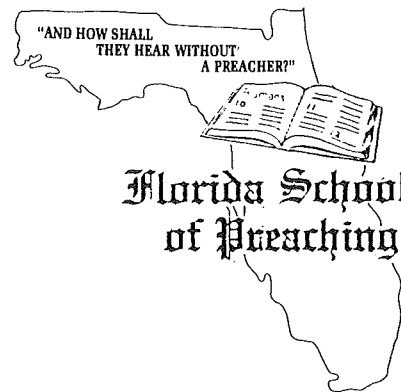


# THE HARVESTERS



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## Prepared

By  
Jackie M. Stearsman

To be prepared implies that one is ready for a given action; that there is sufficient strength for the proposed endeavor. Battles have been lost due to the lack of preparation. In seeking job opportunity we are made aware of the high cost of being unprepared. Some are forever preparing and seemingly satisfied with never reaching the state of being strong enough or ready for spiritual activity. They never feel prepared to teach, to serve, to assist in the necessary routines of the church. This was true of some in the early church (Heb. 5:11-14; II Tim. 3:7) and it is true today. Some are forever priming, never equipped to deal with the reality of life.

We are given examples of those who prepared for service and are able to know something of the process of being prepared. Consider what is said of Ezra: *For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments* (Ezra 7:10). He was prepared emotionally,

volitionally, and intellectually. Paul was prepared. *So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the*



*gospel to you that are at Rome also* (Rom. 1:15). Paul was prepared emotionally. His zeal for what he believed is well known (Phil. 3:6). His volition is expressed in the passage from Romans and his life. He was misinformed while in Judaism and when the facts were presented to him he pursued the truth with the same ardent course.

We need to be prepared and

to motivate us in preparing consider the following areas which call for preparation on our part.

### Prepared To Answer

The words of Peter seem most appropriate. *But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear* (I Pet. 3:15). There are some in the Lord's church who have never prepared themselves to explain to another Biblical faith. Were a neighbor, friend, companion, your own children, an employee, an employer, an enemy, to ask for direction in righteousness could you provide it?

### Prepared To Distribute

Charity is no optional matter before God. Covetousness is classified as idolatry (Col. 3:5).

We are admonished to abound in the grace of giving (II Cor. 8:7). Those who have material goods are advised by Paul to be prepared to use them to the glory of God. *That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to dis-tribute, willing to communicate* (I Tim. 6:18). If we continued unprepared in this grace we are lost (Matt. 19:16-25; Luke 12:13-21).

### Prepared For Every Good Work

We are chosen people and we have been chosen to do good. When good is to be done we must be willing to support it to the extent of our ability and opportunity. If the brethren could be converted to this principle the impact of the church on the world would be known worldwide instantaneously. Paul charged, *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work* (Titus 3:1).

### Prepared To Receive Instruction

Learning is greatly enhanced when approached with the proper attitude. There are many prejudicial barriers which curb education. There is much to be learned from Cornelius and among those lessons is the attitude which he and his close associates brought with them to hear Peter. He states the following: *Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God* (Acts 10:33). An open mind and closed Bible will result in failure. An open Bible and a closed mind will result in failure.

### Prepared To Correct

Many in the church today are under the illusion that we are not to correct those in error. Great emphasis is placed on love and acceptance and unity. The same consideration should be given to correcting wrong, if it were true love and unity would be automatic. Paul was prepared to correct Peter (Gal. 2:11) as well as others. To the Corinthians he wrote: *Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled* (II Cor. 10:10:5-6). *This is the third time I am coming to you. In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare: Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you* (II Cor. 13:1-3). Are you prepared to correct others? Are you willing to be corrected?

### Prepared For Losses

It is certainly emotionally draining to face a loss in any conflict. The loss will be felt more deeply by those who love the cause. To the indifferent or the enemy losses will be viewed differently. If the Lord could not hold all that he taught (Judas) certainly we should not expect to

pursue the battle for truth without casualties.

The Bible provides us insight to some of the losses. Paul writes, *I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. . . . For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world . . .* (II Tim. 4:1-4, 10). From these words we may expect (1) losses from those who accept doctrinal error, and (2) we may expect losses from those who love the present world. Losses are to be expected.

### Prepared To Die

Death is an appointment we must keep (Heb. 9:27). Many will die and not be prepared. If we are to be prepared for death we must be willing to make any sacrifice placed before us (Rev. 2:10). Paul was prepared to pay the ultimate price for his service to the Lord.

**The Harvesters**

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

This prepared him for death. *Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 21:13).*

### **Prepared For Christ to Return**

No man knows when Christ will return (Matt. 24:36). All men should know that he will return. Essential for us in this matter is to be prepared. The Master taught: *Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh (Matt. 24:44).*

As I write these lines the news is filled with predictions as to what our allied forces will do and when they will do it. Those in charge are not revealing the exact hour of their actions. The only safe course is to remain in a state of preparedness. Faithful men have learned this truth and live by it. Are you prepared for the Lord to return?

### **Prepared To Meet God**

The Bible abounds in warnings which are designed to prepare us for the day when we must face our Maker. According to the teaching of the Bible most will not be prepared. Will we be among them? *Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you*

*that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:31-33)*

God will do all within His power to prepare us for the meeting. All that remains to be done is for our own preparation. He is dealing with us as he did with Israel of old. *I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD. Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel (Amos 4:11-12).*

### **Preparing**

The *Florida School of Preaching* is dedicated to preparing souls to give an answer; to be prepared to distribute; to be prepared for every good work; to receive instruction; to correct in love; to face losses; to die for truth; to be prepared for Christ return; and to meet God.

Being prepared is no optional matter. The words of a familiar hymn impress this upon us. *Careless soul, why will you linger, Wand'ring from the fold of God? Hear you not the invitation? O prepare to meet thy God. Why so tho'tless are you standing While the fleeting years go by, And your life is spend in folly? O prepare to meet thy God. Hear you not the earnest pleadings Of your friends that wish you well? And perhaps before tomorrow You'll be called to meet your God. If you spurn the invitation Till the Spirit shall depart, Then you'll see your sad condition, Unprepared to meet thy God.*

## **Lectureship Reflections**

The 1991 *Florida School of Preaching* Lectureship is history. Measured by any reasonable and spiritual standard it would have to be considered a success. Attendance was good and from a wide range of places. This alone will indicate the growing influence of this part of our service.

Our records indicate there were people from the following locations: Alabama, Arkansas, China, Florida, Georgia, Guyana, South America, Illinois, Indiana, Jamaica, West Indies, Kentucky, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, West Virginia.

The 1992 Lectureship will be January 20-23. The theme: **"DOES THE CHURCH NEED CHANGING FOR THE COMING CENTURY?"** This will be developed in the following divisions: (1) Some things that do not change; (2) Evidence of changes that are disturbing; and (3) Some things that we need to change.

Are you making plans to be a part of this rewarding series of lectures?



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## **Summer Specials**

**Two Classes**

**Angeology  
and  
Eschatology**

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# MONTHLY FOCUS

In February I visited the following congregations.

## Clearwater

It was a genuine pleasure to be among these brethren February 3, 1991, for the morning services. Having worked with them for a number of years and to see their continued progress in the truth was inspirational. These brethren support the school and increased their support \$500. per month this year. Brother Davidson, their preacher, was away and the elders conducted the services a part of which involved the presentation of the budget.

## Apopka

February 10, 1991 we visited with the brethren in Apopka, Florida. Sam Ayers taught the Bible class and Don Gardner preached. Brother Gardner was there to consider working with them as their preacher. These brethren have supported the school.

## Arcadia

February 17, 1991, I taught the Bible class and preached for the brethren meeting at 634 West Hickory (Hwy 70 West). Brother Dale Spung is the preacher here.

Brother Spung is on the board of directors of the School.

## Lakeland

The Sixth Street congregation in Lakeland is one of our most loyal supporters. In addition to assisting students with housing and with special contributions these fine brethren increased their monthly support by \$100. Brother Maurice Davis is the preacher here. Brother Davis teaches classes for the school and is on the board of directors. It was a genuine pleasure to be with these brethren on February 24, 1991, for the morning services.

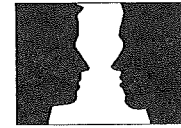
## Auburndale

Sunday evening February 24, 1991, I visited the brethren meeting at 610 Orange. Gene Hill, a graduate of the school is their preacher. These brethren have been faithful supporters of the school and have assisted a number of students by providing housing for them while they were in school.

## Deaver-Till Debate

A public oral debate is scheduled between Mac Deaver and Farrell Till. The debate is planned for March 25-28, 1991,

on the campus of Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, TX.



### Proposition:

*The alleged moral atrocities ascribed to the God of the Bible are not actual moral atrocities and, therefore, constitute no proof that the Bible is not inspired of God.*

Affirming: Mac Deaver

Denying: Ferrell Till

Till is a former preacher for the churches of Christ, and is now Editor of *The Skeptical Review*. He teaches English in Spoon River College in Canton, Illinois. Deaver, of Austin, TX, is a preacher for churches of Christ and is Associate Editor of *Biblical Notes*.

## Thank You!

*For the cards, calls, and all interest shown me in my recent stay in the hospital. I should be back to normal shortly.*

**B.C. Carr**

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