

# The Bible Guys

of Yesterday and Today

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The Race that  
matters most

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**The People of Truth**  
*A Holy Nation*

## The Race that matters most

*By David M. McNabb*

The year 2008 has could possibly be dubbed “the year of races.” With the Olympics and the quest to elect the next president, we have seen several ways to pursue the prize. Then there has been the focus on (and efforts to shift the focus from) another type of race, as America marched towards the election of her first African-American Commander-in-Chief.

Racing (and organized sports in general) is a veritable breeding ground for the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21): variance, emulations, wrath, strife, and seditions, to name a few that are present in nearly every contest. The concept of competition is first seen in the Bible in the story of Cain and Able, but was originally born out of Lucifer’s pride. He desired to be the top banana, and challenged God for control of heaven.

So, we watched as all the nations came together in peace and harmony in Beijing, so that they could prove their superiority to each other. The dichotomy of purpose that is inherent in the Olympic Games is striking, is it not? Despite the media’s attempts to put forth a personal story, and to make it about individuals, still you have nations cheating, or making accusations of cheating, because it is not about peace, hope, love, and harmony – it is about winning.

Certainly, there are individuals, and even nationalities, that excel in certain things. American swimmer Michael Phelps became a household name as he won a record-setting 8 gold medals, winning every event in which he participated and shattering world records along the way. Jamaicans, Ethiopians, and Kenyans proved their track and field abilities in the 2008 Olympics, just as they have in marathons around the world. American and Chinese domination in gymnastics was both expected and achieved.

While there are the “favorites,” we still know that there is always the possibility of the upset. Solomon knew this truth, too. He said, “I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all. For man also knoweth not his time: as the fishes that are taken in an evil net, and as the birds that are caught in the snare; so *are* the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falleth suddenly upon them” (Eccl 9:11-12). That is the reason that sports draw spectators. Not only to see the superiority of one over the other, but also because of the chance that the favorite is beaten by the underdog.

The statistically best team does not always win. The world record holder does not always come in first. The best driver still occasionally crashes into the wall. The genius does not always get the patent. All are subject to God’s law of “time and chance.” Neither Jacob, nor Esau, had done anything good or bad when God chose Jacob in the womb.

In the case of Cain and Able, another truth is seen. Able won God’s favor because his heart was right. Cain lost because his heart was evil. However, God showed that the “race” to live a life pleasing to Him is not a “zero sum game.” He told Cain that he, too, would be accepted if he mended his ways.

In one aspect, there need not be losers. All could live a life of service to God, and please Him, if they so choose. Still, that does not preclude the biblical concept of “election.” Election, in God’s economy, is not necessarily based on merit, but on His sovereignty – His right and will to choose.

*(See The Race, page 6)*

# Parables of a Field

By C. Elden McNabb

One day Jesus went out of the house where He was staying, and sat down by the sea side. Multitudes of people began to gather unto him. So Jesus went into a ship and sat down; and the whole multitude stood on the shore, and He began to speak to them with parables, beginning in Matthew 13:3 and finishing in verse fifty two.

Those seven parables are carefully positioned by the writer so we can readily grasp the fact that all of them are about events which God intended to develop in Christianity between the ministry of Jesus Christ and His second coming. The first, second, fifth, and seventh parables are about the Kingdom of God in "the field;" a term Jesus used figuratively for "the world." The seventh one is similar to the other three, but Jesus treats the subject in the precept of fish, good and bad. It is comparable to the "tares and the wheat."

The third, fourth, and sixth parables in this sequence are more specifically about the Church in the midst of the Kingdom of God.

**In the first parable** Jesus spoke of a man who went forth sowing seed. The seed which fell on good soil produced fruit, "some a hundred fold, some sixty fold, and some thirty fold." Then He challenged us to listen carefully to His words, and to really *hear* them and know what they meant (Matt. 13:1-9).

Later the disciples approached Him with the question, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" Then Jesus, at some length, revealed the amazing truth of the matter. He was using a manner of speaking *which would hide the truth of "the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven"* from "the wise and prudent," but reveal it to babes: the wise hearted among the righteous (Matt. 13:10-17). Unto this day, most ministers, with their flocks, have not been able to perceive "the church in the kingdom." They erroneously advocate, rather, that the Kingdom of God is the Church. A careful study of these seven parables will help us to understand this great truth. However, not all of us are, as sleuths, trying to unravel the mysteries. Nor should we be. That responsibility is given solely to the ministers who have

been given the gifts of Apostle and Prophet (Eph. 3:1-5). In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul explained how that works. He said that God divided the gifts individually to every man personally, to every man to profit withal.

As Jesus continued, He proceeded to explain the meaning of the first parable which He had told them. The mystery of the parable became relatively easy to understand, because Jesus explained it. As it is written, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (Deut. 29:29). However, there is a point or two in that parable which could still use some explaining.

In that first parable, Jesus is speaking of the effect of the preaching of the gospel. He is showing us that there would be at least three different kinds of Christians, as concerns fruitfulness, which the word of God would produce among all those who would believe the gospel until Jesus comes back (Matt. 13:18-23).

**The second parable** He put forth unto them was about the development of Christianity from its beginning unto its end. He said, "*The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto* a man, which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and *in the time of harvest* I will say to the reapers, *Gather ye together first the tares*, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matt 13:24-30).

Jesus told this "parable of the tares," then told a couple other parables (Matt. 13:31-33), followed by a much-needed explanation of what His parables are. The writer said, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: that it might be ful-

filled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, *I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world* (Matt. 13:34-35).

(Apparently we might do well to lighten up about telling people that the parables are written with such simplicity that even the little children in Sunday School can understand them.)

When Jesus had finished explaining the truth about His parables, He sent the multitude away, then, His disciples came and asked Him to explain to them "*the parable of the tares of the field.*"

**"He answered and said unto them,** *He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear"* (Matt. 13:37-43).

What simplicity of wisdom in Jesus' explanation of this parable, yet so rarely understood. As in the first parable, Jesus did not clearly reveal the meaning of every aspect of the parable.

Herein Jesus described for us the saga of Christianity in "seven aspects" from the beginning of the grace age to the end of it. The *sower*: Jesus Christ came and gave us the truth of the gospel to sow in *the world*; providing us with the wonder of the born-again experience. Many believed: *the good seed*, and the glory of God was manifested in the Church which He built, with Peter's help, and of the rest no man dared join himself to the Church of the twelve Apostles: but the people magnified them. And multitudes were added to the Lord, both of men and women (John 21:15-17, 20-22; Acts 5:13-14).

By early in the second century A.D., as the fire of that glorious manifestation became dimmer and dimmer, *Satan* was already sowing *his tares*. The church in Rome sank into the idolatry

which we know as Catholicism, and that darkness caused the gospel message to stagnate in Europe. For more than a thousand years, the gospel did not go to the western hemisphere. However, near the very end of the fifth millennium from Adam, the Eastern Orthodox version did finally reach Moscow, Russia, and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, missions of the Roman church were established in eastern China.

In the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when the time began to come near when Jesus would send forth *His reapers to the harvest*, the gospel began to be brought to a place in the western hemisphere, [now known as the United States of America], where He could “Raise up again *the Tabernacle of David which is broken down*; and build again the ruins thereof, and set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord who doeth all these things” (Acts 15:15-18).

Jesus did not tell us in this parable *when* the harvest was to occur, nor does He say how much time He has allotted for it, but all of that is prophesied of in other scriptures.

“**The Tabernacle of David,**” which James mentioned in Acts 15, was the Jewish Church in the first century A.D. Jude stated clearly that, in the time of his leadership of the Church, certain men had slipped into the Church unnoticed, who corrupted the purity of the message of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. In the process, “The Tabernacle of David:” The Church of God was “broken down.” A diluted Christianity continued into the “Dark Ages,” and out again, with new vigor, in the Protestant “Reformation.” But the Church would have to be “Raised up again, at the last day,” that is, during the time of harvest, which is a fifty-year-long event prophesied of by the fifty-year Jubilee cycle (Matt. 13:38; John 6:39; see verses 5-14-39; Lev. 25:1-10).

In John 6, during the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus commanded the twelve Apostles to “Gather up the fragments that remain, *that nothing be lost.*” They did, “and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves.” According to both Matthew and Mark, Jesus performed another miracle in which He took seven loaves, and fed four thousand people, after which they took up

seven baskets full of fragments. These are prophetic miracles. By these miracles, Jesus told us that He would raise up His Church again, “At the last day,” in the “time of harvest,” among the Gentiles, and therefore “should lose nothing.” He is specifically telling us that it will have the offices of the Twelve Apostles, and Seven Men of Wisdom, just as the Jewish Church had in its time.

**Jesus continued His series of parables** about the Church and the Kingdom of God, saying, “**Again,** the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

And Jesus said, “**Again,** the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

These two parables reveal the distinction between the Elect of God and the rest of the redeemed. Jesus bought the whole world, and issued an offer unto all who would believe. As it is written, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

But what Jesus was especially working and sacrificing for was the Bride the Lamb’s wife (Exodus 19:3-5; Rev. 21:2-10). Therefore, in the process, He also “purchased the Church of God with His own blood” (Acts 20:28).

“**Again,** the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which,

when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

“So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”

“Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old” (Matt. 13:44-52).

**The time is short,** and in a very short time God will fulfill the words of Paul in Romans 2:6-11. He said, that God would “Render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life ... glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile: for *there is no respect of person with God.*” He also said the same thing to the disobedient, saying, “But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, [He will give His] indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

Everything that happened to the Jews in judgment and in glory will also happen to Gentile Christianity very soon. The nations of the world are, at

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this moment, finalizing the formation of the one world government. It is no more clearly shown that in the fact that, since October 1, 08, the U.S. Homeland Security has been mobilized with military troops together with another of the G-Ten of the U.N.: Canadian military.

I believe we can now expect, with confidence, that stopping the religious activities of the Christian community will be one of the first things on their agenda. The enemy will not be able to win against "The Lamb," and they that are with Him [who] are called, and chosen and faithful (Rev. 17:12-14), but they will stand long enough to punish wayward Christianity; coming in "like a flood" to destroy that religion which they do so despise (Isaiah 59:19).

Would God allow that to happen? God has not changed. After 2,000 years, He destroyed Israel in A.D. 70, except for those few who believed. God has now given the Gentiles nearly 2,000 years, and He is almost ready to destroy all of Christianity who do not believe the truth, and do not go into the wedding before the door is shut.

Natural Israel did not get by with their idolatry, and their adultery, or the other various evils which they practiced against the true God. Neither will we Gentiles, who became a part of spiritual Israel, escape the day of the Lord's wrath which even now is hastening upon us.

The days are evil, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Romans 13:11). 

## Den of Thieves

By Joel McNabb

"And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these

should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out. And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, Saying, If thou hadest known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; Saying unto them, it is written, my house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves. And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests and the scribes and the chief of the people sought to destroy him, and could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him" (Luke 19:36-46).

This was a great moment in the ministry of Jesus: the prophecy of His entry into Jerusalem was being fulfilled. Still, He knew what lay ahead for Him. As He told John the Baptist, when He went to be baptized, "Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). Everything that Jesus did on this earth was foretold by the prophets of old, even to the smallest thing that may not even have been recorded in the Gospels. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30,31). Jesus fulfilled all that was written of Him in the law, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning Him.

The time of His suffering was upon Him, and He had to complete the work that His heavenly Father had sent Him to do. He came to the city that God had chosen as the place for His house: the place where He would dwell with men. What Jesus saw there caused His spirit to move within Him, and tears to run down his face, for what it had become. The house of God that was supposed to be His home was now filled with corruption by the men who had

been given the honor of the service of this Holy Place.

The religious rulers who had this honor in the time Jesus' ministry were corrupt in many ways. Even though they were under the Roman Empire, they were still filled with pride. They had control of the Law of Moses, and sat in Moses' seat. Jesus said of them in Matt. 23:27,28, "Ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." They had made themselves lords over God's heritage (a condition against which Paul later admonished the leaders of the Church), and now the place where God was to dwell was no longer inhabitable for Him.

His house was to be a place of worship, a place where He could be at home; loved by the people He had chosen. Here, Jesus, with the zeal of the Lord, saw that God's house had turned into a place where money and merchandise became the thrust, more so than worship: the true purpose of His house. He declared it a "den of thieves." Sounds a little harsh, does it not? After all is it not easier to be able to purchase the sacrifices you need, at the place where you are going to use them? NO, they were supposed to bring their sacrifice into the house of the Lord, not at the convenience for the worshiper, or to pad the pockets of the priest.

John tells us that this occurred at the time of Passover, when all the Jews were to come to Jerusalem to offer the sacrifices for Passover. It was one of the Feasts of the Lord, a feast to remember the great power of God, who brought them out of Egypt. "When Jesus found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:14-17). It cut Jesus to the heart to find

this holy place being used in such a manner.

Jacob had a night vision and saw a ladder set up on the earth. The top of it reached to heaven and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." And he was afraid, and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (Gen. 28).

The house of God is not a place to be taken lightly. It is a place where God is to be feared, not in terror, but in awe. When God dwelt on Mount Sinai, He told Moses to take his shoes off, for the place where he stood was holy ground. In Acts 7, Steven said, Moses trembled and did not want to look when he heard the voice of the Lord. In Acts 5, Ananias and his wife Sapphira found themselves in this awesome place; they lied to the Holy Ghost and fell dead at the feet of the apostles. "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things. And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people" (vss.11-12). They were in the dreadful place that Jacob had seen in his dream, THE HOUSE OF GOD. Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?

In 2 Peter 2: 1-3, Peter tells how it will be in our day, "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not."

Many have come in the name of the Lord and used God's people as did the priests of Jesus' day. Churches have become dens of thieves, where the "almighty dollar" is the main focus, and not places of true worship. "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:2). The ministry is now a career for some, and the church just another place of

occupation. (I have even been to a church where the sanctuary also doubled as a basketball court. All you had to do was move the chairs out of the way!)

Peter continues, in 2 Peter 2, to tell us of the judgment of those who have brought in these heresies. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption; and shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever."

We need to take a good look at what is going on in our churches today. The Bible tells us that judgment must first begin at the house of God. The question we must ask ourselves: "Why do we go to church?" Are we there to worship the Lord, and learn about the purpose of man on this earth, and of His will for our lives? Jesus taught us after this manner to pray: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." His will is that He will have a place where He can dwell on earth: an awesome place where His name is glorified by people who have the same zeal as His Son Jesus.

We must all, with a humble heart, look within ourselves and cleanse any spots that we may have, so that we may stand before the Lord when He once again dwells among men. May the Lord grant us the grace to be true worshippers in His house.

The Lord bless and keep you in my prayer. 

## The Race...

*(Continued from page 2)*

The presidential election of 2008 had its own nuances. Two very different leadership approaches were on display, and the American people were given a chance to analyze both and make a decision on Election Day. Clearly opposing ideas about taxes, military action, energy solutions, and the economy were all presented, and pundits tried to predict the outcome. As with any race, there was a favorite and there was an underdog, and there were fans for both teams. Many expected the ultimate outcome, but, still, there was the chance that the underdog would emerge surprisingly victorious. It was, as they say, a "nail-biter." There were moments of gracious dialogue, and other moments of vicious attacks. The stakes – and the emotions – were high. In the end, there could be only one winner. As they announced Mr. Obama as the victor, every color of the emotional spectrum was seen: from adulation to disbelief, from tears of joy to tears of defeat. Such is the nature of competition.

And, speaking of color, this presidential election presented another aspect of "race." For the first time in American history, an African-American had a legitimate shot at the White House. Oh, others have tried, but none had even succeeded to be the party's candidate. Not only Americans, but people around the world watched to see if the Melting Pot would, or could, elect someone who was not white.

I have no doubt that since the first differences emerged among men, the races have tried to prove their superiority over one another, even as it is human nature to prove our superiority on an individual level. That tendency has reared its ugly head throughout history, sometimes reaching a horrendous apex as many nations over the years have believed themselves to be the master race. Once again, it is painfully obvious that races of any kind are hotbeds for the works of the flesh. In the end, we war against one another to our own detriment, and, in the race of the "races," there are no winners.

The apostle Paul used races as an object lesson. He said "Know ye not

that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

Paul shows that those who strive to win in this world, recognize the cost involved. Whatever the goal, those who really want to win are willing to make the requisite sacrifices. In spite of the Scriptural truth that there is nothing better for a man, but to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of his labors, athletes maintain strict diets and exercise regimens. For example, a wrestler may have to forego a meal and eat only ice to "make weight" for a coming match.

The same is true in the entertainment, business and political environments. Those with an earnest desire to win, to excel, are willing to pay the price. They will sacrifice time with their family and friends. They will put in the effort to learn the needed skills. They will practice and practice, until they have mastered it. In politics, they strive to watch every word, lest they should be quoted time and again in the public arena. They walk the fine line between digging up enough mud on the opponent to make him look bad, while not too much to make himself look mean and vindictive. They will spend countless amounts of money. Regardless of the prize, our brothers in the world know that there is a price to pay – and the winners are willing to pay it.

Paul said that they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but that we do it for an incorruptible one. Whether you are receiving a crown of olive branches, or gold medals, the reward is "corruptible." You may set the world record today, only to have it shattered by another tomorrow. Or you may have excelled in every qualifying race, only to be beaten in the one for the gold. Your leaves may eventually wither, and your gold be lost, stolen or forgotten. Yet, knowing all of that, people still do what it takes to win.

Yet, when it comes to a crown of righteousness, do we truly and soberly

strive? Certainly, salvation is a gift, received not through works, but through God's abundant grace. However, Paul speaks of a crown which can be attained *if* we fight the good fight, finish the course, and keep the faith (2 Tim. 4:7-9). Paul told Timothy that Christ would give a crown to "all them also that love his appearing." This is not merely describing those who claim to be Christians, and speak favorably of Christ's return someday. This is speaking of saints who desire His coming, and are obedient to the Savior, and are willing to do whatever it takes to hasten His appearing.

Peter agreed in 2 Peter 1:2-11. First he spoke of the grace of God, and the free gift which we have received of Him. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that [pertain] unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

Then he gives us instructions of what we must do to "strive for masteries" for our incorruptible crown. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make [you that ye shall] neither [be] barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to *make your calling and election sure*: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

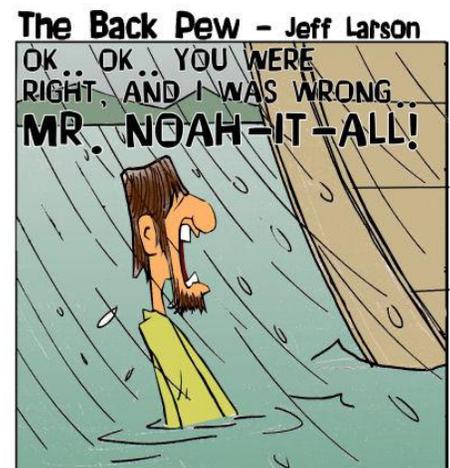
There is nothing you can *do* to enter the kingdom of God, as we all know

and confess. But if we do these things, which Peter has written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, our entry in the kingdom will be one of abundance. The white robe is a gift. The crown is a prize.

When the king of Persia sought a queen, all of the fair maidens were brought to the palace. Esther, at the behest of Mordecai, went as well. She knew that, to be the king's wife, she would have to do all of the things that pleased the king. She had to leave her adoptive father and mother, put off her customs, and strive to align her ways with the ways of her perspective husband. When she went in unto King Ahasuerus, she took only what the chamberlain recommended. In her quest for the crown, she did whatever it took. Her efforts paid off, and she was chosen.

When the prophecy declares, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready" (Rev. 19:7), we know that it cannot fail. Will we be content to be called, or do we desire to also be chosen? Salvation comes by grace. Election requires dedication, consecration, obedience, and faith.

The wife *will* make herself ready unto the coming of our Lord, of that there can be no doubt. We must fall in love with the appearing of our Lord, and determine within ourselves to lay aside every weight, and the evil heart of unbelief, and run with patience the race that is set before us, if we are to win this race that matters most. Amen. 



It was not until the water was waist deep that Willie Nordblat admitted he was in trouble.

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*My son, fear thou the **Lord**  
and the king:  
and meddle not with them  
that are given to **Change:**  
For their **Calamity** shall rise **Suddenly**  
Proverbs 24:21-22*