

From the Editor's Desk



Pastor T.S. Abraham's presence in Kumbanad Hebron Bangalow was quiet, dignified and respectable. Can anybody replace him? I doubt it. He will surely be missed by all.



Johnson K. Samuel

Remembering Pastor T.S. Abraham

"Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith"
(Hebrews 13:7)

Pastor T.S. Abraham, Senior General Minister of India Pentecostal

Church of God, went to be with the Lord on Monday, February 5, 2018 at the age of 93 after many years of service in several leadership positions in the Church. He was born on September 13, 1925 to Pastor K.E. Abraham and Mrs. Annamma Abraham. He was only 5 years old when Pastor K.E. Abraham moved from Mulakuzha to Kumbanad and made Kumbanad the center of his ministry. His childhood had its share of hunger and poverty. There were instances of his fainting in the class room because he had gone to school starving.

I had the privilege of knowing him (whom many of us affectionately call, Kunjoonjachayan) for as long as I can remember - for more than 70 years. I remember the day when I also joined the celebration of his marriage to Marykutty, daughter of Pastor P.T. Chacko, missionary to Andhra in April 1950. I represented my family at the wedding as my parents, Mrs. & Pastor K.J. Samuel were away for the Lord's ministry in Punjab. It appeared as though the whole of IPC crowd was present in the Hebron Compound on that day.

Let me mention a few biographical details: 'T.S.' had his high school education in St. John's High School, Eraviperoor. Then he went to University College, Trivandrum and Union Christian College, Alway for his degree classes. It was during his college days that he and a few friends in college felt the need for a youth organization for IPC and formed the Pentecostal Young People's Association (PYPA) in 1947. I have no doubt in my mind that those young graduate students could take such a bold and meaningful step prayerfully at that time when IPC was just in its formative stages because of a divine leading and intervention from the Lord. Nobody will deny the fact that most of the present leaders of IPC have been moulded in different local churches through the leadership training received in their local PYPA.

'T.S.' went to USA for higher theological studies in 1952 and returned to India in 1955 with B.D. and M.R.E. degrees. He began teaching in Hebron Bible College in 1955 and became its Principal in 1970.



Pastor T.S. Abraham officiated as the Secretary of IPC Kerala State for 17 years from 1974 and later became General Secretary of IPC. He was elected General President of IPC in 2000. After the passing away of the first generation founding fathers of the church, 'T.S.' was at the helm of affairs of the church for the longest period of time than anyone else. He initiated the establishment of the IPC Family Conference in USA when he visited that country in 1998

Pastor T.S. Abraham has authored several books and was Chief Editor of Seeyon Kahalam magazine for many years. He has also served as President of the Bible Society of India, Kerala Auxiliary for a few years.

Pastor T.S. Abraham was a man of few words. His determined and firm stand on principles and convictions was usually hidden behind his captivating smile as he greets people. He stood firmly for doctrinal purity in the Church at a time when the Pentecostal world is abounding with false teachers. He is not known for his oratory but his sermons were simple and thoughts were deep. He would preside over functions like marriages, Lord's Table, baptisms, dedication services, inaugural addresses, etc. with dignity and precision.

As teacher and Principal of Hebron Bible College and later of India Bible College, Pastor T.S. Abraham was instrumental in moulding hundreds of students who are now laboring in the Lord's vineyard all over the world.

His presence in Kumbanad Hebron Bangalow was quiet, dignified and respectable. Can anybody replace him? I doubt it. Pastor T.S. Abraham will surely be missed by all. ■

Living as the Chosen People of God

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will" (Ephesians 1:4,5)

I live among believers. In my city of five million people (Pune, India) every one considers himself or herself to belong to one or other religion. Majority of them belong to one of the Hindu denominations, there are Muslims, a couple of thousand are Jews and we have Christians and Zoroastrians too. All have their own ways of explaining their relationship with their deities or spiritual leaders. Most of them may describe themselves as believers of their respective faiths; some may call themselves devotees or followers.

This makes me take a look at what the Bible says about the believers in Jesus Christ. There are a number of images the Book of Ephesians use to describe those who are believers in Christ Jesus. The first one is the image of adoption. Ephesians 4:1-5 uses two such images: one is of chosen people, and the other being adopted.

"For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will..."

In the Bible, the word "chosen" means selecting something after carefully considering the alternatives. When David went for a combat against the giant Goliath, he "chose" five stones. Certainly there were many stones he could have picked up randomly. But the stones he picked up were "chosen" ones. It indicates the special privilege that the chosen ones have. In the New Testament, the Greek word used for "choosing" is always used with God as subject and believers in Christ as objects. Moreover, it

also is used in a particular grammatical form that indicates doing something for the benefit of the doer. Translated, it means, God chose who believe in Christ Jesus from the human race for Himself. Thus for me to be a Christian it is more than being a believer or a devotee of Christ, though belief and devotion plays a major part in my spiritual life. The fact that I am carefully chosen by God adds to my own self-image: it is a privilege, it means God considers me precious and valuable.

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However, as all special privileges comes with responsibilities, so this one also. The chief purpose is that we will be blameless before God. The word, "blameless" in the Bible means something that is without defect and thus acceptable to God.

The verse quoted above concludes with a reminder of the responsibility or purpose of this election. The purpose of election is that everyone who is thus chosen may be "...to the praise of his glorious grace." Living lives that glorify God is the main purpose why God has chosen those who believe in Jesus Christ.

Thus, those who follow Christ have two awesome responsibilities as the Chosen People of God: to live their lives as acceptable to God and also to bring glory to God. God does not take delight in mediocrity and those who are watching our lives also does not appreciate mediocre lives. ■

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A GOD

Who Is Waiting For Us!



Dr. George Samuel

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We are the objects of God's creation. God gave us unlimited freedom to choose and the freedom of choice is one of the best virtues He gave us. We can even reject the very God who created us as free creatures.

The insights we receive from the Scriptures have to do with God. When we read the Scriptures, God speaks to us. We answer Him with our lives; how we respond to the message in our attitude and actions which are reflected in our lives. If we obey what God says, the reading of the Scriptures will 'form us' and also will 'transform us'; we will never be the same in terms of our attitude and actions. The Bible starts with creation, and ends up in Christ's glorious return and rule.

We are the objects of God's creation. God gave us unlimited freedom to choose and the freedom of choice is one of the best virtues He gave us. We can even reject the very God who created us as free creatures. Although man misused the freedom in choosing the wrong and in disobeying God, God is ready to accept us as we are, and He took the initiative in providing us the remedy for our disobedience and rebellion. In fact, God is ready to fix us up, that too on His own expenditure. God is eagerly waiting for us to see us making a choice to return to Him. Now it is a golden chance to return by believing what God promised through His Son.

God is quite simple and straightforward, although He is the embodiment of all virtues and wisdom. His walk and talk are the same, and He is neither partial nor parochial. But we live with contradictions in our thinking and living. We do not even understand our own behavior. We are tempted to tell lies as if it is blatant truth! We can think holy and unholy thoughts in split seconds. We need to start our lives all over again, like children. We may not have the eyes to see our paradoxical thinking and living. We think we are righteous while not willing to agree with our own unacceptable behavior. Some of our thinking opposes the biblical truths. We may live in sin the same

way King David considered himself righteous until Nathan confronted him (2 Samuel 12:1-9). We, therefore, need release from some of the ritualistic and religious forms in order to see the real spiritual life and be free from the bondages. This requires trust and creative thinking of a different order.

Jesus brought a "revolution of thinking" into the religious circles of His world at that time. While Jesus quoted what the Old Testament stated, He made the change by saying "now I tell you" kind of statement. We enter into the Kingdom thoughts by this 'paradigm shift'. Surely, Einstein has said "the kind of thinking

that will solve the world's problems will be of a different order to the kind of thinking that created those problems in the first place". By following Jesus, we can obtain purity and purpose in our lives. We will not have room for strain or stain. The life offered by Jesus is simple and straight forward. This life is not measured by material objects or even by theological knowledge, but by the depth of our relationship with the risen Jesus.

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Although God is not restricted by time and space, He has determined time and space for man's habitation (Acts 17:26). We who live in time and space are required to give space to God in our daily lives. People may complain that they have difficulty in finding space and time for God in their busy schedule. We can be busy in wrong activities and associations, and thus find it difficult to create space and time for God. In Psalms 1:1, we are cautioned about our associations, giving us wisdom to follow. We may find all kinds of excuses for our busy schedule. Because we are literally busy, we may find satisfaction in formulating appropriate excuses that will cover us. Therefore, we have to check our

associations and activities which take a lot of our time. Such activities, if not careful, can upset our priorities in life.

We read in Psalms 1:2 about finding delight in the Word of God by meditating it day and night. We need to be sensitive to God's voice in His Word. But the voices of the world may be very attractive, and stronger to entice us by triggering the "pleasure centre" in the brain system. Although the voices of the world may appear to be intelligent and insightful, we can find life, prosperity and protection only in God's word. The prosperity is not in what we accumulate, but in "what we are in the eyes of God". The influence of God's word keeps us alive to Him and to bear fruit in season (Psalms 1: 3). Also we are told in Ephesians 5:11, "not to waste your time on useless work, or mere busy work, the barren pursuits of darkness".

Our life may be crowded with a lot of personal needs to be met and earthly responsibilities. But we have to find time and space for God in the midst of our daily schedule. The King of kings and the Lord of lords, our Redeemer wants to "sit down with us to sup with us" every day and all the days of our life (Revelation 3:20).

According to Romans 8:3, God sent His Son, Jesus to help us in our limitations and inadequacies of living in this "fallen world". Jesus modelled the example to live, and we listen to Him. For Pontius Pilot, Jesus was most unreal to be considered as King. So he placed the "crown of thorns" on Him to make fun of the King of kings. If anyone makes fun of a truth, it will not be made untrue or unreal. Of course Jesus was silent during the unwanted questioning. His silence will not make the reality any less real. We also face temptations to reject the real, the heavenly assignment, since

the earthly demands our time. In the example of Jesus, we saw the worldly (unreal) giving way to the real.

Though the Creator purposed for a paradise to commune with the creation, it turned out to be a battlefield. Since Satan entered to rule and regulate, we are now in the enemy territory. The evil was conquered in Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-39) and Golgotha. Jesus has won the battle. We fight knowing and believing that Jesus already secured victory for us through His resurrection. Of course the fight is against powers and principalities of this dark world. In Ephesians 6:11-18, we are given the well-made

weapons of the best materials; we need these weapons throughout life. We are soldiers of Jesus Christ; God is the Commander King. With assurance of Jesus, we fight the Lord's battle as we stay on earth.

Start seeking the God who is, and stop seeking the god we want! The world is creating the god of their whims and fancies, the kind of god they can carry and compromise. Just like the children of Israel made their own god, we are tempted to do the same by going after a god we can manipulate and manage. When we drift

from the living God, the result will be deterioration and decay instead of bearing fruit. When all our thinking and living centre in our ego or self, God is thought of in terms of accomplishing our selfish ends. True worship will take the centre off from our ego or self, shifting to the God who is sovereign and strong. (Someone has said: self is our soul minus God). Also true worship will liberate us from competition and manipulation. We turn to Him in awe and wonder when worship the true God.

(Indebted to my friend K.J. Joseph for some of the insights he shared). ■

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C.H. Spurgeon

"The best praying man is the man who is most believably familiar with the promises of God. After all, prayer is nothing but taking God's promises to Him, and saying to Him, "Do as thou hast said". Prayer is the promise utilized. A prayer which is not based on a promise has no true foundation"

Meditations from
"Ephesians"
2. From Chapter 2

We are God's Workmanship: *Created for Good Works*



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"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10)

The above passage reflects three fundamental truths that we should always remember about our spiritual new birth in Christ, and our renewed life thereafter:

1. We have been saved by grace through faith: The grace of God is the source of our salvation. Faith is the channel through which we are saved by God alone. We cannot earn or work to achieve our salvation, which always arises out of the loving kindness of God.

2. We are saved for good works, not by good works: Our good works having no part in obtaining salvation, which has been obtained through the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Our good works should follow, and not precede our salvation.

3. We are God's workmanship to result in producing good works: Like any great "work of art" we are the handiwork of God. A born-again believer is a masterpiece of God, a new creation through union with Christ, for *"if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2 Cor. 5:17). We are God's work-in-progress; His unfinished works of art, and God is working in us to produce good works. We do not work in order to be saved, but work because we are saved since *"faith without works is dead"* (James 2:26). So, our faith in Christ leads to salvation, which results in good works that will eventually be rewarded by God one day (2 Cor. 5:10).

Let us be clear that God has a blueprint that He has mapped out for us. Our responsibility is to discover, accept and obey the plan that He has drawn up for us by doing the following:

- (1) confess and forsake sin as soon as we are conscious of it in our lives;
- (2) be continually and unconditionally yielded



to Him;

(3) study the word of God to discern His will, and then do whatever He tells us to do;

(4) spend time in prayer each day;

(5) seize opportunities of service as they arise;

(6) cultivate the fellowship and counsel of other Christians.

When we do all of the above, our lives will bring greatest glory to God, most blessing to other people, and produce greatest reward for ourselves. God prepares us for good works while He prepares good works for us to perform, after which He rewards us when we perform them!

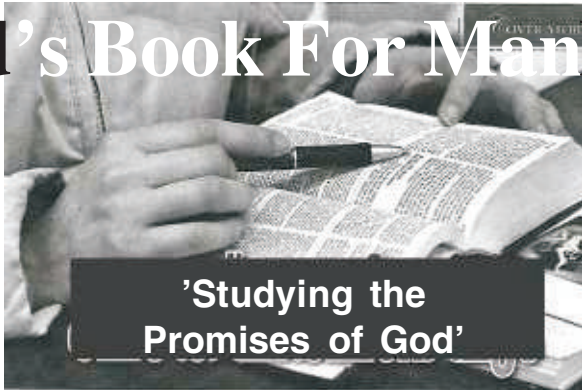
Just like a master sculptor chisels on a big rock to carve out a beautiful image that He has purposed to create, God removes the unwanted areas of our lives and shapes us to His image and prepares us to do good work in His kingdom. Sometimes, God uses circumstances to bring us to our knees before Him. God also uses the twists and turns of our lives to shape us to be more like Christ. *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."* (Romans 8:29)

Finally, God wants us to join Him in the work that He is doing in our world. What He requires from us is that we *"be found faithful"* (1 Cor. 4:2), *"do good"* as Jesus did during His earthly ministry (Acts 10:38), *"be rich in good works"* (1 Tim. 6:18), and also *"maintain these good works"* (Titus 3:8). Let us be submissive to God's plan and allow Him to work in us every day of our earthly lives so that we produce the "good works" in our lives that he has *"prepared beforehand" for us (v. 10).*

"Therefore, my beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure." (Phil. 2:12-13) ■

God's Book For Mankind

Bible Study
- Part 23 -



'Studying the
Promises of God'

Promises, promises, promises, lots of broken promises! We live in a world where spouses make

promises to each other, parents and children make promises, politicians make promises, friends make promises. But there is no human being who can keep or fulfill all his or her promises at all times. Hon. (late) Abraham Lincoln said, "We must not promise what we ought not, lest we be called as to perform what we cannot".

In this article we are not going to study the promises between human beings. Rather we will look at the promises of almighty God, how to study, understand, believe and obtain them.

Definition of promise of God:

Promise of God is a declaration of God that He will or will not perform or act in a certain way. A promise is a solemn word, a pledge, a guarantee or assurance. According to Encyclopedia of Bible words, "promise refers to the specific content or to the form of God's utterances to human beings". The English word 'Promise' comes from the Latin word 'promissum' and the Greek word is 'epangelia' (Vine's Greek New Testament Dictionary).

Scope of the Promises of God:

Hundreds even thousands of promises of God are recorded in the Bible. So theologically and biblically promise is a very significant word. God never fails to fulfill His promises according to His will in His time for His glory, in His infinite wisdom.

Nature of the promises of God:

Apostle Peter wrote that *God has given exceedingly great and precious promises (2 Peter 1:4)*. Apostle Paul wrote that *God is able to do what He has promised (Romans 4:21, Ephesians 3:21)*. *God is faithful to keep His promises (1 Cor. 1:9)*. *So all the promises of God are Yes and Amen in Christ Jesus our LORD (1 Corinthians 1:20)*. *God is not a man that He should lie (Numbers 23:19, Hebrews 6:17)*.

Conditional Promises of God:

Conditional promises have requirements or conditions that God

demands from the person or the people to whom He made that promise. These kind of promise will have an "If" attached to it by God Himself. There are certain requirements and qualifications that need to be met by the person or people to whom God is making conditional promise. God made these conditions according to His wisdom to build character and to mold the recipients into God's will and way. One example of Conditional promises is found in 1 John 1:9. The condition for forgiveness is that we must confess our sins, then forgiveness is promised.

Unconditional Promises of God:

God made these promises without attaching any conditions or requiring any qualifications from His children. Here is an example of unconditional promises: God said, "*I will never leave you, nor forsake you*" (Hebrews 13:5).

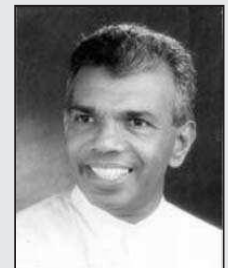
So many of the promises of God do not have any conditions attached to them.

Every Promise is NOT for Everyone. There is a chorus as follows:

*"Every promise in the book is mine,
every chapter, every verse, every line,
All are blessings of His love divine,
every promise in the book is mine"*

Well, it sounds nice, but is it theologically and biblically correct or true? All of us will agree that those words are scripturally incorrect. All things are possible with God, but all promises are not for all people.

Particular promises are given only to particular people. An example of this is found in Genesis 18:10. God made a promise to Abraham and Sara that He will bless them with a son in their old age. Does that mean that any child of God who reads it and believes it is going to have a male child born to him when he is one hundred years old? Of Course not. But it is in the Bible for us to learn that there is nothing



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Hundreds even thousands of promises of God are recorded in the Bible. So theologically and biblically promise is a very significant word. God never fails to fulfill His promises according to His will in His time for His glory, in His infinite wisdom.

Learn to be obedient!

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke (fault), in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Philippians 2:14&15)

Honestly, this verse is really hard to put into practice. I am guilty of this and I know some of you may feel the same way. It is hard to do ALL things without murmuring and disputing. Please note the verse does not allow us to pick and choose; rather it says to do ALL things without complaining or arguing. I and my siblings get in trouble almost every day for our disobedience. When our parents ask us to do something, we knowingly or unknowingly murmur and dispute. Sometimes we get away with it but not for too long because my mom uses the implements in our kitchen to discipline us. When we disobey, she makes us say this verse 10 times or more depending on the severity of the disobedience.

Why is Paul writing this Epistle to the church at Philippi? Is he writing only to the youth or to a selected few in the church? No. He is writing the Epistle of Philippians from prison with chains and shackles in his hands and feet to everyone in the church both young and old.

Have you taken a moment to think about this? Even in this trying situation where Paul is bound in prison, he is



Joel V. Blessan Houston

concerned about his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. If you read Chapter 2, verse 12 onwards, Paul is telling them to be obedient not only when he is around but also in his absence. He is instructing them, "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling". Then he goes on to say to do everything without complaining or arguing. Why? The answer to this question is also given in verse 15: so that we may become blameless and pure children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation and that we can be like stars that shine in the universe.

So, it is my goal this year to be obedient to this verse. I urge all of you as well to be obedient in all things. I ask God to give me and all of us His Holy Spirit to put this into practice. Especially the youth, let us learn to be obedient to our parents. If we cannot be obedient to our earthly parents, how can we be obedient towards our heavenly Father?

We read in the Bible stories of people that disobeyed God: Adam and Eve, Lot's wife, Eli's sons, etc. We have other examples of people that obeyed God: Jesus' mother, Mary, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Daniel, Ruth, Esther, etc..These are all written as warnings and for our edification.

Let us humble ourselves because that is exactly what our Father in heaven showed us to do. He came to this world in the form of man and humbled Himself to the point of death. He died for us on the Calvary cross and shed every drop of blood for you and me. He was being obedient to his Father. Let's be obedient children of God so that we may exemplify how to do ALL things without murmuring and disputing.

May God bless us all. ■

Bible Study: God's Book for Mankind . . . Continuation from previous page

that is too hard for the LORD as we read in Genesis 18:14. Of course, we know that God promised Priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth a son, who is John the Baptist, at their old age.

Promises for the Unsaved or the Unregenerated.

God has given promises not only to those who belong to Him by grace through faith, but also to those who reject His salvation and redemption. We may call these warning promises. They are sure, certain and guaranteed by the very nature of God as we have seen above that God cannot and does not lie. These verses are examples of that, in *Ezekiel 18: 20 that the soul that sins shall die, in Romans 3:23 that the wages of sin is death and in Rev. 20:15 Anyone whose*

name is not found written in the book of life shall be cast into the lake of fire.

Here is the most wonderful promise

Use the right Bible study tools, right method, ask questions of observation, questions of interpretation and questions of application and find answers before claiming any promise of God.

given to the unsaved who accepts God's condition in Romans 10:9,10: we read that "if you shall confess with your mouth the LORD JESUS and shall believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead you shall be saved".

Claiming the promises of God

Few points to remember: Just like studying any verse, study the promises in its context.

Use the right Bible study tools, right method, ask questions of observation, questions of interpretation and questions of application and find answers before claiming any promise of God. In Romans 8:28, we read a precious promise of God, "*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose*".

May I encourage you, dear reader, to study the promises of God, believe the promise of God, experience the promises of God, encourage others to do the same for the glory of God. ■

The Dangers of Spiritual Complacency!

"For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:12,13)

Our spiritual life is a constant battle. Indeed, Satan entered into a battle to thwart God's plan for the Israelites and worked through Pharaoh to kill all male children of the Israelites (Exodus 1: 15-16, 22) even before the birth of Moses. Thus Moses was born virtually into a battle with the enemy. Similarly, when we enter the realm of being born again as a child of God, we are also being born into a spiritual battlefield where a terrific war for souls is being fought. Apostle Paul reminds us that our fight is *"not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places"* (Ephesians 6:12).

Joshua - A Mighty Warrior

There are some notable individuals in the Bible, whose lives were beset by wars – Joshua is one of them. When we are first introduced to him, he is leading the Israelite army into victory against the Amalekites (Exodus 17:9-13). We then learn that he was Moses' assistant, who accompanied Moses to Mount Sinai (Exodus 24:13), and chose to stay beside the tabernacle of the Lord even when Moses returned home (Exodus 33:11). He was one of the 12 representatives chosen to spy out the land of Canaan before the Israelites went up to take possession of it (Numbers 13:8), but was only one of two of them who brought back a positive report of the land (Numbers 14: 6-9).



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As a result, he and Caleb were the only two among all who originally set out from Egypt, to enter the Promised Land (Numbers 14:30). Joshua is chosen by the Lord to succeed Moses and lead the children of Israel to take possession of the land, their inheritance (Numbers 27:18-23). Following Moses' death, the Lord

Towards the end of his life, Joshua covenants to serve the Lord with his household: *"But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15) – the same Lord who has supported him throughout his life – but this understanding is built from years of hard experience.

Himself encourages Joshua thrice to "be strong and of good courage", promising to be with him wherever he goes (Joshua 1:1-9). Towards the end of his life, Joshua covenants to serve the Lord with his household: *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Joshua 24:15) – the same

Lord who has supported him throughout his life – but this understanding is built from years of hard experience. **Joshua's eventful life is a warning to us not to slide into complacency and failure, after hard-fought spiritual victories.**

After the Lord's personal promise to Joshua (Joshua 1:1-9), He promises to publicly honor him in the sight of all Israel (Joshua 3:7). The Lord works a miracle, wherein water of River Jordan overflowing its banks, stands in a heap against the order of nature. The Israelites cross the river as on dry land (Joshua 3). Memorial stones are set up to remind future generations of this great event (Josh 4:20-24), the new generation of Israelites dedicate themselves to the Lord through circumcision (Joshua 5:2-8) and they begin to partake of the produce of the land after 40 years of eating manna in the wilderness (Joshua 5:11-12). At this time we see Joshua contemplating his "battle strategy" to overthrow the city of Jericho. The Lord Himself needs to appear as Commander of the army and remind Joshua of his true place. Joshua initially cannot even identify Him as friend or foe (Joshua 5:13-15)! **We are sometimes so full of ourselves that we fail to recognize the Lord's voice.**

Joshua ultimately does acknowledge the Lord and worships Him and the Lord leads him to destroy the city of Jericho (Joshua 6). Jericho was the first walled city in the world, and its king and inhabitants dwelt

securely behind a wall 5 meters high and 2 meters thick – meant to keep out the flood waters of River Jordan as well as prospective invaders. Following the destruction of mighty Jericho, the Israelites think that a small city like Ai with its 12,000 inhabitants can easily be overthrown and send only 3,000 soldiers to capture it. They are completely routed and 36 of God's anointed soldiers are killed (Joshua 7:3-5). Joshua and the elders of Israel lament bitterly before the ark of God, and even regret crossing the River Jordan (Joshua 7:6-7). The Lord instead merely tells him to "Get up", and makes it very plain that the children of Israel have transgressed and hence face defeat. The Lord adds that even His presence will not remain among them whilst the accursed thing exists in their midst (Joshua 7:10-12). A diligent search ensues till Achan, the culprit, is identified and utterly destroyed along with all his family and possessions (Joshua 7:24-26). **We are so busy making our own plans that we sometimes fail to recognize the presence of sin in our midst.**

The matter of the accursed thing being resolved, the Lord leads Joshua to make a new battle strategy to

ambush Ai and destroy it (Joshua 8:1-2, 26). Ever grateful, Joshua renews Israel's covenant with the Lord, reading the Law of Moses in the hearing of every living soul among them (Joshua 8:30-35). It is at this time that the inhabitants of the nearby city of Gibeon, in fear of their very lives, plot to deceive

In our daily spiritual war, we are warned to be vigilant, for our adversary the devil is constantly looking for ways to defeat and destroy us (1 Pet 2:8). This is similar to the warning given to Cain, that sin lies at the door desiring to rule over him (Gen. 4:7). May we always be alert, and diligent to seek God's will for our lives.

Joshua and the Israelites. They disguise themselves in worn-out clothes and shoes, carry old bread and mended wineskins, and pretend to be ambassadors from a very far country, desirous of making a peace treaty with Israel. The Israelites sample their mouldy food, but **do not ask counsel of the Lord** (Joshua 9:14, *emphasis added*). Joshua makes the peace covenant with them, only to find out later that they lived barely 3 days' away, with the result that the people of Israel begin to grumble against the

sense of judgement of their elders (Joshua 9:15-19). **We are so trustful of our own senses and abilities that we sometimes fail to recognize the spiritual enemies around us.**

Fortunately, God is more than able to turn man's mistakes into miracles and causes the sun to stand still over the same city of Gibeon for almost a whole day – again, against the order of nature – long enough for Joshua to defeat five mighty kings of the Amorites (Joshua 10:12-14). Several more battles occur before the Israelites take possession of the Promised Land and like a true leader, Joshua receives his inheritance last (Joshua 19:49), leading up to his famous declaration in Joshua 24:15.

In our daily spiritual war, we are warned to be vigilant, for our adversary the devil is constantly looking for ways to defeat and destroy us (1 Pet 2:8). This is similar to the warning given to Cain, that sin lies at the door desiring to rule over him (Gen. 4:7), but he chooses to ignore the warning and consequently becomes the first murderer in the world. May we always be alert, and diligent to seek God's will for our lives. ●

"The Road of Life"

When I met Christ it seemed as though life were rather like a bike ride; but it was a **tandem bike** and I noticed that Christ was in the back helping me pedal.

I don't know just when it was that He suggested we change places, but life has not been the same since.

When I had control, I knew the way. It was rather boring and predictable. It was the shortest distance between two points.

But when He took the lead, He knew delightful long cuts up mountains and through rocky places at break-neck speeds, it was all I could do to hang on! Even though it looked like madness, He said, "**Pedal!**"

I worried and was anxious and asked, "Where are you taking me?" He laughed and didn't answer and I started to learn to trust. I forgot my boring life and entered the adventure. And when I'd say, "I'm scared!" He'd lean back and touch my hand. He took me to people with gifts that I needed, gifts of healing, acceptance and joy. They gave me gifts to take on my journey, my Lord's and mine.

And we were off again. He said, "Give the gifts away; they're extra baggage, too much weight". So I did, to the people we met, and I found that in giving I received and still our burden was light. I did not trust Him, at first, in control of my life, I thought He'd wreck it, but he knows bike secrets, knows how to make it bend to make sharp corners, knows how to jump to clear high rocks, knows how to fly to shorten scary passages.

And I am learning to shut up and pedal in the strangest places and beginning to enjoy the view and the cool breeze on my face, with my delightful constant companion, JESUS CHRIST. And when I'm sure I just can't do anymore, He just smiles and says: "**Pedal!**"

- Author Unknown

Rev. Billy Graham promoted to glory at the age 99



Rev. Billy Graham and Rev. Franklin Graham

Rev. Billy Graham (November 7, 1918 – February 21, 2018) has been called one of the most influential preachers of the 20th century. He preached to live audiences of nearly 215 million people in more than 185 countries. Graham was a spiritual adviser to American presidents and provided spiritual counsel for every president from Harry Truman to Barack Obama. In his six decades of television, Graham hosted annual Billy Graham Crusades, which ran from 1947 until his retirement in 2005. He held large indoor and outdoor rallies with sermons which were broadcast on radio and television, some still being re-broadcast into the 21st century.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter said: "Tirelessly spreading a message of fellowship and hope, he shaped the spiritual lives of tens of millions of people worldwide. Broad-minded, forgiving, and humble in his treatment of others, he exemplified the life of Jesus Christ by constantly reaching out for opportunities to serve. The debt owed by the global church to him is immeasurable and inexpressible". Billy Graham grew up in humble, ordinary beginnings but because he yielded himself to God, he was used to accomplish the extraordinary -- forever impacting the lives of countless people. He chose to obey God rather than man and he turned the

world upside down. Billy Graham was empowered by a reverent fear of God -- so much so that he overcame the seemingly insurmountable and took the gospel to people and places thought virtually impossible. He even ventured to countries most hostile to Christianity including North Korea and the Soviet Union. Dr. Graham's deep faith in God overruled the fears of his time. He never failed to give glory to God and the power of prayer for his ministry's success.

What a joyous moment it had to be when Dr. Billy Graham heard the words that he has longed to hear from his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, "Well done, good and faithful servant".

United States embassy in Jerusalem!



Pence and Netanyahu

US Vice President Mike Pence told Israel's Knesset that Jerusalem will have a United States embassy "before the end of the year". Pence also encouraged Palestinians to reconsider

negotiations. He said that peace will require compromise and can only come through dialogue.

Christians see these developments as fulfillment of Biblical prophecies. Jerusalem continues to be the focal point in world history!

Power of prayer!


A new study in UK has found that half of those surveyed say they pray, including one-fifth of those who describe themselves as not religious. Prayer is powerful. As Christians, we recognize and agree with this. But what may be surprising is that, especially when faced with a crisis, even nonbelievers often turn to prayer. Some of the nonbelievers who reported praying in times of tragedy or crisis said they do so because 'if for nothing else, on the off chance something could change'!

Let us hope that this small step of faith may pave the way for answered prayer and a true belief in God and His power to intervene in human lives.

Objection to Bible Study in White House!

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is suing the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development over a weekly cabinet Bible study. FFRF wants to investigate how government resources are being used and if employees in the agency feel "coerced into organizing and even participating in the event". The leader of the Bible study is Capitol Ministries founder Ralph Drollinger, who has led the studies for years. The Bible study is for cabinet secretaries only. Employees do not attend the studies. Drollinger said, all related Bible study expenses are paid by Capitol Ministries.

"God never made a promise that was too good to be true"



D.L. Moody



Our little treasures & God's glorious riches!

A little girl named Jenny had a lovely doll which she loved the most and played with all the time. She took her doll everywhere she went. She always cuddled her doll and listened to her bed time story. One night at bed time Jenny's mom told her the Bible story of the boy with five loaves and two fishes. Jenny's mom explained that we should be ready to give whatever we have to Jesus and He will bless it. When she finished the story, she asked Jenny, "Do you love me?"

"Oh yes, mummy I love you".
 "Ok", said her mom, "Then give me your doll".

Jenny began to cry, "Oh mummy, not my doll, you can take everything else but I love my doll".

About a week later, after the story time, Jenny's mom asked again, "Do

you love me?"
 Jenny said, "Mummy, you know I love you".

Her mom again asked, "Then give me your doll".

Jenny began to cry and said, "Mummy, not my doll".

Her mummy then wiped her tears and said, "That's okay, you sleep well".

A few nights later when her mummy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed - Indian style. As she came close, she noticed Jenny's chin was trembling and one

silent tear rolled down her cheek. "What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?" Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little doll up to her mummy. Jenny's mummy reached out to take the doll and went into the other room and came back with a big and beautiful princess-doll and gave it to Jenny. Jenny's mom was just waiting for Jenny to give up her old doll. Jenny was so excited as she always wanted a princess doll and thanked her mom for the beautiful, precious gift.

This story is so much like what our Heavenly Father desires from us. Like the boy with five loaves and two fishes, if we surrender whatever little we have, our time and our talents to God, He will make it bigger for His glory and bless us too. God tells us in Matt. 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you".

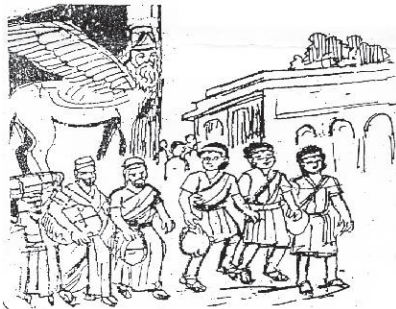


Juby Anoop, UK

Picture Story of Daniel by Banage P.K.



Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon attacks Jerusalem and carries Israelites into exile



The King orders his officials to bring all the young men from Israel without blemish but skillful and full of wisdom.

Among these children were Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego



The were taught the learning and the language of Chaldeans



The King appointed them a daily provision of King's meat and wine nourishing them for three years that they might able to enter into King's service

Pastor T. S. Abraham:

A Beloved Father Figure

Even as a teenager, I knew that Pastor T. S. Abraham was a man of God and a gifted leader who was serving the Lord within the India Pentecostal Church (IPC), the premiere Pentecostal fellowship in the Indian subcontinent. I knew that he had led the founding of the Pentecostal Young People's Association (PYPA), the highly energetic youth wing of IPC which provided people like me our earliest training in ministry skills and leadership. I also knew that he was ordained on the same day with my father Pastor K. T. Mathew. I had opened the page mentioning their ordination and listing their names in Pastor K. E. Abraham's autobiography more than once. In short, I had great respect for Pastor T. S. Abraham before I ever got to know him personally.

I was a 27-year-old pastor of a white church in New Haven, Connecticut in the late 1970s when I began to get to know Pastor T. S. Abraham in a close and personal way. I was blessed to pastor a church that was outgrowing its facilities in those days, forcing us to build a 19000 square foot new building on 10.3 acres of land in North Haven, Connecticut. Before the dedication of the new building in 1978, I invited Pastor T. S. Abraham to visit us and he became the first preacher to proclaim the word of God in that new sanctuary. He spent a few days with my family and the church. His preaching

blessed the church and his presence impacted me and my wife Molly in profound ways.

A few years after, we moved to Tulsa, Oklahoma to join the Oral Roberts University (ORU) family. Once again, I had the privilege of inviting Pastor T. S. Abraham to visit us and the ORU campus. By then, I got to know Valson Abraham well, and this time I invited him as Valson's daddy. I recall with gratitude the time Pastor T. S. and Valson's mummy spent with us and on ORU campus. Their life and ministry made an impact on us and Tulsa.

When I called my father by phone for the last time before his home-going in 2002, I was surprised when he gave the phone to an unidentified visitor. I recognized that voice easily. It was Pastor T. S. Abraham who had come to our home to spend some time with my father, his friend and brother in the Lord who shared the nickname "Kunjuknju," and he had been with him for a while when I called! What a brother! What a friend! He was there for my family when my father went home to be with the Lord, flying in from out of state. He was also there for my mother's farewell service!

I was privileged to share the sacred platform with Pastor T. S. Abraham in India and the United States. I recall how he openly expressed his appreciation for the message after I preached at 2012

Kumbanad convention and privately corrected me because I had mixed up the initials of Pastor P. T. Chacko and Pastor P. K. Chacko in my retelling of the IPC story.

My family with my sister and her husband Pastor K. Timothy visited Pastor T. S. Abraham at his residence during our last trip to Kerala. We saw him as a man of authority, dignity, and hope, a servant of God who was at peace with God and man, and a soldier of the cross who kept the faith. I will fondly remember how he prayed for us and blessed us.

Our beloved "TS" was a father figure to me and my siblings. We lost two father figures this year – Pastor T. S. Abraham, a caring shepherd, and Thomas Nainan, my beloved uncle. We will miss both. Hopefully, not for long!



Dr. Thomson K. Mathew
Oral Roberts University

Fondly Remembering "Pappa", Rev. T.S. Abraham

It continues to be a cherished memory of my time at India Bible Seminary. Even though my parents had been immensely influenced by the Abraham family, my time at the school gave me the opportunity to build a stronger and personal relationship with the family. I fondly remember the interactions with "Pappa", Rev. T.S. Abraham, his calm but stern spirit of leadership, and his sense of humor and wit. The greatest legacy one can leave

behind is kingdom principles that you have invested in your generation. TS



Rev. Sam & Christina Varughese,
IPC Hebron Houston

appachan and ammachi did well in raising a solid kingdom generation through their children.

My wife and I were also blessed to be solemnized in marriage through the ministry of this great man of God.

May the Lord of peace and comfort continue to strengthen the bereaved family. Our love and prayers to Valsachayan, Mollymama, Mercy auntie and Sherlymama, and their respective families.