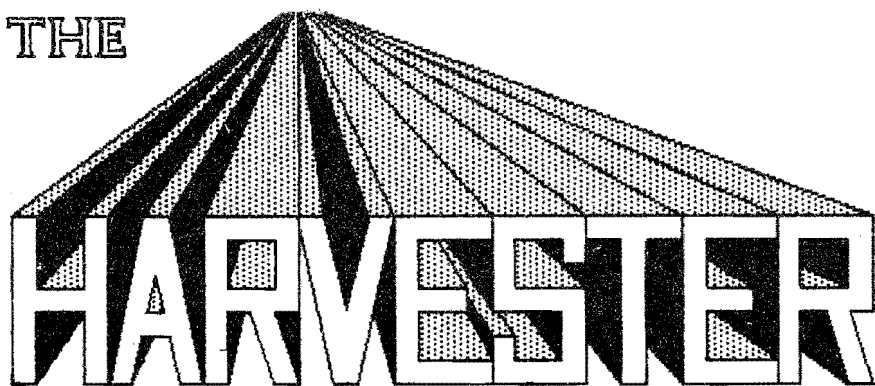


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"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

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## THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

There was once a time when morality meant something in this country. That time is no more. Recently the great basketball star Earvin "Magic" Johnson announced he had contracted the AIDS virus and was retiring from the Los Angeles Lakers. People around the world reacted with shock and dismay. Not at what he had done to contract the disease, but just the fact that it happened to such a great person. Based on his reputation, Magic Johnson is indeed one of the better men in professional sports today. But how did such a good man contract such a dreaded disease? His personal physician said it was through sex. Sex with a woman he was not married to. So

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CORRECTION

is Mr. Johnson the innocent victim of a terrible tragedy as the world says, or did he perhaps bring all of this upon himself? I would never wish this disease on anyone, but when a person acquires it through an immoral and sinful act, I cannot feel much pity for the person.

Magic Johnson says that he will now become a spokesman for "safe sex." Safe sex means nothing more than "it's alright to fornicate as long as you take the proper precautions." When did the Bible change to allow this? The Bible teaches that sex is allowed ONLY within marriage. Apparently Mr. Johnson has not yet learned his lesson. But neither has the rest of the world. A righteous and moral person has very little to fear from AIDS. While it is possible to contract it through blood transfusions, the odds are very slim. The primary ways of transmission are all sinful. Intravenous drug users, homosexuals, adulterers and fornicators are the main ones at risk. Yet most people still scoff at the notion that AIDS is a punishment from God against the wicked. How foolish this generation is!

Magic Johnson may be a really nice person, but that does not excuse his immoral behavior. He rolled the dice and he lost. How many more will walk the same path behind him? How many more must die before people begin to wake up? Sin continues to take its toll all around us, yet the world presses on as if nothing were wrong.

In the long run AIDS is meaningless. It cannot damn the soul to hell. However, the sins which bring it on certainly can. God continues to show man the consequences of his sin, but to no avail. Man laughs in the face of God. Man believes he is the God of his own destiny. But just perhaps Magic Johnson's mistake will

cause a few to see through the smoke-screen. To see reality as it is. To understand that a fate far worse than AIDS awaits those who fail to submit themselves to God. Perhaps I am being a little harsh on Mr. Johnson, but reality is often harsh and what has happened to him he brought upon himself. It's too late for him to change things now. What's done is done. Likewise, we too must someday face the consequences of our actions. If we find ourselves tormented in the flames of hell for ever and ever, we can know one thing for sure. We are not there because of someone else's mistake. We, like Magic Johnson, will have brought it all upon ourselves.

TONY WHIDDON

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## THE QUEST FOR THINGS

This is a true story. The names have been omitted, not so much to protect the innocent, but to tell this account in a more objective way.

In a major southern city there was a fine family. The father and mother were both Christians with two fine small children. They all attended faithfully at a nearby church of Christ. They were a big asset to the church. They were all happy and the church was happy with them.

Things changed. He decided to take an early morning paper route in addition to his nine to five job. This was the beginning of sorrows. To get up in the wee hours in order to deliver his papers he had to go to bed very early and family life was interrupted in the evenings. On

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Sundays the delivery was very time-consuming due to the size of the paper. He started getting home too late to get ready to go to services so he sent the family on without him and he attended the evening service.

Things changed again. She decided to help out on their bills by taking a job also. She needed some new clothes and another car. This necessitated the need for a maid to come in and take care of the children. So in order to make more money it cost more and more to live thus increasing the need for more and more money. The rat-race was on.

The family life began to disintegrate. They hardly saw each other except to wave at each other in passing. Then the children became more and more unruly and would obey only the maid. They wondered why they loved the maid more than themselves. Well, the maid was there. That's why.

They became irritable and edgy and had quite a few family spats. Church attendance was relegated to the background in spite of the urgency of the elders for them to be faithful. Others from the church went to see them to encourage them to once again take their proper place in the congregation. All of this did not avail.

Finally, thank the Lord, they became so tired that they could hardly make it from day to

day. Then, like the prodigal son they came to their senses. Once more they would allow the elders to help them figure things out. Here's what happened.

He quit the paper route. She quit her job. They sold the second car. They discharged the maid. They got their family back. They decided to live within their means on his salary, maintain a proper family life, regain their children, and came before the Lord and the church asking forgiveness for their covetousness and resulting unfaithfulness. They cried for joy when they came forward and brethren cried with them. This case turned out all right in the end.

I am thinking now of many other cases here and there. It is evident that some are making the same mistakes as those we have mentioned. They are on a tread mill which gets faster and faster. Some cases have already resulted in a broken home and leaving the Lord and His people. Others will soon be there as well. Unless they heed the Word of God and the advice of faithful brethren.

Some of the most enriching times of our lives were when Wilma and I had less of this world's goods. That's when the family really has to pull together. That's when the family is truly close. That's when we learn truly what happiness and contentment is all about.

Let's now hear from the Scriptures on this. Hebrews 13:5 says, "... be content with such things as ye have ..." Proverbs 15:16, "*Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith. Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.*" Again in Proverbs 17:1, "*Better is a dry morsel, and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices*

*with strife."*

Less is better than more if more leads you away from the God of Heaven and the family goes down the drain. I plead with the young families to heed the warning. We who are now older can see where you are heading. Will you take heed?

written by J. Wiley Adams  
Warner Robbins, Georgia  
submitted by Buster Boyd

## **SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES**

1. Where was Samuel buried?
2. How did Jesus say all men would know His disciples?
3. Instead of being filled with wine, with what should you be filled?
4. The phrase "the kingdom of heaven" appears thirty-two times in the NT (KJV) and all in the same book! Which book is it?
5. From the time it left 'Egypt' until the reign of David, in what was the ark of the covenant housed?

**ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .**

and remember last month's questions?

1. Why did Hezekiah break the brazen serpent Moses had made? **BECAUSE THE ISRAELITES BEGAN TO WORSHIP IT (2 Kings 18:4)**
2. While in the wilderness, how many trumpets were used to alert the Israelites to assemble or to break camp? **TWO (Num. 10:2)**

3. After Peter escaped from prison, what did King Herod do to the keepers of the prison?  
HE SENTENCED THEM TO DEATH (Acts 12:19)

4. According to Revelation, when the clusters from the vine of earth were gathered and thrown into the great wine press of the wrath of God, what came out from the wine press?  
BLOOD (Rev. 14:20)

5. What book was written by a general?  
JOSHUA

## CHRIST IN THE BIBLE

This month we conclude our book-by-book study of the Bible. In each book we have found the theme to be centered around the Messiah.

It is believed that the apostle John wrote the next three epistles in our series of studies. In I JOHN we are given more information concerning the identity of Christ. He is the Son of God. He is our righteous Advocate before the heavenly Father. He was sent by the love of God. He came by "water and blood" and His blood cleanses the believer from all unrighteousness. In II JOHN the argument continues that the Messiah truly came to earth in the flesh. Certain deceivers in those days were teaching otherwise. But John clarifies the issue. To maintain the proper relationship with God the Father required living in the doctrine of Jesus Christ! In III JOHN the topic centers on the idea of Truth. Who is the source of this Truth? The answer is Jesus Christ. Although His name is not found in this short book, one indirect reference can be traced in verse 7.

What must a Christian do when he is persecuted and attacked by false teachers?

(continued from page 7)

**JUDE** says to fight! Contend for the faith! And do battle! Only in the Redeemer can a believer find preservation among those who deny the Christ. Only in the love of God's Son can a believer find mercy. And only in the Lord Jesus can a believer be presented faultless before the Eternal Judge. It would do us all good to heed Jude's message even today.

The book of REVELATION concludes what the book of Genesis started. The first and the last and Alpha and Omega reveal the happiest ending ever read in a book. It begins with a vision of the Lord's glory, wisdom, power, and authority. It ends with His righteous wrath poured out upon the whole earth and He reigns forever over the beautiful heavenly city. In between we see many pictures of the Messiah: the faithful witness, the Amen, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, the Lamb, Faithful and True, the Word of God, and the bright and morning star. What an awesome revelation of hope to the disciples of Jesus Christ!

RAY

*If a man wants his dreams to come true he must wake up.*

Editor's Note: Thanks to this year's contributors of articles-- Tony Whiddon, Marty Livingston, Harry Cobb, and Buster Boyd. If you can send in an article to be published, it would be most helpful. This is an excellent opportunity to reach souls with the Word of God. Special thanks go to the Sun Hill Road Church of Christ in Birmingham, AL for allowing us the use of their mailing permit. This year they have also paid for all costs associated with Address Corrections which was a tremendous kindness to this editor.