



Musings of a Jaw-Breaker

Some of you may know that I have a jaw-breaker the size of a billiard ball in my office. The reason for my having this jaw-breaker is another story, but I was looking at it today and thought that it might make for some interesting reading. A jaw-breaker, as we all know, is a piece of candy that is virtually impossible to break with your teeth. So in order to consume it, you must put it into your mouth and let it slowly dissolve away. But, a billiard ball size jaw-breaker is impossible to put into your mouth. If you can't get it into your mouth, then how can you dissolve it? Seems like a rather difficult dilemma, doesn't it.

When I bought this particular jaw-breaker, I asked the sales lady, "How do you eat this thing." She told me there were only two ways that she knew to do that. You could either lick it until it dissolved enough to put into your mouth (I can't imagine how long that would take) or you could break it with a hammer. Being a man, the second solution appealed greatly to me. However, I have not, as of yet, applied this solution, as I have ulterior motives for the purpose of the jaw-breaker, such as writing this article.

But suppose I were to take a hammer and smash the jaw-breaker; what do you suppose would happen? I would no longer have a jaw-breaker, per se, but a thousand tiny pieces of sugary candy. At that point, no doubt, it would be fit for consumption, but it certainly wouldn't provide the lasting enjoyment that a jaw-breaker is supposed to provide. Its purpose would basically, be destroyed. Such is, however, what happens when force is brought to bear upon that which is obstinate.

Such reminds me of the Old Testament prophets and the message that they often had to get across to others. They dealt with a people that were very similar to a jaw-breaker. Regardless the amount of scriptural force that was brought to bear upon them, they would not budge. They

were obstinate. Isaiah also wrote regarding their condition: "Because I knew that thou art obstinate, and thy neck is an iron sinew, and thy brow brass" (Isaiah 48:4). Jeremiah wrote regarding these people: "Thus saith the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words" (Jeremiah 19:15). In order to break them, God had to bring an irresistible force upon those people; the result was that they crumbled underneath it.

My jaw-breaker also reminds me of the character Haman in the book of Esther. You remember that Haman was promoted to be the number one man next to king Ahasuerus after the king's other counselors plotted against him. However, when Mordecai refused to bow down to Haman, he decided that Mordecai had to go. Ahasuerus, on the other hand, sought to honor Mordecai. Haman thought Ahasuerus wanted to honor him. He ended up being humiliated in leading Mordecai around the city on a horse. Ultimately he was hung on his own gallows for his plot to kill God's people. Just as my billiard size jaw-breaker is too big for its own good, so also was Haman. Romans 12:3 says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

Finally, my jaw-breaker reminds me of the task that God has set before each one of us. This jaw-breaker could be consumed by licking it over and over again. But it would take some time to consume a billiard-sized jaw-breaker simply by licking it. How could we accomplish such a task? One lick at a time. Paul wrote to the church at Corinth in 1 Corinthians 15:58, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know

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Heaven Ain't Full

S In a recent telephone conversation, a young man asked me about the 144,000 people that will be saved. He had a few conversations with a friend who identified himself with the Jehovah's Witness religion. His friend believed that only 144,000 people would go to heaven and the rest of the righteous people would inherit a newly renovated earth. This zealous teen sought the answer to his friend's limited doctrine.

While on the phone we read Revelation 7:4, "and I heard the number of the sealed, 144,000, sealed from every tribe of the sons of Israel."

John, the apostle responsible for penning Revelation, has entered God's throne room in a vision. While in the vision he hears the angels calling to one another that the servants of God must be sealed or marked. Those marked will be spared destruction on the day of Judgment—they'll be saved. Then John hears the exact number of sealed people, 144,000.

Is the Jehovah's Witness sect correct in saying heaven will be filled with 144,000 souls? Or is there another explanation? We searched for the answer together.

The Question

To properly understand Revelation 7:4, we must be mindful of the context. Revelation 7 answers the ques-

tion posed in the previous chapter, "For the great day of their wrath is come, and who can stand?" (6:17). Yet, understanding this question and why it was asked takes us back to another query in verse 10, "O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth?" (6:10).

In Revelation 6:10, the souls of Christian martyrs ask how long their blood would go unavenged. They don't want their sacrifice to be empty. They long to see justice on those who persecuted and killed Christians. God tells them to be patient and rest for a little while (6:11).

Then God assures them that justice would be served to the infidels. With the opening of the sixth seal in verse twelve, judgment begins. In this horrific scene of judgment, the wicked seek an outlet of safety from the wrath of "him who is seated on the throne" and "the Lamb" (6:16). In their terror the condemned ones ask, "Who can stand?" That is, who will be able to stand on the judgment day—the day of heavenly wrath unleashed?

So far so good; the caller and I understood these questions. Like a lot of people he began guessing their answers, "The saved? Christians? Angels?" Then I told him to look at chapter seven, the divine answer to the inquiry.

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that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." James 5:11 reads, "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." If one really wanted to consume this jaw-breaker, it could be done. We have sometimes a seemingly impossible task before us, but it can be done, if we really want to do it. We take it one day at a time (Matthew 6:34).

Who would have thought that a billiard-size jaw-breaker could teach us so much? Let us not be so hard that God has to break us into a thousand pieces in order for us to be useful. Let's not be so big that we cannot accomplish the purposes for which God made us. Let's do be patient enough to be able to "lick" those seemingly impossible tasks that are before us. God has given us the tools that we need in order to serve Him appropriately. Let's do what we can each and every day to keep our spirits pure, humble, and patient as we long for the Lord's return one day.

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Sermons and Study Topics

Week of 11/14/04

Morning	Beatitudes—Poor In Spirit
Scripture	Matthew 5:3-10
Evening	Questions and Answers
Scripture	NA
Sunday Morning Bible Study	The Book of Hebrews
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	The Book of Nahum

Weekly Record

Week of 11/07/04

Sunday Class	55
Sunday A.M.	72
Sunday P.M.	53
Wednesday	54
Contribution	\$1401.91
Budget	\$1778.13

Heaven Ain't Full (cont.)

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The Answer: Part 1

The angels answer the question in two parts. The first part of the answer comes in Revelation 7:1-8. The destruction of Judgment halts while the faithful servants of God under the Jewish system are marked or sealed. They declare the name of each tribe and separate twelve thousand saved souls in each one. Twelve thousand out of twelve tribes equals 144,000 souls. The first part of the answer is faithful Jews.

The voice on the other end of the phone spoke with enlightenment, "So the Jews will be saved." I affirmed his answer. Then he asked why only 144,000 Jews would be saved. I explained how the number was not intended to be an exact count of saved Jews, be to signify a definite multitude. He understood, so we continued.

The Answer: Part 2

We looked further into chapter seven. After the 144,000 Jews are identified, John sees another group of people (7:9). This group contains people from every tribe, nation and language who wear white robes indicative of salvation.

Who are these people? They own Yahweh as their God (7:10). They worship God sitting on his throne (7:11). They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb (Jesus) (7:14). These serve God daily in his temple the church (7:15) and Jesus guides them (7:16). Who are these people? Christians.

So the full answer to the question in 6:17 is faithful Jews under the Mosaic system and faithful Christians under Christ's system. He grasped the meaning, but still had a question about why the Jews had a definite number and the Christians did not.

The Confusion

A fair question. Why did the Jews get

limited to 144,000, while the Christians were "a great multitude that no one could number?" I had to do some more checking and reading. After some thought it came to me. The Jews were described by a definite number because the Jewish system of salvation had stopped. Judaism had already saved all it ever would save. If we could go to the hadean realm and have all those in paradise who lived and died under the Jewish economy raise their hands, we could count them. If we did it again tomorrow, we would get the same number (given we didn't make a counting error).

On the other hand, the Christian scheme of redemption continues today. People are still being saved daily by the blood of the Lamb. If we counted the number of Christians souls in the hadean realm today, that number would be different tomorrow. That number continues to grow be-

cause that system continues as God's current salvation system. Therefore, as John said, it is a multitude that no one could number.

After I stopped preaching, he answered in excitement, "So the Jews had a number because there wouldn't be any more people saved by the Jewish law; and the Christians didn't have a number because there are still people being saved by Christ's law?" Exactly.

People living today aren't part of the 144,000 because that number only applied to the number of saved Jews under a system that was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14). Today we take heart in the knowledge that God has room in heaven for all Christians—no matter how "great" the multitude gets.

Thank God heaven ain't full!

Sam Dilbeck

Kevin's Korner

We had some really good rain this past week and our weather has finally decided to do something akin to winter. Yesterday morning I had frost on the car when I got up to go to the men's breakfast, which was yummy as usual. Much thanks to Rusty for organizing and getting the food together. Jerry Roller brought a jar of Carolyn's hot sauce and I (and some others) put it on our fried eggs—it was yumderful.

Our involvement with the Cub Scouts is progressing. The annual Pine Wood Derby was held last night at the Berryville Community Center. We had about 60 folks come out for that event. Those who participate in it always have a good time. I'm very happy to announce that Austin's car got 1st place in the overall races. The car wasn't much to look at, but evidently, it was built just right.

We've also enrolled Austin in the

youth basketball league that has started up at the community center. Braden and Hunter are doing that too. We should have some basketball games coming up soon. Perhaps some of you could come out to the community center sometime and cheer on some of these kids when the games begin. Right now the program is in the "clinic" phase. It meets on Tuesday and Thursday nights.

Elders:

Clay Bozarth, Leon Duncan,
Bruce Foster, Bill Fort, Glenn
Quigley

Deacons:

Ken Smith, Brent Stevens,
Rusty Windle.

Preacher:

Kevin Cauley... 870-423-6707

- Today is the day that the Lord has made! Let us rejoice and be glad!
- Let us remain constant in prayer for the following individuals: Gary Bragg, Ruby Hand, Ralph Hunter, Vernice Hayden, Toy Peach, Bill Powell.
- The Children's Home truck will be here on Monday, November 29th. They are asking for good used items (appliances, furniture, toys, and clothing for both children and adults). They sell these items in their thrift store to benefit the children's home. If you have items to donate, please put them into labeled boxes. Of course, they will also pick up food from our pantry while here. Please feel free to bring any food item for the pantry this month. Thanks for your wonderful love and support for this good work.
- Our monthly question and answer session is tonight! Please bring your open Bibles and open hearts to this opportunity for study.
- Our monthly potluck is next Sunday afternoon after services. We hope that you will make your plans to be with us for this time of fellowship.
- The pantry item for this week is pickles.

Welcome!

To the Berryville church of Christ.

Family Times for Worship and Study

Sunday Morning Bible Class:..... 9:30 AM
 Sunday Morning Worship: 10:20 AM
 Sunday Evening Worship: 6:00 PM
 Ladies Bible Class: 10:30 AM
 Wed. Evening Bible Class: 7:00 PM

Serving Each Other

November 14th, 2004 November 21st, 2004

	November 14th, 2004	November 21st, 2004
Sunday Morning		
Songs:	Brent Stevens	Ken Smith
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Bob Moore	Clay Bozarth
Scripture Reading:	Perry Foster	Brent Moore
Lord's Table	John Gass	Leon Duncan
(assist)	Glenn Quigley	Ken Smith
	Bruce Foster	Jerry Roller
	Ray Duncan	Jack Gentry
Closing Prayer	Brent Stevens	Glenn Quigley
Sunday Evening		
Songs:	Bruce Foster	Glenn Williams
Preaching:	Kevin Cauley	Kevin Cauley
Opening Prayer:	Bob Moore	Rusty Windle
Scripture Reading:	Brent Moore	Ray Duncan
Lord's Table	George Eddings	Jerry Roller
	Rusty Windle	Dale Pinkley
Closing Prayer	Glenn Quigley	Dan Hand
Wednesday		
Songs:	Kevin Cauley	Glenn Quigley
Opening Prayer:	Dale Pinkley	George Eddings
Invitation:	Brent Stevens	Kevin Cauley
Closing Prayer:	John Gass	Dale Pinkley

Happy Birthday/ Anniversary!

We would like to wish a happy birthday to all who have such in the month of November!

Birthdays

Helen Gentry..... 16th
 Debbie Duncan 20th
 Susan Elliott..... 25th
 Jeffrey Pinkley 25th
 Samantha Roller 25th
 Kendra Smith..... 28th

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