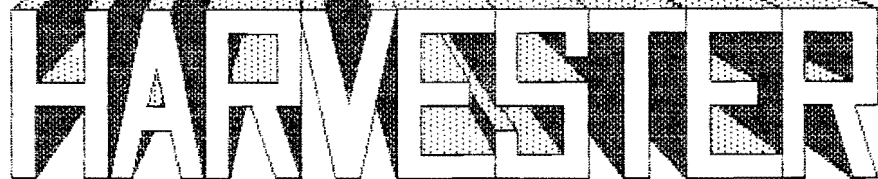


THE



HARVESTER

"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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UNBAPTIZED BOYS PARTICIPATING IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE ASSEMBLY

While there is no doubt a sincere intent in using in the assemblies of the Lord's church young boys who have not yet been baptized, I seriously question the wisdom of this practice. It is not a question of their purity, for perhaps most are not old enough to have been confronted with this decision. It is not a question of their making a mistake, for even experienced brethren are subject to that. It is not a question of their being allowed to take part and thus encouraged in the right direction, for this comes in time with proper home influence. Without question, the young should be encouraged!

Perhaps most of us at one time or another

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have witnessed young children (and sometimes with their parent's approval) come forward after the assembly and eat and drink the remaining bread and fruit of the vine. The assembly has been dismissed, to be sure, but have the emblems so soon lost their significance? When the life has gone out of a person's body, do we so desecrate that empty shell? Such would be unthinkable. Why, then, not consider with at least equal honor that which signifies the Lord's body and blood?

The assembly of the saints, too, is a situation where reverence (1 Cor. 11:27-29), order (1 Cor. 14:40) and responsibility (1 Cor. 14:26,32) are essential factors. A contrast is made, even, between children and men in Paul's reasoning regarding understanding (1 Cor. 14:20). Participation in the leadership of the congregation is a position which should be reserved for those who have been proven.

When the role of leadership is allowed a child, there has been removed a major incentive for him becoming a Christian. This is so because he is allowed to engage in a role normally expected of and reserved for those who have made a commitment to Christ. As an illustration, the child likely does not greatly harm himself in partaking of the communion without the proper understanding; but don't we explain to him that such is reserved for membership in the Lord's family? The principle is identical.

I am well aware of a congregation where young people were not encouraged to become members until they reached the age of maturity (about 18 or 19) and were able to make decisions without dependence upon their parents. In this congregation was a young man who was allowed to lead singing until the time of his marriage, and he had not yet been baptized. To reasonably apply this problem, where would you

stop your son from participating if he were a long time in being baptized? At the age of 10? What about 12? Perhaps he has not been baptized by the age of 14. Would you then cease using him to lead singing? Upon what grounds? What if he were 16? The point is -- you have no point at which you can reasonably stop his participating, for he has been allowed to participate all along. There has been removed by permission that barrier which would have caused him to see the distinction between those who have committed themselves and those who have not. He has been allowed a privilege which should have been withheld until he had proved himself by making a profession of his faith!

The Scriptures enjoin:

"The same commit thou to faithful men"
(2 Tim. 2:2)

Of elders, *"Know them which labor among you"* (1 Thess. 5:12)

Of an elder, but certainly true of those lesser in statue, *"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil"* (1 Tim. 3:6).

Certainly these Scripture references do not directly apply to young boys, but they do show the seriousness of being careful about who leads the congregation. There is not one reference about unbaptized young boys taking such a role, and it is contrary to the principle of these Scriptures. In allowing this practice we presume to walk without Divine authority.

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<p>IF YOU AREN'T AS CLOSE TO GOD AS YOU USED TO BE, WHO MOVED?</p>
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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Which person of Pharaoh's household found Moses when he was hidden in the bulrushes?
2. To where should one look to see the source of his help, according to Psalms?
3. How long did Paul wait in jail at Caesarea before coming before Festus?
4. From what did Elijah get food during the drought?
5. What two tribes of Israel were from Jacob's grandsons rather than sons?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who came to Hagar in the desert by the spring of water as she was fleeing Sarai? AN ANGEL OF THE LORD (Gen. 16:7)
2. How many daughters did Moses' father-in-law have? SEVEN (Exo. 2:16)
3. Why did Paul oppose Peter in Antioch? BECAUSE PETER STOPPED EATING WITH THE GENTILES (Gal. 2:12)
4. How many miracles are recorded in Mark? NINETEEN (Book of Mark)
5. Under Solomon's reign what became as common as stones? SILVER AND GOLD (2 Chr. 1:15)

CHRIST IN THE BIBLE

The last twelve books of the Old Testament also contain teachings from God's prophets, but are shorter in length than the four prophets we studied last month: hence, their reference as Minor Prophets.

The book of HOSEA is unique in that God uses this prophet's own personal life to portray the special work of Christ. Hosea is a faithful husband whose wife, Gomer, seeks other lovers and finally deserts him. Although his suffering is great, later he buys and restores her from the slave market. In like manner the Messiah will redeem and restore his adulterous people from their sins.

Like the locust plague that has just struck Judah, the day of the Lord will also be a day of judgment. This is the message from JOEL, an uncompromising preacher of repentance. He informs us that this 'day' will occur in "the last days" and that Christ will be the One who will judge the nations in the valley of Jehoshaphat.

AMOS, the Burden-Bearer, has the task of declaring judgment to rebellious Israel. He uses visions of grasshoppers, fire, plumbline, summer fruit, and smitten door lintels to pronounce the future judgment. But in his message comes forth the anticipation that the Anointed One will restore His people.

In OBADIAH we find the shortest book of the Old Testament, yet it carries one of the strongest messages of judgment. The nation of Edom has been arrogant and cruel to Judah. Therefore its doom is sealed, its pride will be overthrown and the house of Jacob will be restored. The Judge of the nations, the Saviour of Israel, and the Possessor of the kingdom are all portrayals of the Messiah.

God called JONAH to preach repentance to the wicked city of Nineveh. At first Jonah refused, seeking refuge at Tarshish. But after being tossed overboard and swallowed by a great fish, he obeyed and Nineveh was spared. This is the only prophet to whom Christ likened Himself. As Jonah spent *"three days and three nights in the whale's belly"*, so this is a figure of the death, burial, and resurrection of our blessed Redeemer.

MICAH left his hometown to preach in Jerusalem. As with the other prophets, he predicts a time of judgment and restoration to come and pleads for repentance. In one verse, Micah gives us one of the clearest and most precise of Messianic prophecy. He tells us the birthplace and the eternity of Christ, seven hundred years before it actually happens!

Considered a sequel to the story of Jonah, one hundred years later NAHUM proclaims the downfall of Nineveh and its destruction by Babylon. Because they returned to their wicked ways, Nineveh's overthrow is justified. This is noteworthy since the city "appeared" invincible. This is a loud warning to all in light of the fact that the Messiah will be the Judge of all nations in spite of "who they are".

As death approaches the nation of Judah, the faith of HABAKKUK is troubled. He does not fully understand God's ways but his conclusion is this: in any generation the just shall live by faith. Near the end of his book, Habakkuk deals with the subject of salvation. He uses the root word from which the name 'Jesus' is derived. Unquestionably the time of the Lord's salvation draws nearer.

Another eleventh-hour prophet to Judah was ZEPHANIAH. He was probably the only prophet of royal descent. In his writings he alludes to

One who will convert and restore God's people. This One will save and gather them and make a name for them. Surely the reader can see in this book the theme of the promised Messiah.

HAGGAI was a prophet when the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity. His sermons helped stir the people to finish rebuilding the temple. At one point he said that the latter temple would be greater than the former, an allusion to God's redemptive plan through the Messiah. Haggai also portrayed Christ in the person of Zerubbabel, who was like a signet ring, sealing together both branches of David's descendants through Solomon and Nathan.

The book of ZECHARIAH is filled with Messianic passages and figures. A contemporary of Haggai, Zechariah uses pictures of visions and messages to appeal to the people. He explicitly prepares the Jews for Christ with such language as: the Angel of the Lord; the righteous Branch; the stone with seven eyes; the King-Priest; the lowly King; the cornerstone, nail and battle bow; the Good Shepherd who is rejected and sold for thirty shekels of silver, the price of a slave; the pierced One; the cleansing fountain; the smitten Shepherd who is abandoned; and the coming Judge and righteous King.

The last prophet to preach before the four hundred years of silence is MALACHI. He plainly predicts the coming of the messenger who will clear the way before the Lord: John the Baptist. To know the coming of this "prophet Elijah" is to recognize that the time for Christ is at hand. This is what the Jews had been looking forward to since the promise was made to Abraham. This is the theme every OT writer had in mind when he wrote.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
June 30 - July 5	Sun Hill Road Church Birmingham, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 8-11 (M-Th)	Hokes Bluff Church near Gadsden, AL 7:00 each evening	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 12-14 (F-Su)	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL 7:00pm Fri. & Sat.	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
July 14-17	Westside Church Shawnee, OK	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
July 14-19	Valley, AL	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
July 28 - Aug 3	Napolean Church Woodland, AL	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)

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THINK IT OVER:

God made the sun -- it gives.
 God made the moon -- it gives.
 God made the stars -- they give.
 God made the air -- it gives.
 God made the clouds -- they give.
 God made the earth -- it gives.
 God made the sea -- it gives.
 God made the trees -- they give.
 God made the flowers -- they give.
 God made the fowls -- they give.
 God made the beasts -- they give.
 God made the Plan -- He gives.
 God made man -- He . . . ?

Selected