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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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BEFORE WE ASSEMBLE...

The Lord's church is commanded to assemble on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:2, Heb. 10:25). The main focus of the assembly on Sunday morning is partaking of the Lord's supper to remember Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection and to consider or discern the Lord's body (I Cor. 11:23-29). Also during the assembly we are to exhort one another and provoke one another "unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Since it is our duty of love (selfless, sacrificial, uncondi-

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tional love) to God and Jesus as well as a high privilege and honor to remember God so loving us (John 3:16) via Jesus' sacrifice over 2,000 years ago - before we leave for Church services we should consider the condition of our body, mind, and soul.

Before we leave home for the assembly, what is the condition of our body concerning spiritual matters? Most of us who live in the United States of America are blessed beyond measure with many temporal blessings and opportunities. We may not be rich in the eyes of some, but in the eyes of the majority of the world we do not really have anything to complain about. We have food enough and to spare. We have transportation that allows us to travel to the assembly in spite of most harsh weather circumstances. We very likely woke up in a house that is climate controlled and has indoor plumbing. Having all these numerous blessings we have the opportunity to present ourselves in the assembly so as to show our deepest respect for Jesus' dead body (kind of like a funeral), and to provoke one another to love and good works. We can readily do this by the clothes that we wear. We don't have to wear the latest fashion or expensive clothes. However, we should wear clothes that promote God and not ourselves. We should wear clothes that are respectable and reflect who we are --- Christians! We should never wear clothes so as to cause some to lust and promote ourselves instead of God and Jesus Christ. Our clothes should be as clean as possible and most assuredly have enough cloth so as to cover our nakedness. Let us prayerfully consider a mandate that was given to priest in Exodus 28:42: "*And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach*". From this verse we

note very clearly that God considers an uncovered thigh as being naked. Brothers and Sisters, we are all "priests" under the new covenant. No Christian should ever expose their thighs in public whether with pants, dresses, or swim wear. Let us look at Isaiah 47:2-3: *"Take the millstones, and grind meal: uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered, yea, thy shame shall be seen: I will take vengeance, and I will not meet thee as a man."* These verses vividly expound that showing the thigh is considered showing nakedness. The pelvis, abdomen, breasts, back, shoulders and shoulder blades should be covered. Ask yourself if you think it's okay to show a small amount of anything just mentioned --- Ask yourself WHY am I wanting to show it? One should never dress so as to cause someone to lust - commit adultery in their hearts! Thus, in public or mixed company we should always be covered from the knee to the shoulders. It is the responsibility of both men and women to consider one another in a Christian manner. Matthew 5:28 extols: *"But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* And the inverse is true for ladies as well. Also in preparing our bodies for public assembly we should be as clean and odor free as possible. We are to consider one another and serve one another. We are to provoke each other to holiness. We can't "provoke" each other in a proper way by being very dirty and having offensive body odor. How we present our bodies to others shows "who" we are. Folks look at our actions long before they get to our words.

Before we leave home for the assembly what is the condition of our attitude? Do we prepare

ourselves for the assembly by thinking "I get to" or "I have to"? Often times we like to hide behind excuses when we approach attending church services via the attitude of having to. Some typical excuses are "Bro Ramble doesn't have a lot of deep knowledge and can't tie his points together too well. His sermons bore me to tears and he hardly ever teaches me anything." Sometimes, some will avoid attending services for this very reason. This gives one the idea that they have "itching ears" and like to gather around Bro Silver Tongue. "He can preach up a storm!" Another reason for some to dread attending certain congregations is based on the singing. Those with this attitude will proclaim, "The Off Pitch Congregation cannot carry a tune to save their lives! I like the Tuned Up Congregation because they can sing like no other congregation - they are the tops when it comes to singing on time, in tune, and according to the rules of music!" Brothers and Sisters - do we have this attitude? Let's be very honest with ourselves --- sometimes, many of us may be guilty of this to on some level. Are we "high maintenance" members of the Lord's kingdom? Do we approach attending services on Sunday mornings and during gospel meetings from the standpoint of we "must always get something out of the services"? We should look at services from a different spectrum; what are we "putting in" the services? We all should provoke one another to love and good works and not depend solely on the sermon from a given preacher or how well a given congregation sounds when it sings. We attend church services because Jesus took our place on the cross and died "while we were yet sinners" (Rom. 5:8). We did not merit the opportunity to obey the gospel in faith and walk in sanctification via the blood of Christ, the truth, and the Spirit. We should

be delighted and very thankful that the Lord died for us and be over joyed because we get to worship God in an assembly and provoke His saints to love, holiness, and good works! We are to worship in spirit and in truth. Our praise for God is to be done from the heart (faith in action) and not to be stimulated via pretty sounds only. Some of the humblest people in the church can bring one to tears from the standpoint of their faith; their hearts are deeply into what they are singing about or preaching about! Let us all prepare our hearts for worshiping in the assembly because we get to and our hearts are saturated with the right attitude. We should think "what can I do for God and his saints today at services?"

And lastly, before we leave home for the assembly we should consider, "does the Holy Spirit dwell in me?" We first received the gift of the Holy Spirit when we touched Jesus forgiving blood with our faith in the watery grave of baptism for the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). We can grieve the Spirit and ultimately push Him out of our hearts via blasphemy. Or we can become weak in the faith and He is still in us but we keep Him pushed aside and don't let him lead and guide us via the truth of the Bible as much as we should. Brothers and Sisters, the Holy Spirit of God searches our hearts and intercedes for us. We must keep our temple clean and covered on the outside but we must also have our minds cleaned so that God the Spirit can dwell in our minds. If the Holy Spirit is not in us we have either 1) not obeyed the gospel or 2) or He is no longer working inside our temples. If the Holy Spirit is working in our lives, that means that we are walking in sanctification and are thus sanctified. Put simply, we are holy (morally blameless) when God's Spirit is in our temples.

In conclusion, let us all prepare our bodies, our attitudes, and our temples for church assemblies so that we don't cause others to stumble. Also we should go to church with the attitude "I get to" and "what can I put in the assembly". If the Holy Spirit is working in the temples of our hearts, God is in us and is thus in the assembly of His saints (sanctified ones).

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. What weapon did Samson use to slay one thousand Philistines, according to Judges 15?
2. Before David told his confidants to install Solomon as king, who was attempting to set himself up as king?
3. After the positive outcome of the situation in Esther, Mordecai and Esther decided the two days commemorating it should be celebrated every year by the Jews. What is the name of this event?
4. To what reward did Judas agree for betraying Jesus to the chief priests?
5. In Romans 4 Paul discusses the righteousness apart from circumcision of what Old Testament patriarch?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address, address changes and all correspondence to:

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and remember last month's questions?

1. Why was Shelomith's son stoned to death, according to Leviticus? BLASPHEMY (Lev. 24:11)
 2. In Proverbs, Solomon writes that whoever is led astray by what is not wise? WINE/INTOXICATING DRINK (Pro. 20:1)
 3. What was Ezekiel's first vision? FOUR CREATURES INSIDE A WHIRLWIND (Eze. 1:4-14)
 4. Unlike Matthew, Mark's writing did not mention which story from Christ's life? THE BIRTH OF CHRIST (Mark 1)
 5. What did Paul refer to Jesus as in Colossians? "THE FIRSTBORN OVER ALL CREATION" AND "THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD" (Col. 1:15)
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APOLOGIA

QUESTION: Could you help me to understand "*gathered to his people*" in Genesis 25:8? Is this referring to a burial or an afterlife?

ANSWER: In Genesis 25:8 reference is made to Abraham being "gathered to his people," the only place I find where this exact wording is found. "Gathered unto his people" is the term used with reference to Ishmael (Gen. 25:17), Isaac (Gen. 35:29), Jacob (Gen. 49:33), and Aaron (Num. 20:24). "I am to be gathered unto my people" was spoken by Jacob in Genesis 49:29 and the Lord told Moses in Deuteronomy 32:50 that he was to be "gathered unto thy people." There appears to be no significance, however, as to whether the word "to" or "unto" is used or the words "his," "my," or "thy," This is simply a different way to say the same thing.

The place of burial is sometimes noted. Genesis 23 records the purchase by Abraham of a place to bury Sarah. Genesis 25:9-10 states that Abraham was buried in this same place. Genesis 49:29-33

Gospel Meetings

DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
August 31 - September 2	Dowell Hill Columbus, IN	Danny Adams
September 6 - 9	Goochtown Eubank, KY	Tim Eldridge (Woodland, AL)
September 9 - 16	Mt. Zion Crab Orchard, KY	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY) & J. D. McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
September 21 - 23	Pleasant Ridge Woodbury, TN	Joe Hill (Hager Hill, KY)
September 28 - 30	Van Lear Van Lear, KY	Hunter Bulger (Fort Deposit, AL)

tells that Jacob instructed his descendants to bury him *"with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite...which Abraham bought...for a possession of a buryingplace. There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and Rebekah his wife; and there I buried Leah."* Genesis 50:12-13 tells us that Jacob was buried in this place.

Although it is true that the patriarchs looked forward to an afterlife, there is no reference in Genesis 25:8 to life beyond death. We must not read into a passage that which was not intended. This and the various passages earlier suggested simply refer to a person, as his ancestors before him, suffering physical death as the consequence of sin (Rom. 5:12). It is our custom today and it has been through the ages, that individuals are buried in family groupings. It is good that we have remembrance of those who have gone before, for in this we learn and can profit from their experience.

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