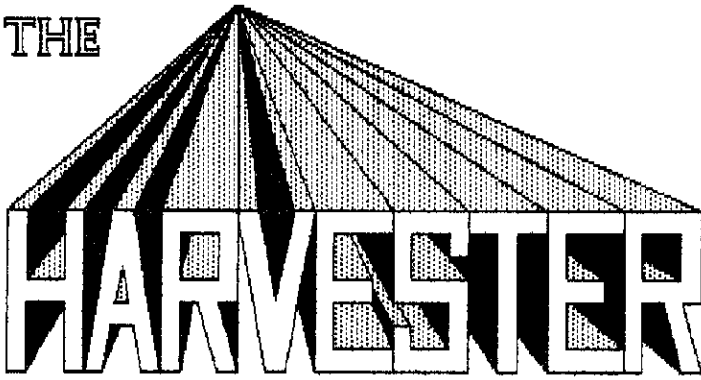


THE



"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)

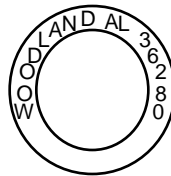
JUNE 2001

No. 186

ARE YOU MAKING THE RIGHT CHOICE?

Which one of these men do you represent, the rich man, or Moses? Do you put God first in your life? Do you *"esteem the suffering of Christ greater riches than the treasures"* this world has to offer you? When you step from this stage of life, where will you lift up your eyes in that Spiritual world? Will it be in hell where there is no mercy, where you will plead for just a drop of water on your tongue, but won't get it? Or in that day will you lift up your eyes on that heavenly mountain of God, where you will

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behold the Lamb of God who died, that you might live, whose face will be the shining light? *"And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their forehead. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."* (Rev. 22:4-5)

One of the most important steps in man's life that he needs to learn, is the universal law of sowing and reaping, and that our God is not a God that can be mocked, by ignoring his law. Paul says, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."* (Gal. 6:7-8)

Again Paul says, *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify <put to death> the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* (Rom. 8:12-14)

Let us take our thoughts back to the rich man again. *"And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, ... And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."* (Luke 16:23-24)

(Friends), hell is a reality, it is just as real as heaven, and just as everlasting; this, the rich man learned to his sorrow -- Is this the man we are imitating?

Abraham's answer: *"Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receiveth the good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented."* (v. 25)

Yes, this man was remembering; he was remembering how he had left God out of his life, how he had chosen rather to enjoy the pleasures the world had to offer him, instead of what God had reserved in heaven for them that keep his law.

(Friends), let us not waste our time in this life, sowing to the flesh, then in hell we lift up our eyes, and "Behold," it is too late to remember, -- It is too late to plead for mercy.

Let us remember while it is not too late, let us repent while we can, let us fall down in humbleness, and ask God's mercy while it is being extended to us. Now is the day --

Let us say as David, *"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."* (Psa. 61:2)

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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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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. According to Proverbs 8, when was wisdom appointed?
2. What prophet did some people think Jesus was calling upon while He was on the cross?
3. The woman that Jesus met at the well had had how many husbands?
4. What must be removed from the silver before it can be used?
5. Paul says in 2 Cor. that the letter of the covenant kills but what gives life?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who died at age 123 on Mount Hor?
AARON (Num. 33:39)
2. How many times a day did Goliath taunt the Israelites? TWICE (1 Sam. 17:16)

3. Why were the Jews amazed at Jesus teaching at the Feast of the Tabernacles? BECAUSE OF HIS LACK OF EDUCATION (John 7:15)

4. What apostle did Paul oppose because of his actions among the Gentiles? PETER (Gal. 2:11)

5. What did Abraham's servant give to Isaac's future wife at the well? GOLDEN EARRING AND TWO BRACELETS (Gen. 24:22)

ELDERS (Limits of Their Authority)

The King James Version of the Bible indicates Elders "rule" and "oversee" and that Christians are to obey those who have the rule over them (1 Tim. 5:17; Heb. 13:17; Acts 20:28). Perhaps few would suggest their rule is unconditional and absolute. But if not, then what is the extent and realm of their authority?

MATTERS OF JUDGMENT

Do Elders have the authority to issue commands not issued by God, but of their own judgment? For example, what if the Elders commanded the congregation to give 10% of their income to the local church treasury? This might certainly be their judgment as to what constitutes appropriate levels of giving. But would it be beyond their scope of authority to issue such a command? And if so, would the congregation be bound, upon penalty of sin, to obey?

A DIFFERENT KIND OF "RULE"

In considering these questions, we note that Peter instructs Elders not to be as "lords over God's heritage but being ensamples to the flock."(1 Pet. 5:2,3) In the same passage, we find that "taking the oversight" and "feeding the flock" must be performed without being "lords over God's heritage." The same Greek word is used by Matthew in quoting Jesus when He tells His disciples, "...the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you;..."(Mt. 20:25,26) Mark's and Luke's account are similar. Clearly, "rule" among disciples was to be different than the rule of earthly rulers such that no dominion or lordship were to be exercised.

NOT LAWGIVERS/DICTATORS

James tells us there is only one lawgiver (Christ).(Jas. 4:12) This coincides with biblical warnings against the commandments of men in matters of religion.(Mt. 15:9; Deut. 4:2; Gal. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:11) Can Elders or anyone else speak as the "oracles of God", while issuing commands of their own? Accordingly, we conclude that Elders must not be dictators and issue commands of their own design or judgment.

CHURCH DECISIONS

Are Elders to make all the decisions for the church, including who serves as teachers and deacons, use of the money, etc ? The Elders will of course have

to make decisions with regard to their function. But is their function to make all decisions?

When the Jerusalem church selected individuals to "serve tables", the Apostles left the selection to the church.(Acts 6:1-6) In Antioch, "...the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judaea."(Acts 11:29) The churches were to choose the individual to accompany Paul to administer the church contribution to the saints at Jerusalem.(1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:19) The whole church was involved in the "council at Jerusalem" in determining whether Christians must keep the Law of Moses.(Acts 15:22,23,28)

THEIR FUNCTION

If the role of Elders does not include issuing commands of their own judgment or making all church decisions, then what is their function and authority? The following examples in scripture help to define the role of Elders. These should be reviewed because of the differences already noted between worldly ideas of authority versus those in the Kingdom of Christ.

The office of Elder is a "work".(1 Tim. 3:1; 1 Tim. 5:17) Strong emphasis is placed on their role as teachers.(1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9) Shepherding or tending to the needs of the congregation is another role.(Jas. 5:14; 1 Pet 5:2; Acts 20:28) They also acted

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE & TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
June 3 - 8 (Su-F)	Taylor's Crossroad Roanoke, AL 7:00PM Mon-Fri	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
June 10-15 (Su-F)	Mt. Carmel Church Woodland, AL 7:00PM Mon-Fri *[June 9 - Seminar "Leadership: Jesus-style"]	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June McDonald 17-22	Ephesus, GA 8:00PM E.S.T.	James (Woodbury, TN)
June 21-24	Bonaventure Road Savannah, GA	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
June 24-28	Hokes Bluff Church near Gadsden, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 29 - - July 1	Chapel Hill Church Pell City, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
June 29 - - July 1	Red Hill Church Woodbury, TN	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

* * * * *

(continued from page 7)
facilitators of group endeavors. (Acts 15:6; Actos 20:17; Acts 11:30) Finally, they were to be examples to the flock, even of humility and submission to all other Christians. (1 Pet. 5:3-5)

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