

In The Presence of My Enemies



by Dawn Reed
Eastern Ky. Columnist

My beloved built a fire pit in the backyard last week. It was a dream come true and we couldn't wait to use it! Friends were invited over to share our inaugural blaze. The fire was started before supper

so it would be going strong when we finished eating. After dining on Hungarian Goulash, we ventured to the roasting area. Chairs were set up all around. We each found a place and then melted into our seats. You know how a fire is: you stare into the flames and just unwind. Watching the hypnotic embers sparkling from dark to light lulls you into a warm and cozy place just nigh of a nap.

I had dished out apple pie and poured Dunkin Donuts for all. We sipped and chewed periodically. The chill in the air along with the crackle of the fire made it a perfect moment. Mmmmm.

Suddenly, out of the cool night air came a blood chilling howl. I froze and looked around the fire. The others' eyes were big, too. A heartbeat later, another howl . . . way too close! Our neighbor has a terrier. It sure wasn't him! "Coyotes!" the guys said at once. I still hadn't moved. What the thun-

der do you do when there's coyotes?! In the movies, men grab a stick of wood with the end on fire and wave it at the varmints. Shouldn't somebody be doing that? I wondered.

Psalm 23:5 flashed into my mind: "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies."

We were warming by the fire enjoying coffee and pie while wild, hungry coyotes lurked nearby. (I pictured sharp teeth.) But isn't that real life? Especially 2020?

Life is so unexpected. First Peter 5:8 reminds us that we have an enemy: "Be alert and be sober. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." He often comes out of nowhere!

In Phillip Keller's 1970 book "A Shepherd's Look at Psalm 23", he compared a shepherd with The Shepherd, a sheep's life with a Christian's life. Numerous times he reported that staying close to the shepherd is the safest place for a sheep to be. It keeps them safe from predators (coy-

otes, wolves, cougars, and bears). The same is true for us! He wrote, "At all times we would be wise to walk a little closer to Christ."

What is YOUR coyote? What has arisen that has melted all your confidence or courage and has you shaking in your shoes? Cancer, job uncertainty, job certainty (the same problems/conflicts day in and day out), loss of a loved one, marriage problems, heartache over a child, school pressure for teachers, students AND family are just a few that could be lurking around your campfire.

The good news is that if we make the LORD our Shepherd, He is strong enough, smart enough, big enough, and loves us enough to take care of us every day. No matter what dangers or enemies come! He tells us constantly in His Word that He is with us. He will watch over us. He will not leave us. Shew and ptl!

My fire-mates assured me that even if a coyote came close, it wasn't big enough to drag me off. I still scooted closer to the fire.

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

JOHN 14:23

Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them."

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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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Bible Word Search Answer on Page 12

Stickeler's Puzzle

STICKELERS [sic]
by Terry Stickels

Below is a 16-letter word that is known to all. See how quickly you can unravel it. The word starts with the letter "M."

A	I	P	S
P	R	R	P
I	I	A	T
O	G	N	M

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Stickeler's Answer on Page 12

Seeds of Hope



It is a day I will always remember. It was hot and humid and the black gowns and colorful "hoods" provoked more sweat than satisfaction. It was a day that brought three long and difficult years of study to a conclusion and I was now going to be identified as "Doctor."

As I stood in a line with my classmates who had struggled with me we could not help but wonder what changes the degree would make in our lives. A new day had dawned. Things would be different for us from that day forward. We would have new opportunities and new status. People would look at us differently. It was time to celebrate. We believed that we had earned it!

Psalm 98 begins with

a call to celebrate: "Sing to the Lord a new song, for He has done marvelous things." This call to celebrate was not for anything that the people did or had accomplished. It was a call to celebrate what God had done for them. It was a call to celebrate the "marvelous things" that God had done for them. This phrase "marvelous things" refers to God's direct, supernatural interventions in the life of "His people." It refers to God's power and authority, His protection and care, His interest in the well-being of His people on this earth. And as important as those gifts of God are, they cannot compare to the gift of His salvation and deliverance!

There are many special events and days in our lives and the life of our nation that give us reasons to celebrate. But nothing provides a greater cause for us to celebrate than the hope we have in Christ our Lord!

Sower Ministries.org
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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of 1 Peter in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Matthew 13, what baking item did Jesus compare to the kingdom of heaven? Eggs, Milk, Salt, Yeast
3. In Genesis 6:3, how many years did God set as mankind's age limit?

120,490,612,969

4. Where does one go to find balm, according to Jeremiah? Corinth, Joppa, Derbe, Gilead

5. Which of these women wore a nose ring? Esther, Mary Magdalene, Rebekah, Martha

6. Who tested the will of the Lord with a fleece? Jehu, Gideon, Amos, Ahaziah

Answers on bottom of Page 12

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in bookstores and online.

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A Word of Warning

by **BOB CASEY**, preacher
Cornerstone Church of Christ
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Our lesson today is dealing with the realities of life, and of things that are certain and will not be changed. In the Old Testament **Ezekial the prophet said in Chapters 33:7-9:** "that God has set the Holy men of Israel as watchmen over the nation. He said to speak words of warning unto them to turn from their sins. Saying if you don't warn them and hey die in their sins, I will require your blood. But if they would cry out the warning and did not turn from his sins, they would be delivered from the blame them of their sins."

I personally do not want any one's blood on my hands at the judgment. This is why I preach a warning to us all. **Prepare to meet our Lord.**

In **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8** Solomon wrote concerning all the events of mankind saying in **verse 2**, "There is a time to be born." Now we all know that we had nothing to do regarding our births, neither our colors or nationalities. Yet in due time out we came into this world kicking away, crying and taking our place upon their earth. But in the same sentence Solomon added, "A time to die." Sometimes little babies never proceed to take hold of life because they died in infancy as did our first daughter. But these are rare exceptions. Most live to experience some time in life's journeys. But during these two events we will have a time to consider what life is really all about. We will have time to hear about the love of God, about the sending of His son, and we will know about His reasons for His coming. This of course is to redeem and save sinful men. So then if we live to an age where we are accountable to God for our sins, then he offers to all a plan to save all who will obey Him. This plan **has not and will not** change until Jesus returns to judgment.

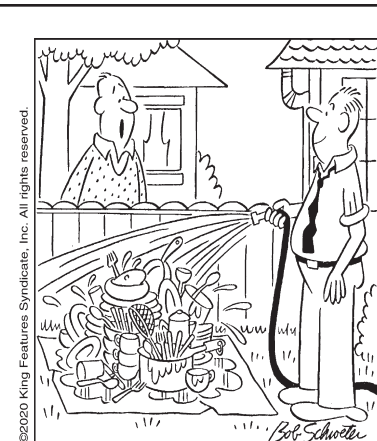
This is a fixed thing with our Lord. **Revelations 1:5-8** declares it. Then there are two other things that are fixed and prepared for men. **First**, a place in the heavenly home for all who have, and will believe and obey our Saviour. **Hebrews 5:8-9** and **Revelation 21:1-7** reveals this wonderful promise. It is worth a weekly reading.

Then there is another place fixed and prepared for disobedient mankind, "A lake of fire and brimstone." Revelation 20:10-15 also reveals this terrible end for all who live life in a reckless manner, never heeding to Christ's warnings, never showing sorrow for having lived a life of sin, scoffed at the idea of eternal judgment, mocked at the idea of Christian service. Why would our Lord let anyone like this into His Heaven? These things are for certain and will not change.

But there is hope for all mankind who will open their minds and their hearts to make a decision to change their destinies from death unto eternal life. This opportunity will remain until our Lord descends from Heaven to establish His judgment. Remember! Only you with our Lord's forgiveness can change your destiny.

Let us help you make this decision soon!
Sincerely, Bob Casey 1-859-369-4165

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SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

- Passage
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TODAY'S WORD



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