

From the Editor's Desk



Some thoughts on 'Sneezing' & Christian Living!!

Sneezing is an explosive, involuntary action to expel foreign particles and cleanse the nasal cavity - a mechanism built into the human body by the Creator.

A believer must listen to the corrective voice of the Holy Spirit and instinctively flee from evil and also use the provision of the blood of Jesus for cleansing himself of all impurities on a daily basis.



**Johnson
K. Samuel**

A few days ago one morning, a close friend of mine sneezed and broke a rib! Sneezing is a common occurrence, but breaking a rib is rather unusual. This prompted me to read about this phenomenon called 'sneezing' in the *Wikipedia*. Some details that I gathered are given below:

"A sneeze is a semi-autonomous, convulsive expulsion of air from the lungs through the nose and mouth, usually caused by foreign particles irritating the nasal mucous membrane. It expels air forcibly from the mouth and nose in an **explosive, spasmodic involuntary action**. **The function of sneezing is to expel foreign particles or irritants and cleanse the nasal cavity**. Sneezing typically occurs when foreign particles pass through the nasal hairs triggering the release of histamines, which irritate the nerve cells in the nose, resulting in signals being sent to the brain to initiate the sneeze".

Of course, 'sneezing' is not a spiritual topic and hence, you may well wonder why I am filling space with some medical information!! The reason will be apparent as you read.

I realized that Creator God while designing this marvellous human body had built into the system some automatic, involuntary mechanisms to rid the body of irritating, foreign, dirty particles. These foreign particles must be expelled as they do no good to the human body - they only irritate and make one sick. Now, moving on to a spiritual plane, the body of a Christian believer is a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19). It has to be maintained in a holy status if Holy Spirit has to continue residing there. Can impurities like evil desires, malicious talk, murderous feelings, lusts, dirty tricks and love of money co-exist with the Holy Spirit? Almighty God has built into the human system a conscience which sets him apart from animals. When a Christian believer surrenders himself to the lordship of Jesus Christ, Holy Spirit takes control of his conscience and guides him to proceed in the right path. Our Lord

promised: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth" (John 16:13). Apostle Paul declares: "Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace" (2 Cor. 1:12). Paul strived to keep his conscience clear and unblemished: "My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me" (1 Cor. 4:4).

We are familiar with the comparison of the natural instincts of a goat and a pig. Push both of them into a muddy pond. The pig will stay on in the pond and play in the mud, but the goat will escape as quickly as possible and try to shake off the dirt from its body as much as it can. The believer must listen to the corrective voice of the Holy Spirit and develop an instinctive dislike for evil and run away from it. Apostle Paul admonishes Timothy: "But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith" (1 Tim. 6:11, 12). We are told in Hebrews: "Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles" (Heb. 12:1).

In addition, we would certainly need cleansing on a daily basis. Our dear Lord has made provision for it, too. Apostle John makes it very clear: "My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father - Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 2:1,2). "The blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Let us submit ourselves to the convicting, corrective actions of the Holy Spirit and continue to be cleansed by the blood of Jesus as we live as Christians with a clear conscience looking for the second coming of our Lord.

Pentecostals, Holiness and Whole Person Lifestyle:

A Call to Biblical Standards of Holiness

"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5:23).

Oral Roberts, the founder of Oral Roberts University (ORU), is remembered as a televangelist. As the first minister to use television as a medium for evangelism, the title televangelist is appropriate for him. He pioneered television ministry by telecasting the healing services he conducted in huge tents across the USA and around the world. He brought real life miracles to the living rooms of America and millions of people heard about the saving and healing power of Jesus Christ through this method. Many ministers have followed him, some very effective and ethical, some others not necessarily very ethical.

Oral Roberts is known for his teaching about healing, Holy Spirit, signs and wonders, and giving. His teaching on giving to God's work is often known as "seed-faith." Less known about him is the fact that he was a pioneer proponent of the whole person life-style. In fact, the foundation of ORU is the whole person philosophy of education.

The whole person life-styles is a biblical concept. Oral Roberts developed this concept during a time when Pentecostals were on the wrong side of the track, so to speak, socially, economically and educationally. He was the son of a Pentecostal Holiness preacher who became a pastor in the same tradition. Roberts came across the words of the Apostle Paul, *"Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thes. 5:23)*. He realized that holiness must go beyond matters of the body. Holiness must involve body, mind and spirit. He discovered that God wants His children to experience wholeness, not just salvation. Roberts concluded that true holiness is wholeness and vice versa.

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This discovery took place at a time when Pentecostals were measuring holiness by women's sleeve length, make up, etc. They were also generally against medical care of the sick. Oral Roberts taught that holiness must deal primarily with body, mind, and spirit, and beyond those areas holiness must deal with relationships, finances, etc. He believed in divine healing and was used of God to minister healing to a great number of people, but he felt that all truth is God's truth and therefore science can help people

through medicine. He developed the idea of healing through healing teams consisting of physicians, nurses and ministers. He taught that the apostle Paul and Luke the physician traveled together as a healing team. Roberts implemented this idea at a medical school and hospital he established called the City of Faith in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA,

which eventually closed due to financial challenges.

People made fun of Oral Roberts when he started teaching the whole person concept. Although the City of Faith Hospital failed due to finances, the concepts of wholeness and whole person healing have become mainstream ideas since then. For example, Harvard University now hosts Healing and Spirituality Conferences on its campus, and no one is laughing! It appears that Oral Roberts was ahead of his time.

Modern Pentecostals may want to take a lesson from Oral Roberts and Harvard University and incorporate the concept of wholeness – body, mind and spirit - into their understanding of holiness and life-style. They may want to consider the concept of divine prevention of sickness along with divine healing of maladies.

There is much unnecessary suffering among Pentecostals because their life-style is not



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If the body of a Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit, it deserves better care. Wrong diet and lack of exercise are making many sick.

SUFFERING: A Pathway To Self - Denial



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For the Church and Christianity there is no one else other than Jesus Christ to focus as the Supreme Model.

We live in a world of celebrities, surrounded with flashy lights and media. They move around in affluent and colourful presentations of their own lives. Always they make all efforts to land in a sphere of sparkling lights to show their skills and splendor. No wonder, this is the same picture we see today in spiritual fields, too. Everyone speaks about achievements, gains, performance and personal stories of elevations. We have plenty of preachers now describing themselves as celebrities who began from the zero level. Some others simply boast on the "blessings of forefathers" and sell their testimonies to elevate themselves. For others, affluent life is the mark of God's special love and then subsequently declare that poverty is the outcome of curse and low level life. They, in fact, often talk all these words in order to hide their deceptive devices.

For the Church and Christianity there is no one else other than Jesus Christ to focus as the Supreme Model. St. Paul, in his 'letter of joy' to Philippians vehemently encourages the readers to be comforted with suffering and reproach for the sake of their Saviour. In order to establish this fact more vitally and brightly, he draws the

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magnificent picture of the humiliation of the Son of God (Phil. 2:4-11). Remarkably in his exposition, he states: Jesus' suffering is the signpost to the Christians today. He explains that the Son of God, the God of Eternity, being in the same and equal Substance and Essence with the Father emptied Himself to take the human form. He denied Himself to come down to carry the sin of humanity even unto the cross. He came down not just from

the higher rank of the physical nature but from the peak of eternal glory! In the excellent treatise to the Hebrews, the writer obviously reminds us that although He was the Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered (Heb. 5:8). Here the issue is self-denial. Jesus denied Himself to be made sin on the cross on behalf

of us (2 Cor. 5:21). This is the splendor of His suffering. Self-denial, then to us is willingness to put our own status, interests and ambition aside for the sake of following Christ to grow in his purity, maturity, humility and eventually into His character.

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"A call to Biblical standards of holiness" Continuation from previous page

changing with the increased knowledge and wealth among them. Wrong diet and lack of exercise are making many sick, just like wrong approaches to taking communion make many "weak and sickly among you." If the body of a Christian is the temple of the Holy Spirit, it deserves better care. This is why ORU requires all its students to document regular physical exercise throughout their study as a requirement for graduation. The hope is that taking care of the body through aerobic exercises becomes a discipline for life for the students by the time they graduate. The university believes that proper diet and exercise for the body, properly informed thinking for the mind, and biblically sound disciplines for the spirit are important components of wholeness and holiness.

I am writing this in humility out of concern for the ministers and people within the Pentecostal movement, particularly in India. I have seen the suffering of many friends and family members. There was a time when diet had to be whatever was available due to poor economic conditions of Indian Pentecostals. Due to the social and economic "lift" experienced by modern Pentecostals, those days are gone for most believers. Now that there are better resources available to many, Pentecostals in India may want to consider the ministry of prevention along with the ministry of healing. The locally defined standards of holiness among Pentecostals may need to be stretched to accommodate the demands of the word of God for true holiness that involves body, mind and spirit.

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prints? If we want to follow Christ we have to say 'yes' to certain divine principles and 'no' to many self gratifying aspects of life. It may not be easy as we think, but it is prerequisite in the way of becoming His people. This perspective of life in Christ may permit us to go through sufferings and pain! It is inevitable, of course. The reluctance to the suffering and self denial is not counted as the principle of discipleship. It is the deliberate denial to the immediate grandeur and glory. Whoever thinks of personal splendor and status will never be able to carry the cross and walk in the way of Jesus. This definitely demands the utmost denial of self and motivates to accept the identity of Jesus Christ. This will help us to perceive the value of suffering and cost of discipleship.

The sublime teaching of discipleship includes both suffering and self denial (Luke 9:23,24). The willingness to suffer will naturally bring down boasting. When Jesus called people to follow Him He did not offer a mild

and rosy path. It was a tough path but with promise of His enduring presence!! The Twelve became disciples first, not apostles. Today everybody wants to reach soon to the higher rank before they commit to learn from the school of discipleship. The leaders were disciples first in His learning centre. This understanding is lost in today's Christianity. We need to learn to suffer with Christ in lowliness and humbleness. This happens not because we have nothing nor we are poor but because we have everything in Christ! We have been blessed with all the heavenly blessings in Him, hence we must be ready to suffer for our Saviour's cause. He did not even expect service but came to serve us by giving His priceless life! (Mark 10:45). Jesus did not have any short cuts to get things fast as the world dreams.

Jesus consciously left out His infinite glory and equality with the Father, so that in the fullness of time He could be lifted up to save sinners. It is not Jesus enthroned, but Jesus dethroned to the earth even to the cross who became the Lamb of God and made the way of salvation. So the suffering of Christ is incredible, but is in tune with a divine purpose to fulfill. His ordeal is not defeat but victory!. The Christian suffering is therefore neither failure of life nor result of curse nor the lack of smartness. This is beyond human definition and thought. St.

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Peter rightly puts this in an unusual way in his letter of hope. He exhorts the persecuted church to rejoice in the suffering because God's glory rests upon the sufferers (1 Peter 4:12-16)..

Today, the so-called crusaders and crowd pulling preachers do not comprehend the honesty and truthfulness of the Word. They simply stand around the glamour and splash of words to highlight their own personal benefits to deceive the hearers and also deceive themselves. They are simply focusing on the temporary deliverance and dreaming about the monetary benefits from their efforts. They try to spiritualize their greed for achieving personal agendas and ambitions in the

name of the gospel. They really make profits for their own kingdom rather than the Kingdom of God. They sell Christian principles and add more to expand their empire. To them, suffering is counted as curse, self denial is a grandma - story and cross is an old drama!. They always need Jesus who turns

stones into bread (so that they can eat lavishly!) rather than Jesus who breaks the stony hearted; Jesus who turns water into wine (so that they can sell it!) rather than Jesus who changes behavior of sinners; Jesus who multiplies five into thousands (so that they can collect more money based on multiplication theory!). Thus they use all sorts of deceptive methods to deceive the poor.

The church has to sense this endangering situation today and needs to rise to the occasion, so that she can secure the purity, honesty and accuracy of the scripture. This is high time for the church to rescue the truthfulness of the Word from the adulterating agents. Remember we are called not only to believe in Christ, but to suffer for His sake too (Phil. 1:29). This is the mind of Christ according to Peter (1 Pet. 4:1). Apostle John had seen a multitude, who are brought out of a great tribulation (Rev. 7:14). We cannot separate the path

of suffering and self denial from the discipleship and Christian belief. However we have a great promise and assurance that Jesus who endured hostility and suffering is the captain of our faith and will be with us even unto the end of the age. Moreover there is a great reward waiting for all those who endure suffering and agony, that we will receive in eternity. Today we suffer with Him so that we can reign with Him for evermore.

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God Will Fight Our Battles, If We Let Him!



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"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Joshua 1:5).

When Joshua had assumed the charge of leading the Israelites to conquer Canaan, there was a definite assurance from God for him: *"No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you" (Josh. 1:5).* God had promised the land of Canaan to the Israelites with the underlying assurance that He would give them the strength to conquer it and also if needed, He would fight the battles for them!

So, when the five kings of Canaan joined forces to defeat the Israelites (Josh. 10:1-5), it was evident that Joshua and the Israelites would need God's help to win the battle. In keeping with His promise, God assures Joshua: *"Do not fear them, for I have delivered them into your hand; not a man of them shall stand before you" (Josh. 10:8).* God did indeed fight the battle for Joshua: *"So the Lord routed them before Israel, killed them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, chased them along the road that goes to Beth Horon, and struck them down as far as Azekah and Makkedah. And it happened, as they fled before Israel and were on the descent of Beth Horon, that the Lord cast down large hailstones from heaven on them as far as Azekah, and they died. There were more who died from the hailstones than the children of Israel killed with the sword" (Josh. 10:10-11).*

We can see a greater monumental miracle in Joshua 10:12-14 that is also referred in Job 9:7 and Habakkuk 3:11. Joshua, moved by the Lord's will, commanded the sun to delay (Heb., 'be still, silent, leave off'). The earth actually stopped

revolving or, more likely, the sun moved in the same way to keep perfect pace with the battlefield. There are five things we can note from this great miracle:

1. Something miraculous took place that day that enabled them to have a wonderful victory.

2. This miracle came about because of Joshua's prayer.

3. This miracle had something to do with the sun and moon, with which only God could affect.

4. This victory had to do with an extended time to fight the enemy before they scattered back to their cities.

5. Truly God was fighting for Israel.

The main point is that God not only gave them a great victory, but the victory came about in such a manner that made a great impression on the Israelites and the enemies about them.

"And there was no day like that before it or after it, when the LORD listened to the voice of a man; for the LORD fought for Israel" (Josh. 10:14)

Remember, God will fight our battles too if we let Him! It is interesting to note that when Christ conquered our enemy Satan upon the cross, the miracle that happened in connection with the sun was the reverse of what happened at Joshua's time. It was then darkened, as if going down at noon. Christ did not need the light of the sun to complete His victory, so He made darkness His pavilion. Let us understand that *"without Christ we can do nothing" (John 15:5b).* *"He [Christ] who is in us is greater than he [Satan] who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).*

Let us surrender ourselves completely to God so that He can fight our battles for us!



Keep "Suvantha" Ministry in your prayers

The Gift of Life

"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" (Gen. 2:7)

"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" (John 3:16).

Life is a precious gift that God offered man during Creation. The story of how the first man became a living being is described in the 'Creation account' in the Book of Genesis (ch. 2:7). God graciously offers this gift to all men, irrespective of our merit. God determine one's life span unless man decides to end his life deliberately by committing suicide. It is a sin to disregard God's precious gift.

In the summer of 2013, I became gravely ill and my family and friends never expected me to survive. My symptoms were quite complicated and included the contamination of my lungs by a toxic reaction to heart medication, along with various heart concerns. I am alive now only because of the earnest prayers of my family, friends and many children of God in different parts of the world. I believe that God extended my life as a gift. God has a plan and purpose for His children. It is my duty to live for the glory of God for whatever additional time He gives me here on earth.

David said, he is comforted in his suffering because God promised him that He would preserve his life (Psa. 119:50). In Psalm 23, David proclaims that *"though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me"* (Psa. 23:4). David knew that though he was not yet dead, he had occasions in his life when he was passing through the "shadow" or "illusion" of death. According to Webster's dictionary, illusion is the *"perception of something objectively existing in such a way as to cause misinterpretation of its actual nature"*. David is saying that death is only a phantom or an illusion - nothing to be scared of - when he has the comfort of God's companionship.



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Jesus told His disciples that they should not be anxious about their life. He promised that He would take care of them. Their duty was to seek His kingdom and His righteousness. Jesus said, *"Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing" (Luke 12:23)*. Apostle John says, *"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (John 1:4)*. Jesus also said, *"For the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will" (John 5:21)*.

"I cannot know why suddenly the storm should rage
so fiercely round me in its wrath;
But this I know – God watches all my path,
and I can trust."

- *"Streams in the Desert", Cowman, p.196*

Jesus proclaimed, *"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" (John 3:16)*. This 'everlasting life' is a gift from God for accepting His Son as the Lord and Savior. This life is both physical and spiritual. Those who have everlasting life will live continually even after their physical death.

Lazarus in the New Testament who was a friend of Jesus Christ and the brother of Mary and Martha experienced two stages of life. He became quite ill, and his sisters called for Jesus and expected Him to come quickly and heal Lazarus. Instead, Jesus waited two days during which time Lazarus died. When Jesus finally came to see him, he was already in the tomb four days. It is interesting to note that when Lazarus was sick Jesus told His disciples: *"This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it" (John 11:4)*. Jesus revealed His deity by saying He is the Resurrection and Life. He told Martha: *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26)*. Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus cried and with loud voice, *"Lazarus come forth!"* At that moment, Lazarus' decayed body received new flesh and blood and he regained his strength to come out of the tomb covered with grave clothes. Jesus said to the people to loose him and let him go. Lazarus received the gift of a brand new life offered by Jesus.

Jesus came to the earth born of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Virgin Mary in order to die on the cross and redeem mankind from sin. He gave up His life on the cross and He was resurrected from the tomb by the Holy Spirit on the third day in a heavenly body. He is now in heaven on the right hand the Father interceding for us. Our very breath and life are dependent on Jesus who declares, *"He who believes in Me has everlasting life"*.

Praise the Lord.

Fiery Torches

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:1-3)

"In one accord"

The unity is something to be commended when the first New Testament revival started on this earth. Wind is used for blowing out the ash, the dirt and give air which is necessary for the fire to persist. The filling was complete - 100% - filled the house, affected all people and sat on each person.

We know the importance of studying the Bible as a whole to establish each doctrine or principle. For example, take the doctrine of grace and actions required by faith. Old testament is full of actions by faith whether it be sacrifice or Temple worship and New testament is the fulfillment of those actions and we receive grace by faith. That means, the Bible does not give us the freedom to follow our own ways and thinking, whereas it gives directions how to approach God to please Him and receive His grace. Sacrifice in Leviticus is symbolic action for us to follow (Lev. 1:3-9): First, complete surrender and subjection - laying hands putting the sins on the lamb without blemish. Then blood is sprinkled for sanctification. The removing of head from the animal means the senses are dead and flesh is prepared for the fire to burn. Removing skin makes everyone same. The cutting of the animal in pieces means brokenness. Washing of inside is meant to prepare the inside clean from our sinful thoughts. Washing of the feet means that the paths we have gone through in past have to be remembered and cleansed towards sanctification. This makes the sacrifice to be pleasing to GOD. All these give a direction for our personal sacrifice to be pleasing to GOD. For us all the essential requisites are ready: the Lamb is already



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given in sacrifice and fire has already poured out and we have to prepare ourselves in faith. When the preparation is finished and people join together in one accord, then the sacrifice becomes sweet smelling in the presence of God.

There is tremendous potential when people join together. Deut. 32:30 says, one will defeat 1000 and two will defeat

There is tremendous potential when people join together. Deut. 32:30 says, one will defeat 1000 and two will defeat 10000 which means five times what each person can handle individually.

10000 which means five times what each person can handle individually. Bible has many examples of the combination of two: man & woman, pairs in Noah's ark, Cherubs facing each other, 2 sockets for the planks in tabernacle, 2 rings on the sides of ark in tabernacle etc. Coming to New Testament, our Lord's presence is assured in an assembly of 2 or 3 in His name (Mat. 18:20). The potential was seen by GOD when men gathered

together against Him (Gen. 11:6,7). He made them disperse. Also in New testament the Jews were in one accord to crucify Jesus (Mat 27:25), but this action resulted in their dispersion to different countries of the world.

In this context, let us turn our attention to the story of the superhuman act of Samson: "So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves" (Jud. 15:4,5 - NIV). What an astounding scenario! Three hundred foxes with fiery torches, let loose in the fields, vineyards and olive groves of the enemies!!

The result of tying the torch:

Since the fiery torch was tied to their tails, the foxes had to run forward for their own safety. They were forced to stay together and keep the torch behind at a safe distance and run forward. The torches put the enemies' stock on fire. After the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples of Jesus, the fire inside took them to different places and destroyed the enemy's strong holds and brought many souls for the Master. This is exactly what we need in the presently existing situation, too.

The result of lighting the torch with fire:

If there was just the torch tied to the tails without lighting it with fire, the foxes would have pulled in opposite directions and destroyed themselves. This is what is happening in the present day

A Fatal Virus: Jealousy!

Newspapers are filled with descriptions of different viruses which are fatal and deadly. Research and studies are done to find out the cause of deadly diseases like HIV, H1N1, Chikanguniya, Dengu and Leptososis. While the medical world is worried about the course of medicines and their after effects, let us as believers and children of God, focus our attention on a much more "fatal virus" which is affecting people at every stage of their life.

This virus is a horrible sin and it is none other than 'envy or jealousy'. Who is here without jealousy? Who is free from the deadly Virus? This factor of envy is found among kids, members of a family, among societies, clans, tribes and nations.

"To envy another is to feel ill will, jealousy or discontent at his / her possession of something that one keenly desires to have or achieve oneself. "Envy is a feeling of discontent and ill will because of another's advantages, possessions etc.

People who are filled with jealousy and envy cannot bear to see the progress of other people. Even a baby is unable to tolerate the sight of his / her parents cuddling another baby.



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In his own way a baby reacts and shows her anger which comes out of jealousy. According to Pope Gregory "Jealousy (envy) is one of the seven sins". This sin is a calamitous one which is spread all over the world.

This sickness of jealousy is not curable by medical science. It is such a virus which turns brother against brother, sister against sister.

There was a time when people of Kerala used to say "*There is no medicine for envy and baldness*" (*Asooyakkum, kashandikkum marunnilla*). Some time later, an advertisement appeared in

Kerala like this: "At last we have developed a cream, a very effective one for removing your baldness". But its partner 'envy' is still left alone. Yes, this sickness of jealousy is not curable by medical science. It is such a virus which turns brother against brother, sister against sister.

Leave alone other people, this disease is found even in the spiritual world. Apostles have written about this deadly vice. See Acts 13:45, Gal. 5:18-21.

Cain observed that God wasn't pleased with his offering, but was very much pleased with his shepherd brothers' offering. Cain murdered his own brother Abel out of jealousy (Gen. 4:8). Saul had a jealous eye on David (1 Samuel 18:7-9). Saul's further activities show us that this jealousy cannot do any good to anyone.

When Isaac was blessed by God, the Philistines felt jealous at his prosperity. The envious Philistines even covered the wells of Isaac. Even if the enemy tries to block our plans, our heavenly Father would open another way for blessing us. Genesis 30:1 says Rachel felt jealous of Leah who bore children for Jacob.

"Torches with fire" Continuation from previous page

churches without fire. People pull the congregation in different directions. The final goal and vision are lost. In the present generation, we feel, believers are not at all concerned about eternity but more concerned about temporal gains. If we are concerned with eternity, the standards would surely change.

The result of their running:

The wind which accompanies running with the fiery torch kept the foxes in the desired direction. Both wind (John 3:8) and fire point towards the qualities

of the Holy Spirit. The Apostles were separated, ordained, guided, and commanded by the Holy Spirit. They never disobeyed Holy Spirit and the 'Acts of Apostles' were indeed the activities of the Holy Spirit.

The possible end of the foxes

The foxes might have died in one of the burning fields or might have returned after the mission was completed. With the torch in place, they got their direction right. This was again true with the first revival. Apostle Paul says that both life

and death are for the Master's glory. If it is life, the mission has to be accomplished pleasing the Master. Paul counts death as a great gain to rest and enjoy together with Master (Phil. 1:21-23). Those disciples who warred among each other went to war for the Master to achieve something for the master without looking each other's faults. They went in the direction of pleasing the Master. They went with a purpose which the Master desired.

We will pray and let the fire do the same work on each of us, our church and society.

Jacob worked for seven years to get Rachel. She must have been proud of her beauty but her personality did not bring blessings to her. Leah might not have received any recognition from her people, but God gave recognition to her.

Genesis 37:4 shows how envious the brothers were to Joseph who had the gifts of the Spirit. His bothers used to mock at Joseph calling him a "dreamer". Joseph kept himself holy. He endured all ridicule and humiliation and hence was honoured by Almighty God. The brothers of Joseph, who put Joseph into misery, were made to address their bother Joseph as "master" and "Sir". Those people with envy and jealousy are punished by our Lord in this manner. Those brothers never had any slightest inclination that the bother whom they had sold as a slave would occupy a glorious position and would turn out to be their protector.

Asaph a singer in the house of the Lord had this jealous feeling (Psa. 73:3). Jealousy can make you depart from God. Envy can turn you away from man too. But Asaph got a chance to repent and he got the realization that the rich wicked ones are on a slippery ground. We see how the Israelites were jealous at Moses and Aaron and the dire consequences of that sin (Psa. 106:16,17).

Jealous people cannot have any peace in their life. "And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind" (Eccl. 4:4).

Let us pray to our Lord for enabling

Is there jealousy among church members?
It is moving with us. God will not tolerate if we come to worship with this deadly feeling in our mind.

us to rejoice in another person's blessings. "Do not fret because of evil men or be envious of those who do wrong" (Psa 37:1). We are reminded in Proverbs 14:30: "A sound heart is the life of the flesh, but envy the rottenness of the bones".

According to Dr. Billy Graham, envy is one of the most heinous sins of the flesh and one most uncalled for. Lord God denounced this sin. The Pharisees and the priests were jealous of Lord Jesus as He was gaining popularity among the Jews.

Great writers and wise men strongly condemned this dreadful vice. Paul said, "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another". Solomon said, "Who is able to

stand before envy" (Prov. 27:4)? According to Stanley Jones, "Envy is the only passion which can never lie quiet for want of irritation". Such an abominable feeling jealousy is!

Is there jealousy among church members? It is moving with us. God will not tolerate if we come to worship with this deadly feeling in our mind.

Some preach out of jealousy (envy) (Phil. 1:15), Ministry should not be done out of jealousy but with the amazing Grace of God.

Yes, for this sickness of envy, though incurable by human efforts, there is a permanent solution with our God, the greatest doctor. If a person is in Christ, he or she is a new creation and "those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires" (Gal. 5:24). One may not be able to overcome such sins overnight. By continuous persevering with the help of Holy Spirit we can attain victory over all these evils of flesh. (Gal. 5:19-26).

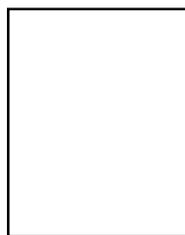
Prayer: Oh Lord, we pray to you to give us that broad mindedness so that we can rejoice in somebody's progress and happiness. Create in us a new heart, oh Lord! Help us to be free from all those deadly sins. Enable us to focus our attention and concentration only on you our Lord ! Amen.

Short Story

One morning poor widow said to her five children : "My dear children, this morning I have nothing to give you to eat because there is no bread in the house. There is not even an egg. But ask God's help for He is rich and powerful, for He himself said : "Ask and it shall be given unto you".

Little Chris, a boy who was only six years old, went to school fasting and very worried. Passing by a church he went in and knelt down at the foot of the altar. Seeing that nobody was inside he began to pray in a loud voice: "Our Father in heaven, we have nothing more to eat. Our mother has no bread, not even an egg to give us. Give us something to eat so that we may not die of hunger. Good Lord, help us! You who are rich and powerful can certainly come to our help

A Child's Prayer



Lydia Mathew
IPC Chembur

as You have promised us".

Chris finished his little prayer and went to school. When he returned home he saw a big loaf of bread on the table and a basket full of eggs.

"Thanks be to the LORD", he exclaimed joyfully. "The good Lord has heard my prayer. Tell me mother, was it

an angel who brought us these gifts?" he asked.

"No, my dear", she answered. "But the Lord heard your prayer, when you were praying in the church before the altar, a rich lady was kneeling in a pew in another part of the church. You did not see her, but she saw you and heard what you said and decided to send us these gifts. She is the angel that God sent to us. My dear children, you must thank God now and for the rest of your life and you will be always helped by God, if you pray for your needs and have faith in His providence".

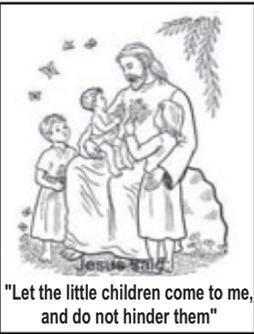
*"All things that are on the earth
Shall wholly pass away
Except the love of God which shall
Live and last for ages!"*

Children's

CORNER



In God's perfect plan !



A man who survived from a shipwreck was washed up by the waves and reached a small deserted island. For many days he prayed to God to rescue him, and every day he looked at the sea for help, but no help ever came.

Many months passed by, but still the man prayed and maintained his faith in the Lord for his rescue.

In the meanwhile he also managed to build a small hut. It wasn't big or strong, but at least it would give him some protection from the bad weather and a place to rest. The hut was made of palm leaves and some wood. But then one day, when he arrived home after searching for food in the island he was shocked to find his little hut in flames, everything burned and the smoke rising up to the sky. It was the worst thing that could happen to him. The only thing he had for himself was all gone up in flames.

Now he had absolutely nothing. Not only was the hut gone, but also the little bit of food he had managed to gather.

He wept bitterly and lost his hope of staying alive. He was shattered in spirit and began cursing God in anger and grief. He was tired and laid down on the ground and slept.

Very early the next morning he was awakened by the sound of a ship and it was lying just a few hundred yards from the beach. There was also a large row boat coming towards him. They had come

to rescue him!

As the men in the boat arrived on the beach, he jumped with joy asked his rescuers, "How did you know I was here? How did you find me"?

"We saw your smoke signal", they replied. The smoke from the burning hut informed the ship that someone in the island needs help.

Dear friends Bible says: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the LORD (Isaiah 55:8). Many times in our lives, nothing happens as we plan. Things we build and expect to protect us may be washed out. But in all these circumstances just remember that God is at work and He is answering our prayer. He can turn our worst days into the best days of our lives. Friends, everything happens for good and in the right time and in Gods perfect plan.



Juby Anoop

God's Creation



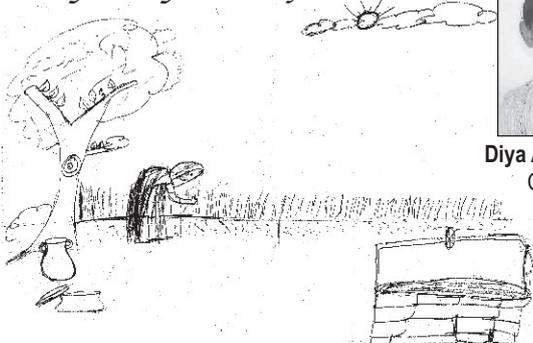
Barnabas E. Johnson
Nagpur

God will do wonders among us - Joshua 3 : 5



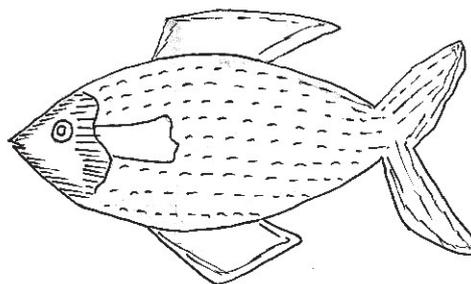
Aaron B. Thomas
Panvel

Ruth gleaning the ear of Grain



Diya Alan Mathew
Chembur

God's Creation



Joel Joe Kurian
Nagpur



China to become 'world's most Christian nation' within 15 years!

The number of Christians in Communist China is growing so steadily that it by 2030 it could have more churchgoers than America, according to a report published in the 'Telegraph'. The biggest church in China with a capacity of 5,000 seats and boasting of a 206 ft cross that can be seen for miles around, opened last year. "It is a wonderful thing

congregations in particular have skyrocketed since churches began reopening when Chairman Mao's death in 1976 signalled the end of the Cultural Revolution. Less than four decades later, some believe China is now poised to become not just the world's number one economy but also its most numerous Christian nation. In 2010 there were more than 58 million Protestants in China compared to 40 million in Brazil and 36 million in South Africa, according

many millions who worship at illegal underground "house churches", which hold unsupervised services – often in people's homes – in an attempt to evade the prying eyes of the Communist Party. Now it is starting to send its own missionaries abroad, notably into North Korea, in search of souls. They think, it is easier for them than for British, South Korean or American missionaries.

Chairman Mao thought he could eliminate religion. He thought he had accomplished this. But he and his party actually failed completely.

'Blood Moon' and the return of Jesus!

Could a series of "blood moon" events be connected to Jesus' return? Some Christians think so. In the wee hours of (April 15) morning, the moon slid into Earth's shadow, casting a reddish hue on the moon. There are about two lunar eclipses per year, according to NASA, but what's unusual this time around is that there will be four blood moons within 18 months - astronomers call that a tetrad - and all of them occur during Jewish holidays. A string of books have been published surrounding the event by many authors including Pastor John Hagee, Texas, and quoting a Bible passage in Joel (2:21) that refers to the moon turning into blood. "The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord". In his book, Hagee says something traumatic and "world-changing" will happen to the nation of Israel due to the tetrad. The four eclipses occur on April 15 and Oct. 8, 2014, April 4 and Sept. 28, next year. The ones in April occur during Passover, and the ones in October occur during the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles. In 1492, the Jews were expelled from Spain. In 1948, the modern state of Israel was born, and in 1967,



Congregation of the largest church in China

to be a follower of Jesus Christ. It gives us great confidence," beamed Jin Hongxin, a 40-year-old visitor. "If everyone in China believed in Jesus then we would have no more need for police stations. There would be no more bad people and therefore no more crime," she added. Officially, the People's Republic of China is an atheist country but that is changing fast as many of its 1.3 billion citizens seek meaning and spiritual comfort that neither communism nor capitalism seem to have supplied. Christian

to the Pew Research Centre's Forum on Religion and Public Life. Professor Yang at Purdue University predicts that by 2030, China's total Christian population, including Catholics, would exceed 247 million, placing it above Mexico, Brazil and the United States as the largest Christian congregation in the world. A church leader said: "They (the Chinese government) do not trust the church, but they have to tolerate or accept it because the growth is there!"

Among China's Protestants are also

Israel won the Six-Day War. During the 300-year interval from 1600 to 1900, there were no tetrads at all, according to NASA eclipse experts. This time, Hagee suggests that 'Rapture' will occur where Christians will be taken to heaven, Israel will go to war in a great battle called Armageddon, and Jesus will return to earth. "When you see these signs, the Bible says, lift up your head and rejoice, your redemption draweth nigh," Hagee said in a sermon. "I believe that the Heavens are God's billboard, that He has been sending signals to Planet Earth but we just have not been picking them up". But NASA does not consider tetrads as especially rare, saying in a statement that there will be eight sets of tetrads before the year 2100.

Critics are many. One Pastor said: "We need to stop giving into some of these sensationalist speculations". Another said: "Maybe Christians are more gullible. One has to twist the data to make it appear as if these are the fulfillment of some biblical prophecy. It can strike fear into people, which is so unnecessary and wrong".

Speculations apart, our Lord is coming soon. Let us keep ourselves ready and prepared for that great event!

A pastor commits suicide!

It was reported in newspapers that the pastor of Community Bible church in North Carolina died after hanging himself in his home. According to Police,

he was found dead on April 11.

The pastor's wife wrote in Facebook, asking for prayers: ""With saddened hearts for our earthly loss, but joyful for heaven's gain, we inform you that (my husband) finished his race for God and entered into His presence Friday night. Details regarding his celebration of life service are pending and will be posted shortly".

The reason for the pastor's action of taking his own life is not immediately known. But whatever the circumstances, what was the his faith in Jesus which could not overcome the circumstances? Did he really trusted his Lord who promised to His followers, the peace that passes all understanding? Is his wife's conclusion really valid?

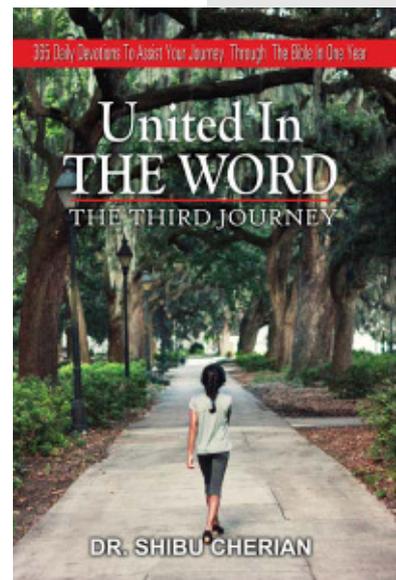
Daily Devotions: "United In THE WORD - The Third Journey"



The third and final devotional book written by Dr. Shibu Cherian has been released. This 698-pages book is available on sale in both paperback and kindle formats in Amazon.com as well as through the UnitedInTheWord.com website

It was on October 19, 2010 that Dr. Cherian was inspired to start on this devotional journey through the Bible. Since then, he has made three personal journeys through the entire Bible during the years 2011, 2012 & 2013, which have resulted in three devotional books (The First/Second/Third Journey). Each of these devotional books provide 365 daily devotions that will assist every believer to journey through the entire Bible in a year by following the daily Bible reading plan. These devotional books have been well liked and appreciated by many Christians all over the world, and has since Jan 1, 2014 resulted in an audio broadcast of the daily devotions through Victory 91.5 FM radio from Cumming, Georgia, USA that airs daily at 5:45 AM and 7:45 PM (Eastern Time) through the FM radio as well as through live streaming from Victory915.com as well.

Suvartha Magazine readers are quite familiar with Dr. Shibu Cherian who writes a 'Meditation' page in every issue. (See page 6 of this issue)



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