

## **The Easy Yoke**

*"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30).

Do you consider the yoke of Christ to be an easy one? Do you feel that serving the Lord is a joy or a burden? Do you find being a Christian to be a pleasant, desirable, easy lifestyle? Or is it a real effort?

The difference is attitude. Some look on serving God as the greatest joy imaginable. Others think it a heavy burden that weighs them down. It is all in the attitude.

- Is attending Wednesday evening Bible study a blessing to your life? It is designed to instruct and uplift, to help us make it through a busy week. Some love to attend; for others it is a burden. Which is it for you?
- Do you give joyfully, cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)? Or do you give grudgingly, only because you know that you "have to?" Do you think about all of the other things you could have done with that money? Or are you glad to give the first fruits of your blessings back to God?
- Do you look for opportunities to help others? Does it make you feel good when you know that you have eased someone else's burden? Or do you look around and see no needs, except maybe your own?
- What about evangelizing the lost? Is that a job for someone else? Or do you, through your appreciation of what God has done for you, share the message of hope with a lost and wandering soul?
- Overall, is your experience in serving God a joy or a burden? Do you look forward to opportunities to be with other Christians in social settings? Do you sing praises to God with an overflowing heart of appreciation? Is being a Christian an easy yoke or one that is so heavy that you almost fall beneath the load?

*"Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!"* (Philippians 4:4).

**- by Roger Hillis**

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## **The Average**

If a man were to stand with one foot on a hot stove and one foot in a freezer, some statistician would assert that, on average, he's comfortable.

This reminds me of some who seem to feel that they can come to church on Sunday and yet live like the devil during the week. They say that they are, on the average, pretty good people.

Such a person cannot be "comfortable" any more than the man with his foot on the stove and the other in a freezer. He is "a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). He has only enough religion to be miserable, but not enough to go to heaven.

Our Lord does not prefer an average. He wants his people to be either "cold or hot." The average nauseates Him. He will spew out of his mouth those who are lukewarm (Rev. 3:15-16).

Brother, you had better get all the way on the Lord's side now, lest you spend eternity with the devil.

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## **"The Lion Shall Eat Straw Like The Ox"**

Many religious people are looking for a coming kingdom of Christ here on earth. They expect Jesus to return, conquer the forces of evil, and establish a physical kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital. It will last for 1000 years, and Christ will personally and literally reign on David's restored throne.

There are a host of scriptures that are twisted to arrive at this conclusion. It is a theory most commonly referred to as "premillennialism." A favorite proof text is Isaiah 11:1ff: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit

of the Lord shall rest upon him . . . and righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious."

This passage is clearly messianic; that is, it is a prophecy of the work to be accomplished by the Christ. But what does it actually foretell?

The premillennialist looks forward to a wonderful 1000-year reign of Christ. Everything will be so beautiful and peaceful, so they say, that the wolf will literally dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the kid, etc. Even the lion will stop being a predatory animal and will eat straw like an ox, according to their view. Is this literal interpretation right? Or could the prophet be using figurative, symbolic language? Thankfully we have an inspired commentary on these verses in Romans 15

In much of the book of Romans, Paul deals with some of the Jew/Gentile problems that plagued the early church. In the immediate context of chapter 15, Paul instructs them to:

--"be like-minded one toward another" (vs. 5)

--"with one mind and mouth glorify God" (vs. 6)

--"receive ye one another" (vs. 7)

He then reminds them that Jesus' mission was "to confirm the promises made unto the fathers and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy" (vs. 8,9). To prove this he then quotes from Psalms 18:49, Deut. 32:43, Psalms 117:1, **AND** Isaiah 11:10.

By inspiration Paul has explained that Isaiah 11 is symbolic language, referring to a time when the Messiah would make peace where it had not existed before. Not literally among the animal world, but rather between the Jew and Gentile. In His kingdom (now existing) we are one (Gal. 3:28). In Ephesians 2:14-16 the apostle affirms the same truth: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby."

Here, then, is the promised peace of Isaiah 11. There is no future earthly kingdom to come. We can enjoy citizenship in the kingdom of Christ NOW, with all the benefits He has promised.

**- by Greg Gwin**