

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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## TEARING DOWN THE HIGH PLACES

Israel's path toward idolatry can be traced back to the days of Solomon. He built many altars and high places in Jerusalem to honor the false gods worshipped by his heathen wives. After Solomon's death, and the subsequent division of the kingdom, idolatry quickly overspread the northern kingdom of Israel, due mainly to the almost unbroken succession of corrupt kings. In the South, many of Judah's kings were righteous and sought to suppress idolatry and delayed its spread.

Some 350 years after the reign of Solomon a young man named Josiah became king of Judah.

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Fourteen men had occupied the throne between Solomon and Josiah. These included such notable men as Asa, Joash, and Hezekiah. There were many good men in this group, and they had ruled Judah well. Asa, for instance, is highly praised for his faithfulness. *"And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father."* (1 Kings 15:11) Yet there is one negative mentioned about all of the righteous kings of Judah. The high places which Solomon had built were not destroyed.

Finally, after they had disgraced Jerusalem for 350 years, Josiah destroyed these high places. *"And the high places that were before Jerusalem, which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon, did the king defile. And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men;"* (II Kings 23:13-14)

What was so significant about this? While these high places remained they legitimized idolatry and basically made it equal to the worship of God. After all, Solomon built the temple of God as well as the high places for these idols. This certainly must have been confusing to people who lived during the next 350 years until these high places were finally destroyed by Josiah. How were they to know which god to serve? These high places served as temptations for the people to stray into idolatry. As long as they remained the worship of God was in danger.

How were the priests supposed to convince the people to abstain from idolatry when so close

at hand were monuments to these idols which had stood for over three centuries? Jerusalem's high places certainly contributed to the spread of idolatry throughout Judah. There is just no way their presence could not have affected the people.

Many people also have "high places" in their lives today. Things which, as long as they remain, jeopardize their service to God. For example, a group of friends can be a "high place" for a person. Far too often someone does something which they shouldn't do when they are with a group of friends. This is so-called peer pressure. The person will then regret what they did and promise their self they will never do it again. But yet the high place remains. They continue their association with the group that caused the problem in the first place.

Another person might have trouble controlling their sexual urges and thoughts. They want to exercise self control, but so often fail. They may well have a "high place" in their life which is the cause of their problem. Perhaps it is what they watch on television, what they read, or the music they listen to. So many of these things are filled with glorified images of immoral behavior and can cause a person's thoughts to turn in that direction.

Too often people underestimate the influence things have on them. The Apostle Paul gave a warning about this very thing. *"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners."* (1 Corinthians 15:33) The word 'communications' here means relationships with others. The idea here is simple. There is not a single person who is immune to the influence of others, although so many people feel that they are. Anyone who feels that they can continually keep company with worldly people

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and not have it weaken them is as Paul said, "deceived!"

We must constantly re-evaluate our lives and try to find the high places. And once we have found them we must then tear them down and make sure they are not rebuilt. And in their place we need to put something of value: fellowship with other Christians, study of the Bible, visiting the sick, and so on.

Your high place might be a friend, your job, the television, or anything else in your life. The idea is that if it causes you to be exposed to evil, it will eventually weaken you. Paul gave us the best advice about these matters. *"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things:"* (Philippians 4:8)

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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. When Joshua was invading the promised land, what people saved themselves by making a deceptive pact with the Israelites?
2. How does the Lord feel about dishonest scales?
3. When your eyes are evil, what fills your body?
4. Was a rabbit or a hare a clean or unclean animal according to Jewish dietary laws?
5. What was the craft of Demetrius?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Who gave Joseph of Arimathaea permission to bury Jesus? PILATE (Luke 23:52)
2. The river Pison flowed from Eden and through the land of Havilah where there was a precious metal. Name that metal. GOLD (Gen. 2:11)
3. How did God show His approval of Stephen? GOD CAUSED HIS FACE TO SHINE LIKE AN ANGEL (Acts 6:15)
4. What were the leaders of Israel called before they had a king? JUDGES (1 Sam. 7:15)
5. What did Eli think when he saw Hannah praying? THAT SHE WAS DRUNK (1 Sam. 1:13)

### PREACHER'S PRAYER

*"Lord, fill my mouth with  
worthwhile stuff,  
And nudge me when I've  
said enough."*

## JUDGING OURSELVES UNWORTHY OF EVERLASTING LIFE

(Editor's Note: The following article is the third in a series of four lessons. The text is Acts 13:42-46.)

Summarizing briefly, in our previous series of lessons, One and Two, we noticed the Rich Young Ruler (Matt. 19:16-24; Mark 10:17-25) and the Prosperous Farmer of Luke 12:15-21. Both of these men judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life by their own choice and decision. Are we doing the same by neglecting our opportunities? Eph. 5:15-16.

### Felix and Drusilla - Acts 24:24-26

Our third study deals with a man and woman of great power in the political arena. Man's opportunity and his negligence of it often sinks him into a spiritual quicksand, from which he seldom recovers.

*"And after certain days when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee. He hoped also that money should have been given him of Paul, that he might loose him: wherefore he sent for him the oftener, and communed with him." (Acts 24:24-26)*

Felix was Roman Governor (procurator) of Judea from A.D. 53-60. Drusilla was the daughter of Herod Agrippa the 1st. Her father killed the Apostle James (Acts 12:1-2). Her great uncle also slew John the Baptist, and her great grandfather tried to kill Jesus (Matt. 2:7-23). Felix was a clever politician, and a crook and scoundrel. He hoped that he could be bribed

and then he would let Paul go free. 1 Tim. 6:10 and Luke 12:15.

Although he trembled when Paul preached, righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, he was so busy in politics and covetousness, that he ignored Paul's preaching for the moment, by passing off the matter, perhaps at a more convenient and opportune time, he thought. He thereby judged himself unworthy of everlasting life.

May we avoid these same pitfalls by learning from these examples, and applying our hearts to wisdom; and understanding that tomorrow never comes. It's always today (James 4:14; 2 Cor. 6:2). So let us

SEE HIM (Jesus) MORE CLEARLY

LOVE HIM MORE DEARLY

AND FOLLOW HIM MORE NEARLY. "Amen!"

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## WHY I ATTEND EVERY SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

I go to every service of the Church to set a good example. Many are looking my way and following my steps. Influence is either good or bad -- there is no middle ground. Any hour the Church meets, my influence is with or against Christ. If I attend, it is for the Lord. When I neglect a service, my influence is for Satan.

I go to every service of the Church to prove my love and gratitude. So boundless was the love of Jesus for the church, He gave His life

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

| <u>Dates</u>              | <u>Place &amp; Time</u>                                   | <u>Speaker</u>                   |
|---------------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| August<br>6 - 8<br>(F-Su) | Fairview Church<br>Oxford, AL<br>7:00pm/ 10:45 & 6:00 Sun | Sam Dick<br>(Cave City, KY)      |
| August<br>20 - 22         | Bonaventure Road Church<br>Savannah, GA                   | Harry Cobb<br>(Wedowee, AL)      |
| August<br>22 - 27         | Rainsville, AL  | James McDonald<br>(Woodbury, TN) |
| Aug. 30<br>- Sep. 4       | Oak Grove Church<br>Liberty, KY                           | James McDonald<br>(Woodbury, TN) |

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for it. If I would be His disciple, I must also prove my love. Since God has given me a multitude of blessings I do not deserve, it is indeed a small sacrifice to return a few hours in public worship. One who truly loves God does not ask if he must attend all services. His love compels him to! If I show love to God by attendance, I show lack of love by absence.

I go to every service of the Church to obey God. The Bible says, "*Forsake not the assembling of yourselves together . . .*" (Heb. 10:25). The first Christians met weekly and often daily (Acts 20:7; 2:45; 19:9). Any service where the Bible is taught, prayer is made, and God is worshipped, is good, and "*to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not to him it is sin!*" (James 4:17). If it is good to be present for all services, it is bad to be absent from any.

I go to every service of the Church to put first things first. "*Seek ye first his kingdom . . .*" (Matt. 6:33). Jesus said the church must be first to the Christian, even before seeking food, clothing, and drink. Nothing could be so important as being a faithful member of the Lord's church. -- Copied --