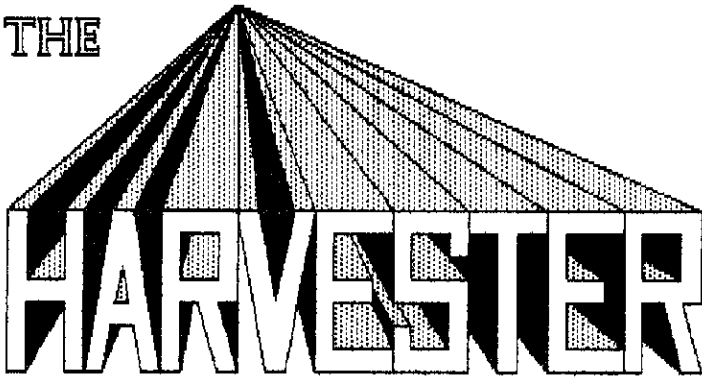


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)*

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SEPTEMBER 2001

No. 189

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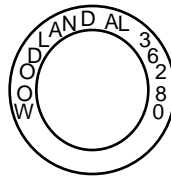
## "BALANCE THE UNBALANCE"

Have you ever wanted to get even with someone? Have you ever had someone do something to get even with you? Have you ever bought something and felt like you got the "short end of the stick"? What do you think made you feel this way? Why is it human nature to want everything to be even? Why do we like for things to be "even" and "balanced"?

I would like to propose to you that this is a part of human nature that dwells within all of us. This "balancing act"

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that we like to perform is very vital to our human lives, but more importantly our Christianity. And we must understand it -- because Satan does.

Satan wants us to look around us for our perspective on how to balance our lives. Satan wants our whole perspective to be physical or material. He wants our goals and dreams to be mortal, shortsighted, and non-eternal. Satan does his best to provide us with the temptations that we want. And yes, I did say the temptations that we want because as James says, it is of our own lust from which our sin is conceived. He wants us to "keep up with the Jones's" in order to feel balanced and not as though we are behind. Many times Satan will tempt us with things that we want and feel that we need for our lives to be balanced. Notice again the physical, "fleshly" balance that Satan uses to tempt us.

However, God wants us to think of balance in spiritual terms. God wants us to focus on heaven, eternity, spirituality, and being perfect.

"What? Be perfect? There is no way I could ever be perfect. Jesus was the only person who was perfect and there is no way I could ever be equal to Jesus! I've done too much wrong! I've messed up too many times! I am too weak! I don't have the knowledge. I don't have the patience. I don't have the love. I don't have the understanding. I don't have the direction. Even when I try to do well, I end up doing bad! Sometimes I even lose my temper. I don't deserve to be equal to Jesus! It wouldn't be fair

for Jesus to be associated with a miserable, wretched man like me!!!"

See there, now Satan has us convinced that God's promise of forgiveness, grace, and love doesn't mean me. "It can't be me, because I've been too bad." But, isn't that why Jesus came to die? For "bad" people? *"For I came not to call the righteous but the <who?> sinners to repentance."* Mark 2:17

Brethren, this is the greatest "unbalance" that we will ever face in life. And the bigger question is how do we "balance" this "unbalance"? We know that we can never do enough good to be or even feel equal to Jesus. We can never make up or undo the wrong things we've done. So, what do we do with the guilt that we feel of our past? How do we get rid of the guilt so that we can serve Jesus the way we should?

I suggest that if you feel convicted and feel an "unbalance" toward God, you have already taken the first step. Having acknowledged that you can do nothing to take away the past and having accepted the fact that without God you cannot do what is right, you are ready to make real progress toward "balancing the unbalance". You are ready to begin by replacing the guilt with a promise. A promise to God and to yourself that through God's strength, you will not commit the same sins again and that you will give your life to Him. You replace the guilt with a promise.

Is that all? Just make a promise? Well, not exactly. You see, anyone can utter

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the words of a promise. But let's ask ourselves what exactly makes a promise worth something? When is a promise valid? I think that we all will agree that it is only when a promise is executed that it can be considered true and upheld. Through execution of our promise to God the guilt can be replaced. Notice that the guilt is not removed -- it is replaced. This is a change of direction...a change of attitude...a change of mind. It is a change from "past-thinking" to "present and forward thinking". It is a change of mind from "look what a mess I have made of my life" to "look what I have the opportunity to do with the time that I have left." Living out this promise is the only way to "balance the unbalance".

So where is the balance? In the execution of the promise -- "God, since You gave me Your Son, I will give You my all for the rest of my life." Okay, so let's get this straight. We have accepted that we are not worthy of God, we are not worthy of his love, we are not worthy of Jesus' death, and we are certainly not worthy to be called a son of God and a brother to Jesus. In order

to "balance the unbalance" all I have to do is make a promise and carry it out?

I dare say that is all there is to it. You see, when we are convicted of our past sins and realize that we need God, we BELIEVE (John 3:16) that Jesus is the Son of God and that He died for our sins. When we make the promise to God that we will not commit the old sins again, we REPENT (Luke 13:3) of our ways. By our promise to give our lives to God, we submit to His will in our life, not our own. God's will is for us to CONFESS (Matthew 10:32) Him before men. Not just once, but God wants every day of our lives, every choice we make, every word we say, to show the world that we are Christians and that we are not ashamed of the Gospel of truth. God's will for us is to come in contact with the blood that Jesus shed through an obedient heart in BAPTISM (1 Peter 3:21). God's will for His children is for them to "*Be faithful unto death [and He will] give thee a crown of life.*" Revelation 2:10

So, what point am I trying to make? Well, a couple of points actually. First, many criticize the Church of Christ for our "steps" to salvation. Actually they aren't "steps". It is a natural process that will happen when someone truly wants to follow God and "balance the unbalance". Second, let us never use the excuse that "everybody messes up once in a while" as a justification for our sins and shortcomings. Even though it is true that we are human, we do make mistakes and we have fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)-- not once did the Apostle Paul use that

excuse for anything in his life. Let us never use our past of our human frailty as an excuse not to live righteously before God. Brothers and sisters in Christ -- as such we are Saints called to live Righteous and Upright lives and to be known in the kingdom of God as heirs to His throne. My prayer is that we may live this way and be as the city set on a hill that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 5.

Remember the story of Peter in Matthew 14 when he tried to walk on water? He was doing fine until he lost his focus on Jesus and began to focus on the "unbalance" between the boisterous waves and his mortal "inability" to walk on water. However, when he looked back to the eternal spiritual power of Jesus and cried "Lord save me!" Jesus immediately reached to him and rescued him.

My prayer is that we too will reach for Jesus to save us as we struggle to "balance the unbalance" between our fleshly mortal lives, and the eternal immortality God has prepared for his children ... us. *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen."*  
Revelation 22:21

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**A COINCIDENCE IS WHEN GOD  
PERFORMS A MIRACLE, AND DECIDES TO  
REMAIN ANONYMOUS.**

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which of Joseph's brothers was shocked to find that Joseph had been sold by the others?
2. Where did the two angels that came to Sodom find Lot?
3. The two men put to death with Jesus were guilty of what crime?
4. What does feeding a hungry enemy or giving drink to a thirsty enemy do?
5. What is like apples of gold in pictures of silver?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Which of the officials who questioned Jesus tore his own clothes? THE HIGH PRIEST, CAIAPHAS (Matt. 26:65)
2. Isaiah predicts that the mere mention of what nation will bring terror to Egypt? JUDAH (Isa. 19:17)
3. It is easier for what animal to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into heaven? A CAMEL (Matt. 19:24)
4. In Job 23, Job treasured God's word more than what? NECESSARY FOOD (23:12)
5. Who spoke against Moses and was made temporarily leprous because of it? MIRIAM (Num. 12:1,2,10)

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
Sept. 3 - 7	Oak Grove Church Liberty, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 7 - 9 (Fr-Su)	Fayetteville Rd. Church Atlanta, GA	Julio Barahona Kevin Mills Brad Prince Chad Prince
Sept. 10 - 14	Lily, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 17 - 21	Estesburg Church Eubank, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
Sept. 20 - 22	Barnes Church Livingston, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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**QUESTION: Does water wash away sins? No.**

There is nothing in H<sub>2</sub>O to cleanse sins.

Why then, someone asserts, does the Bible say that baptism saves (1 Pet. 3:21)? Why was Saul told to be baptized to wash away sins (Acts 22:16)? Because baptism is the place God chose to apply to the soul the precious blood of Christ (Rev. 1:5). Christ's blood is the cleansing agent, baptism is where God does the "operation" of forgiveness (Col. 2:12). When one is baptized in water, he is baptized into Christ's death (Rom. 6:3). Because Christ shed His blood (John 19:34), man can be justified (Rom. 5:9).

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