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"...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." Matthew 13:47

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THE SANDMAN IS COMING—Have you ever thought how many grains of sand there are on this earth? The University of Hawaii has done some research and made a guess-timate—7.5 quintillion grains. Basically sand comes about through the erosion of rocks. As a nation, we use it at the rate of billions of tons. It comes in all colors from white to black and everything in between. My wife tries to keep it off the floors of our house, while thousands drive to our area just to spend time lying on it.

Sand—did you know it is a Bible word, used some twenty-eight times in my KJV? Let me show you a few places. I have found it very interesting.

1. A Great Number—Genesis 22:17; 32:12; 41:49. God promised Abram that his seed (children) would be like the sand of the sea without number. That's a lot of people and the fulfillment of this is yet to come. In 1 Kings 4:29 God gave Solomon wisdom, understanding, and largeness of heart as the sand on the seashore. Whoa! Solomon must have been the greatest of all men in that area. In Psalm 78:27 the nation of Israel had left Egypt and was in the wilderness with no food. They wanted flesh, so God gave them quail flesh as the sand of the sea. That would have made a lot of quail burgers! In Psalm 139:18 David speaks of God and His Word. The thoughts of God came to him as the sand of the sea. David must have been special to God!

2. A Great Treasure—In Deuteronomy 33:19 Moses is giving a blessing to the children of Israel, and to Zebulun and Issachar he says they had "treasures hid in the sand". If you know anything about this land, you know it is filled with metals and minerals. Just dig it out. In the future Israel will be the richest place on earth.

3. A Bad Foundation—In Mathew 7:26 God speaks of a foolish builder. He put his house in sandy soil. The problem is sand provides no foundation because it moves with wind and water, causing the house to be destroyed. This is good physical advice but more so spiritually. Jesus is telling the crowd of His day that they must not just listen, but do what "thus saith the Lord". Those who obeyed were likened to building a house on a rock (solid, unmoveable foundation) that could stand the test of time. Others who refused the words of God would have their house destroyed.

Have you chosen sand to build on? (Like "trying to do your best," "becoming religious," "turning over a new leaf," etc.) Jesus is the only Rock to build on. A firm belief in His work of providing forgiveness of sin also gives that security needed in times of storm. Satan, the true sandman, is working hard, putting mankind to sleep, keeping eyes blinded to truth (Jesus). 2 Corinthians 4:4.

THE SANDMAN IS COMING!

NAUTICAL "LITTLE" JOB—Jim Scogin is not one of the Coast Guard's glory boys involved in the thrilling stories that make newspaper headlines. His crew does not pull stranded boats from the eye of a hurricane. They are never in on the big million-dollar busts, seizing drug-laden boats trying to enter American waters.

The hull of his Coast Guard boat is conservative black instead of flashy white sported by the search and rescue teams and law enforcement units. The aids to navigation team could be described as the bread-and-butter team of the Coast Guard. They keep the large barges going in and out of Mobile Bay and up and down the area rivers by keeping them between the buoys. The aids to navigation team is charged with the responsibility of marking and maintaining the buoys, referred to as aids, which mark the channel and guide the large vessels in and out of Mobile.

The aids are numbered, color-coded signs on the side of a piling in the bay, many of them topped with a light. "Pilots of the big freighters rely on us to get up and down the channel," Scogin said. "We are the unglorified part of the Coast Guard. We are involved more in the construction aspect. You don't get the awards and medals that search and rescue units might get, but it does give you a great deal of satisfaction."

Life is made up of many "little" jobs. Since our world now thinks only in "big" terms, "little" seems, at times, insignificant. On the water, my friend, little is much! Proverbs 30:24, *"There be four things which are little upon the earth, but they are exceeding wise..."*. Zechariah 4:10, *"For who hath despised the day of small things?"*

COUNT THE COST—A pastor told a story about a man traveling on an ocean liner. He was leaning over the ship's rail, tossing something in the air and catching it. "What is it you are tossing in the air?" asked an onlooker. "A diamond of great value. It is all I have in the world," said the man. "What an awful risk to keep tossing it up so carelessly!" "No risk at all, I've been doing it for the last half hour, and I can catch it every time!" "But there might come a last time," remarked the onlooker. The man laughed and tossed it up again—but this time he missed. For a moment the man stood aghast, then he cried out, "Lost, lost, lost!"

You say that story is not true—but it IS true! The ocean is eternity; you are on the vessel of life. That diamond is your soul! *"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"* Mark 8:36. Jesus Christ died for your sins. Trust Him for forgiveness. He will "save" your soul. Luke 19:10, *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

WINNING IN ANY WIND—In 1983 I watched one of the America's Cup yacht races as ships competed off the coast of Rhode Island. Through my binoculars I could observe the yachts LIBERTY and AUSTRALIA II as they raced for the prestigious championship. Although the boats were basically the same size, there was a marked difference between them. The heavier LIBERTY sailed best under winds of 15-20 knots. The AUSTRALIA II, with her innovative superkeel, performed better in winds between 7-12 knots. Yet, no matter what condition the crew faced, they each took full advantage of the available wind and competed with great skill.

As I watched, I thought, Christians should react like that to life's trying situations. Some people make the best progress when the sailing is not too rough, while others require the strong winds of adversity to develop their character. In either case, the key is to adjust to the conditions with God's help. The heavenly Father knows whether your vessel and keel are made for heavy winds or light. The psalmist said, "*For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind*" (107:25), and "*He maketh the storm a calm*" (v. 29). This applies to His control of our trials as well as the elements of nature.

We can be sure God will guide us to our "*desired haven*" (v. 30). We can be winners in any wind. —PRV

Editor's Note: You cannot direct the wind, but with God's help you can adjust your sails.

SWEATER IDENTITY—The fishermen in Ireland tell how years ago during times of storm when lives were lost, the fishermen who drowned could be identified by the sweater (jumper) they wore. You see, each family had a different design and stitching. The wives and mothers who made these for the men and children would so design the sweater so dead or alive you had an identity with what you wore. Isn't this true also for us as Christians? Shouldn't we be identified by what we wear? Physically, yes, but more so spiritually. Thank God for His righteousness given to us at salvation as spiritual clothing. Have you done as Adam? (Clothed yourself.) As God looks at us, remember, He can tell WHO IS WHO by what we are wearing. Ephesians 4:22, 24, "*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*"

FOUR STEPS OF EVIL

First, it shocks you.

Second, you become accustomed to it.

Next, you embrace it.

Finally, you defend it.

Isaiah 5:20, "*Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!*"

BUYING TIME—A story is told of a father who came home late, having worked hard all day, tired and a bit irritated. His only son approached him and asked, "How much money do you make an hour?" The father

got mad, pushed the son away saying, "That is none of your business, but if you have to know, I make \$25 an hour" (at a seafood processor).

Later sitting down for supper, the son asked his father if he could borrow \$10. The father flew off the handle and said, "You wanted to know about my salary so you could hit me up for some money to buy some stupid toy!" And he sent the son to his room.

After cooling off, the father, thinking he had been a bit harsh, went to his son's room and told the boy he had had a hard day, and handed him the \$10. The son said, "Oh, thank you!" He immediately pulled out a box from under his bed with some crumpled dollar bills. The father, seeing the son already had money, began to get mad again, and said, "If you already had money, why did you want some more?" The son slowly counted all the money and said, "I've been saving and with the \$10 you gave me, I now have \$25." He presented it to his father and said, "Can I buy one hour of your time?"

Moral—spend your time wisely with those who desire it. There will come a time when it is no longer wanted.

COASTAL DEFINITIONS

Brat—A child who belongs to someone else.

Boy—A noise with dirt on it.

Wife—Dish jockey.

Patience—That which is often needed just when it runs out.

Raisin—A senior citizen grape.

Screen door—What kids get a bang out of.

Ulcer—Something you get when you mountain climb over mole hills.

Inflation—A drop in the buck.

Junk—Something you keep for years and throw away just before you need it.

Flashlight—A case to carry dead batteries in.

Doctor—The man who says to cut out something before he has to cut out something.,

Dandruff—Chips off the old block.

Education—What is left over after you have the facts.

Flood—A river too big for its bridges.

FISHY THOUGHTS

--How old would you be if you didn't know how old you were?

--You don't stop laughing when you grow old; you grow old when you stop laughing!

--By the time you're 75 years old you've learned all you need to know; now you only have to remember it.

--An aged fisherman here in Bon Secour was visiting his doctor. Ending his examination, the doctor said, "That pain in your leg is caused by old age." "Impossible," said the fisherman. "The other leg is the same age and it doesn't hurt."

--The weatherman here at homebase reports "still and clear". Sure enough, he was right...STILL raining and CLEAR up to my knees! (Last month 14+ inches.)

FISHY QUESTION—Last edition's answer was Jonah. We had several correct answers. This time tell me what kind of sea described in the book of Revelation lies before the throne of God.