

THE SOWER
ARTHUR CHURCH OF CHRIST
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Have you visited our web site lately? (www.Arthurcoc.com)

HARVEST TIME

As we have recently seen men and equipment in the fields, bringing in the fall harvest, we are reminded of Genesis 1:11, where God decreed: *“Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after its kind, whose seed is in itself.”*

Next week, as a nation, we will be observing Thanksgiving, a national holiday in which we should pause as a people to give thanks to our Creator who has provided us with a harvest of the fruit of the earth. Indeed, *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights....”* (James 1:17). There is another type of fruit with which our heavenly Father wishes to bless us. It is a fruit that is not harvested from the soil of the world, but from heaven. God very much desires to see this fruit in the heart and soul of every member of the human family—a spiritual fruit. To Jesus’ disciples, Jesus Christ said, *“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit::so shall ye be my disciples”* John 15:8). Jesus spoke of some who, in their lives, would bear “good fruit,” while others “evil fruit” (Matthew 7:17).

In our materialistic world, we are too much like ancient Israel, of whom it was said, *“Israel is an empty vine: he bringeth forth fruit unto himself”* (Hosea 10:1). We are thus reminded of the futility of lives that are absorbed only with the fleeting possessions and pleasures of life, with little or no thought of spiritual enrichment. One who would seek to live his life without God is seen as an “empty vine.” It is in such lives that sin finds fertile soil. John the baptizer, preparing God’s people for the reception of the Christ, pleaded, *“Bring forth fruits meet for repentance”* (Matthew 3:8).

A harvest can never be a reality without the planting of the proper seed. We are informed that “the seed is the word of God” (Luke 8:11). It is that seed, planted in the God-seeker’s heart, that will bring forth fruit. Paul would remind us: *“Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God”* (Romans 10:17). Through faith, and obedience to that word, one is “born again” (John 3:3, 5)—*“not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible: by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever”* (1 Peter 1:23). That living word, planted in the obedient sincere heart, will bring in a fruitful harvest. Paul defined such fruit: *“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering,*

gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...” (Galatians 5:22-23). Such are the blessings God wills to bring to harvest in the lives of all who will commit themselves to Him through Christ. What is the fruit in your life?

--Ron

**Two things to remember in life: (1) Take care of your thoughts when you are alone; and
(2) take care of your words when you are with people.**

THE BOOK OF JOHN

The Gospel of John is a treasure for students of the New Testament. It can fill our days and sustain us for many years. Yet we must develop an appreciation for what the author is trying to accomplish.

Matthew, Mark and Luke were edifying their readers and bringing souls to Jesus. However, false doctrines about Christ were arising, and needed to be addressed. Who better to do so than the man who was probably the closest to Jesus among all those on earth?--John. (John 13:23-25).

God, through the Holy Spirit and the Apostle John, opens the remarkable fourth gospel with the most shocking introduction in history. The first five verses of John present challenges so lofty that only one man could live up to them. The eternal Word was with God while actually being God at the same time (John 1:1-5), and He came to earth to walk among men (John 1:14). In this brief introduction, John touches on many common themes in his gospel, such as the eternal and authoritative Word, light, darkness and glory.

John spends the remainder of the book proving his initial premise. John is less biographical and more apologetic to prove Jesus is the Son of God, and that He came in the flesh. Every item was selected to prove his points—chiefly the Seven Great I-Ams (John 6:35; 8:12; 8:28; 10:11; 11:25; 14:16; 15:1, 15).

John’s premise is proven when Thomas doubts the resurrection of Christ. He demands to see the wounds of Jesus, and is granted the privilege (John 20:24-27). Then Thomas exclaims, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28, NKJV). Jesus follows Thomas’ affirmation with, “Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed” (John 20:29). He then closes the section with the statement that these words should be sufficient for everyone to prove the deity of Christ (John 20:30-31).

The Gospel of John is extraordinary, and provides the perfect source to introduce someone to Christ. Become an avid student of the book, and bask in its blessings.

--Richard Mansel, Florence, Ala.; slightly edited

THE GREATER LOVE

“Greater love has no man than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.” (John 15:13).

In his book, *Written In Blood*, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

“Would you give your blood to your sister Mary?” the doctor asked. Little Johnny hesitated, his lower lip started to tremble, and then he smiled and said, “Sure, for my sister.” Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room—Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke, but when they met, Johnny grinned. As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny’s smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube.

With the ordeal almost over, his voice slightly shaky, broke the silence: “Doctor, when do I die?” Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he’d agreed to donate his blood. He’d thought giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. Though, in reality, it was not necessary, he was willing to give his life for his sister. In that brief moment, his love for his sister caused him to make his great decision. --

Logansport (Ind.) Lifelines

“**WHAT SATAN HATES**” series continues today, with Rev. 12:3-5 as the reading.

PRAY FOR: Doris has left DMH and has gone to the Shelbyville Rehabilitation & Health Center, 2116 W. S. 3rd St, Shelbyville, IL 62565; ph.—217-774-5440. She was found to have a serious infection (Sepsis) , and will also be taking therapy with the hope of soon returning home. *** Ron McConkey is to have eye surgery Nov. 24 and Dec. 7. *** Ruby Bradd (Clinton, cancer recovery) and Wayne Polk (Shelbyville minister, Health problems).