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McInteer Sermon Outlines - Ezra

Jim Bill McInteer

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Ezra's 6 Principles of Success

Ezra 7

- I. We do not enter enterprises to fail-Ezra shows us how to succeed.
- II. Ezra's 6 principles
 - A. It must ascend itself to the will of God.
 - 1. He wants to refurbish the temple.
 - 2. The hand of God was on him (9).
 - B. It must be undertaken at the right time.
 - 1. "After these things" 56 or 57 years (v-1)
 - 2. Started on first day of new year.
 - 3. Four month journey from Babylon to Jerusalem
 - C. Must have the approval of those in charge.
 - 1. Artaxerxes letter (v-11)
 - 2. Cyrus, Darius, Xertes and new Arta.
 - 3. Approval of 7 counsellors monarchs (v-14).

Rice
Boiled
Fried
Thru

Bro or Sister - No Cousin

D. Need an able man to lead with authority

1. Ezra came (v-6).

A. Ezra came (v-6)

1. Teacher - wisdom (v-25)
2. Well versed in law
3. Law of Moses of God - this inspired (v-6)
4. Devoted to study, observance, to teach its decrees and laws.
5. Ready scribe.
6. Associates - priests, Levites, singers, gate keepers, temple servants.
7. Magistrates and judges.
8. Power - v. 25-26

2nd Enthusiasm

Handcut picture

E. State an avowed object - inquire about Judah and worship in the temple.

1. Supplies to furnish temple 2 years.
2. Had with them the necessities.

F. The spirit to praise God & give Him the credit. V 29-28

1. No selfish pride

2. Thank to God

Not Very Helpful

A pastor was called on very short notice to conduct a funeral in the next town. He arrived at the church just as the bell was tolling to begin the service. In fact, he hadn't learned any details at all, not even the sex of the deceased — which he would need to know for his remarks from the pulpit.

As he walked up to the front not too confidently, he paused at the mourner's pew and whispered to a seated man, "Brother or sister?"

Came the hushed reply, "No, cousin."

Edwardsville, Ill. George

Word Scramble

I saw a saw down in Arkansas.

It could out saw any saw I ever saw.

If you've got a saw that can out saw the saw I saw down in Arkansas, let me see your saw saw.

Iowa Sandra

Last Word

A motorist was unknowingly caught in an automated speed trap that measured his speed using radar and photographed his car. He later received a ticket for \$40 and the photo of his car in the mail.

Instead of payment, he sent the police department a photo of \$40. Several days later, he re-

ceived a letter from the police that contained a picture of handcuffs. The motorist promptly sent the money for the fine.

Maine

R.C.

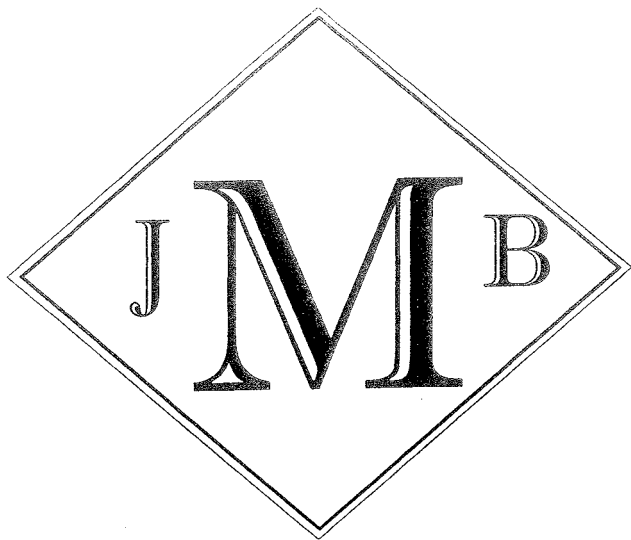
One woman went to the market and asked for two pounds of sausage. The clerk yelled at the butcher, "Two pounds of enthusiasm!"

"Why do you call it 'enthusiasm'?" she asked.

"Because he puts everything he's got into it," the clerk said.

Whether it is your vocational life, your relational life, or your spiritual life—what would happen if you put everything you've got into it?

Steve Goodier, publisher of Your Life Support System. For samples, visit <http://www.lifesupportsystem.com>. For free e-mail Your Life Support System, send a blank e-mail to lifesupport-subscribe@topica.com



EZRA, THE HOMECOMING EXAMPLE

Ezra 7:1-10

- I. Whenever it occurs, there is a thrill about homecoming.
 - A. Not only in whom I shall see--
 - B. the stories connected with reunion.
 - C. the reception extended.
 - D. But what do I bring to the event!
 - II. A Perfect Example of Going Home is seen in Ezra.
 - A. From Ezra 7:1-10 I want you to relive the event.
 - B. See what type of man he was.
 - C. Turn the exam on myself to see my comparison.
 - III. In these matters, Ezra is an Inspirational Pattern. He has features that are admirable--please meet him.
 - A. He wears a famous name.
 1. Perhaps it means "the Lord has helped."
 2. Great lineage--to Aaron--16 names.
 3. Equipped himself.
 4. Had a great ambition--goal, multiple parts.
 - B. He had favorable relations with civil authorities.
 1. Cyrus, Zerubbabel all before him--now Artaxerxes gives him permission and money.
- Heb. 13:16 "But to do good & to communicate"
2. Saw Ezra as a worthy man.

C. Proper Student of Timing

1. Started 1st day of 1st month.
2. Leaving Babylon--spent 4 months in journey and terminated it 1st day of 5th month.
3. Auspicious timing for 1st day of new year.
4. 4 months to move 9000 perhap volunteers:
None forced to go--we are free-willed people--1773 males plus women and children.
5. Went up from Babylon to Jerusalem--moving in right direction--not the reverse spiritually speaking, thus sacrificing for a spiritual goal.
6. Had the ability to lead people.
7. Best connection--repeatedly said "the good hand of his God was upon him."

D. Who Was This Ezra Anyhow?

1. Ready
 - a) Skilled
 - b) "Quick"
 - c) Speaks of wisdom & experience
 - d) More than speedy writer, excellent penman but skillful in expounding law.
2. Scribe
 - a) Student of Scriptures.
 - b) Practioner of Scriptures.
 - c) Interpreter
 - d) Accurate copyist.

E. His 3-fold thrust

Ambition

v-10 "For Ezra had prepared his heart"

1. Prepared his heart.
 - a) He fixed
 - b) He determined.
 - c) He purposed--great ambition.
 - d) How will he reform people unless he first is right?
2. Seek the law of the Lord
 - a) Made it his business to search the Scriptures.
 - b) Sought mind of God.
 - c) Does not come without seeking.
 - d) Moses' words given by the Lord (v-6)--Inspired message--above human origin.
3. And to do it
 - a) Obey
 - b) Put in practice
4. Teach statutes & judgements.
 - a) First gave himself to the study of the Word.
 - b) Then to practice what he'd learned.
 - c) Then teach all the moral judgements to others. Thus made the Word the basis for his actions.

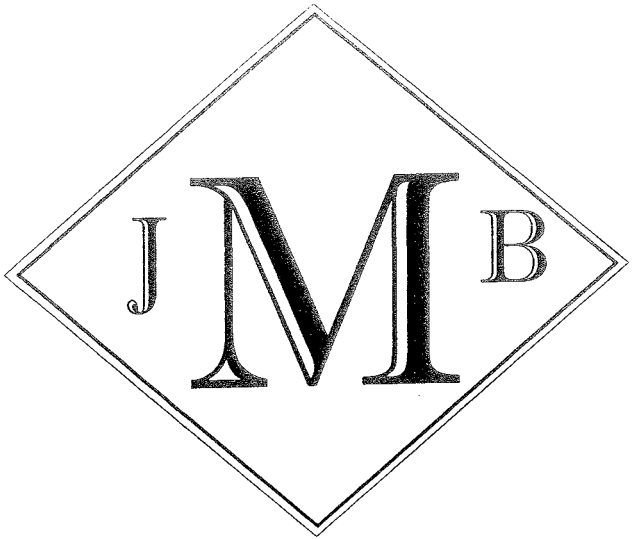
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HELLO EZRAS

Ezra 7:1-10

- I. I've a universal name for all Teachers - it's Ezra.
 - A. His name means "Help" - that's the universal cry of most teachers.
(Origin of name)
 - B. He was a Teacher deluxe - we believe you are.
 1. "So you're a School Teacher" Judge
 2. Won't vote if St. Pete - not in my district.
 - C. He had features that sound so like you - lovingly I call you Ezra.
 1. Qualities of a good speech.
 - II. Let's see the Features
 - A. I know his heritage - son (or grandson) of Seraiah.
 1. Interested in where you came from.
 - a) Earlier congregation & Family.
 - (1) Relationship - very nice.
 - b) Schooling -
 - (1) Mayflower clip.
 - (2) Corporal Sanders.
 - c) Trials
 - (1) All the way back to Aaron.
- I Chron. 6:2-15; 50-53
(2) Son of Seraiah - put to death when Jerusalem was sacked.
- 2 Kings 25:18
:21
(3) Ezra knew Babylonian captivity. (Clip on Smiths)

d) Illustrations

(1) My Book

(2) Bride's complaint

(3) Stand in corner all day.

B. He was a ready Scribe (v-6) in the law of Moses which the Lord God of Israel had given.

1. Knew origin of the Word and accepted it for what it was. Scriptures were also rule of his life.

2. Ready Scribe

a) Implies great learning.

(1) Professor & apt.

(2) Education clip.

(3) Did you know?

(4) Something wrong with clock.

b) Conversant with Scriptures in knowing what they meant.

(1) Good listener clip.

c) Ready writer

(1) Cake calling card..

(2) Lump in carpet - cigarette gone - seen Parakeet?

d) Student, interpreter, copier of the law.

(1) Oysters - w/o pearls.

(2) Copy his paper?

e) As copyist sought to preserve intact the Book exactly as it came from God - took no editorial liberties.

f) Skilled in it.

Ps. 45:1

C. He had great associates, boss, and assistants.

1. King, children of Israel, priests, Levites, singers, porters.
2. Foul mouth parrot - deep freeze - what did that parrot say?
3. Never done it with 1 donkey.
4. Farmer & pajamas.
5. Glasses & chocolate chips.

D. Recognized the Source of his power - "the good hand of His God (was) upon him" - (v-9).

E. Great Methodology

1. Prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord.
 - a) Both a priest & scribe.
 - b) Devoted to law via diligent study.
 - c) Word of God meant more to him than any other study.
 - d) Sought earnestly.
 - e) Fixed his heart, purpose, determine.
 - f) Heart - all powers & affections.
 - g) Study word & hide in heart.
 - h) Beans burning.
 - i) Moose - see rest of it.
2. To do it -
 - a) Must obey what he knows.
 - b) Must know & do before teaching others.
 - c) Good opportunity clip.
 - d) Farmer & mule eggs - watermelon, jackrabbit a "little mule" - didn't want to plow that fast.

- e) Fallen lighthouse more dangerous than a reef.
- 3. Set his goal - teach Israel the Scriptures.
 - a) 1st learned, obeyed, then taught.
 - b) Skilled in expounding law.
 - c) Gave sense to word.
 - d) Commie - Sand - Bicycles
 - e) Frederick Loewe
 - f) Hot water 1 hour

III. There were other Features

A. Traditions

- 1. Collected cannon & history.
- 2. Started synagogue and was 1st President.
- 3. Always done this way.

B. Truth

- 1. The Scribe - high honor.
- 2. Pious
- 3. Zealous
- 4. Good Administrator
- 5. Humble - self denial

7:10-15

- 6. Trustworthy

7:13

:26

- 7. Anxious to commend his cause to others.

8:2-20

- 8. Prayerful

8:21

10:1

9. Grieved over Sins of People.

9:3

10:6

10. Died 120 years old.

(These from Lockyer)

Laurel church, Knoxville, TN (Teachers Banquet) 10/28/88
 Washington Ave., Evansville, IN (Teachers Banq) 12/1/88
 Campbell Street, Jackson, TN (Teachers Banquet) 1/23/89
 Palo Alto, Panama City, FL (Teachers Banquet) 3/10/89
 Hilledale--Clarksville, TN (Teachers Banq.) 5/12/89

causing me untold embarrassment.

Will the good little black dress ever return? I hope so. I still have a dainty white lace collar, a strand of pearls and an exquisite black lace shawl that came from Switzerland. They would look so pretty. . . .

— Erma Fajen MacFarlane

12 Miller Dr., Columbia, MO 65201

My Book

PLEASE READ me a story from 'My Book',” I begged.

“No,” Grandma said, “You wouldn't like them,” and then she would read Snow White or Mother Goose. What were the secret stories in the big red book I found in Grandma's closet?

Like most other four-year-olds, I had many books with pretty colored pictures, but they were not like that big red book. I carried “My Book” nearly everywhere. I set it on the table next to my plate when I ate, and laid it on the bed when I took a nap. Occasionally I leafed through it. The words were very small and the pictures were black and white line drawings with numbers under them that I didn't understand. Sometimes I used my crayons to color the drawings.

Slowly I learned my alphabet and numbers, and when I started school at five years old, I learned the simple words from *Dick and Jane and Baby Sally*. Still, I couldn't read the tiny words in “My Book.” By this time most of the drawings were red, green, purple and yellow, and some of the words were colorfully underlined.

“Read me a story from 'My

Book',” I pleaded.

“No,” Mama said, “They are too old for you,” and then she would read Peter Rabbit or a Raggedy Ann story.

I knew it wasn't a naughty book. And it wasn't a Jesus story because Grandma read those to me from her big, brown Bible with the crocheted purple cross bookmark in it. What kind of book could it be that no one would read to me? I wanted to learn to read well enough to unlock its mysterious stories.

Then I started second grade, and had carried “My Book” around all summer. After a few weeks of school, I insisted Grandma read from “My Book,” determined not to be put off this time. Finally, she made a bargain with me. “If you read the cover, I will read you one page,” she consented.

I didn't know how to pronounce the big words, but I excitedly spelled the letters printed in gold on the cover of my beloved red book — “M-O-T-O-R M-A-N-U-A-L 1-9-4-3.”

— Marion Childs

4000 Wood Rd., Madison, OH 44057

THE BODY AND the mind are interdependent, you can't abuse the one without affecting the other. So, for the comfort of your family and dependents, to do justice to your own temperament and abilities, do the wise thing, eat in moderation and live so as to be healthy.

— Grenville Kleiser

THE ONLY PERIOD of time you can ever really act upon is right now.

— Dr. Paul Parker

A BRIDE WAS complaining to her mother, "Marriage really is a terrible grind. I never dreamed it would be like this. You wash the dishes, make the beds, tidy up the living room and then two weeks later you just have to do it all over again."

8

I have a little fun



"WHERE YOU a good little boy at kindergarten today?" The mother asked her darling offspring.

"Yes," he said. "You can't get into very much trouble standing in the corner all day."

9

THE PROFESSOR was forced to look for an apartment because the building he was living in was being converted to office space. Apartments were almost impossible to find, and he was at his wits' end locating a place to live.

At last he had a brilliant idea. He went to a large apartment complex that was filled and asked the manager if he could see the complete list of tenants. As he and the manager ran down the list together, the professor said, "There, that one. I'll take it the first of the month. That tenant is a student of mine. I know it will be vacant because I suddenly have a feeling that he is going to fail physics and chemistry and be sent home."

11
29
thinking out loud

EDUCATION IS something you get when father sends you to college; but it isn't complete until you send your own son.

- Did you know? 12
1. Every man in history
are murdered,
imprisoned, go mad
died young, dethroned
2. Edge crocodile by
zig zag
3. Hummingbird
only one can fly
backwards
4. Roman statues had
detachable heads
5. Greek author 158 verses
6. 600 million hot dogs
chain to moon & back
7. Human body 45 miles
never
8. Stamp collecting must do
hobby

For the Young Folks.

Just a Word

It's no trick at all
 When you've had a fall
 To patch up the skin you have broken;
 But it's something again
 To heal up the pain,
 The hurt, of an ugly word spoken.

You can't call it back
 Nor heal up the crack
 That's made in the heart of a dear one;
 A double-edged sword
 Is each ugly word—
 As harmful to say as to hear one.

—Anon.

THE ECHO

OVER in Scotland, they like to tell of what happened when a mother took her young son from their Edinburgh home for a holiday in the heart of the Highlands.

One morning she woke her boy very early, and then led him on a walk up a deep glen. The mother was quite familiar with the spot.

Finally, they paused at a point where the rocky slopes rose high on either side.

"Laddie," said she, "they tell there's a boy up among these hills. You can't see him, but if you'll just call out, he'll likely answer you."

The son called, "Hello!"

Back came the answer, clear as a bell, "Hello!"

Highly pleased, the youngster then shouted, "Who are you?" » »

The reply was the same, "Who are you?"

The Scottish boy's face clouded with anger. He sup-

posed the unseen lad was up to some trick, and trying to make him look foolish.

So he called out defiantly, "Tell me, or I'll fight you!"

The answer was just as insulting. "Tell me, or I'll fight you!" came back the challenge.

The mother, seeing how angry her son had become, offered a suggestion. Putting her hand on his arm, she said, "Just tell him you like him, laddie, and then see what he says" » »

This time the son cried out, "I like you!"

Thereupon came an answer that brought a gay, satisfied smile from both the mother and the boy, "I like you!"

Of course this is only a story, and you don't have to believe it unless you want to. But one thing is surely true. Nine times out of ten, if we greet someone with real old-fashioned courtesy, we get the same kind of reply.

—Franklin Winters.

ORIGIN OF YOUR NAME

IN EARLY TIMES most people bore only a first name. Along about the time of the Norman conquest of England, however, the nobility began to use the titles of their ancestral estates as surnames. The rest of the people followed the example, and proudly assumed the names of their trades, such as Smith, Baker, Miller, Clark (Clerk), and many more that you will recognize among the names of your friends today.

Other names show simple relationship of father and son. For instance, Wilson was originally William-his-son. Thompson and Johnson and many more were formed in the same way. Indeed, in almost every country you find names indicating this relationship.

The prefix O' in Ireland and Mac or Mc in Scotland

13
X
A workman put a ladder up against the tower on the town hall and reached the clock. A woman stopped to watch and said, "Is there something wrong with the clock?"

"No, madam, I'm a little nearsighted."

h

over

in BOOZE WHO.

...the nuclear scientist who swallowed uranium and got atomic ache.

Woman: "I'd like oysters — not too large, not too small, cooled but not cold."

Waiter: "With or without pearls?"

Page 524

over

Decem

GAZET

15

Cake Calling Card — A salesman had been unable to get an appointment with a busy executive, so he sent him a huge cake decorated with this message — "Unable to reach you by phone. Would like an appointment for 11 a.m., the 4th of this month." He included his name and phone number. And it worked.

"Were you copying his paper?"

"No, sir, I was just checking to see if he had mine right." — *Oral Hygiene.*

Education 16 d

no answer being a wofly answer

14

A good listener is not only popular everywhere, but after a while he knows something.

TELLER

Capper's
printed under
Capper's Wp

Two Are Better

A withered mountain woman was having difficulty getting her donkey to pull its heavily loaded cart up the hill. Observing her plight the village lawyer got behind it and pushed both donkey and cart over the top.

"Thank you," said the woman. "I'd never have done it with just one donkey."

Bancroft, Neb.

Esther

AN OLD FARMER was watching the clerk in a country store unpack a box of brightly-colored men's pajamas.

"What are those?" the farmer asked.

"They're pajamas," the clerk

said. "They are for men to wear at night. Would you like a pair?"

"No," the farmer said after thinking a moment. "I never go anywhere at night except to bed."

18

17

ugged 19

A woman in her 40s refused to wear her bifocals because she thought they made her look older. One day a good friend stopped by her house and noticed she had them on.

"How long have you been wearing your glasses?" the friend asked.

"Since yesterday" the woman replied. "When I was baking some cookies I saw something on the counter, picked up the flyswatter and killed four chocolate chips."

St. Louis, Mo.

Meiba

20

Lifting the phone to make a call, a farmer on the rural party line overheard one woman say to another: "I just put the beans on to cook."

The farmer hung up and waited for 15 minutes before trying again . . . but the women were still yak-yakking. Another 20 minutes later, the same two women were still gabbing away. Finally, in exasperation, the farmer picked up the receiver and said, "Hmmm . . . I smell beans burning."

*Keep - 20 minutes
the line was
free*

21 X
Moonhead

A little boy was in the library of a rich family and was quite intrigued with the moon head on the wall. His host saw that something was troubling him and asked what he wanted. The little boy answered "Do you mind if I go into the next room and see the rest of it?"
Mission Hills, Calif. Martha

22 X
Good Opportunity - A sign on a church bulletin board reads - "Interested in going to Heaven? Apply here for flight training."

23 X
Frederick Loewe, Viennese-born composer of "My Fair Lady," arrive in the U.S. during the Depression of the 30s and could not make a go of it despite being a gifted musician.

Bent over the keyboard, he could hear nothing but the music which he played with rare inspiration. When he finished and looked up, he was startled to find that he had an audience—three moving men who were seated on the floor.

They said nothing and made no movement toward the piano. Instead, they dug into their pockets, pooled together enough money for the payment, placed it on the piano and walked out, empty handed.

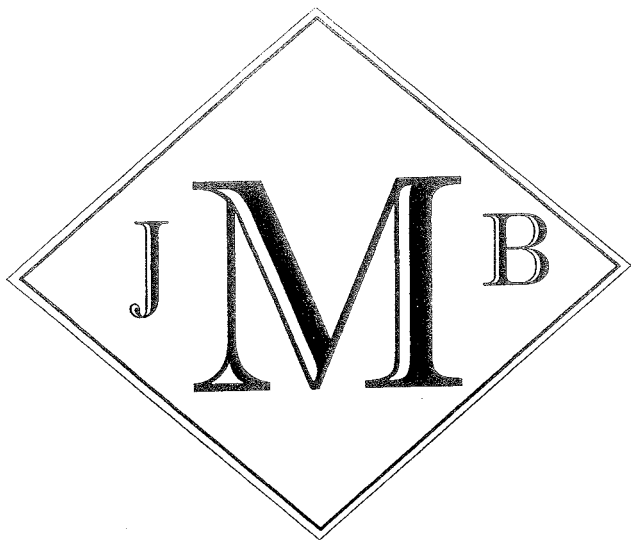
—Crumbley (by Crackey!)



SUFFERING with a mild stomach complaint, a woman was advised by her doctor to drink hot water an hour before breakfast. The patient took her leave and in a week returned to the doctor's office saying she felt much worse.

"Did you follow my advice and drink hot water an hour before breakfast?" the physician wanted to know.

"I did my best," said the patient, "but I couldn't keep it up for more than ten minutes at a stretch."



GOD'S METHOD OF LEARNING

Ezra 7:10 Phil. 4:9

I. I think all of us want to learn and avoid embarrassment.

A. What is a heifer?

B. Who would steal Harry?

II. In two places the Bible tells how we get knowledge.

Ez. 7:10 "Prepared heart to seek, do, teach . ."

Phil. 4:10 *Isaiah stated Judge ->* "Learned-received; heard and seen, do. God of peace."

A. Think of lessons learned here.

B. Living example.

C. Retiree so busy doing nothing no time for anything else.

D. Meeting of the Board.

III. Paths to Knowledge.

A. Learned and received.

1. Bessie and mule.

2. Meeting of the Board.

3. Guess age.

4. Wandering in his mind.

5. Why Form 1040?

B. Heard and seen.

1. Puts you in the picture.

2. Alert to things heard.

3. Preacher vs. dad's vacation -- two weeks, four weeks.
4. Raise three companies after me.
5. Pig and straw--talking pig?
6. Worked one week--satisfied.
7. Sheriff's interview. *7 sec. time*

C. Seen in me. Do.

1. I John 4:18 "Perfect love casts out fear."
John 4:18 "You've had five husbands."
2. Check - special fund. *Better spend*
3. Parking car - forgive, lead not into temptation.
4. Favorite desk - clean one.
5. Sleeping man - only two of us for it.

Locust Grove, KY - 9/6/03 (Teachers & Workers)
Trinity Lane Teachers Dinner - 4/22/04

Clever

One day, a woman asked her neighbor, "What is your favorite dish?"

"A clean one," was the response.
Florida Suzan

Stand-up Guy

During his Sunday sermon, a minister noticed a man who had fallen asleep.

Deciding to play a trick on the man, the minister shouted, "All those in favor of sin, stand up."

Startled by the shouting, the sleeping man awoke and jumped to his feet.

Standing there alone, he said to the minister, "Well, I don't know what we're voting on, but it looks like you and I are the only ones in favor of it."

Missouri G.B.A.

Job Security

A man got out of his car and tucked a note under the windshield wiper of his car.

The note said: "I've circled the block for 20 minutes, and I'm late for an appointment, and if I don't park here, I'll lose my job. Forgive us our trespasses."

When the man returned to his car, he found a parking tick-

et on his windshield, along with another note.

This note said, "I've circled this block for 20 years, and if I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. Lead us not into temptation."

Kansas Betty

Trapped

"Did you set a steel trap on your front porch?" John asked his neighbor Tom.

"Yeah," Tom replied. "The wolf had better not come to my door."

"Well, you've caught a bill collector," John said.

Texas T.D.S.

Good Cause

A well-known speaker lectured to the members of a literary society. After the lecture, the secretary approached him and handed him a check.

The speaker politely refused payment, saying, "Just devote it to a charitable purpose."

"Would you mind if we add it to our special fund?" the secretary asked.

"Not at all," said the speaker. "What's the special fund for, anyway?"

"To enable us to get better lecturers next year," the secretary said.

Kansas

T.G.

UNFORTUNATE MIX-UP

A Christian couple asked their caterer to write "1 John 4:18" on their wedding cake. 1 John 4:18 appropriately says, "There is no fear in love. Perfect love casts out fear."

The wedding guests were mystified, however, when they saw the cake. The caterer had left off the "1" and wrote "John 4:18."

John 4:18 says, "For you have had five husbands, and the man whom you now have is not your husband."

STORYTELLER

Reassurance

A woman who was worried about her husband called the doctor.

"My husband seems to be wandering in his mind," the upset woman said.

"Don't worry," said the doctor. "I know your husband. Believe me, he can't go far."

Missouri

Harvey

Wise

At a gathering, a widow asked a young man to guess her age.

The young man looked at the woman and thought for a few minutes.

"You must have some idea," the woman said.

"I have several ideas," the young man said, smiling. "The only trouble is that I hesitate

whether to make you 10 years younger on account of your looks, or 10 years older on account of your intelligence."

New York

Tony

Tax Time

"Jim, do you know why the

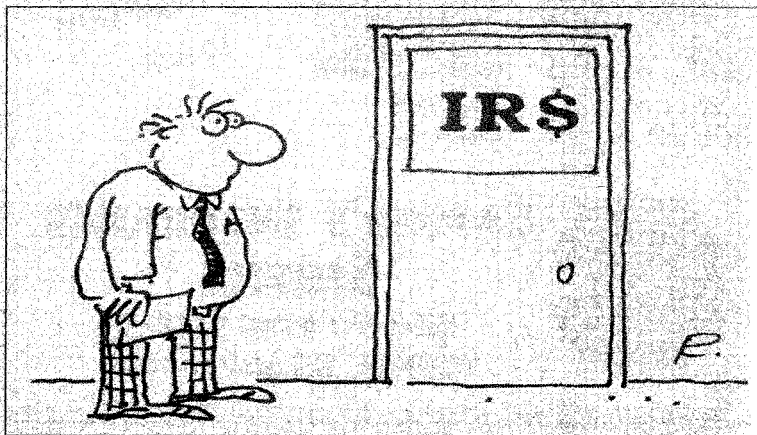
Internal Revenue Service calls the form we fill out a 1040 form?" Bill asked.

"No," said Jim. "Do you?"

"Because for every 50 dollars you earn, you keep 10 and they take 40."

Kansas

Betty



STORYTELLER

Logical

A woman tried to convince her husband, who was reluctant to fly, to take a trip by plane.

"If it's your time to die, you'll die whether you're on the ground or in the air," she said.

The husband replied, "What if it's the pilot's time to die, and I just happen to be with him?"

Kansas Regina

Curious

A boy asked why the minister got a month's vacation and his dad only got two weeks.

Share your jokes

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"Well, if he's a good minister, he needs it," his mother said. "If he isn't, the congregation needs it."

California Ida Grace

After Him

Employee: "I have to have a raise. You see, three other companies are after me."

Boss: "Which companies?"

Employee: "The electric company, the phone company and the gas company."

Illinois George

Imagination

A first-grade teacher was reading the story of the three little pigs to her class.

"So the pig asked a man with a wheelbarrow full of straw, 'Pardon me, sir, but may I have some of that straw to build my house?'" the teacher read, then paused before asking, "What do you think the man said?"

"I think the man said, 'Wow, a talking pig,'" said one boy.
Kansas Betty

Job Referral

A man asked for a letter of recommendation from his boss.

The letter he received contained only the words:

"Jack Jones worked for us for a week, and we're satisfied."

Kentucky Martha

Make someone's day

Jan. 22 is National Compliment Day.

Make it a personal goal to compliment at least five people on this day, and make their day special.

SOCIAL

Q. My husband is increa

Amen

An adult Sunday-school class was discussing formal and informal prayer.

One man remarked, "I do some of my best praying while I'm driving."

From the back of the room, in a quiet voice, the man's wife agreed.

"I, too, do my best praying while you're driving."

Illinois George

Interview

A fellow who was a little slow needed a job. His wife saw an ad in the newspaper for deputy sheriff in their town, and she urged him to apply.

When the man went for the interview, the sheriff told him he'd have to take a test. Then he began the question-

"First question: What is one and one?" the sheriff asked.

"Eleven," the man said.

The sheriff rolled his eyes and went on to the next question.

"Second question: What two days of the week begin with the letter T?"

"Today and tomorrow," the man replied.

"I've got one more question for you," the sheriff said.

"Who shot Abraham Lincoln?"

"I don't know," the man said.

"Go home and study up on it," the sheriff said.

When the man returned home, his wife asked if he got the job.

"Yep," the man said. "And they've already put me to work on a criminal case."

Missouri L.M.E.

Riddle

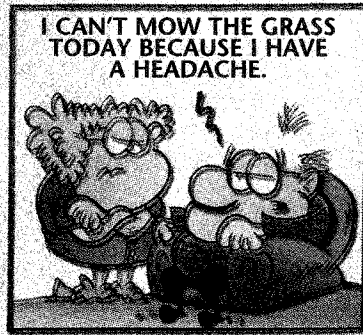
Q: Why do hummingbirds hum?

A: Because they don't know the words.

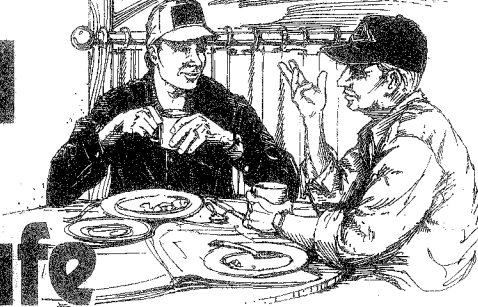
South Dakota A.S.

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



Overheard at the Country Cafe



IF YOU pull up to a café and see a lot of pickup trucks parked there, chances are it's a great place to eat.

That's because there are country folks inside, and they like to eat hearty. The food tastes especially good because anytime country friends and neighbors get together, the meals are accompanied by rib-ticklin' humor like these stories sent in by *Country* readers.

Rapid Recovery

FARMER JOE decided to take the trucking company responsible for his injuries to court, writes Robert Hunt of Upper Marlboro, Maryland.

In court, the trucking company's lawyer questioned Farmer Joe, "At the scene of the accident, did you not say that you were fine?"

Farmer Joe responded, "Well, I'll tell you what happened. I had just loaded my favorite mule, Bessie, into the..."

"I didn't ask for details," the lawyer interrupted. "Just answer the question: Did you not say at the scene of the accident that you were fine?"

Farmer Joe replied, "I had just gotten Bessie into the trailer and was driving down the road..."

The lawyer interrupted again and turned to the judge, "Your Honor, I'm trying to establish the fact that at the scene of the accident, this man said he was fine. Now several weeks later, he's trying to sue my client. Please tell him to simply answer the question 'yes' or 'no'."

By this time, the judge was interested in Farmer Joe's story and said to the attorney, "I'd like to hear what he has to say about his mule."

Farmer Joe thanked the judge and proceeded, "Well, as I was saying, I had just loaded Bessie into the trailer and was driving down the highway when this huge semi-truck ran the stop sign and struck my truck. I was thrown

into one ditch and Bessie was thrown into the other. I heard Bessie moaning, but I was hurting real bad and couldn't move to go help her.

"Shortly after the accident, a state trooper came on the scene," Farmer Joe continued. "He could hear Bessie, so he went over to where she lay. After he looked at her, he took out his gun and put her out of her misery."

"Then the trooper came across the road with his gun still in his hand and looked at me. He said, 'Your mule was in such bad shape, I had to shoot her. How are you feeling?'"

Mistaken Identity

THREE FRIENDS were visiting a farm for the first time, when two of them got into an argument over what kind of an animal a heifer is, says Andy Hershberger of Apple Creek, Ohio.

Chuckles a la Carte



DINNER PAIL. "Our 3-month-old colt, Mr. Tanner, tried to share his lunch with grandson Michael," says Beverly Phillips, Shelby, N.C.

"It's a sort of pig," said Tom.

"No, it's a kind of sheep," said Dick.

Turning to the third friend, they asked, "Harry, what is a heifer? Is it a pig or a sheep?"

Harry pondered the question for a minute, then said, "To tell you the truth, I don't know much about poultry."

Harried Retiree

"THE LAST TIME I was in the barber shop," says Roger Schroeder of Mesa, Arizona, "I overheard a retiree telling the barber that he was so busy doing nothing, he didn't have time for anything else!"

Hunter's Dilemma

A GROUP of deer hunters were spending the weekend at their cabin. At dawn, they all split up in pairs to go hunting, relates Marcella Kulp of Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

At noon, all the hunters—except Joe and Harry—returned to the cabin, tired and empty-handed. Hours later, the two missing hunters still weren't back, and their friends were getting worried.

Finally, they saw Joe approaching the cabin, laboriously dragging a 6-point buck. Huffing and puffing, Joe managed to answer their questions as to Harry's whereabouts.

"Harry passed out from exhaustion about a mile back," Joe said.

The men were surprised that Joe had abandoned his partner. "How could you choose a deer over Harry?" they asked.

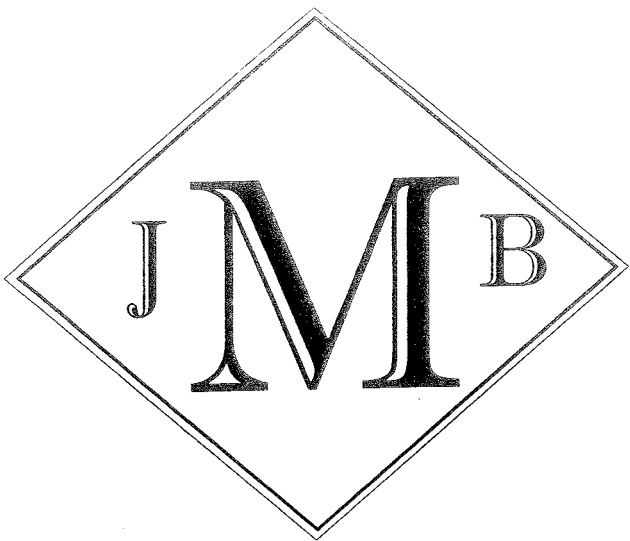
"Well," said Joe, "It was a hard decision, and I prayed about it for a long time. And then I thought, who's going to steal Harry?"

Bored Meeting

AS THE PASTOR concluded a very long and uninspiring sermon, he announced that he wished to meet with the Board following the close of services, writes Dora Giggly of La Grange, Indiana.

The first to arrive for the meeting was a stranger. "You misunderstood the announcement," said the pastor. "This is a meeting for the Board."

"I know," said the man, "but if there's anyone here more bored than I am, I'd like to meet him!"



THE SET HEART

Ezra 7:10

I. What an ambition.

- A. Set his heart.
- B. To seek the law of Jehovah.
- C. To do it.
- D. To teach in Israel statutes and ordinances.

II. Background.

- A. Ezra is a scribe.
- B. He is a priest (7:1-5).
- C. Transcribed and studied the law.
- D. Taught it.
- E. Led caravan to Jerusalem to restore worship -- "as it is written."
 - 1. Got means to "beautified the house."
 - 2. He could punish all who disobeyed word (7:25-26).

III. Others so set their hearts.

A. Josiah

2 Chron. 34:3

B. David to Solomon

1 Chron. 28:9

C. Meaning: Study to know and do.

D. Today

John 7:17 "If any man wills to do his will."

E. See power of one man doing what's right.

1. Fasted

2 Prayed (v-23) for protection as they were to go 800 miles, took 4 months; robbers after the treasure he carried--went about 8-9 miles per day.

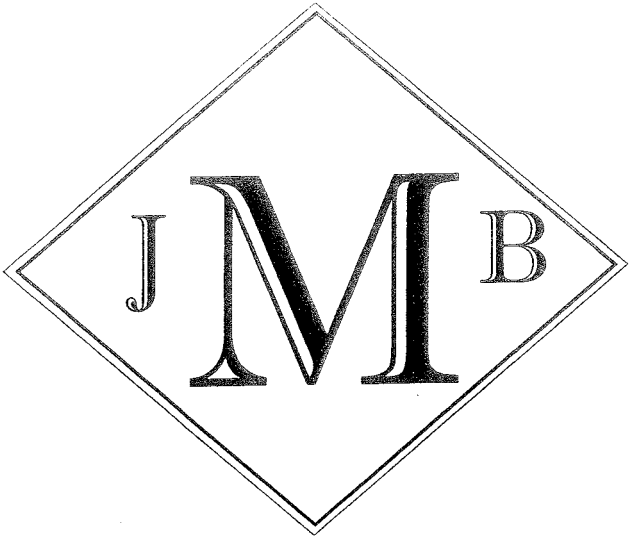
F. Made it because "the good hand of his God was upon him. (He did it without protecting soldiers).

IV. When they did the restoration it followed a pattern.

Ezra 3:2 .."offer burnt offerings thereon as it is written in the law.."

3:4 .."kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it written..."

Heritage - 1/16/05



Notes from a King's Correspondence

Ezra 7:11-29

- I. Are you ever curious what rubes think of the church?
 - A. Garfield in it
 - B. Johnson distributed fliers
 - C. Clinton knows us well
 - D. Clement and Fulton "almost" there - forebearers were
 - E. Bredesen disliked, Purcell unknown
 - F. June Lyon in legislature

- II. Naturally hope it's one of respect. I do know what Artaxerxes thought - I have his letter. Ezra 7:11-26
 - A. We'll pick phrases from his letter.
 - B. We'll see Ezra's burst of praise. Ezra 7:27-28

- III. Notes from a King's correspondence
 - A. Set stage
 - 1. Ezra permitted to lead second exodus
 - 2. Been in captivity at least 60 years
 - 3. Free to follow him home

4. Letter written about which Williamson wrote:

"The substance of the letter is made up of four clauses.

- 1) Permission to return to Jerusalem by any Jew who wishes to do it
- 2) Commission to conduct an inquiry in Judah and Jerusalem
- 3) Regulations for the transportation and use of certain gifts and grants for the temple
- 4) Permission to appoint magistrates and judges for the enforcement with legal sanction and the teaching of the law.

B. Two main characters.

1. Artaxerxes

- a) King of Persia
- b) Kings could be cruel or generous
- c) King of Kings-casually used by Babylonians
typical of self-designation of themselves
- d) Was King of some Kings as there were many smaller rules who called them-

selves kings.

- e) Ezra did not contest title as we see things offensive to our sensitivities.
- f) Law of God of Heaven-not just of Jerusalem, but Heaven
- g) Didn't expect Ezra to change law

2. Ezra

- a) Ready scribe
- b) Descended from original high priest
- c) "Teacher" instructor and interpreter of law
- d) Zerubbabel, Joshua, Haggai, Zechariah dead
- e) New leader has arisen- perhaps God's using you
- f) Priest of the words of commandments of the Lord
- g) Need one loyal to word and its exactness

3. Artaxerxes wanted perfect peace and used

IV. Phrases that project:

A. Free will

- 1. None forced-could go or stay.

2. Loving God, you will want to go.
 3. Religious servies need to be voluntary
- B. Go to Jerusalem
1. Disorder in Jerusalem as men become disobedient
 2. If King is interested in spiritual welfare of Israel is it nothing to you who pass by
 3. Jerusalem repressive orthodoxy.
- C. Seven counsellors
1. Seven trusted advisors
 2. Sent by highest authority
 3. Ezra did not take law into his own hands.
 4. It was in the scope of concern for the law of this God which is in thy hand.
 5. Needed to know law and stay within confines of their assignment
 6. Seven counsellors are named in Esther 1.
- D. Carry treasures for the temple
1. Silver and gold
 - a) Free will given
 - b) From people

- c) People of Babylon gave gifts from non-Jews also
- d) Is the generosity of heathen a thing to put us to shame?
- e) Must outsiders support the cause?
- f) Do we live in such a way that they are motivated to do it?
- g) Accept it?
- h) Live so we are trusted with other's golden gifts?
- i) Do they see us using it to glory of God?

E. Things for house of God:

1. Obvious gifts were to support temple worship offer on altar - v. 17
2. To glory and adoration of God in compliance with His will
3. Buy speedily - v.17
4. Made no demands to alter the alters, but "do after the will of your God." - v.18
5. Saw a relationship between religion and civic behavior

6. Royal treasure to cover all worship costs. v.20

7. Beyond river (Euphrates) done speedily.

F. Measures of gifts:

1. Hard to supply modern equivalents to those measurements as this would supply temple for about 2 years.
Generous.
2. Truly giving Jews a good start.
 - a) Kor - 75 gallons, 1qt.1 pt.
 - b) Bath - 7 gals. 5 pts.
 - c) 800 bushels wheat
 - d) 700 gallons wine
 - e) Kor is 10 baths
 - f) Talent - 75 pounds
 - g) Tax only 350 talents
3. Whatsoever is commanded by the God of Heaven (v.23).
 - a) Diligently done, prompt, speedy. v.23
 - b) Blend of civil and religious law--even as prayer in schools.
 - c) Distinguishing factor between church and state
 - d) Will of God our supreme command

4. Wrath against realm
 - a) Do it unto God-reason
for it--nations that are
haughty brought law.
 - b) Wishes to do good so as
not to displease God.
 - c) Does Ventura please God?
5. No tax on religious leaders,
v. 24.
6. Set magistrates and judges
 - a) Some know law
 - b) Teach those that know
not (v.25).
 - c) Gave teeth to them,
death, banishment, con-
fiscation, imprison.
 - d) King felt law important.

G. Call to a new life.

Deut. 30:15-20

1. Four month journey.
2. 500 miles direct, took 900
through Syria.

V. Ezra offers thanks (v.27-28).

A. Blessed be the Lord God

1. We must in everything give
thanks.
2. "For whatever occurrence
pleases us, it must own
God's hand in them and
praise His name." Scott

3. It was just an outburst of praise.
 4. "Ezra has to stop to offer thanks." Wesley
 5. In all things give God glory.
- B. God put this in the King's heart to beautify the house of the Lord.
1. Results in mercy to Ezra.
 2. Publicly done before all the King's might princes.
- C. Strengthened at the hand of the Lord my God was upon me.

Gen. 49:24

1. Hand of the Lord Ezra's life story.
2. Clark - "He who loves God and man will rejoice in the establishment of the divine worship because this is the readiest way to promote the best interests of men.
3. Ezra takes heart and begins second migration.
4. What was an attractive motivation to get Jews to join Ezra's mission?

5. The prospect of a new life is ever open and confronts each successive generation with its challenge for decision. Williamson
6. Deut. 30:15-20 change life
7. Took courage to get "chief men" to go with him.

