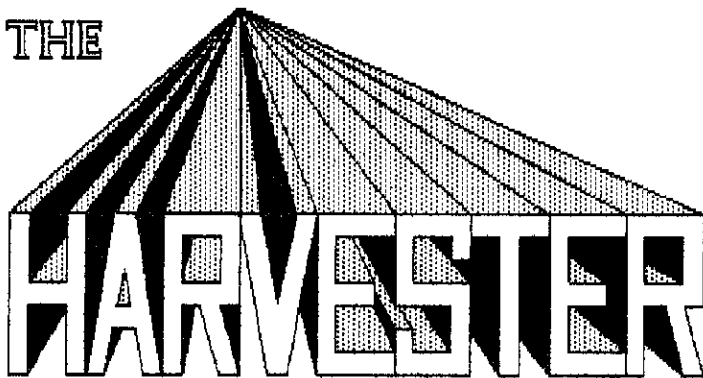


THE



*"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)*

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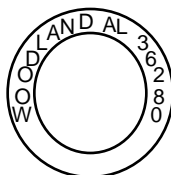
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## THE EARTH WILL BE BURNED UP

In 2 Peter 3:1-14, Peter was concerned about the spiritual well being of those he addressed and he wanted them to be stirred up to the point they were sure their lives conformed to the will of God, thus would be ready when the judgement day came. All Christians believe God as he speaks about the Judgement Day and they believe Christ is coming one day to judge the world. BUT most do not believe he is coming in their lifetime. Peter wanted his hearers, all of them, to

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believe that not only is He coming and that the judgement will take place, but that it may be any day now or any hour or even any minute.

The Bible says, "*The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.*" It is impossible to know when a thief is going to break into a home and steal prized possessions. There is no sign of his coming and he doesn't forewarn his victims. By the time it is discovered an intruder has burglarized someone's home, it is too late to think about protection.

God has warned that Christ will return just as unexpectedly as the thief in the night. At that time He says the heavens will pass away, the elements will melt with fervent heat and *the Earth Will be Burned Up!!!* If a thief steals earthly possessions they can be replaced, but what about the Soul and Life after Death? In the judgement, sinners will be destroyed, then it will be too late to think about protection. We can only escape that fate by being ready when Christ comes, whenever that may be.

The scoffers in Peter's day refused to believe Christ was coming, so they continued to sin as if there was no God. They justified themselves by their own reasoning, saying, "*Where is the promise of His coming? ...Since the beginning of creation, all things continue as they were.*" (2 Peter 3:4) There were no changes, no signs, so they refused to believe Christ was coming. God told them but they would not hear. They would not accept his word, the same word which was powerful enough to form the world and

then destroy it by the flood when scornful men refused to repent of their sins.

Even though God has delayed His coming, His word makes it quite clear that He still has the judgement reserved for sinners and when it comes they will no longer have the world as a refuge, but will be judged and cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.

One of the dangers in failing to accept and truly believe that Christ may come at any moment is the apathy it causes. Everyone is prone to put things off. People don't study as they should, they don't visit the sick as they should, they don't seek to lead the lost to Christ as they should, thinking, we will do it later, or we will do that when we are better prepared or when we have more time or circumstances are more conducive to the task at hand.

But why do people believe there will be a tomorrow? What makes them think that God will give them another day or even another hour? John 4:35 says, "*Say not there are yet four months until harvest? I say look about you, and see the fields are ready for harvest NOW.*" The apostle Paul said, "*Behold, NOW is the accepted time; NOW is the day of salvation.*" (2 Cor. 6:2)

Scoffers then and today don't understand that it is simply because of God's great love and forbearance that Christ's coming has been delayed. Notice Peter's statement in 2 Peter 3:9, "*The Lord is not slack concerning his promise as some*

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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*men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come unto repentance."*

It is because God loves people so dearly and individually, that He has delayed the judgement. Repeated opportunities are granted to all mankind and he is allowing as much time as possible before sending his Son to judge the world. But God can't wait forever. One day time will run out and the inevitable judgement must take place, then what will the scoffers and apathetic do?

Peter understood the dangers in ignoring God's prophets who foretold such things. All the apostles taught and warned their hearers about this danger, and since Peter loved the souls of men he wanted them to be saved. To this end he encouraged them to react positively and appropriately to what they had heard and been taught.

His admonition was, "*Since you see the world is going to burn up at the Judgement, then what manner of persons ought you to be in dedication and*

*godliness..., be diligent so Christ may find you blameless and without sin..., beware that you do not let yourselves be deceived and led into sin so that you fall from grace..., rather grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."* (2 Peter 3:11,14,17,18)

As Peter STIRRED UP the believers in his day, in like manner let his admonition stir up God's people today that they may not be found wanting when the Lord comes. Only through obedience and a godly life NOW can man be judged worthy of eternal life in the HEREAFTER!

Robert Phillips  
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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which of the officials who questioned Jesus tore his own clothes?
2. Isaiah predicts that the mere mention of what nation will bring terror to Egypt?
3. It is easier for what animal to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven?
4. In Job 23, Job treasured God's word more than what?
5. Who spoke against Moses and was made temporarily leprous because of it?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who is the Lord of the Sabbath? THE SON OF MAN (Luke 6:5)
2. After Abraham died, where did Isaac live? WELL OF LAHAIROI (Gen. 25:11)
3. How many believers met in an upper room for prayer after Jesus went to heaven? ABOUT 120 (Acts 1:15)
4. Who prophesied that Bethlehem would produce the Messiah? MICAH (Mic. 5:2)
5. What did Moses do in order to keep the people from coming up to Mt. Sinai? SET BOUNDS ABOUT THE MOUNTAIN (Exo. 19:12,13)

## STEPHANAS, FORTUNATUS, AND ACHAICUS

Here are three names with which you may not be familiar. You might guess that they are Biblical names from their spellings, and you would be right. But who are they, and what did they do?

1 Cor. 16:17 *"I am glad of the coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and Achaicus: for that which was lacking on your part they have supplied."* While there are a few facts that we know about these men whose name's only appear in First Corinthians, we just don't know a lot about them. Or do we?

We know this about Stephanas:

1 Cor. 16:15 *"I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,)"*

We can see that he and his household were servants of Jesus, and particularly involved in the ministry of the saints. We can speculate that Fortunatus and Achaicus were equally involved with this, since Paul spoke of all three equally in verse 17. By Paul mentioning them in this way, we know these men were Christians. And most importantly, examples -- strong Christian examples. Paul makes note of them and then encourages the Corinthians to acknowledge not only them, but also those like them.

1 Cor. 16:18 *"For they have refreshed my spirit and yours: therefore acknowledge ye them that are such."*

And this speaks volumes about these men.

Are we living Christian lives as these men did? If Paul were still around today and writing letters to churches, would he include our name and say "acknowledge those who conduct themselves like this person" and "look to this person as an example"? It is my prayer that we are living that kind of Christian life.

CHAD PRINCE  
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# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
August 3 - 5	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 6 - 10 TN)	Owens Road Church Prattville, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 10 - 12	Valley, AL 7:30 EST, Fri & Sat	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
August 17 - 19	Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)
August 23 - 26	Antioch Church Livingston, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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## WHAT WOULD HAPPEN?

**What would happen** if I heard the same exact message that was preached in Acts chapter 2 by the apostles some 2000 years ago? And **what would happen** if I honestly believed that the One called Jesus Christ was also the True Son of God? And finally, **what would happen** if I did exactly as Peter instructed those who asked about salvation: *“repent and be baptized ... in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ...”* (Acts 2:38)

Wouldn't the same thing happen to me as did the thousands of Jews on the day of Pentecost? *“And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”* (Acts 2:47)