



New Year Greetings

*"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"
(Hebrews 10:23-25)*

We had the privilege of serving our Lord freely without hindrance while many others in various parts of the world had to suffer because of religious intolerance. Also we have to search ourselves whether we were faithful during the past year in our dealings with the Lord and people.



Thomas Nainan

New Year greetings to all the Suvatha magazine readers. Year 2013 left us with all its pride and pleasures. When it started, last year was a new year, but now it has become old. We have all become older by one more year, and a brand new year has dawned on us. During the course of last year some of our dear ones have left the scene but we have not forgotten them. The past is history, the future is a mystery and the present is ours. We will also leave the scene one by one when the years pass by. But as we enter into another new year, let us forget not all His benefits. Several things happened which God's people should never forget. So many evil things and natural disasters have taken place during last year and lakhs of people perished without seeing the new year, but God kept us to see this year, 2014.

We should be happy and thankful to God for yet another thing: What we should not forget is that we had the privilege of serving our Lord freely without hindrance while many others in various parts of the world had to suffer because of religious intolerance. Also we have to search ourselves whether we were faithful during the past year in our dealings with the Lord and people.

As we see the day of our Lord's coming is drawing near, the author of the epistle to Hebrews exhorts us to follow three guiding principles: **First**, we must hold fast the hope

which God has promised to us without wavering. When the world gives us only what is perishing, God has promised us eternal life. By the resurrection of the Son of God, it is confirmed that we, too, have everlasting life. **Secondly**, we are exhorted to stir up one another unto love and to good works. In the new-year let us abound in stirring our fellow beings to do as much good works as possible so that the name of the Lord be glorified and the work of gospel of love is carried out. As we carry out many deeds of love, we encourage others also to do the same. **Thirdly**, we must not neglect the assembling together of believers. We must develop the habit of enjoying the maximum number of occasions for fellowship with one another. As years go by, there is a noticeable slackening in the matter of fellowship gatherings. Many believers nowadays are content with the Sunday worship. But the Apostle asks us not to neglect coming together of believers as many times as possible.

So let us resolve in the New Year 2014 to make all efforts to grow spiritually and encourage others to grow. Have confidence that God who has begun a good work in us will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ. The beginning may appear small but the end will be great. So let us work with patience for the Lord who will take us from glory to glory until we become exactly like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Wishing all "Suvatha" readers a happy and prosperous New Year 2014

Coming to Christ is an EVENT: **Becoming like Christ is a JOURNEY!**

“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son. That whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3.16).

God sacrificed His beloved son on the cross to redeem mankind from sin and the punishment of death. Those who believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sin and accept Him as their personal savior will receive salvation and eternal life. Salvation by accepting Christ as savior is the utmost significant event in life. Salvation brings a new life in Christ, a born again experience, a life with renewed joy, peace and hope. Someone said, “A life without Christ has a hopeless end but a life with Christ is an endless hope”.

Jesus said, “I am the way, truth and life” (John 14:6). Salvation through Christ is the solution leading us to redemption and eternal life. Life will be completely transformed; attitude, interest, goal, habits, purpose, ownership, leadership, desires etc. will change forever. Christ becomes the leader and the Lord of life. The Bible becomes the manual for life. The direction changes from a sinful nature to a sinless life, a hopeless life to a hopeful life, an unhappy person to a happy person and to a life controlled by the will of God and the word of God, the Bible. The day we decide to follow Christ is the beginning of our spiritual journey and growing spiritually is a lifelong process.

“The day we are born, our life started towards death, but the day we are born again our life started towards eternal life” -•What a meaningful and

Peter was a man with many facets of character. He was gifted with spiritual insight, courageous in his confession of faith in Christ, yet guilty of the most cowardly denial

significant statement - a new day, a new journey, new hope, new challenges, new purpose and a new friend, Jesus, to guide and lead us from this perishable world to the imperishable kingdom of God. The Christian journey will be challenging, however we are not travelling alone any more.

Jesus said, “I will never leave you or forsake you”. The one who died for us, saved us and paid great price for us will be with us. There is no moment we are alone in this new journey. We experience a delightful sense of peace no matter what our circumstances may be. A sense of serenity

and security envelops us in spite of our foes, fears, failures, afflictions, disappointments, distractions and defeats. His strong and mighty hand is holding us, His presence is protecting us, His eyes are watching us, His blood is covering us and His spirit is strengthening us to sail smoothly to the shore of Heaven.

The life and spiritual journey of Simon Peter, a close disciple of Jesus is a classic example to study the painful struggles to become Christ like. When Peter was introduced to Jesus by his brother Andrew, he was a shifty, shaky,



Peter was so much like each one of us. He struggled with failures even though he was with Jesus for three years. Our journey to become Christ like is not smooth or easy. There will be many hurdles, fears, failures & frustrations



Joseph Kurian Houston

The day we decide to follow Christ is the beginning of our spiritual journey and growing spiritually is a lifelong process.

Peter reminds us that coming to Christ is an event but becoming like Christ is a journey. We can trust our Saviour and find His mercy and everlasting grace to help us in our time of need.

God knows our heart's desire and love to live for Him. He will restore us from our faults and failures to finish this journey successfully like He restored and recommissioned Peter after His resurrection.

uneducated, untrained and unqualified person. Jesus looked at Simon Peter and said, "You are Simon, the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (John 1:40-42). Cephas is Aramaic for the Greek name Petros, which means "stone or rock". Jesus changed his name in anticipation of what He would do with Peter. Jesus started to change the course of Peter's journey from someone who was catching fish to someone who catches men for the kingdom of God. Peter was a man with many facets of character. He was gifted with spiritual insight and courageous in his confession of faith in Christ, yet guilty of the most cowardly denial. He miserably failed his Lord in an hour of crisis being the only disciple to deny Christ.

Peter was so much like each one of us. He struggled with failures even though he was with Jesus for three years and the one who received the unique triple call as a friend, disciple and an apostle of Jesus Christ. Our journey to become Christ like is not smooth or easy. There will be many hurdles, fears, failures, frustrations, disappointments, attacks, accidents, incredible and uncontrollable circumstances.

We yield to the pressures of life, the pleasures of life, our prestige, pride, position and fame and deviate from our main focus of Christ to our selfish interests. Self sufficiency sets us up and tears us down and sometimes we fail like Peter. Paul the great apostle said. "I know that in me nothing good dwells" (Romans 7:18). Jeremiah, the prophet said, "The heart is deceitful above all things; who can know it? (Jer. 17:9). Jesus' words: "Without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

We yield to the pressures of life, the pleasures of life, our prestige, pride, position and fame and deviate from our main focus of Christ to our selfish interests. Self sufficiency sets us up and tears us down and sometimes we fail like Peter.



Paul's conversion was an incredible event in history, however his quest to know the one who saved him, to serve Christ, to live for Christ and to die for Christ was an amazing journey of numerous challenges, adversities and heartbreaking experiences.

We will have ups and downs like Simon Peter. Our struggle living the Christian life is a battle that lasts a lifetime but it is a battle worth fighting. God knows our heart's desire and love to live

for Him. He will restore us from our faults and failures to finish this journey successfully like He restored and recommissioned Peter after His resurrection. Peter, perhaps reflecting so many battles in his journey, wrote: "Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Resist him, be steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world (1 Peter 5:8,9). He says in 2nd Peter 1:10: "Therefore, brethren, be ever more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if

you do those things you will never stumble". Legend has it that Peter deemed himself unworthy to die in exactly the same way as his Lord had and so begged his tormenters to crucify him upside down.

Peter reminds us that coming to Christ is an event but becoming like Christ is a journey. Along the way we will

have joyous and sad moments, strong and weak experiences, success and failures, peace and worries, gains and losses, excitements and struggles, good days and bad days, miracles and mournings, no matter what, we can trust our Saviour and find His mercy and everlasting grace to help us in our time of need. Let us fight this

battle well, finish our race and keep the faith like Apostle Paul. Christ captured Paul at the gate of Damascus on his way to destroy Christians and then dramatically changed the course of his journey to save many perishing souls for His kingdom. Paul's conversion was an

incredible event in history, however his quest to know the one who saved him, to serve Christ, to live for Christ and to die for Christ was an amazing journey of numerous challenges, adversities and heartbreaking experiences.

Thank God for that unforgettable event in our life accepting Christ as our Savior. Let us continue the journey to be like Christ. When we see Christ as He is, then we will fully be like Him (1 John 3:2) and the journey will finally be finished in Him. May God give each one of us the grace to finish our spiritual journey to be like Jesus Christ.

God's Book for Mankind:

- Part 5 -

Sufficiency of the Bible

Bible Study

By sufficiency of the Bible we mean that the Bible has the necessary instruction and information that God intended to give to mankind through His Word.



The Bible is sufficient to reveal the one and only, triune, living God, His character, nature, and attributes, His wondrous works in the past and present, and His marvelous plan for the future. The Bible is sufficient to reveal to us the sinless origin of our world and humanity, the fall of man, and God's gracious plan of salvation and redemption through His son, Jesus Christ

The Bible is sufficient to reveal to us how to live and function in a corrupt world, in family, and in the body of Christ. The Bible gives sufficient instruction for godly living and making moral and ethical choices. The Bible is sufficient to thoroughly equip God's people for good works. The Bible has all the information we need to live a life that pleases Him and glorifies His name. Even though direct answers to specific questions and particular situations may not be found, we can find scriptural principles that will guide us to know what is right and wrong in the sight of God. The word of God is the final absolute authority for our faith and practice for matters concerning spirituality, morality and eternity.

God has not given any other revelation to any one that is equal in inspiration, revelation and authority regarding matters of eternal consequences. There are those who claim that they have received a word or revelation for

somebody or for the church from God. God does speak and communicate to people through visions, dreams, word of knowledge and other means that he chooses. But it must be examined very carefully in the light of the written word of God and if it does

not agree with the written word of God (66 books) it should be thrown out. An example of this is the repeated false prophesies concerning the second coming of Christ. Down through the years many have prophesied that Jesus is coming back on such and such date. Several years ago someone published a book, "88 Reasons Why the Rapture Will Be in 1988". Another example is Mr. Harold Camping who prophesied that Jesus would return in May 2011. Later he admitted that he was wrong.

The Word of God brings back those who believe and receive His Word, even from the deepest pit of sin. We should study and prayerfully share the

life giving Word with the lost. Those who meditate on the Word of God and obey it become wise and discerning concerning the things of God and avoid the ways of the enemy. The Word of God brings joy and gladness and increases faith and trust in the Lord. Faith comes by hearing the Word of God. ■

God has not given any other revelation to any one that is equal in inspiration, revelation and authority regarding matters of eternal consequences.



Dr. C.P. Varghese

is the Founder & President of *Peniel Bible Seminary*, Peniel Children's Home & Peniel Academy, Keezhillam, Kerala.

Here is the fifth part of the Bible Study series on "**God's Book for mankind**" by Dr. Varghese

Scripture References:

Deuteronomy 4:12; 12:32; Psalms 19:7-12; Proverbs 30:5-6; II Timothy 3:15-17; James 1:18; I Peter 1:23; II Peter 1:3-4; Revelation 20:18-19.

We are responsible to pray **FOR OUR LEADERS!**



**Dr. Shibu
Cherian
D.Min., Ph.D.**

is an ordained Minister with the Church of God and serves as President of United in the WORD Ministries, Inc. He is a certified Clinical Chaplain, a Bible Teacher and a Premarital Counselor. He authors a Bible reading- meditation blog called 'United in The WORD' @ <http://unitedintheword.blogspot.com>. Visit his ministry website @ <http://www.unitedintheword.com>

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim 2:1-4)

Prayer moves the hand that governs the world. Prayer is both a privilege and an obligation: it is a privilege for us to have audience with the Almighty God, and it is an obligation for we are debtors to all with reference to the good news of salvation (Romans 1:14). Apostle Paul lists four aspects of prayer - supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, which the Believer's Bible Commentary has distinguished as follows:

* Supplication is the earnest pleading of specific requests and needs.

* Prayers cover all kinds of our reverent approaches to God.

* Intercessions are those forms of petition in which we address God on behalf of others.

* Giving of thanks describes prayer in which we rehearse the grace and kindness of our Lord, and pour out our hearts in gratitude to Him.

Thus, we should be humble, worshipful, trustful, and thankful when we pray. In the above passage, in particular Apostle Paul is exhorting his spiritual son Timothy that he is responsible to pray for his leaders - whether political, government, spiritual, work-related, etc. - anyone who is an authority figure. The reasons for that are because authorities are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1), and they are ministers of God to us for good (Rom. 13:4).

This instruction takes special meaning when we remember that Apostle Paul wrote this letter in the days of Nero. The terrible persecutions which were inflicted on the Christians by this

wicked ruler did not affect the fact that Christians should pray for their government leaders. The reason Apostle Paul gives is that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence (v. 2).

It is for our own good that our government should be stable and that the country be preserved from revolution, civil war, turmoil, and anarchy. We must pray for those who are in authority over us if

we wish to reap the benefits of good government, which is a prized gift from God for the church's welfare and advancement of the gospel. This prayer is good and acceptable in the sight of God as well (v. 3).

To influence our leaders for God, we need to intercede on their behalf before God. God is the ultimate Sovereign. He is in control, and our prayers affect decisions at the highest level. God hears the prayers of the righteous (Prov. 15:29), and God will turn the leader's heart as He wishes as an answer to our prayers, as read in Prov. 21:1: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes".



Sadhu Sundar Singh:

A modern Saul who met Jesus

Several books on the life and teachings of Sadhu Sundar Singh are available in book shops. But we think it will be interesting to readers of "Suvantha" Magazine to get a glimpse of the miraculous conversion and ministry of the great Indian missionary who was born on 3rd September 1889 in a wealthy aristocratic family in Patiala, Punjab and who is believed to have died in the foothills of the Himalayas in 1929.

In Part 1 in the last issue, the first topic, "Miracle of Conversion" was described.

2. Miracle of Healing and Deliverance

Before the evening Sundar left home, an attempt had already been made on his life by poison, so that the new convert should not live to be a disgrace for the noble Singh family. Poison had been mixed in his food. When he reached the house of a Christian for shelter, the poison began to work and he was nearly dying. The doctor who was called, refused to give him any medicine, as he knew the young man was beyond hope, and that if he treated him he might be blamed for his death. But Sundar boldly claimed Christ's healing power, and he was soon well. The doctor was so deeply impressed at the healing, that he became a Christian, and eventually entered the ministry. Our modern Saul thus faced the attempt on his life soon after conversion, not through those who "watched the Damascus gate day and night to kill him," but by his own folks who poisoned his food. To Saul the deliverance came through a basket let down by the wall; to Sundar it came as the miraculous fulfillment of Christ's promise: "And if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." Saul's conversion was followed by a healing of



Sadhu Sundar Singh

the blinded eyes; Sundar's by a healing of the deadly effects of poison.

3. A Miracle of Unlocking the Prison

Soon Sundar became a mighty instrument in God's hand, and he preached Christ, to thousands all over

India. One of his greatest passions had been to preach to the people of Tibet who were under the powerful sway of Lama religion. Lama was the King-Priest of Tibet', and being antagonistic to Christianity, he persecuted the Sadhu who ventured to preach in his territory. Being furious, the Lama ordered him to imprisonment and to be thrown into a deep well. This was a Tibetan custom of inflicting punishment on criminals. The Sadhu lay in that well without food or water for nearly three days. The following is his own description of what happened on the third night:

"The door was locked, and it was quite dark. There was nothing but dead bodies and bones in that well. I was thinking my time had come, and that I would be called to heaven, when somebody opened the door. I could see no one. Then I knew that a wonderful power had delivered me - but the man who made me free, was no human being." A rope had been handed down by invisible hands, and our hero was pulled out to the top of the well, where he could not find a man whom he could thank. The well is situated near Raz ar town.

Cyril Davey explains this deliverance with much clarity in his biography of Sundar Singh. He points out that it was



Rev. Dr. John Cherian, former Dean, Southern Asia Bible Institute, Bangalore, wrote this brief biography of Sadhu Sundar Singh many years ago as he was profoundly influenced by the miracle life of that great Indian saint.

Most of the miracle stories written here were narrated to him by his father, Pastor K.C. Cherian (Vettiyar) who came to the Lord through the ministry of Sadhu Sundar Singh. We are sure, readers of 'Suvantha' Magazine will be delighted to read about that great apostle of Jesus Christ.

impossible to elevate himself to the top of the well by self-help. He further adds that even if he were able to do so, there was no way of getting out, 'for the Grand Lama himself had removed the key of the well from his own girdle, and by this time it would be back on the jangling key-ring under his robes.' A. J. Appasamy confirms most of these circumstances in his account.

Thus, the victorious Sadhu was out of the prison-well by a supernatural unlocking of the door, even as in the day of Paul at Philippi, "the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened." Acts 16:26. The miracle in Philippi was followed by the opportunity for Paul to preach to the jailor and household. Sadhu's miracle was followed by a similar venture on his part, to witness in the market place nearby. Paul's miracle frightened the Roman magistrates;

Sadhu's miracle scared the Grand Lama of Tibet, who summoned the Christian revolutionary into his hall and questioned him regarding his escape. Mrs. Arthur Parker writes: "But when search was made for the key, and it was found on his own girdle (Lama's), he was speechless with amazement and fear. He then ordered Sundar to leave the city and get away as far as possible, lest his powerful God should bring some untold disaster upon himself and his people." This reminds us of the Biblical narrative of the Philippian jail: "the police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid ... and they took them out and asked them to leave the city." Acts 16: 38-39.

4. Miracles of Angelic Ministry

Angelic ministry has not been a strange phenomenon to many men of God down through history. Angels ministered in connection with the birth of Christ, the Resurrection, and Peter's deliverance from prison. Paul speaks of an angel who stood by him and conveyed a message of safety during a shipwreck near the Sea of Adria. Acts 27:23. Angels are delegated by God to be "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation," according to

the Christian faith. George Fox, the early Quakers, Moody, Alexander Dowie, William Branham, Sarah Schrader, Marietta Davis and others have also experienced the supernatural ministry of angels. Sadhu Sundar Singh has had several such experiences.

One of those striking events took place while the Sadhu was traveling in a rural section of Tibet. In a certain village, the men became hostile to the preaching traveler, and on account of their violent behavior he took refuge in a nearby cave. That was one time when our hero felt that his death was near, for the enemies soon followed him with sticks and

That was one time when Sundar Singh felt that his death was near, for the enemies soon followed him with sticks and stones. Commending his soul to God, he stood in prayer. The angry mob stood suddenly still, within a few yards of their victim. Then they began to move back some paces and whispered together. They asked Sundar: "Who is the other man with you, and many more who are around you, in bright garments?"

stones. Commending his soul to God, he stood in prayer. In relating this scene, Mrs. Arthur Parker says that the angry mob stood suddenly still, within a few yards of their victim. Then they began to move back some paces and whispered together. They asked Sundar: "Who is the other man with you, and many more who are around you, in bright garments?" Sadhu, in astonishment denied that anybody was around him. The men fearfully insisted that the cave was surrounded by a bright body-guard. Naturally, the experience convinced the mob of a supernatural power. They invited Sundar Singh into their village, as he preached to them the Christian message of supernatural providence. Many feared, and many more believed in the message of the Bible, which indeed declares: "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and delivers them."

Sadhu Sundar Singh relates another instance when God's angel came in a human form to bring him deliverance in emergency. This took place in a wooded

section of Kailash on the Himalayan border. He was engaged in preaching tours. Seeing he was a Christian, some antagonists in a village directed him to a dangerous forest-path in answer to his request to show the way. Sadhu followed this path for a long time, until he was lost in the forest, with no human settlements visible anywhere. The following are his own words:

"As I traveled, night came on, but no village appeared, and the sun was setting when I arrived at the bank of a river. From every side, the noise of wild animals came to my ears. Just then I raised my eyes and glanced across the river. I saw a man sitting and warming himself by a fire. He said: "Do not be troubled. I am coming to help you." I was very glad to see him as he rose and came to me, and I was amazed to see how unhesitatingly and fearlessly he entered the swiftly flowing river and came out. He said to me, "Sit on my shoulder and do not fear." So lifting me, he very gently carried me across. But, when I turned and looked back, immediately both the fire and the man disappeared, and there was no bounds to my awe, wondering what this was." This incident has been cited by A. J. Appasamy in his book, *II The Cross is Heaven.*"

The miracle of angelic ministry has been reported at least once more in the life accounts of Sundar Singh. This experience took place in Kamayan, where he kept preaching under great opposition. For a whole day he was unable to get any food. At the end of the day, after much travel he found himself in a desert place in utter exhaustion. Having had no formal shelter, he lay down under a tree and fell asleep. But in the middle of the night, he was awakened by the touch of someone near him. Opening his eyes, he found two persons beside him with food and water. But, as he turned to talk with them, 'there was not a soul to be seen anywhere,' in the words of Mrs. Arthur Parker. The Sadhu gratefully partook of the meals, which no doubt came from miraculous providence.

- To be continued

What is that in your hand?

"Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand? (Exodus 4:2)

"If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it" (Gen 4:7).

In the context of the above passage, sin came only until door step, maybe because there was prayer and faithful souls inside the house. If we consider present day situation - after many years and several generations - being in the period of grace, we see sin closer to us than during that time. Sin is inside our houses in form of visuals, videos and bad news on Television sets, It is on top of the table in form of gadgets like computer, laptops or ipad which bring high end knowledge as well as sinful stuff if not used with grace. It is inside our pockets / hands in form of smart phones with distraction visuals as said earlier, if not used with grace. Sin has a desire on you as there was with Cain, but we should have to rule over it to offer a pleasing sacrifice and find favor before our God. **What is that in your hand?**

"Then the Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. The Lord said, "Throw it on the ground." Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. Then the Lord said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand" (Exod 4: 2-4)

God was revealing to Moses about an object that he held in his hand for a long period of 40 years. The rod was handy for him which was used to tend the sheep. He used the rod for bringing down the leaves for the sheep. He used the rod to guide the sheep and to discipline them. He might have used it to attack the enemies who had come to attack either him or his sheep. The rod



Tommy Philip
Doha Pentecostal
Assembly (IPC), Doha,

had seen many of his mischief during the period in the wilderness. God asked Moses to drop the rod on the ground. The object which gave him confidence or help in the wilderness became a frightening thing when dropped or surrendered in the presence of God. Moses wanted to run away from it. This is the case with us too. We have many handy things to which

Jesus taught three principles: (1) Obey laws and live peaceably, (2) He has provisions even in the depth of the sea and (3) Jesus can use the handy things that Peter has kept even when he claims to have left everything to follow Jesus.

What is that in your hand?

we hold on in our life as our sources of confidence - such as money, a bad case of anger, a strong / harsh way of talk, our powerful relatives, our friendship to someone who might be in powerful positions in politics, our education, our knowledge or our physical strength. Whichever it may be that we rely on other than spiritual solutions for our problems can be 'that which is in our hand'. But God revealed to Moses that his object of

strength and self confidence can turn out to be a frightening thing for him. This is what we also need, we need to lose all alternatives and cling to God for help in our difficult situation. When Moses completely obeyed God, the same rod was made a powerful one which was used for miracles for GOD. **What is that in your hand?**

When Peter had an encounter with Jesus he forsook all and followed Jesus (Luke 5:11). He left everything behind. This is the decision we also take when we start following Christ. Jesus could reveal multiple messages when he did a miracle. Jesus, when questioned about tribute to be given to rulers, told Peter that laws of the land should be kept and live peacefully without offending anyone. *"Jesus said to him. "But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours" (Mat 17:27).*

Through this miracle, Jesus taught three principles: (1) Obey laws and live peaceably, (2) He has provisions even in the depth of the sea and (3) Jesus can use the handy things that Peter has kept even when he claims to have left everything to follow Jesus.

What is that in your hand?

Peter's thoughts are revealed in the next passage: "Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" (Matt. 19:27). Although Peter left everything to follow Jesus, the thoughts for the temporal are always sticking to him. We ourselves are the same; we take strong decisions when starting our race with Christ. As Paul asks: "You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth?" (Gal. 5:7). We have slowed down with

different handy things like the fishing rod and distracting thoughts of Peter. "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Heb. 12:1), We have weights that hinder us and sin that easily besets us. We are lagging behind in our race. We have lost our vigor in prayer, worship and service of witnessing to souls or evangelizing.

Further, we see in John 21:3: "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing".

Here Peter left everything but we see that he had kept the key of his fishing boat hidden in his pocket. Yes this is the case with us in our spiritual life, too. We carry a small key which allows us to open the old things which we had left. We are in depth been molded in sin. We cannot help ourselves and we need help from God.

Jesus said: "Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground

and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds (John 12:24). We have to die to the world. We need to die in our flesh to have the indwelling spirit to be released for action

1. Over confidence in one's own strength is bound to fail.
2. Hypocrisy in a disciple is not acceptable.
3. Love for the Lord has to be above everything else.

in full amount. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). Consider a dead body: It does not respond to temptations or pleasures, has no desire to beautify itself with all the worldly ornaments or fashion, cannot move by itself and is not liked by the world

Peter was restored with a look from Jesus which went sharp into his heart. The eyes of Jesus are as fire; it can bring heat to our heart. It was again on the shore of Tiberius, Peter out of shame jumped deep into the sea hiding his nakedness when he heard about the

Master. Jesus enquired about Peter in Luke 24 seeing him as a timid injured person in his heart. Jesus brought him to the shore of Tiberius gave him the best food ever and personally asked him about his love towards Jesus, not one time but three times. Here also there are multiple messages from Jesus:

1. Over confidence in one's own strength is bound to fail. Peter's words to Jesus when He told him about denying the Lord before the cock crew showed his over confidence.
2. Hypocrisy in a disciple is not acceptable. Peter was

made to understand that he cannot be hypocrite.

3. Love for the Lord has to be above everything else. Jesus wanted to ensure that by asking Peter three times.

When Peter threw away everything in his hand and began to love and trust the Lord fully, he was restored to his prime place as an apostle, stood up together with the other apostles and gave the inaugural address of the church when it was established on the Day of Pentecost.

What is that in your hand?

Incredible story of a contact lens!

Brenda, a rock climber, was almost halfway to the top of the tremendous granite cliff. She was standing on a ledge where she was taking a breather. As she rested there, the safety rope snapped against her eye and knocked out her contact lens. "Great", she thought. "Here I am on a rock ledge, hundreds of feet from the bottom and hundreds of feet to the top of this cliff, and now my sight is blurry".

She looked and looked, hoping that somehow it had landed on the ledge. But it just wasn't there. She felt the panic rising in her, so she began praying. She prayed for calm, and she prayed that she may find her contact lens. When she got to the top, she was saddened because she could not clearly see across the range of mountains. She thought of the bible verse "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth". She thought, "Lord, You can see all these mountains. You know every stone and leaf, and You know exactly where my contact lens is. Please help me".

Later, when they had hiked down the trail to the bottom of the cliff they met another party of climbers just starting up the face of the cliff. One of them shouted out, "Hey, you guys! Anybody lose a contact lens?"

Well, that would be startling enough, but you know why the climber saw it? An ant was moving slowly across a twig on the face of the rock, carrying it!

Brenda told the incredible story to her father who was a cartoonist. He drew a cartoon of an ant lugging that contact lens with the caption, "Lord, I don't know why You want me to carry this thing. I can't eat it, and it's awfully heavy. But if this is what You want me to do, I'll carry it for You".

I think it would do all of us some good to say, "God, I don't know why You want me to carry this load. I can see no good in it and it's awfully heavy. But, if You want me to carry it, I will".

God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called. Apostle Paul wrote: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13).

When you pass through trials, KNOW THAT YOU ARE IN GOD'S HANDS!

I read the following story which inculcated a sense of awe and I marvelled at the ways of our God Almighty. A woman was reading her daily scriptural portion from the book of Malachi where she came across a verse which made her think. It said, "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver". After reading the verse she had a desire to understand the actual meaning of the verse for a better meditation. The verse compares God's role with that of a silversmith. Hence, she approached a silversmith to watch him at his work and gain firsthand knowledge of purifying silver. She observed the process carefully to learn how he goes about refining the silver. As she was looking, she saw that he held a piece of silver over the fire and heated it to a very high temperature. When asked about it, the silversmith explained that, during refining, one needs to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flame will be the hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman imagined herself in the hands of God, the silversmith where she was being heated by various tests and trials to refine her and remove away all her impurities and make her faith stronger in God. The verse says that he sits as a refiner and purifier of silver. She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire for the whole time during the refining process. The silversmith answered "yes", he had to sit there holding the silver and moreover, he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was being refined in the fire. If the silver was left even a moment longer in the flames, it would be destroyed and will not be useful anymore. The woman asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?" He answered, "Oh that's easy it is refined when I see my image in it".

This story clearly helped me to learn about the manner in which God brings



Anoop Chacko, UK

us through tests and trials. God is our silversmith and we are the silver in His hands. God may lead us through very tough and painful situations but take heart as those will be times of refinement in our lives. Just like the silver, God may put us in the hottest point of the fire for a short period. The silver has to go through this process to be pure and to increase its value. Similarly when we pass through some difficult trials in our lives we become purer and clean in God's sight.

Next what amazed me was that the

He knows our strengths and weaknesses and our threshold of holding on in trials. Bible says: 'God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear' (1 Cor. 10:13).

silversmith sits at the fire and sets his eyes on the silver throughout the time it was heated; moreover he is holding the silver in the fire. Similarly we too in our times of testing and trials may feel that we are left alone and God has forsaken us and does not care for us. On the contrary God is holding us in His hands and watching over us when we are passing through the hottest trials. He always has His eyes on us throughout those tough times of refinement in our lives. Bible says He will never leave us nor forsake us.

The silversmith holds the silver to be purified from all its impurities, sitting in front of the heat though out the process

because it could not be left alone as it would turn out to be useless if it is left a bit longer in the heat. It is marvellous to see that the silversmith has to watch the silver closely. So the silversmith sacrificially sits with the burning silver despite the heat he has to bear. Just like the silversmith, God our creator, purifier and perfecter of His children watches over us closely as we are passing through the toughest times in order to see us refined, fruitful for others and His kingdom.

Metaphorically we can see that God won't lead us into trials which we cannot bear. He knows our strengths and weaknesses and our threshold of holding on in trials. Bible says: 'God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear' (1 Cor. 10:13).

However many times we are forced to question God as to why God wants us to go through such difficult and distressful situations in our lives. The

answer lies in the last few lines of the above story. God wants us to pass through these tests and trials in our lives in order to make God's face shine on us. Thus, we, His children would be able to reflect our wonderful God through our refined lives and set an example for others.

The main purpose of purification is not only to refine us but also to change and mould us into something useful. Bible says in Proverbs 25:4: 'Remove impurities from the silver and the silversmith can craft a fine chalice'. Thus refining our lives makes us useful vessels in God's hands to fulfil His purpose on earth.

Dear friends, remember, today if you feel the heat of the fiery trials in your life; do not panic because you are secure in God's hands and He has His eyes on you. He will not let you to be perished but will watch over you until you come out refined and pure.



TBN founder, Paul Crouch dies at 79

Paul Crouch, the televangelist who built the Trinity Broadcast Network (TBN), the world's largest Christian broadcasting network, has died after a decade-long fight with degenerative heart disease. Crouch began his broadcasting career while studying theology by helping build the campus' radio station. He moved to California in the early 1960s to manage the movie and television unit of



the Assemblies of God before founding TBN in 1973 with his wife, Jan. TBN grew into an international Christian

empire that beams prosperity gospel programming to every continent, round the clock. It has 84 satellite channels and more than 18,000 television and cable affiliates. TBN has created a Christian amusement park in Orlando, Florida, "The Holy Land Experience" where the visitor can make an imaginary tour of Israel. According to his grandson Brandon Crouch: "He was an incredible businessman, entrepreneur, visionary; he built something that impacted the world".

Critics talk about Paul and Jan's extravagant life-style and liberal spending on private jets and mansions and how TBN spends the hundreds of millions of tax-exempt donations they receive from viewers. Paul is survived by his wife and their two sons, Matthew and Paul Jr.

Paul Crouch has certainly made an impact on Christian Television.

Now bones of St. Peter! What a joke!!

Tens of thousands of pilgrims gathered to catch a glimpse of the remains of St. Peter - eight fragments of bones between two and three



Peter's bones!

centimeters long - displayed on an ivory bed within a bronze chest on a pedestal in St. Peter's Square, on Sunday, November 24, 2013. The newspaper report presents St. Peter as the "first Pope of the Catholic church"!

At the start of the solemn ceremony, Pope Francis prayed in front of the chest before blessing the bones with incense. With no DNA evidence to support the find, the debate over whether they really do belong to Apostle Peter is likely to continue, but the Vatican has said it "has no intention of opening up any argument"! They probably know that the bones will not stand any test or scrutiny. Rino Fisichella, head of the pontifical council for evangelisation, said: "People of God, have always believed these to be the relics of the apostle Peter, and we continue to venerate them in this way".

Roman Catholics find new ways to fool their 'faithful', draw them in thousands to St. Peter's square and empty their pockets! How ridiculous are their claims!! Can people be so gullible?

Church of atheists!

A movement of atheist churches spearheaded by two prominent British comedians is becoming popular in some cities of USA also. One such assembly inaugurated in Los Angeles recently attracted several hundred people bound by their belief in non-belief. The founders, British duo Sanderson Jones and Pippa Evans, are currently on a tour around USA and Australia to raise donations to launch new Sunday Assemblies. During the service, attendees stomped their feet, clapped their hands and cheered as Jones and Evans led the group through rousing renditions of hit songs that took the place of gospel songs. There was an "inspirational talk" about important inventors and scientists and some stand-up comedy. Congregation later began a 'get-to-know-you' game that involved clapping and slapping the hands of the person next to them.

Jones got the new idea while attending a Christmas carol concert six years ago. He said: "There was so much about it that I loved. There were awesome songs, interesting talks about improving yourself and helping other people. But at the heart of it was something I don't believe in - God". Sunday Assembly - whose motto is 'Live Better, Help Often, Wonder More' - is targeting people who left their faith but now miss the community that church provided. Critics say: "There's something not OK with appropriating all of this religious language, imagery and ritual for atheism".

I quote the following statement by a commentator about the atheist's church: There's an old joke that says: How do you describe an atheist at his funeral? "All dressed up with no place to go". Now there is a place atheists can go on Sundays! In a free country, because of a

Christian base, atheists are free to assemble or not, just as anyone else is. Only in such nations does that freedom exist. (It certainly didn't exist in the Soviet Union, which was based on atheism.) The idea of atheists going to church supports the idea that we are all hard-wired by the Creator to worship. St. Augustine wrote: "You have made us for Yourself, Oh God, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in You". An atheist said: "I loved to watch a certain preacher on TV every week. I loved his sermons because they were filled with motivation, goal-setting, uplifting stories. If the preacher mentioned God, I would just edit that out, in my mind".

Unfortunately, many Christian churches have unwittingly done the same, removing essential tenets of the Christian faith. It's sad to think that in some of our Sunday assemblies, there is no longer an emphasis on Christ's atoning death for sinners and His resurrection from the dead. But that is the heart of the Christian message - "Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again". In one sense, a "cross-less Christianity" makes just as much sense as an "atheist church". G. K. Chesterton once said: "The worst moment for an atheist is when he is really thankful and has no one to thank. If there were no God, there would be no atheists!"

Thanksgiving - North Korean style!

Americans celebrate "Thanksgiving Day" every year in November to thank God for their blessings and prosperity. The day commemorates the first Thanksgiving feast by the Pilgrim Fathers when they landed in America. The Pilgrims were thankful to God who miraculously kept them alive during a terrible time that might well have killed them all.

In contrast, the news emanating from North Korea makes interesting reading. ASSIST News Service reports that in North Korea, thanksgiving to North Korea's "Eternal President" Kim Il Sung must be given at every meal. The best wall on every house must have photos of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il and at every meal families look up at the picture and pray, thank you, Father Kim Il Sung, for this food. One hundred percent of its citizens are required to worship Kim Il Sung because North Korea is ruled forever by its deceased "eternal" president.

Nebuchadnezzar has returned!

Exit monkeys - enter pigs!

A leading geneticist has suggested that humans did not evolve from just apes but was a hybrid of a chimpanzee

and pigs. His hypothesis is based on the fact that though humans have many features in common with chimps, there are a lot more that don't correspond to any other primates. He then suggests that there is only one animal in the animal kingdom that has all of the traits which distinguish humans from apes - the ordinary pig. He explains: "Genetically, we are close to chimpanzees, and yet we have many physical traits that distinguish us from chimpanzees. Features found in human beings, but not in other primates, can only be explained by a cross between a chimpanzee and a non-primate". He points out the frequent use of pigs in the surgical treatment of human beings. Pig heart valves are used to replace those of human coronary patients. Pig skin is used in the treatment of human burn victims. Serious efforts are now underway to transplant kidneys and other organs from pigs into human beings. Why are pigs suited for such purposes? Why not goats, dogs, or bears, he asks.

To top it all, the eminent geneticist suggests that Charles Darwin told only half the story of human evolution!

Man can be so pig-headed and go to any extent to deny the role of Creator God. Bible categorically affirms: "A fool says in his heart, there is no God!" (Psalms 14:1)

Ten Principles of Christian Giving from 2 Corinthians 8 & 9

By Rev. John R.W. Stott

1. Christian giving is an expression of the grace of God (8:1-6)
2. Christian giving is a gift of the Spirit (8:7)
3. Christian giving is inspired by the cross of Christ (8:8,9)
4. Christian giving is proportionate giving (8:10-12)
5. Christian giving contributes to equality (8:13-15)
6. Christian giving must be carefully supervised (8:16-24)
7. Christian giving can be stimulated by a little friendly competition (9:1-5)
8. Christian giving resembles a harvest (9:6-11a)
9. Christian giving has symbolic significance: Apostle Paul meant it to be a deliberate symbol of Jewish-Gentile solidarity in the body of Christ. *(Similarly our gift symbolizes our support of the cause to which we are giving. For example, when we contribute to evangelistic enterprises, we are expressing our confidence that the gospel is God's power for salvation. When we contribute to economic development, we express our belief that every man, woman, and child bears God's image and should not be obliged to live in dehumanizing circumstances. When we give to the funds of the local church, we acknowledge its centrality in God's purpose and His desire for its maturity)*
10. Christian giving promotes thanksgiving to God (9:11b-15)

Children's

CORNER



Are you Jesus?



The train was about to arrive at the station. There was a lot of hustle and bustle at the station as people were crowding with briefcases and bags. Among them were a few salesmen rushing to board the train to work. One of the salesmen, Roy, in his hurry carelessly kicked over a table which held a few baskets of apples. Apples rolled everywhere. Without stopping or looking back, every one ran to board the train. But Roy didn't board the train along with his friends. He felt sorry for the girl whose apple stand had been overturned.

Roy went to the girl. He looked at her and felt sorry for her even more when he realised that the girl was totally blind! She was softly crying, tears running down her cheeks in frustration and at the same time she was helplessly searching for her scattered apples as the crowd ran about her, no one stopping, and no one to care

for her plight. Roy knelt on the floor with her, gathered up the apples, put them into the baskets and helped set the table up once more. As he did this, he noticed that many of the apples had become battered and bruised; these he set aside in another basket. When he had finished, he pulled out his wallet and said to the girl, "Here, please take this Rs. 200 for the damage we did. Are you okay?"

She nodded through her tears. As the

salesman started to walk away, the blind girl called out to Roy, "Mister..." Roy paused and turned to look back into those blind eyes. She continued, "Are you Jesus?"

He stopped in mid-stride, and he wondered. This question continued to ring in his ears every time he came to the station. A small helping hand of Roy helped the blind girl to see the love of Jesus in him.

Dear children,

In this world we may be very busy but still in your busy schedule please stop for a moment and help the needy. That's what Jesus wants. The Bible says in Matt. 5:16 "let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." ■



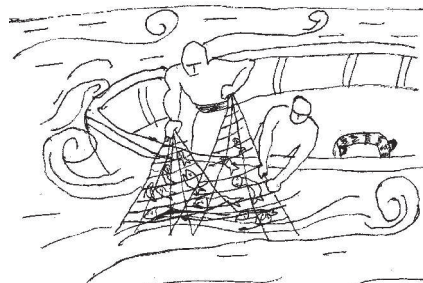
Juby Anoop

God Called Samuel

God called him "Samuel ! Samuel ! Samuel answered "Here I am Lord".



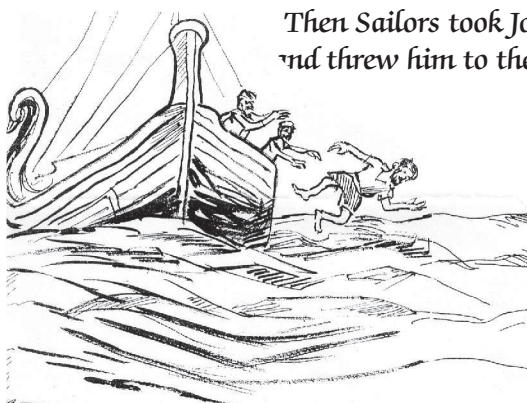
Abel John
Chembur, Mumbai.



Obey Jesus "Let your nets down for a great catch"



Jeff Sam Scariah
Kerala



Then sailors took Jonah and threw him to the sea.



God commanded the fish and it vomited Jonah on to dry land



Banage P.K.