



# “Created Unto Good Works...”

*"For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (Eph. 2:10).*

The Bible makes it very clear that salvation is by the grace of God through faith in the finished work of the one and only Savior of the world, Jesus Christ. We must know and remember that we are God's workmanship. The word 'workmanship' has to do with the care, concern and commitment that is invested in a product by the one who created that show piece. God not only created us as human beings but also he recreated,- regenerated- made alive spiritually- in Christ Jesus. He lavished His love and grace that is greater than all our sins. He gave us not only His only begotten son but also His Holy Spirit and Holy Word so that we could live in holiness and righteousness. All the righteous deeds and good works of an unsaved person are like stained clothes before the Lord. But the righteous deeds of those who are washed by the blood of the Lamb of God are precious fine linen of the bride of Christ. (Rev 19:8).

Remember that good works do not make a person Godly, but a Godly person will do good works. Doing good works ought to be a natural outcome of being born again. It should be a spontaneous expression of being born of God, born from above. We should do good works in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Do gladly, with rejoicing, do as unto the Lord Jesus Christ. Do with whole heart, do without griping, complaining or hypocrisy. It is not enough that we do a good work here and there, now and then, we should be full or rich in good works.

The God of the Bible is a good God who is very active in doing good. In the very first chapter of the Bible we read that God saw every thing He made and it was very good. God's children must live in agreement with the values and priorities of our heavenly father. We should be zealous for good works. The word "zealous" or zeal comes from the root word "zeo" meaning "to boil with heat." So it means to have a burning desire for some thing good or be passionate. This is the opposite of being "lukewarm."

Jesus set forth the perfect example for us in that it is written that He went about doing good.

John the apostle wrote the words of Jesus regarding this, "Many good works have I shown

you from my Father.....". Paul wrote that the Word of God is given to us to instruct us and to fully prepare us for all good works. Let's do it!

It is not always easy to do good works that is why the Holy Spirit encourages us in the Scriptures that we should not grow weary in doing good. So we should encourage one another for good works, which is a good thing.

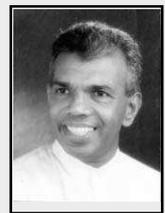
Good works reflects the image of God in God's people. Good works bring glory to our father in heaven. Good works demonstrates our obedience to our father. Good works is an evidence or proof of our faith. It is faith in action. It is a witness to the world that we do love the Lord and love people. Doing good works will be a Godly example for others to follow. We should do good works to believers and non-believers, but especially to believers. We should not do good works for others to see or to get praise from people.

A great man of God, evangelist and revivalist John Wesley said:

*"Do all the good you can,  
By all the means you can  
In all the ways you can,  
In all the places you can  
To all the people you can,  
As long as ever you can"*

Everyone reading this article has many practical ideas of good deeds that we should do. Let me suggest a few here and ask every reader to make your own list and start practicing it or continue practicing what you are already doing.

Pray and ask the Lord to show you specific people and needs that you can get involved with and help with God has given to you. Of course there are so many people and so many needs. That is the reason, it is very important that you pray for specific direction. Write down a list of what God has given to you that you can use to encourage and help others. Be a friend to lonely people. Make telephone calls, emails or regular mail letters. Visit people with their permission when it is convenient for both them and you. Be a good and caring listener. Oftentimes people do not need



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# “Consider your ways!”

*"Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Consider your ways" (Haggai 1:7)*



**Pastor  
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**"Consider your ways and see whether you are doing anything to build the Kingdom of God"**

Haggai the prophet was an instrument in God's hand to bring instructions to God's people. In the first chapter of Haggai God is sending His instructions to the governor of Judah and to Joshua the priest. A prophet is also one who is sent by God (v. 12). Haggai, God's mouthpiece was also sent to represent God. Haggai was sent to tell the people that God knows the hearts of all the people especially because He is "the Lord of hosts" meaning one who rules over all the earth, the sovereign God. From His throne His eyes go to and fro over the whole earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His (2 Chro. 16:9). God knows the attitudes, intentions, thoughts of every people especially when it comes to doing the building of God's kingdom (here the rebuilding of the Solomon temple was in view). The people by their actions were saying they were not interested in the rebuilding of the temple. Even though God blessed His people abundantly, they didn't care for God's work. They were only interested in building their own houses or their own private kingdoms. They were busy making beautiful houses for themselves rather than doing anything towards the temple of the highest God. They planted much, but harvested little. They ate but were never filled. They drank but were still thirsty. Had expensive clothes, but was still not warm. They earned plenty but at the end of the day their monies ran out – always experiencing emptiness. If we do what the world does, then we will not be satisfied. What satisfies people is

nothing but doing the will of God. They went to the harvest and brought it in. But God blew it away by His breath because their intentions were to build up themselves (v. 9). God told them even though they were abundantly blessed; He Himself blew their riches away because they were not interested in God's work. They were complacent and therefore God stopped the snow and the earth's fruits, brought drought on the land and the mountains, on the grain and the new wine and the oil, on whatever the ground brings forth, on men and livestock, and on all work of the people.

God will be honored when people start to rebuild God's holy temple. God is not much interested in the construction of the building itself. Verse 8 instructed them to go to mountain tops to bring wood into the building. The building itself was made of stone, so God was talking about the inside of the building (people as in Jer. 5:14). People must fill the temple. So God instructs them to "Consider your ways" (v. 5, 7) which means "Think carefully about what you are doing." Even today God is speaking to us through Haggai. Consider our ways (look keenly at what we are doing) – check what you have done so far and what your plans are. Do they comply with God's will? Do your current plans and plans for the future honor the Lord's name? Are you building your own private empires or are you doing anything for the kingdom of God? So examine your ways. As corporations make financial statements periodically, how about making a spiritual



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**- John Wesley**

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advise, they just need some one who care enough to give them a listening ear and a caring heart. Pray for and with people. Give a ride to some who needs to go some place but do not have transportation, invite some one for a meal. Buy school supplies such as uniform, note books, text books, pen, pencil and/or other items. If you are not able to do all of it do what you can and may be another person will do the rest. Give free tuition to school and college students. Help a widow and/or orphan or a truly needy person/family with some of their needs such as educational

needs, medical needs, housing needs, marriage needs and the list goes on and on and on. Compliment some one for some thing done well. Encourage that person, who did not do very well but tried to do something, so they will try again. A word of encouragement or actions of kindness can and does do a lot of good and we do not know how far-reaching of a positive effect it can have on some one.

God has before ordained that we should do this in His name for His glory. So do not forget or neglect to do good for God is greatly pleased with such sacrifice. Let us keep up the good work and impact the lives of many for here and eternity.

*Scripture References:*

*Matt. 5:16. John 10:32. Acts 10:38, Gal. 6:9. Eph. 2:10. Col. 1:10; 3:17. 1 Tim. 6:18. 2 Tim. 3:17. Titus 2:14; 3:8,14. Heb. 10:24;13:16, 1 Pet. 2:21.*

# "THAT NONE (we know) SHOULD PERISH"

The other day as I was reading and meditating from the Bible, I got arrested by God! I was stopped on my tracks as God opened my eyes to a couple of all-too familiar verses, which were none other than John 3:16-17: "*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved*" (John 3:16-17). You will notice that I have highlighted some portions of these verses that caught my attention, and it dawned on me that what I was reading was God's desire for humankind through the ages past.

As we examine these verses closely, we are confronted with what God *truly desires* for this world. It says that he love our world (meaning, *all the people in our world*) so very much that He sent His one and only begotten Son to travel through the million galaxies to this earth for one and only one purpose – *that no one should perish*. This has been the heart cry of God from the very beginning, and we can see that when we examine the pages of the Bible from the very beginning of time.

In Genesis, we read that God created the entire world, and all the creatures living in this world. Finally, God created man (Adam) in His own image and placed him in the Garden of Eden. However, when God saw that Adam was lonely, God provided for him a helper and companion, Eve. They both had everything that they needed in that garden. There was only one rule for them to follow – *they were not permitted to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - for in the day they would do so, they would surely die* (Gen. 2:16-17). When Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, did God keep His word? Yes, they died spiritually and broke their communion with God. However, we can take a peek into the mind of God as we see what God did for them after this event – God killed an innocent animal in their place and clothed them Himself with those tunics of skin (Gen. 3:21).

Thereafter, God drove them away from that garden, in order to ensure that they would not eat from the tree of life and live forever in that fallen state. This 'living forever in that fallen state' is aptly described by the word 'perish', or in other words, God did not want Adam and Eve to perish in eternal sin and condemnation. Even in that garden, God



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statement about your life? Look at what God has gifted you with, and how you used them to glorify God. What does your balance sheet show? Can it stand the test through fire?

The people responded by obeying the voice of the LORD their God and the words of Haggai the prophet, as the LORD their God had sent him; and the people feared the presence of the LORD (v. 12). They responded favorably to the message of the prophet Haggai, who spoke just as the Lord instructed him, and the people began to respect the Lord. The correct response for anyone when hearing God's word is to be obedient to it and also give respect to the person perhaps a pastor or prophet for being God's ambassador. When they obeyed God's words it brought praise to God. Their immediate response to the instructions honored God's name. There can be no worship without obedience to God's word. True worship is a response of loving and obeying the Lord.

It is noteworthy that because the people responded positively to God's instruction, God immediately sends another message to them, "I am with you, says the LORD." Then God stirred up their spirits to do God's work in unity. God energized and encouraged, sparked the enthusiasm and

made everyone eager to work towards building God's temple. The enthusiasm to do anything from God is an undertaking of the Holy Spirit. God's spirit shook them up and moved them to start rebuilding the temple. This took place on the 24th day of the 6th month, in the 2nd year of King Darius (Hag. 1:15). Compare with verse 1 when the word of the LORD first came by Haggai on the 1st day of the 6th month in the 2nd year (Hag. 1:1) – it is interesting to note that God keeps track of when He sent His prophet and when God's people responded to His messages!

So consider your ways. Carefully look at what you are doing now. All people, young and old have talents that must be put to proper use. So go out and distribute gospel tracts. Or write and print the tracts. Or donate money to the organizations who undertake such an endeavor. Or perhaps your gifting is to preach in street corners, so go and do it without fear, because God said that He is with you when you start to obey God. Or maybe you can be the Good Samaritan who took the wounded to the inn, go ahead help the needy or feed the hungry! But do it quickly before God starts to blow your blessings away with His breath.

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planned that one day the 'Seed of the woman' (Jesus Christ) would bruise the head of the serpent (Satan), which He did about 4000 years later on the cross at Calvary.

Let me mention a couple of incidents in the Old Testament that clearly proves that God does not want humankind to perish (die eternally condemned in sin). When the wickedness of man became too much for God to bear (Gen. 6:5), God decided to destroy the sinful humans, but not before giving them a chance to repent and come back to God. After Enoch started walking with God

when he was 65 years old, he had a son whom he named through a divine revelation as Methuselah, which means "*when he dies it (the judgment) will come*" (Gen. 5:21-23). This literally happened that on the same year that Methuselah died, on the 600th year of Noah's life God destroyed the earth with water (Gen. 7:11). We

are aware that Methuselah was the oldest person who ever lived on this earth (for 969 years). But why did he live that long? Because God was extending His grace to the earth allowing him to live as long as possible, and during the last 120 years before he died, his great-grandson Noah preached repentance to his world. Sadly, Noah could just save his own family of eight people from perishing with the rest of humanity (Heb. 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 3:5-7). God Himself shut them in the ark (Gen. 7:16), and the rest of the people living in that age perished in the waters of God's judgment!

The next incident that we see was when God decided to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire because their sins were "very grave" (Gen. 18:20). However, God did not want anyone to perish, so He revealed His intention to Abraham beforehand (Gen. 18:16-33), sent His angels to Sodom (Gen. 19:1), and literally dragged Lot, his wife and his two daughters out of Sodom for the one reason:

*"the Lord being merciful to him"* (Gen. 19:16). God did not want anyone in Sodom to perish in that judgment fire, but they were too depraved and blinded in sin and darkness to realize that they had a real opportunity not to perish through God's judgment!

The heart cry of God - has ever been and always will be - that '*none should perish*' (Matt. 18:14). For this very purpose, Jesus Christ came to this world born through a virgin at the right moment in history. He lived and died for that purpose. While He was on the earth, Jesus

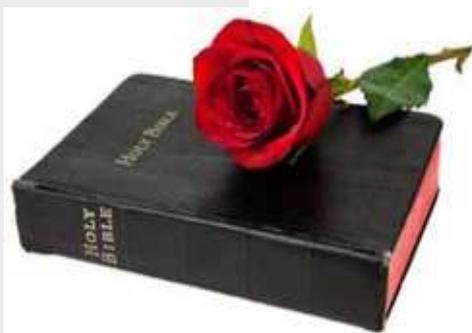
appointed and sent out seventy disciples (Luke 10:1) to whom He counseled that they should rather rejoice that they were not perishing with the rest of the world, but that their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). Before He left the earth, Jesus gave His final commandment (called as 'The Great Commission') for His disciples was that they should preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16), and *make disciples of all nations/ people groups* (Matt. 28:18-20). Jesus gave them (and us) both *authority* (Matt. 28:18-19) and *power* (Acts 1:8) to achieve this mammoth task!

*Dear Friend*, what does God require from you? That you would reach out to 'your world' with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who are the people in your world? Take out a paper and pen and write down the names of all the people that you know, including your family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, etc. Then cross out the names of the people that you know have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and their godly lives testify to that fact ("by their fruits we can know them"). Remember, the people whose names you have not crossed out are your world and they are your responsibility to evangelize. You need to start praying daily for these people presenting them by their names to God, and then look out for opportunities to witness to them. *Unless they repent, they will perish for eternity!* (Luke 13:3, 5) The message of the cross may be hidden (2 Cor. 4:3) and foolishness to them (1 Cor. 1:18), but you should do your part in witnessing to them. Then God will do His part in saving them from their sins according to His predetermined will (John 10:28). Let your life become a fragrance of Christ to them (2 Cor. 2:15), so that they are attracted to the God you preach and profess!

Let me close with this final thought: our Bible ends with these words of Jesus: "*Surely I am coming quickly*" (Rev 22:20). For over 2000 years, Jesus had wanted to come back, but what has kept Him back - He does not want anyone to perish! "*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*" (2 Peter 3:9)

Let us obey the great commandment of God (Matt. 22:37-40) by *loving God* (by obeying His Word) and *loving our neighbor as ourselves* (by not allowing them to perish for eternity). That is how the world will know that we are His disciples (John 13:34-35). We need to do our part in reaching others with the gospel that ***none we know should perish, and hasten*** the second coming of Christ (2 Peter 3:12). Will you take up the challenge and do your part as well starting from today?

May God give you a real burden for your perishing world today is my prayer and hope!



Let us obey the great commandment of God by *loving God* (by obeying His Word) and *loving our neighbor as ourselves* (by not allowing them to perish for eternity)

*"your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish" (Matt. 18:14)*

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# "Revive us, O Lord"

*"And to the angel of the church in Sardis write, 'These things says He who has the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars: "I know your works, that you have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you" (Rev. 3:1-3)*

Sardis was the capital of Lydia and was an ancient, flourishing, famous city of then Asia. It had a big name too. It was the first city in that part of the world that was converted by the preaching of Apostle John. So the church in that city held a great name and had great reputation. Such churches will be crowded with reputed people. Once a poor person, who was converted from non Christian background went to a reputed Pentecostal church in the city. After the church service, the pastor of the church came out and met him personally and advised him to go to another church from next week onwards as that church and its people are not suited for him. What is a church for? If the church does not serve its purpose, then what church it is? Remember what our Lord has said: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matt. 5:13). And He further said this too: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid" (Matt. 5:14). It is possible for professing people or professing church to be alive in their own esteem, and yet to be dead or dying in God's account.

How can a dead believer or a dead church be revived? How can we prevent ourselves from dying? How can we prevent a church from dying? There is answer with our Lord for these questions. He Himself is the answer.

In verse 1 we see that He has seven spirits of God. "The seven spirits of God" represent the fullness of the Holy Spirit. No one can bring revival to us or to our church except our Lord. Revival preachers may be available, but revival is with Jesus Christ and Holy Spirit only. It was this truth God revealed to Zerubbabel through the prophet: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My



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steps to be taken for revival

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Spirit,' says the LORD of hosts" (Zech. 4:6). Zerubbabel was on a rebuilding mission for God and His people. So the answer is simple. Rely on Holy Spirit who is God within us, if we want to revive or to be revived. Our Lord said: "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me" (John 15:4).

He also has seven stars in His hand. Who are these stars? They are the angels of churches (Rev. 1:20). They are the ministers of churches, appointed by Jesus (1 Cor. 12:28, Eph. 4:11) and are in His hand and He controls the churches through them. They are responsible and accountable to Him for the churches and souls. Many churches and believers are ignoring the ministers and despising them without knowing the Word of God has prohibited doing so. Look what the scripture says: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. 13:17). Let the churches know that the ministers are in His hand. Let the ministers also know

this truth.

What we learned from the above is that our Lord is the sole authority of the church and He only can revive us. He will do this with His Holy Spirit and using His angels (ministers). Now what do we have to do for a revival?

Our Lord has given five directives for this:

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## 1. Wake up / Be watchful (3:2):

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Our Lord instructed His dear disciples in a critical moment in this way: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). We have the direction from our Lord to be vigilant always. The Spirit in us has the readiness but the flesh is just opposite. For which of these two we are subject to is the issue. Paul says: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal 5:16). Walking in the flesh without considering the spirit is going towards death. Have we ever bothered to look at our spiritual condition? It is better for a child of God to do this often. A vigilant man will always be subjected to the Spirit and pray like David prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting" (Psa. 139:23-24).

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## 2. Strengthen (3:2):

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Our Lord has asked the Church in Sardis to strengthen the things which remain, that are about to die. There are many areas in our spiritual lives to be strengthened. Which are our weak points? What about our love towards Him? Are we like the church of Ephesus who left their first love (Rev 2:4)? What

about our prayer life? What about our bible reading habit? What about our spiritual relation with our brethren? What about our giving to Lord's work? If we are ready for self examination, Lord will help us to find where we lack.

### 3. Remember (3:3):

Jesus says to remember, what we have received and heard. The cure for the church in Sardis who was about to die was to keep in mind the way that they had first responded to the truth of God and to once again respond in the same way. Let us remember the situation and the way when we received the gospel for first time in our life. Where were we then? How did we come to this faith? What was God's purpose for bringing us to this faith? Peter says: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Pet. 2:9). The church of Sardis was called for a purpose. But they did not do that. It does not mean that they have done nothing. But their works were not perfect before the sight of our Lord. Are we enjoying in what we are doing for Lord now? Good. It will be better if we check with God whether this doing is perfect before Him or not. All are

engaged in doing many things for Lord. But many are not considering their call and its purpose. Apostle Peter said: "Wherefore rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall" (2 Pet 1:10). Our deeds will be analyzed according to our calling in the judgment. It will be a fire trial. The perfect work only will remain in the eternity. Paul says about this: "Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:12-15). So let us remember how we were called and for what purpose it was.

### 4. Retain / Hold fast (3:3):

Lord will ask the account of only what He had given to us. We are supposed to keep, retain or hold fast what was entrusted upon us. What do we have to hold fast? Many things such as faith, our life, and various gifts received from Him, particular ministry etc. We are supposed

to keep these things till He comes (Rev. 2:25). Then only we will be able to receive the special crown meant for us (Rev. 3:11).

### 5. Repent (3:3) :

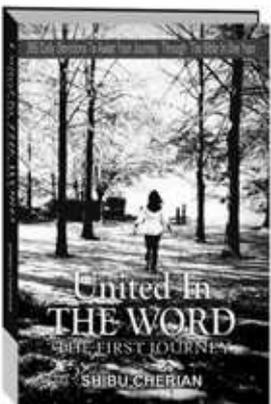
Repentance was the first demand by Lord from each and everyone who entered in the church by grace. Remission of sin and the gift of Holy Spirit will be applicable only for the people who repents (Act 2:38-39). Repentance must remain in us even after our entry to His church. If any one does not have repentance, he is at the brim of destruction (Luke 13:3). Lord demanded repentance from each church in the book of revelation except Smyrna and Philadelphia. Why He did not demand from Smyrna? They were going through persecution. Why not from Philadelphia? They are already having it and ready for rapture (Rev. 3:10).

*The church in Sardis was warned to keep the above directives. If they fail, He will deal with them (3:3). Dear brothers and sisters, He will deal with us too. Remember what our Lord said to us: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent" (Rev 3:19). So let us be careful. Let us keep the directives of our Lord. Let us be faithful. He is coming!*

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## Haughty spirit - Pathway to fall!

### Meditation

*“The pride of your heart has deceived you, you who live in the clefts of the rocks and make your home on the heights” (Obadiah 1:21)*

Titanic, the largest and most luxurious ship afloat then, sank on April 15, 1912 during its maiden voyage. It had a double-bottomed hull divided into 16 watertight compartments. It was considered unsinkable. The builders of Titanic claimed, no power on earth could sink the ship. They didn't even bother to take enough lifeboats for its first voyage! However, shortly before midnight on April 14, it collided with an iceberg, and the ship sank. Over 1,500 of its 2,200 passengers lost their lives in the Atlantic.

What made the Titanic sink? Ice berg? No! I would to say, it was pride! “Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18).

Edom was a hill city, situated in the clefts of rocks that acted as a natural fort. No enemy could normally defeat the city, as it was high on the rocky mountains. In



**Saju John Mathew**

addition, she had strong allies (v.7). Therefore, Edom said, “No one can bring me down to the ground!”(V.3).

Do you think you are living in the “high mountains,” holding positions in your office, organization, church? Do you think you live in the clefts of the rocks, like wealth, health, wisdom (craftiness)? May be you have strong allies, influence in the administrative body, with politicians.

Although you show humility outside, may be you are proud in your heart. You cannot trick God! God says ... “though your nest is set among the stars, thence I will bring you down” (v.4).

“The pride of your heart has deceived you”, says the Lord! Pride becomes a deception because the proud will never

### Saju John Mathew

**Reading passage:**  
Obadiah 1:21

listen to warnings! “The strong allies” also deceived Edom. Her destruction was inevitable!

When we have everything and everybody with us, we are confident in ourselves and we ignore warnings! But that's a deception. Someone with a haughty heart can never please God.

“All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand that he may lift you up in due time” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

**Prayer:** Lord let me not be deceived by possessions, positions or allies. Let me know that I am just dust and ash, Amen.

**For further reading:** Acts 12:19-23; Daniel 4:1-36

### Short Story

## The Real Friend

Once there was a king who name was Andrews. Like all other kings the had a fad for hunting. In ancient times kings used to take their dogs for hunting but this king was different in his thinking and he used to take his eagle who was his best friend on his shoulder for hunting. One day he decided to go for hunting and called all his ministers and soldiers to accompany him. They all made their way to the forest for hunting. The eagle flew away from the shoulder of the king as it used to do. The king and his men roamed for about 3-4 hours in the forest, but could not find any thing to hunt. The exhausted men pleaded to the king for rest. The king told his men to go back to the palace and he alone wandered in the forest. The men did as the king ordered, Now the

king after walking some distance was thirsty. He had a mug on his shoulder but their was no water in it. He moved ahead to search for water. After walking some distance, he saw that from a cracked rock, there was water falling drop by drop. He was very much happy and started filling it with water.

The moment the mug was filled the eagle (his friend) flew down and dashed the king. The mug fell to the ground and all the collected water was wasted. The king was very angry for what the eagle did. He told, “I gave you enough love and you are troubling me?” Again he started to fill the water in his mug and again the eagle did the same thing. This made the king very very angry. The king filled the mug again and saw the eagle coming

down again to dash the mug. He took his sword and sliced the eagle into two pieces.

While doing this his mug fell down deep into a pit where he could not reach. So he climbed up on the mountain searching for water and was astonished to see that a poisonous snake was lying dead in a stream. The king realized that the eagle was trying to prevent him from drinking the poisonous water and cried out: “Why did I kill my best friend just for my thirst when it wanted to save my life!”

**Moral:** Similarly, Jesus Christ also want us to be free from the world of sin and He came down to this world and died for us to save us from sinful life.

**“He is our Real Friend”**

## Are we not different from others?

This was not a question some generations ago, when there was a clear distinction between believers and non believers; but in these days this has become a debatable topic. In the past it was easy to differentiate born-again Christians from others from their behavior, the way they dress and the way they talk and the way they perceive things. However, in this modern age it is not easy to identify a born-again Christian in those aspects. Many things that were taught as sin in the past are not sin now and moreover, they have become the life-style.

What has changed? Did the Word of God get changed in due course or did we change ourselves according to the patterns of this world?

In the Bible we see the plan and purpose of God was to select and separate the people of Israel as a unique nation for Him. "Behold the people that dwell alone, not reckoned among the nations". God has not changed His plans. It is the same thing that God expects from us in this age as well. We find in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new".



**Paulson Thavu**  
Virginia, USA

Bible here clearly teaches about a complete change. To understand this change, we need to know the characteristics of the 'old man' and the 'new creature'. The old man was the doer of all the evil and who took pleasure in doing such worldly activities. On the other hand the 'new man' is the one who loves God and wishes to please God in everything he does and eager to pass on the image of Christ to others by his doings. So, Bible clearly points out a difference in the life of a born again believer from others. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22). Furthermore, 1 Peter 1:14-16, states that "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the

former lusts in your ignorance: but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

We may hear that "man looks the outward; God looks only the inner heart and therefore one should be serious about his inward holiness only". This is just an excuse. Do not forget the fact that one's outward action is the reflection of his inward. One who keeps the inward holiness will definitely be serious about his outward appearance as well. Some people say that "What is the use of showing good outward; while one is wicked in heart?" Surely that is not desirable. However we should know that nobody can fool others always. The real internal picture of a person will definitely be revealed one day.

A true born-again Christian is surely different from others in all walks of his life - inward and outward, without which he cannot be a true witness for Christ. It is important to remember that our Christian life is not just about us as individuals, but about witnessing to every lost soul who may be influenced in their decision to accept Christ through our personal actions.

## "Unborn tomorrow ..... Today is sweet"

An oft-quoted saying goes like this, "Unborn tomorrow, dead yesterday, why fret about if today is sweet."

Man has confronted with his/her yesterdays; meets his/her today and forlorn for his/her tomorrows. No one is free from this. Many are overwhelmed or perplexed by any of these in their life.

Man broods over the things which are beyond his/her capacity to control or change. Unexpected loss, failures or difficulties are apt to cause disturbing experiences. Some look with dread what might befall to him/her in the days to come. The past and the future loads heavy weight on the minds of a person as he/she is not secure of his/her life. It makes one forget to do what is most



**Dr. J. Varghese**  
ICPF

needed for the present to avoid future disaster or overcome the past.

Man is apt to fret about the tomorrows which are not born and the yesterdays which is dead and lost its significance, but instead spoil the today which is so sweet and which wants to empower him/

her from further nuisance.

Bible says 'do not worry about your life'. It is related to eating, drinking and clothing. Life is more important than food and body more important than clothes. By fretting no one can add a single hour to his/her life but can only spoil his/her sweet today which could have been used for furtherance of His kingdom. One can make his/her today sweet by seeking His kingdom i.e. the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself and do not fret about yesterday for yesterday would have worried about it. Today is made for you and make it sweet for the Lord.



## Are you ready for the second coming of Christ ?

Maria was excited since her father was returning after his business trip. She had done all the tasks her father had told her to do when he was gone. She had memorized a chapter from the Bible which her father had told her to. She even made a bouquet of paper flowers for him to give him a surprise gift. She was impatiently waiting for the hour to come when her father would walk in and she could present it to him and be hugged by him. Her mother too was excited but a little sad that she could not finish the painting he wanted her to finish before he came back. It was a nice painting on a canvas to be hung on the living room wall. Maria's father came and he had

brought many gifts for her and her mother. Her father was very happy that his daughter did everything just as he had told her to do. He said he was proud to have a wonderful daughter like her.

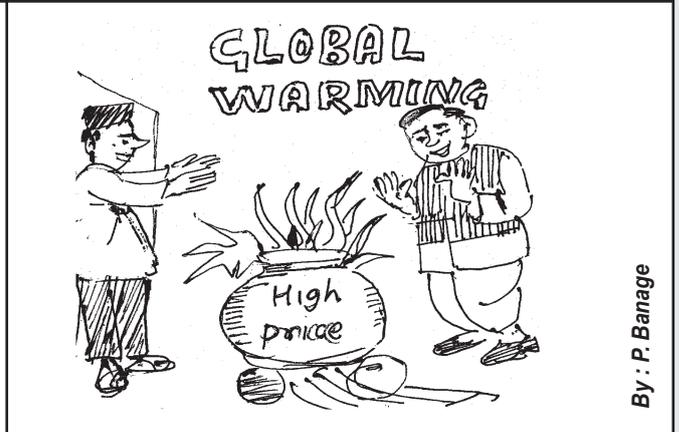
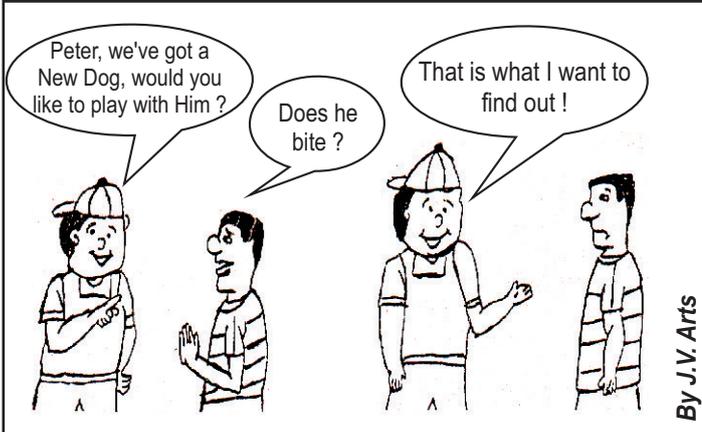
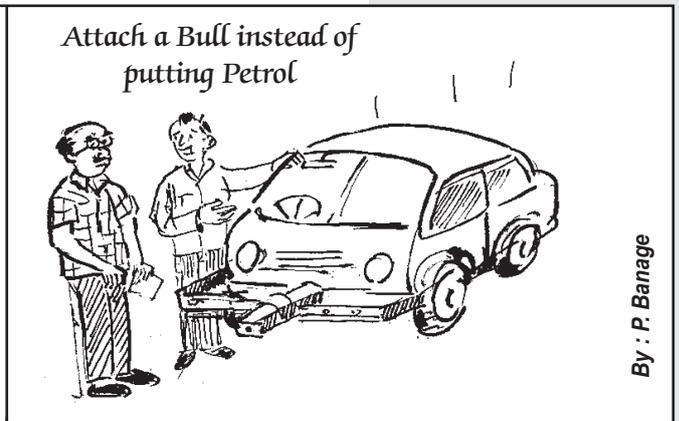
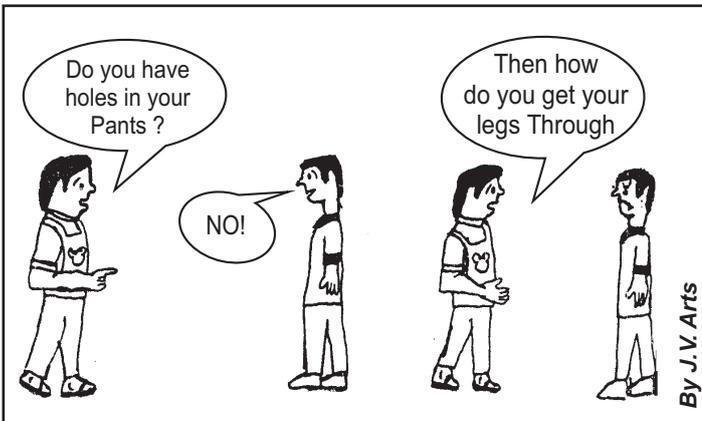
*Dear children,* Jesus will come to take us to His presence. Are we doing the work that He has given us? Are

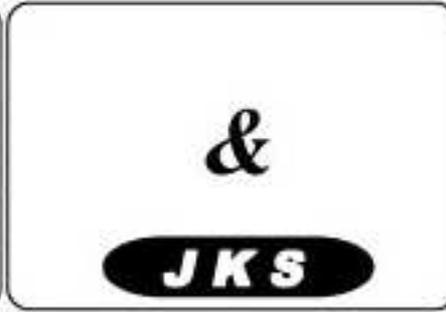
we living to please Him? Do we love Him and obey His commands? (John 14:15).

His word tells us that He is coming to take those who love His appearing. He will take only those who lived this life to please Him and did what He told to do through His word. Let us be like Maria who did everything her father had told her and she was very excited to meet him. Her mother was sad that she could not do what he had told her to do. Let us not be like her. James 1:12 says '..... the crown of life is given to those who love Him'. Read 1 Thes. 4:16-17, Mat. 25:14-30. God bless you.



**Shiny Aunty**





**St. Cuthbert Gospel**

British Library has acquired a seventh century gospel for nine million pounds. It is a manuscript copy of the Gospel of St. John which was discovered in St. Cuthbert's coffin more than 900 years ago and hence known as St. Cuthbert Gospel. The manuscript was produced



**St. Cuthbert Gospel**

in the northeast of England in the late 7th century and was placed in the saint's coffin. According to the British Library, the manuscript features an original red leather binding in excellent condition and is the only surviving "high status" manuscript from this period of British history to retain its original appearance both inside and out. The book will be displayed to the public in London. The British Library has opened a special display exploring the creation, travels and "near-miraculous" survival of the gospel across 13 centuries and it has also been digitized and made freely available on-line.

*Is it not amazing that the Word of God which is settled forever in heaven is also preserved on the earth, too? The Bibles that we carry now with us is really the authentic Scriptures handed down through centuries and generations, although there have been serious efforts to destroy it at various times!!*

**'Lord's Prayer' banned!**

A U.S. district court judge in Delaware ruled that members of a local city council who had been reciting the Lord's Prayer at every meeting for six years must stop, according to a report in Christian Post. The judgement came when a few residents filed a suit, claiming the prayer violated the Constitution. The learned judge ruled that since the Lord's Prayer is 'distinctly Christian' and has been the only prayer recited at the beginning of council meetings, the council is giving Christianity an unconstitutionally preferred status! A councilman said: "I don't know how we are going to get around the ruling, but we are going to find a way".

In a similar case, a judge in a New York town ruled that the town board's practice of opening its monthly meetings with prayer was unconstitutional because the town didn't try hard enough to find non-Christian speakers. He added: "an objective, reasonable person would believe that the town's prayer practice had the effect of affiliating the town with Christianity".

*It is unbelievable that such things are happening in the United States of America which was founded on Christian principles and for freedom worship!*

**Partisan judgement of an Egyptian court**

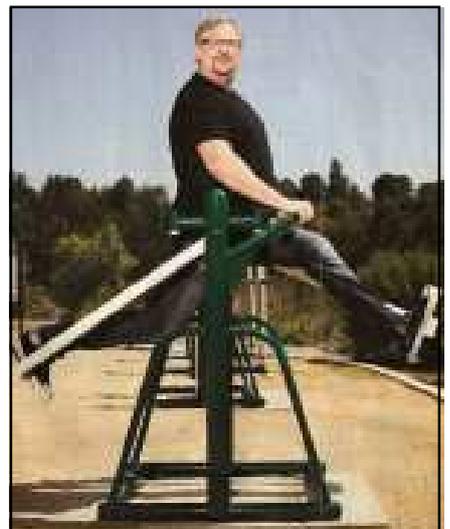
In a violent incident in Minya last year, two Muslims were killed and several Christian homes and businesses were destroyed. 12 Christians were sentenced to life in prison while eight Muslims were acquitted for their roles in the incident. The Christians were found guilty of possessing illegal weapons, sowing public discord and shooting two Muslims to death, while the Muslims were freed of charges of possessing illegal weapons and burning down Christian

homes and businesses. It is evident that the police investigation from the beginning was faulty and unfair. The military ruling council which is in charge of Egypt after the January 2011 revolution has done little to protect Christians from Islamist attacks.

*We are currently seeing a growing level of intolerance against Christians all over the world. The devil is working overtime to extinguish faith from the hearts of people as he knows that his activity time is soon coming to an end. Let us be ready to meet our Lord.*

**Rick Warren and his 'Daniel Plan'**

Rick Warren, Pastor of Saddleback Church in California has 20000 members. He has authored many books including the best selling "Purpose Driven Life" which has sold 32 million copies in 97 languages. He discovered a problem in his church during a baptismal ceremony. He, along with other pastors, had to baptize 800 members in four hours. He had to dip



**Pastor doing exercise**

and lift a whole lot of people, that day. The average weight of women in his church was 170 lbs and of men was 210 lbs. He himself weighed 295 lbs. Thus he launched 'Daniel Plan' on January 15, 2011. The plan is based on the Daniel story where Daniel and his friends chose vegetables and water instead of the rich food at the king's table and grew fitter and finer.

Warren's plan begins with a simple diet of 70% unprocessed fruits and vegetables and 30% whole grains and starchy vegetables. It also includes exercise groups, nutritional training, sport, small group meetings and 'Walk and Worship' sessions. The plan has now 15000 members and the church has lost 260,000 lbs collectively. The Pastor himself has lost 55 lbs and hopes to loose at least 35 more.

Warren stresses the Biblical teaching that our bodies are gifts from God and we are expected to return them in the best shape possible. The slogan on the members' T shirt reads: "God created

the body; Jesus died for it; The Holy Spirit lives in it; Shouldn't you take care of it?" One of the instructions in the Daniel Plan is to rely on God's power and find encouragement from Bible passages like: "I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength".

*There is no denying the fact that faith and health are related. Studies have shown that belief in a loving God is linked to faster recovery after surgery. One study even found that church members who give service have better health conditions than those who receive service - confirming that it truly does pay to care for others.*

#### Growth of Christianity in Iran

'Open Doors USA' reports that the number of 'Secret Believers' is growing faster and faster in Iran, especially among young people. Forty years ago, this number was 200, but today the number estimated is around 370,000. The growth is happening in all regions,

mostly in Iran's larger cities, and the house church movement has triggered many secret meetings. Despite increasing crackdowns, the network of Iranian Christians has only become stronger.

#### Most popular baby names have Biblical origin

The list of America's most popular baby names for 2011 is available now. Jacob, Noah, Michael and Daniel are among the top ten names for baby boys. Matthew and Elijah came in at numbers 12 and 13, respectively. For girls, variations on biblical names are also popular, with Isabella (a variation of Elizabeth), Ava (a variation of Eve) and Abigail making the top 10. It is also observed that popular biblical names have shifted from the New Testament to the Old Testament.

*Unfortunately for many people, Bible is only a source of baby names and not the foundation of their faith!*

### **Bible verses and investment principles!**

Ron Blue, a Certified Public Accountant and the Founder / Managing Director of 'Kingdom Advisors', has an investment philosophy derived from the Bible. The following are his guidelines:



1. Proverbs 21:5: "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty"

2. Proverbs 24:27: "Put your outdoor work in order and get your fields ready; after that, build your house"

3) Luke 14:28 "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?"

4) Ecclesiastes 11:2: "Divide your portion to seven, or even eight, for you do not know what misfortune may occur on the earth"

5) Ecclesiastes 5:13: "I have seen a grievous evil under the sun; wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners"

**Establish Written Financial Goals.** Write down your end target, then determine your steps towards getting there. A little bit at a time, all of the time, is a wiser plan than taking frantic all-or-nothing shots.

**Save and Invest Before You Spend.** Don't spend in the short-term because you won't have it in the long-term.

**Keep a Long Term Perspective.** In other words, know what you need to set aside to reach your savings goals. Your time frame is going to vary depending on your personal goals. Saving for college may be a 15-year strategy while retirement planning could involve more than 40 years. The investments are different depending on the size of your intended tower.

**Diversify Your Portfolio** - some venture capital, stocks, bonds and real estate. The goal is not eliminating failures but anticipating them by having an assortment of investments.

**Do Not Take on More Risk Than You Can Afford.** If something sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Nobody knows where the stock market is going to go. You can't be guaranteed of returns, and if you are trying to get that elusive profit all the time, you are probably taking more risk than you should.

### **Bible can guide you in all your ways!**