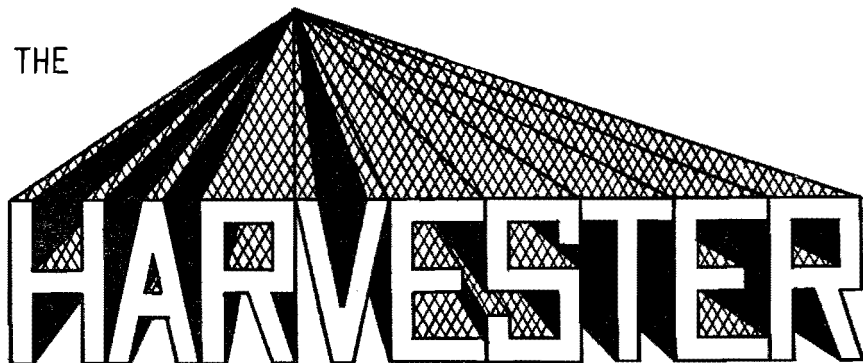


THE



*"Therefore said he unto them, 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)*

August 1988

No. 032

## WHICH SIDE OF THE CROSS DO YOU LIVE ON?

Paul told Timothy that he should *"rightly divide the word of truth"* (II Timothy 2:15). And we as Christians must make an actual division in the recorded word of God. We must separate that part which applies to us under the new dispensation, and that which applied under the old. Some believe that every word from Matthew through Revelation applies to us today as "new testament" Christians. However there is a subtle point that is being overlooked in taking this point of view. The things written in all four accounts of the Gospel are records of things that occurred under the Old Law, not the New.

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It is also hard for many people to realize that even though Christ said something, it doesn't necessarily apply to us. You might ask, how this could be since we are disciples of Christ? Although Christ did possess great power and authority, there was one thing He could not do. He could not, in any way, change the law of Moses. Christ said Himself that *"till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled"*(Matthew 5:18). Throughout Christ's life every part of the law of Moses remained as valid as it was the day Moses proclaimed it. I am not saying that we are to simply ignore what Christ said. Anything that He taught that was not covered under the law of Moses was obviously meant for His disciples, which we are. But often His words were directed to the Jews, or were comments about the old law. And since Christ could not change the law we must be careful how we treat His teachings. Unfortunately, many people try to bind on Christians those things which Christ spoke to the Jews. This has caused much controversy within the church and lies at the root of many doctrinal disputes.

The marriage and divorce issue can be largely attributed to this very situation. I will not endeavor to condemn either point of view concerning this issue, but I do wish to challenge the interpretation of one of the primary verses used in this argument. The nineteenth chapter of Matthew is where most people go to prove that there is a cause for divorce. But let us examine this passage with the knowledge that whatever Christ spoke on this subject, it had to be in perfect harmony with the law of Moses.

In verse 3 we see that *"the Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"* There is no doubt that Christ



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is neither giving a new commandment, nor a commandment which was meant to supercede the Law of Moses and become part of the new law.

I do not claim to prove from this that there is no cause for divorce. I simply would like all to see that Matthew 19:9 is totally irrelevant to this entire matter. And that anyone that does advocate divorce should look elsewhere for scriptural proof of their viewpoint.

This is but one of many instances where we must be careful how we interpret God's word, as to whether it applies to us. Here is another example that is used by many denominations to uphold their unscriptural teachings.

Many religious denominations which advocate belief as the only essential step toward salvation like to point to the crucifixion scene as an example of someone being saved without having been baptized. Let us carefully examine the verses dealing with this subject. The incident in question is recorded in Luke 23:42-43. The thief that hung alongside Christ *"said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise."* Was this man saved by faith alone? Yes he certainly was. But does this prove that today we can be saved the same way? Absolutely not! We must realize that when this happened the law of Moses was still fully valid

since all had not yet been fulfilled. Therefore the act of baptism was not necessary for this thief since he lived and died under the old law.

As in the first example, I don't claim to have proven the necessity of baptism, but merely to have shown that these verses are not part of the new law, and that we cannot use them to prove that baptism is not necessary for salvation.

There are of course many other examples which can also cause controversy, but these two are very prevalent in doctrinal disputes today. Anytime when we study God's word we must always remember to look at each verse in its context, and not by itself. And to always remember who the words were originally meant for. If we are diligent, and sincere, in our studies we can resolve this seemingly difficult problem. And we "*may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*"(Romans 12:2). And then live by it to the glory of God.

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## FROM THE SCRIPTURES ...

### ECCLESIASTES 12

1 Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;

2 While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain:

3 In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened,

4 And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low;

5 Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets:

6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.

7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.

## AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS

(A Series to Promote Church Attendance)

Is it a sin to miss a church service? This is a question that has been asked by many. Of course, if a person is sick or physically not able to attend, then how could that be wrong for that person could not have made it even if he had tried. The Lord will not hold against us that which we cannot do. But what of those who "deliberately" miss a church service? There are some who have the opportunity to go to church but refuse to do so. Is this a sin?

Perhaps we can answer this question by noting a few points. First of all, it is the will of God that we attend the services of the church.

God has written to us in His word such passages as Hebrews 10:25, "*Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching*". The examples of daily gatherings among the disciples (Acts 2:42-46) demonstrate that this was the pattern of the early Christians.

Secondly, if we do the will of God we will enter heaven. "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*" If it is the will of God that we attend church, then we must do that to go to heaven. Deliberately missing the services could keep us from reaching our eternal home in heaven. Sin can do the same thing. Is it possible then that "*forsaking the assembling of ourselves together*" is a sin?

Everyone would agree that going to church and attending the services is good. No one in his right mind would argue otherwise. Would we tell people not to attend church? Of course not, but rather we recommend all folks to attend as much as possible. We encourage it and we honestly believe in our hearts that there is some benefit in regular attendance. So, going to the church services is good. This we know and understand.

Now let us read in James 4:17. "*Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.*" We have already shown that going to church is good and everyone is aware of it, whether he will admit or not. Now, the person who willingly misses the church service (knowing that he should not), has he sinned? I believe if we search the Scriptures, we will find the answer.

RAY

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place &amp; Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
August 1-7	Antioch Church Livingston, TN	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
August 1-6	Marrowbone Church Marrowbone, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 12-14 (F-Su)	Brushy Creek Church near Lucedale, MS 7:30pm Fri. & Sat. 10:30am, 6:00pm Sun.	V.W. Boland (Gadsden, AL)
August 14-19	Rainsville, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 14-20	Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
August 21-26	Colquitt, GA	Lindeal Greer (Bogue Chitto, MS)
Aug. 29- Sept. 2	Houston, TX outdoor nightly serv.	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 9-11	Freefield Church near State Line, MS	Tony Whiddon (Mobile, AL)
Sept. 12-18	Gaylord, Michigan	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Sept. 16-18	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
Sept. 23-25 (F-Su)	Moffat Road Church Mobile, AL 7:30pm Fri. & Sat. 10:00am & 6:00pm Sun.	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)

<p style="text-align: center;">People are like tea bags ... they don't know their own strength until they get into hot water.</p>
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