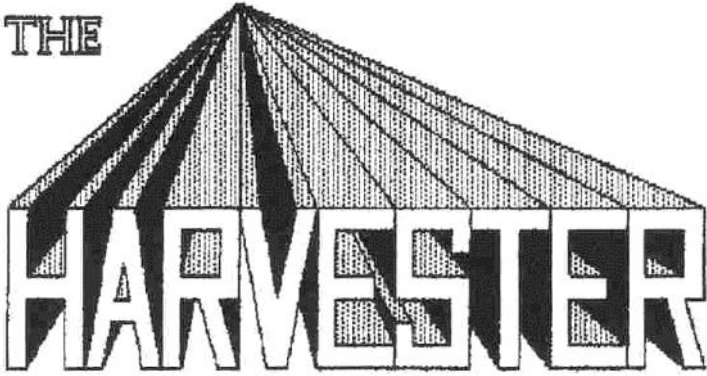


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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest" (Luke 10:2)*

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## MURMURING AND DISPUTING

In Philippians 2:14-15 the inspired Paul vividly declares, *"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world"*. Murmuring involves the meaning of "grumbling" and "grudging". Also, it carries the idea of "whining". Disputing carries the concept of "doubting" and "debating".

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Let us now turn our attention to a classic example of murmuring as found in the book of Numbers, 14:1-4:

*And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in this wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt.*

At first glance the children of Israel's complaint seems to almost be legitimate. They had been in the land of Egypt with access to what seemed to be preferable food and more favorable living conditions. Now, they were roaming in the wilderness. They had "complained" and "cried to Moses" earlier in chapter 11. We read in verses 1 through 6:

*And when the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard it; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the LORD burnt among them. And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting: and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and*

*the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlick: But now our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes.*

They were missing the food of their earlier days. This seems to be (almost) a legitimate complaint. I miss my mother's cooking all the time. We yearn for things and situations that are preferable to suffering the loss thereof. We have fond memories of our childhood and the way things were back then. I prefer living in a stable environment. I think I would have a difficult time in getting use to wandering.

Were the children of Israel's complaints truly legitimate? Let us further investigate the writing of Moses to ascertain the answer. In Numbers chapter 14:5-9 we note:

*Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh, which were of them that searched the land, rent their clothes: And they spake unto all the company of the children of Israel, saying, The land, which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.*

The phrase "if the Lord delight in us" is the answer! The children of Israel were too caught up in worldly desires. They had a miserable life making bricks in Egypt. They thought they would have rather have died there eating fish, melons,

onions, and garlic. They didn't have deep enough faith in God. Their hearts were not pure before Him! They saw all the miracles that Moses performed to confirm the word of God. They saw the rod turned into a serpent. They saw Moses' hand ravaged with leprosy and then healed again. They saw all the plagues of Egypt and the Red Sea parted! Yet, they were grumbling and whining. In short - they were not thankful for what they had. God was providing them with manna to eat. But they didn't like it. God was with them. Yet, they wanted to go back to Egypt. God was not pleased with them. God was willing to protect them from their enemies and give them a land flowing with milk and honey if they would just get their hearts right and trust Him.

As Christians - we are not to engage in grumbling and debating of a harmful sort. If we do such things we won't be "blameless" before God and will thus be in danger. We are to be harmless to the Lord's church and watch our example before the world (Phil. 2:14-15).

In the modern world what do citizens of the United States have to complaint about? We are so very blessed to live where material blessings are in abundance. We are privileged to have climate controlled homes, gas powered automobiles, running water, telephones, computers, clean-cooked food, medication, universities, libraries, paved freeways, electricity, hospitals and on and on. Many in the world do not enjoy the blessings and opportunities that you and I have access to. The Lord's church in America is blessed to have air conditioned and heated buildings. Church buildings in the United States have padded seats, carpet, glass windows, Bibles, song books, water fountains, and rest rooms.

In conclusion if our hearts are right with God and we have a crown of righteousness laid up for us (2 Tim. 4:8), what do we really and truly have to complain about? We are told in 1 Timothy 6:6-12:

*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.*

**TIM ELDRIDGE**  
Woodland, AL

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## APOLOGIA

*Editor's note: This question and answer are from a letter in response to a brother in Africa.*

QUESTION: In 1 Corinthians 11:28, Paul writes that we are to examine our self before partaking of the Lord's Supper. Then in 2 Corinthians 13:5 we are told to examine our self to see if we be in the faith. What is meant by 'examine' in these two passages? Does it mean when a Christian sins, he or she is not to partake of the Lord's Supper? If so, why in Matthew 26:28 are

we told that once we drink of his blood it will cleanse us of our sins?

ANSWER: The three Scriptures to which you refer have three different meanings. As an example, when one speaks of water, water may come from three different sources: rain, the well in your yard, or from a spring to which women go to fill their buckets - but it remains water. So it is with words in the Bible. The same word or expression may be used, but they can have different meanings.

*But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.*  
(1 Cor. 11:28-29)

1 Corinthians 11:28 speaks of our examining ourselves regarding the communion. Verse 29 states that our purpose must be to discern or consider in serious memory the Lord's body which was sacrificed. We examine ourselves to be certain we have the proper attitude about what we are doing when we partake. Unworthily refers to our partaking without really being thoughtful of the significance of what we are doing.

*Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not*

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*your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? (2 Cor. 13:5)*

2 Corinthians 13:5 explains our need to look at ourselves carefully to be certain we have not become lazy in our service to God, that we remain dedicated in living the Christian lifestyle, and that we remain committed to that grand cause of Christ in which we serve. Otherwise we will be rejected by God.

If as a Christian we do sin (for 1 John 1:8 tells us we do), this does not mean we should not partake of the Lord's Supper. 1 John 1:9 explains that if we acknowledge our sins, God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins." Sins are forgiven by Christ's shed blood received by us through baptism (Romans 6:3). The Lord's Supper is where in partaking we express our remembrance of His death. This is a memorial service in which dedicated Christians, even with our imperfections, remember and express thankfulness for what the Lord did for us.

*And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. (Matt. 26:27-28)*

Matthew 26:28 beautifully expresses the fact that forgiveness of sin comes through Christ's shed blood which is what we acknowledge and remember in partaking of the Lord's Supper. Forgiveness is not in partaking of the Lord's Supper, but rather in Christ's blood which we remember in the Lord's Supper.

**HARRY COBB**  
Wedowee, AL

# Gospel Meetings

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<b>DATES</b>	<b>PLACE</b>	<b>SPEAKER</b>
July 11 - 13	Chapel Hill Pell City, AL	Sam Dick Cave City, KY
July 13 - 18	Templehill Smithdale, MS	Joe Hill Hager Hill, KY
July 18 - 20	Owens Road Prattville, AL	J.D. McDonald Woodbury, TN
July 20 - 25	Oak Grove Woodland, AL	Wilbur Bass Auburn, AL
July 27 - August 1	Napoleon Woodland, AL	Various speakers

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which two sisters married Jacob?
  2. How old was Moses when he died?
  3. What did Boaz say Naomi was selling?
  4. Who carried the cross for Christ?
  5. What was Paul's home town?
- ...and remember April's questions?
1. What was the name of the woman who hid the spies at Jericho? RAHAB (Josh 2:3-4)
  2. Which river was Naaman told to wash in to rid himself of leprosy? JORDAN (2 King 5:10)
  3. What should you not "throw before swine?" PEARLS (Matthew 7:6)
  4. With what was Peter's mother-in-law sick? A FEVER (Matthew 8:14)
  5. When in prison at what time did Paul and Silas pray and sing to God? MIDNIGHT (Acts 16:25)