

The Academy Perspective

Vol. 4, No. 7

April 1995

Vada Lee Barkley, Editor

FEARS IN THE WAY

by Vada Lee Barkley

In his classic description of old age, Solomon said: ". . . fears shall be in the way" (Eccl. 12:5). Who among us would dispute that assertion? We seniors are especially vulnerable to fear. TV commercials, mail advertisers, and telemarketers thrive on the propensity.

Speaking of "fears in the way" reminds me of an incident I remember from my teens. It happened during my junior year in high school. I walked three miles to catch my school bus. About two miles of that distance I walked through the woods. (I visualize that scene when I read Robert Frost's poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening").

No one lived within a radius of at least a mile from the center of that woodland. Only a deserted, dilapidated farm house stood far to the west of my path. The woods posed no threat, however, since no ravenous beasts inhabited that part of north Arkansas. Not to my knowledge at least.

One afternoon some boys on the bus were talking about seeing a bear in the woods south of town. One said, "Vada Lee, that bear's gonna get you going through those woods some time." I made some reply and promptly dismissed the thought.

Following my usual route home, I soon left the road to take a shortcut. About half way through the forest I heard a strange noise.

Through the bushes, I spotted an animal trotting down the path toward me. It was swinging its head from side to side just

like the only live bear I'd ever seen (in a side show). With its head down, it hadn't noticed me.

I froze in my tracks. I simply stood there paralyzed, watching this thing approach.

When the "bear" -- a neighbor's stray hog -- finally saw me, it turned aside into the bushes. My wits returned and I continued my walk.

Since that day, fear has often threatened, and sometimes paralyzed, me. Most of its objects, however, have proved to be phantoms, or at worst, as harmless as that neighbor's pig.

MAY MEETING

Our May 8 meeting will feature published book authors from our membership. Virjean Bayles, representing the Forums and Lectures interest group on the Plans and Programs committee, will be in charge of the program.

ART'S CHUCKLES

The moon will probably be our next vacation spot. People who go there won't have an earthly thing to do.

A cold is both positive and negative. Sometimes the eyes have it, and sometimes the nose.

You can tell a child is growing up when he stops asking where he came from and starts refusing to tell where he is going.

Life doesn't begin at 40 for those who went like 60 when they were 20.

ANNUAL MEETING

The agenda for our annual meeting, April 10, will include the following:

- I. Reports
 - A. Treasurer's Report
 - B. Plans and Programs Committee Report
 - C. Bylaws and Organization Committee Chairman's Report This will involve a request to amend the Bylaw--Article VII., Section 1. Fiscal Matters: "The fiscal year of the Academy shall coincide with that of the University" to read: "The fiscal year of the Academy shall end March 31."
 - D. President's Report
 - E. Nominating Committee Report
- II. Election of Officers

JUST A REMINDER

Annual dues (\$10 per person) are due at the annual meeting for all but the following:

1. Gene Chambers and Ken and Geneva DeLozier. (They joined after January 1; therefore, their initiation fees cover first-year dues).

2. Paul and Martha Gresham and Lyle and Bea Flinner. (They paid twice last spring).

New I.D. cards will be issued for those who need them. Cards will be updated next fall for those who now have them.

WHY WAS THE STONE ROLLED AWAY?

by Dick Howard

"..An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat on it." (Matt. 28:2 NASB)

Why was the stone rolled away? Have you wondered--or maybe asked? All four of the Gospel accounts tell us that the stone was removed, and Matthew adds the detail that it was an angel who rolled it away. We quite naturally think it was so Jesus could get out. But, is that true? We know that later, with His resurrected body, barriers were no problem to Him--even shut doors (cf. John 21:19,26; Luke 24:36). Did He need the stone rolled away to get out of the tomb? Hardly!

Why was the tomb sealed with the stone in the first place? It was to keep the disciples out and not to keep Jesus in! "Therefore, give orders for the grave to be made secure until the third day, lest the disciples come and steal Him away..." (Matt. 27:64)

No--the stone was rolled away, not so Jesus could get out, but so we could see in! What we, and all the the world, see is an empty tomb. "He is not here (a corpse in a grave), for He has risen, just as He said..." (Matt.28:6) So, to this very day it is the symbol of the resurrection--the empty tomb.

But for those despairing and frightened disciples that empty tomb was far more than a symbol. This is one of the two historical evidences of Jesus' resurrection (the other one being His many appearances). How ridiculous was the attempt by Jewish leaders to promote a hoax--that when the guards were sleeping the disciples stole His body (cf. Matt. 28:13). Even the harshest critic ridicules such a scheme. Could such

deception create a faith that caused men and women to even lay down their lives? As has been so often observed, without the actual, bodily resurrection of Jesus there could never have been the church. But He had risen and the empty tomb was proof!

Yet that is not all. Matthew alone tells us that when the angel had rolled away the stone--he *sat* on it. That stone represented the strongest and worst that Jesus' enemies could do. In an act of divine contempt--God(by His angel) used that symbol of human opposition as His resting place. What an awesome evidence of God's triumph.

But what about today? As we have observed, the historic fact of the empty tomb, with its removed stone, *is* a glorious symbol of the resurrection of Christ. We know the historical record, but men can--and have--belittled it. Symbols--even based on historic facts--are not enough. Our faith must rest on more than a symbol. The Holy Spirit can and will make that historical fact a living reality to us. How do we know He lives? A song writer has practically immortalized it--we know He lives "because He lives within our hearts."