



by Dawn Reed
Eastern Ky. Columnist

A Lot Like Tom Brady

Tom wore cleats to enable him to negotiate the AstroTurf in the Raymond James Stadium. As a disciple of Jesus, my feet are to be "shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace"-KJV. (The NCV: "On your feet wear the Good News of peace to help you stand strong.")

Tom's football helmet protects his skull and brain from injury. I have the "helmet of salvation". It is crucial to protect my mind, blocking the lies the devil often tries to spin.

Football players wear a mouthguard to shield their teeth from blunt force trauma. As a Christian, I also need a guard to keep from causing damage with my words. Psalm 141:3 pleads: "Set a guard over my mouth, LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips."

A quarterback is no good without a team. Receivers, tight ends, tackles, linebackers, and others complete the unit that will work together for a common goal: a win. A Christian alone or isolated will wither and waste away. Being connected to a body of believers will strengthen me to live a victorious life. A football huddle might compare to a Small Group/Sunday School class.

Sports teams often have oodles of supporters close at hand. Family and friends happily cheer and boo as necessary, reminders that they are not alone. Hebrews 12:1 tells of my invisible cheering section: "a great cloud of witnesses," saints who have gone on to heaven.

I watched as Tom Brady walked steadfastly from the locker room to the stadium. He was serious. He looked focused. His coach had a plan, a good one, and Tom hoped it would lead to victory.

With God as my coach, I know that He has a plan for my life, a good one. If I focus on Him and His will, He will give me victory, as well.

Like Tom, there will be days when I will win and it will feel great! There will be some days when I'll get sacked or knocked down, but I can't give up. The apostle Paul gave me a running play I can use on those days: "I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me," Philippians 3:14.

When the Super Bowl was over, Tom and the Buccaneers were awarded the Vince Lombardi Trophy. When my days are over, I will receive a crown of life (James 1:12)!

Until the Super Bowl last Sunday, I hadn't realized how much I have in common with Tom Brady.

The famous quarterback stepped on the field ready for a battle against the Kansas City Chiefs. He was armed with football pads, cleats, a helmet, a mouthguard, and a plan. Focused on a victory, he would fight this foe with his teammates all around and fans in the stands. The clash would be talked about for decades.

As a follower of Christ, I am "on the field" every day facing enemies big and small. Instead of foam and rubber pads, God provides a full set of armor which enables me to face them. Ephesians 6:10-18 names each piece: belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, shield of faith, etc.

But, Just When!

by BOB CASEY, preacher
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Just a few years ago a boyhood friend was told by his doctor that he would soon die from lung cancer. He was also a consistent smoker. He said, and I quote: "It is not the thought of actually dying that bothered him as much as not knowing the certainty of the day." Now to me this was a very strange thought. Since one could not read his mind, we can only assume that just maybe in the closing hours somehow he could change some things, or perhaps maybe make some restitutions, or even secure some sense of salvation right before his death. Then again, maybe not of these were his reasons for wanting to know the very date itself.

But there are some things that all living now need to know. One day we will all die if the Lord continues to withhold the day of His coming again. And since most of us are not aware of the certainty of this day, why live in jeopardy of our destiny to stand before Jesus in judgment. (Romans 14:10-12).

Why is it then that many put off the inevitable? Sadly, many act as if they know of the day in spite of what our Lord teaches in **Matthew 24:36**, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my father only." Are we then smarter than the angels? Even they don't know! Again, even if we had an idea concerning the very day of our demise do we think that putting off making our call-

ing and election sure we could make a change in so short a time that would earn us a home in Heaven?

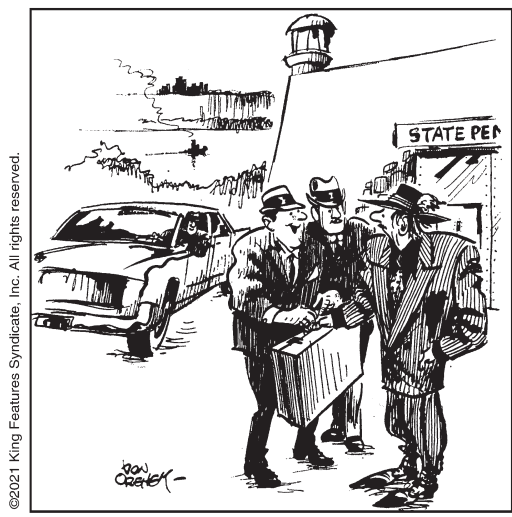
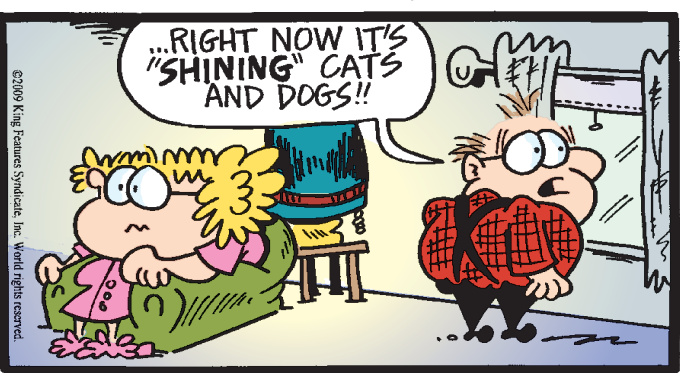
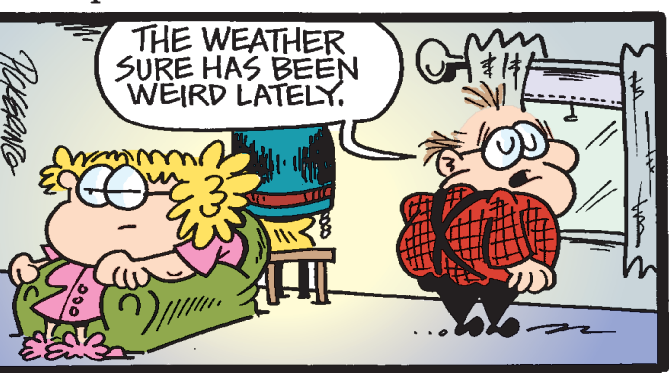
Let us consider this point for a few lines. Many will point out the story in an attempt to justify a closing hour of salvation by using the story found in Matthew 20:1-6 concerning the workers in the vineyard. It tells that some were hired at different hours of the day; and that some were hired at the eleventh hour, or at the ending of the day. Some would point to this and say: "See they went in at the eleventh hour, so can we." But to notice the reality of this story is this, notice that they were all paid. Why? Simply because they all performed labor in the vineyard. They earned their wages by being obedient. Now for the sake of space I want to note **Revelation 22:12-14**. Here our Lord says when he comes again his reward is with him to give men for their labors. **Verse 14** expresses it in this way, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, for in doing so, they will have right to the tree of life, and also be able to live forever in the eternal city."

Now, consider any who are depending upon a few hours or minutes with a hope of gaining salvation. Have they earned it? Have they fully obeyed the Lord's commands pertaining to salvation. Have they taken time to support the Lord's church by a lifelong commitment to attendance, to prayer, to study, to helping others to know the Lord. Simply put, have they earned the right to Heaven? I truly believe that all need to know the truth about the matter! Let us study with you, at home or at the church building. Your hope of heaven may depend upon it.

Call us at 859 (Waco) 36-4165 or visit with us at 70 Bond Street at Camp Avenue in West Irvine.
Sincerely, Bob Casey, 1-859-369-4165

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



"First thing we gotta get you, boss, is a new _____!"

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Awe

DOWNER

Deliver

SECURE

Oppose

BEEKUR

Saunter

LAWDED

TODAY'S WORD

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

Psalm 32:10-11

Many are the woes of the wicked, but the LORD's unfailing love surrounds the one who trusts in him. Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you righteous; sing, all you who are upright in heart!

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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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Bible Word Search Answer on Page 12

BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Daniel in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. From Philippians 4, what does the apostle Paul instruct us to do rather than worry? Cry, Pray, Love, Talk
3. Who, perhaps, did Jesus give a standing ovation to in Acts 7:55-59? Herod, James, John

4. How long did the journey of Ezra take from Babylon to Jerusalem? 3 days, 2 weeks, 4 months, 4 years
 5. Who's the runaway slave in the book of Philemon? Lemuel, Marcus, Doulos, Onesimus
 6. All of Job's children were killed in a ...? Flood, Fire, Wind, Stampede
- Answers on bottom of Page 12**
"Test Your Bible knowledge," with 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in bookstores and online.



Years ago a man who had difficulty believing that God created the universe stopped by my brother's office for a visit. As he was sitting there, he noticed his new electric typewriter. After typing a few lines and watching the little ball swirl around and identify the letters of the alphabet that he wanted, he asked, "Where did this amazing machine come from?"

Remembering that he was an atheist, Michael replied, "Oh, a friend of mine just threw a bunch of bars and bolts, guides and keys, nuts and rollers, screws and springs and some toner stuff into a bucket, shook it for a minute or two, turned it upside down and out came this 'creation.'"

"O.K., Preacher, I get it," he admitted. "What you're telling me is that just as there had to be someone design and put the typewriter together, there must have been Someone to design and put the universe together."

There are many who argue for or against the existence of God. The Bible, however, does not. It simply states that "God is." In Psalm 102:25 we read, "In the beginning You laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands." This obviously means that God "was" before anything existed and that the heavens and earth are the work of His hands. Creation is finite and transitory but our God is not. As Peter reminds us "in keeping with His promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness."

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Stickeler's Puzzle

STICKELERS (sic) by Terry Stickels

How many anagrams can you find for the following?

- 1) stale
- 2) stance
- 3) stripes
- 4) sublet
- 5) stained

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Stickeler's Answer on Page 12