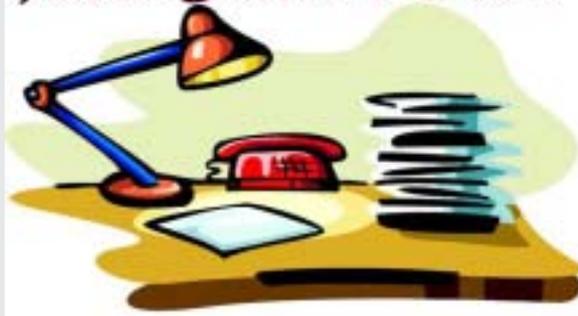


From the Editor's Desk



SOCIAL MEDIA: A Social evil?

Social Media is the technological revolution of the 21st century. Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, Instagram, Messenger etc. are

the main social media tools that allow people to share or exchange informations, ideas, images, videos and even more with each other through a particular network. It is a platform for people to discuss their issues and opinions. A day without the use of social media cannot be imagined in today's life and has become a day-to-day routine. The effect and impact of social media is more than that we presume and the society around us is highly influenced by the social media as it plays a vital role in transforming people's life style.

In earlier days, people used to gather in a common place and share their views on socio-economic and political issues. This communion used to maintain a sense of belonging and bonding among members of the society. They were members of a real world. But the emergence of the social media has made them members of a virtual world.

It is a fact that the social media is capable of uniting people around the world and it has the power to transmit messages in lightning speed to millions of people in a short span of time. The conventional methods of communications such as news papers, radio and television had a sense of reliability in its content and form, but the news which is being flashed through the social networking sites lacks the same. Any person can ignite a spark on the social networking site and without enquiring its truthfulness and reliability, it is exchanged by a chain of people.

According to a recent survey, 90% of college students use social networking sites. Students can easily communicate or share information quickly and effectively reach others with regard to class ventures or for help on homework assignments. Teachers can post about class activities, school events, homework assignments.

There are some negative effects of Social Media on education. The first concern is the kind of distraction to the students present in the class. Students are tempted to use it even during lectures affecting their concentration and quality of learning. A long use of mobiles or computers in the previous night causes a kind of distress and distraction in students making them unable to concentrate on studies. Researches conducted by eminent

psychologists and doctors revealed that high amounts of time spent on social media may lead to depression and low self-esteem.

The primary effects of social media are especially in children and youth, the cream of the society. It has already inculcated a social culture among the young generation leading them to a sense of insecurity, lack of self esteem, mental instability and depletion of human values.

As the use of social media becomes an addiction, students hardly get time for studies and to do home works. This directly affects their career, resulting in a dim future. Students also get into unhealthy relationships causing imbalance in their spiritual, social and cultural values.

The use of text messaging and social media messaging have become common occurrence in today's society. Interaction on a human level has become less frequent in a person's life. Spending much time in on-line socializing has replaced the time spent on face-to-face communication. Human element of conversation has disappeared and by this we have lost all of the blessings that go along with it, such as, the sound of laughter, ability to read other's emotions, the sight of a smile and the feel of a touch.

Many young people's day to day life are woven by the social media. Youngsters are in communication with their friends and groups every day. In past years youngsters used to be in touch with friends and their groups only in their own schools and colleges. But nowadays they are in contact not only with known friends but also with unknown people - strangers - through social networking. As it is not clear who the "strangers" are, they may indulge in kidnapping, murder and robbery using details shared.

Wasting lots of time in social networking sites affects the health of youngsters. Blogs with unknown credentials influence youth to become violent and get into inappropriate actions. Youngsters using social media extensively show negative reflections in their behaviors. Their career gets affected, they become spiritually weak, influenced by unhealthy friendships and cultures. The warmth of homely communication is lost.

To conclude, social media has various merits but it also has many demerits which affect people negatively. Use of social media is beneficial but should be used in a limited way without getting addicted. Parents have the responsibility to monitor the social media activities of their children to safeguard them from possible threats on their life and spirituality. ■

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Mathews Paul

Rapture, Millennium & Resurrection

Prophecy is a topic that is disregarded in many pulpits today, especially prophecies related to Christ's return. Regarding the Second Coming, although we cannot know the "day or the hour", we can know approximately when His soon return will become history. Jesus and the prophets have given us fairly clear signals that point to the "last days". There are three events in particular which biblical prophecy describes in detail. They are: the rapture, the millennium and the resurrection.

1. The Rapture

The Bible vividly points out the imminence of Christ's return for His church. It will activate a worldwide regathering of those who are still alive at the time of Christ's coming. This regathering is generally known as the Rapture.

At this event, the Lord is reaching down for His bride.

Religion specializes in man's reaching out for God. Christianity specializes in God's reaching out for man.

There are three theories relating to 'Rapture'.

a) *Post-Tribulation Rapture.* A number of Christians believe that the rapture is to take place at the end of the Tribulation.

Jesus said : "*For then there will be Great Tribulations unequalled from the beginning of the world until now and never to be equaled again*" (Mat. 24:21). Deeper study of prophecy seems to point to the length of this period as a total of seven years. That will be a period characterized by war, famine, natural disasters and pestilences. Jesus goes on to say: "*And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon the sea and the waves roaring*" (Luke 21:25). It seems that this is already beginning to happen. Global weather has seen strange extremes lately. Yes, the sea and the waves have begun roaring, and will intensify during the Tribulation. While most Christians

believe that the Rapture of the church takes place before the agonies begin, a few teach that the church will go through the Tribulation and then will be raptured at the coming of Christ.

b) *Mid-Tribulation Rapture.* A few Christians theorize that it would be in the middle of the Great Tribulation that the church is to be raptured. According to them, -the church will remain in the world during the first half, the milder period of Tribulation. This view is shared only by a small minority of Christians.

c) *Pre-Tribulation Rapture.* This is the correct view, and is widely held in Christendom. It holds that God calls away His church before the onset of the Tribulation. Then will begin what Jeremiah described as the time of Jacob's trouble (30:7). Huge massacres will take place, so the dead will lie around like garbage on the earth (25:29-33). Entire nationalities without regard for Christ

will be wiped out. Regardless of the unleashing of the powers of darkness at the end of this age, let us remember, God is in control. This incredibly speeding spacecraft called earth has a pilot at the controls!

ATTACKER'S TEETH ROT IN THE MOUTH.

Is such a period of outpouring of God's wrath on earth a credible thought?

Well, the Bible is filled with stories of judgment. If God judges sin in this life, we can be sure that future judgments are also realistic. A preacher tells us how he saw divine retribution on a family that attacked him for causing the conversion of a non - Christian woman. Her mother and relatives surrounded the man of God at one of his meetings, and spat the red juice of tobacco and beetlenut on his face and his clean clothes. The man of God took no revenge but carried on with the service. In a few short weeks, God took action. The attackers' tongues rotted in their mouths by a strange disease. That wicked family perished within three months!



Rev. Dr. John Cherian

Prophecy is a topic that is disregarded in many pulpits today, especially prophecies related to Christ's return. Regarding the Second Coming, although we cannot know the "day or the hour", we can know approximately when His soon return will become history.

2. The Millennium.

The next major prophetic topic of prominence in the scripture is the Millennium. In Latin that means 'a thousand years'. The thought is conveyed six different times in the Book of Revelation. Here is the most important of the six references: *"Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven with the key of the bottomless pit. He seized the Dragon, the Devil and bound him in chains for a thousand years. He flung him into the bottomless pit. I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of the testimony to Jesus and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-4).* Here again there is

difference of opinion. The following three views may be observed among churchmen who interpret prophetic passages:

a) *A-Millennialism.* A small minority of Christians rule out a literal interpretation of the kingdom of God on earth. This view surfaced some 300 years ago. To these Christians, the Millennium is the church age. The 'binding of Satan' is interpreted by them to mean Jesus' binding of the powers of darkness at His

first coming. Most liberal churchmen adhere to this view. But then, what are these words of Christ supposed to mean? *"You shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with power and great glory"*? These are the words of a trustworthy and honorable person!

b) *Post-Millennialism.* This group of Christians rose in the seventeenth century. Their view, like A-millennialism, explains away the supernatural element, suggesting that the Millennium is gradually being set up in the world through current world evangelization. Christ is not going to return to establish a temporal kingdom; it is the church, they say, that is in the process of doing that here and now. *Well, some have everything to live WITH, but nothing to live FOR. What are the post-millennialists living for?*

c) *Pre-Millennialism.* This is the most credible view of the Millennium. This is based

on the literal understanding of its description in the Book of Revelation. Accordingly, Christ will return to earth prior to the thousand - year reign and engage in a final battle with the forces of evil and Antichrist.

ANTICHRIST and the MICROCHIP:

The 'mark of the beast' to be introduced by Antichrist as predicted in the scripture is already in the making, in the form of a microchip which can be implanted in one's forehead or hand. Using the electronic transfer of money, one hand-sweep over the super-market's scanner with that implant in his hand will make it possible to automatically deduct funds from his personal bank account. It has the potential of

becoming *'the mark of the beast', as "one cannot buy or sell save he that had the mark"•(Rev. 13:16, 17).* The chip is powered by a lithium battery and recharges through the temperature changes in our skin. It has already been used in top secret military operations. The designers claim, 'the forehead and back of the hand are the only viable places'•for making this device work! Thanks be to God, the good news is that Christ will destroy this "Man of Sin" and inaugurate the millennial kingdom!

The 'mark of the beast' to be introduced by Antichrist as predicted in the scripture is already in the making, in the form of a microchip which can be implanted in one's forehead or hand.

Thanks be to God, the good news is that Christ will destroy this "Man of Sin" and inaugurate the millennial kingdom!

3. The Resurrection

The last major prophetic subject in this connection is the 'Resurrection'. There are a number of phases in the unfolding of the 'Resurrection'. In many believers' minds, there is a state of confusion regarding this topic. Hence let me list here an organized picture of the teaching.

The First Resurrection. Under this heading there are several phases of action.

a) *The first phase.* Here we would list Jesus, who rose from the dead; also a few people such as Lazarus, the son of Nain's widow and those who arose from their tombs at the time of Jesus' death.

b) *The second phase* includes all the believers who are to rise from the dead at the time of the rapture, just prior to the Tribulation.

The 'mark of the beast' to be introduced by Antichrist as predicted in the scripture is already in the making, in the form of a microchip which can be implanted in one's forehead or hand. Using the electronic transfer of money, one hand-sweep over the super-market's scanner with that implant in his hand will make it possible to automatically deduct funds from his personal bank account.

Christ will return to earth prior to the thousand - year reign and engage in a final battle with the forces of evil and Antichrist.

Moral Issues

Facing Churches Today!

- Part I -



Pastor Shibu Joseph
Navi Mumbai

Introduction:

We live in the climactic level of information technology and high altitude of the social media. Irrespective of social and financial status, all people from every walk of life popularly involve in the social media and use available technological utilities. The world is brought on the tips of our fingers by these technological devices and has become what is called a 'global village'. The space science takes its wings to other planets in the vast universe. Nuclear science, bio-technology, genetic engineering and other remarkable developments in the area of transportation and infrastructure make everything possible for humanity. People of every country glorify these developments boundlessly. The rise of many god-men and woman and cultic centers is another mark of today's history. On the other hand, we witness

moral degradation, devaluing of human values, social evils, threat of terrorism, rapes, murder, racial issues, rise of criminality and suicide, breaks up of families, etc. The increase of incurable diseases is another head ache of the world.

The church of Jesus Christ lives in the midst of all these issues. Because the influence of many such issues creep into the churches, we need to address them today. We cannot be merely passive and show sluggish faces to people.

The church of Jesus Christ lives in the midst of all these issues. We cannot just ignore or shut our eyes to these problems. Because the influence of many such issues creep into the churches, we need to address them today. We cannot be merely passive and show sluggish faces to people. Many of the young men and women misuse their time in the social sites and find themselves lost from the main

stream of the churches and aimlessly get entangled in unwanted relationships. This is really a crisis in many of the Christian communities. The question is how we can solve

The world is brought on the tips of our fingers by these technological devices and has become what is called a 'global village'.

"Rapture, Millennium & Resurrection" (Continuation from previous page)

c) *The two witnesses.* Rev. 11:11 speaks of the two witnesses being attacked by the Beast (Antichrist) and killed during the Tribulation. But after three days their bodies are resurrected; they go up to heaven in a cloud.

d) *The fourth phase* is described in Rev. 20:6. The ones who are raised here are the saints who became believers during the Tribulation. John saw "the souls of those who had been beheaded for the sake of God's word and their testimony to Jesus. These came to life again and reigned with Christ for a thousand years". . . .

The Second Resurrection. Now we conclude with the 'Last Resurrection'. It is also mentioned at times as the 'Second Resurrection' and is associated with the 'Final Judgment' - judgment

for those who wanted too much fun out of life. But remember - **There is no fun in life when everything is funny.** We read in Rev. 20:11: "Then I saw a great white throne and the One who sat upon it I could see the dead, great and small, standing before the throne--- The dead were judged upon the record of their deeds". After this 'Great White Throne Judgment', God will dwell for ever with His people. Christ will hand over His kingdom to God the Father. New heavens and new earth will appear, where New Jerusalem will be the center of glory and peace for ever and ever. ■

God will dwell for ever with His people. New heavens and new earth will appear, where New Jerusalem will be the center of glory and peace for ever and ever.

There are many moral issues that the churches face today. A few of them are divorce, remarriage, abortion, cohabitation, same sex marriage, euthanasia and suicide.

The Holy Bible is both a spiritual and ethical Book. Our God is both a spiritual and ethical Person. In other words, the Lord gives as much importance to morality as He gives to spirituality, according to the Bible. No other book in the world provides true and honest teachings regarding these matters.

all these problems? How do we address these based on the holy scriptures? What is the position of the Bible on these issues? This small effort is to address a few issues and put forward some findings from the Holy Writings as much as possible. This article is not going to address all the issues as the writer feels that it would be a vast work and also there are many limitations.

Relevant Issues of Today:

As mentioned above, there are many moral issues that the churches face today. A few of them are divorce, remarriage, abortion, cohabitation, same sex marriage, euthanasia and suicide. These are some of the issues we need to address immediately. Though many of these started in western countries, now we can see all these exist among our community and are increasing day by day. The so-called leadership of the churches is not interested to deal with these issues and make any biblical appraisal. Many of them are after personal advantages, unfortunately. As a result people are in real dilemma and doing whatever is convenient to them. At least few of the pastors and leaders allow many of these issues to take place and even encourage people to do so. So in this scenario, it is necessary to look in the Sacred Scriptures in order to find out the right position that we need to keep and communicate.

The Holy Bible is both a spiritual and ethical Book. Our God is both a spiritual and ethical Person. In other words, the Lord gives as much importance to morality as He gives to spirituality, according to the Bible. No other book in the world provides true and honest teachings regarding these matters. So it is always befitting to bring out the Holy Book to address these issues. We now will discuss certain issues in the following pages.

Divorce and Re-marriage:

This is one of the worst problems the churches face today everywhere, irrespective of nations, cultures, languages and faith. In order to deal with this crisis the church has to understand the meaning and plan that God the Creator ordained in holy matrimony. In fact,

marriage was the first institution that God established in human society. It is divine in institution and sacred in action and practice. Wilbur Donovan rightly writes: "marriage in God's plan involves threefold unity between man and woman. These threefold unity correspond to the threefold nature of human beings as body, mind, spirit (1 Thes. 5:23). These unities are physical unity, mental and emotional unity and spiritual unity" (*Biblical Christianity in Indian Perspective*, p.339). The renowned writer John Stott gives a biblical definition, "marriage is an exclusive heterosexual covenant between one man and one woman, ordained and sealed by God, preceded by a public leaving of parents, consummated in physical union, issuing in a

permanent supportive partnership and normally crowned by the gift of children" (*Issues Facing Christians Today*, p.361). Because the marriage is a covenantal relationship (Malachi 2:14), we need to highlight **four serious commitments**, such as:

1. Commitment before Almighty God,
2. Commitment between husband and wife,
3. Commitment to the church and
4. Commitment to the families they belong and society in which they live.

They also have a legal and constitutional commitment to the nation. This is all about the marriage.

In the present scenario divorce has become a normal practice among Christians, even in Pentecostal churches. It is violating the divine ordination and breaking the bond between couples. Marital breakdown is always a tragedy. It is becoming a serious problem in the modern society. The Bible is not encouraging divorce to take place. The last minor prophet Malachi writes, "*God hates divorce*" (2:16). Because divorce destroys God's plan for both marriage and family. Divorce gives extreme pain to the children. If a family has children, the act of divorce creates anger, hurt and often result in developing a low view of marriage and family bonds into their hearts. Such parents lose their confidence with the Lord and practical standing before others.

The so-called leadership of the churches is not interested to deal with these issues and make any biblical appraisal. Many of them are after personal advantages, unfortunately.

What our Lord Jesus teaches about this? His teaching is found in the Bible as a response to the question of Pharisees in Matt. 19:3-12, Mark 10:2-12, cf. Matt. 5:32. The answer of Jesus was about the original divine plan of marriage, recorded in the book of Genesis. He quoted the scripture from Gen. 1:27 & 2:24. Then Jesus added His own version into it, *"what God has joined together, let man not separate"*. Jesus here obviously stressed the permanency and commitment of marriage. The only concession given to divorce is fornication (Matt. 19:9). Jesus allows divorce in this case but He does not command it. When God yoked together a man and woman in holy wedding, no one has the authority to break it, even the courts of the country.

"Christ Jesus permitted divorce and re-marriage on the sole ground of fornication or adultery. The fornication or adultery indicates sexual infidelity or marital unfaithfulness and every kind of illegal relationships. This disrupts the "one flesh" concept of the marriage. Even if divorce is allowed in such cases, it is not encouraged widely. It is allowed but not required. In fact, forgiveness and reconciliation, restoring the relationship should always be the first option" (ESV Study Bible, p.2546).

When Apostle Paul is dealing the marital issues in Corinthian church, he too justified what Jesus taught (1 Cor. 7:10-16). However he put forward another legitimate ground for divorce: only on the basis of desertion by either one (v.15) for the sake of Christian faith. Perhaps it is a voluntary act by the person who is not in the genuine faith. In this sense they are not bound any more. Nevertheless, a Bible believing Christian should not take any initiative to do so. Surprisingly, no hint of remarriage is seen or stated here. The remarriage is possible and permissible when either one dies, but only with a believer (1 Cor. 7:39).

What are the precautions and remedies we need to draw? The first and foremost remedy is respect God's word and accept the plan of God in marriage. A few findings are listed here:-

1. Married couples should consecrate themselves to the Lord first and then to each other. Spend ample time in prayer and meditation of the Word.

2. A complete obedience to the principles of marriage that God set forth in the Holy Scripture.

3. The unconditional love between each other (1 Cor. 13).

4. We have to remember that God who joined us is not only the Sustainer but also a Supreme Judge, who will ask an account of the family life.

5. The need of faithfulness to life partner and accept each other in spite of all human limitations and weakness.

6. Have a better communication between couples and openness to each other.

7. Keep the purity and chastity in the relationship (Heb. 13:2,3).

8. Do not love money and material things more than the husband or wife and family bond and more over be content with what we have (Heb. 13:5,6)

9. Remember, to God family is so important because it is His plan for humanity. So we should handle it carefully. The whole family both in heaven and earth derive its name from the Father (Eph. 3:14). Family is therefore a shadow of heaven on earth.

10. Finally, love each other, respect and accept each other. Do not just count on the personality, beauty and finance alone. Find out the beauty, concern, and kindness of the hearts. Cherish noble characters like love, obedience, loyalty, joy, subjection, honour and satisfaction in the family. Family is not a military camp, but a place of happiness and humor. But there should be discipline and decency.

In conclusion, we must say that the grown up children should discuss their marriage with their parents or vice versa. A young boy or girl should not try to find out the partner in their own way, but rather should allow the parents to find out the partners. In creation God found a way to make a help mate for Adam. Abraham found a girl for Isaac, not Isaac by himself. Jacob chose wives for himself but they brought lot of troubles and tensions into his family later. More strictly the church must not allow inter-faith marriage and promote any such aspect in the Body of Christ (2 Cor. 6:14). Biblical marriage is not only a social activity but above all it is spiritual and sacred, grounded in the unchanging Word and God's superb and sublime plan. Moreover divorce is abhorrence to the Lord. How can we encourage divorce when God feels strong hatred to it? And re-marriage is not permissible when there is no genuine ground, except what is recorded in the Word. Hence a genuine Christian should be able to abide in the law of God.

(. . . To be continued) ■

Jesus here stressed the permanency and commitment of marriage. The only concession given to divorce is fornication. Jesus allows divorce in this case but He does not command it. When God yoked together a man and woman in holy wedding, no one has the authority to break it, even the courts of the country.

A young boy or girl should not try to find out the partner in their own way, but rather should allow the parents to find out the partners. In creation God found a way to make a help mate for Adam. Abraham found a girl for Isaac,

God's Book for Mankind:

- Part 20 -

'Word study Method' of Bible Study



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Studying difficult passages in light of other passages in the Bible that deals with the same subject is the best way to study. Interpreting the Bible with the Bible is the best way of studying.

There are thousands of words in the Holy Bible. In studying the Bible you need to remember that each and every word does not have exact same meaning all the time.

Even though certain words may have the same meaning always, that is not the way it is with all the words. Usually we have a basic knowledge of what a lot of words mean in a simple, plain, literal sense. But that is not the case always.

Studying certain words and/or phrase helps us to understand what that passage of the Word of God means. Some times words can be difficult to understand. Studying difficult passages in light of other passages in the Bible that deals with the same subject is the best way to study. Interpreting the Bible with the Bible is the best way of studying. .

Tools you need for Word study. At least a language dictionary in whatever language you are studying, a Bible Dictionary, and an Exhaustive Bible Concordance are needed. Exhaustive Bible Concordance lists the book(s), chapter(s), and verse(s) where the word you are studying is found. A Bible Dictionary gives the meaning(s) of the word and other words that have similar meaning. If you have more tools such as Bible study Handbook, Bible Encyclopedia, Study Bible, Cross Reference Bible, all of these can be used to make your study faster and easier. Of course, have your Bible, pen and a note book.

Choose a word. The first step in this study is to choose a word that you wish to study. Decide whether you want to study the word only in the writing of one writer, such as Moses, Jeremiah, Daniel, Apostle Peter, John, or Paul, or do you want to study the use of this word only in one book of the Bible, such as the Book of Genesis, Psalms, the Gospel of John or whatever book you choose. Choose words that are used repeatedly, action words or verbs, figure



of speech words, interesting words or even words that are difficult to understand.

Context Context, Context. What is context? Dictionary defines context as the circumstances that form the setting for an event, statement or idea. So be

sure to read the verses, paragraph or even the whole chapter where the word is used to understand the context.

Ask some questions about this word and find answers. What is the plain, simple, most obvious, clear, common meaning of the word? What is the context in which this word is used? What kind of literature is this? Is this poetry or prose? Is this passage a parable, or history, Is it used literally or as figure of speech? Does the literal, plain meaning make sense in this passage?

If you do not know the answers to these questions then look up the meaning of this word in a dictionary. Then look up the meaning in a Bible Dictionary. If you have more than one translation of the Bible available to you, look and compare if the same word is used in both translations or a different word is used.

Organize the References according to Meaning. After reading and studying various references, you need to organize these verses where this word has the same meaning in to one group. Write down those verses where this word has a different meaning(s) and group those verses separate as groups.

As you get a deeper understanding of the word of God through word study method of the Bible, may the Holy Spirit help you to have a closer walk with the LORD Jesus Christ.

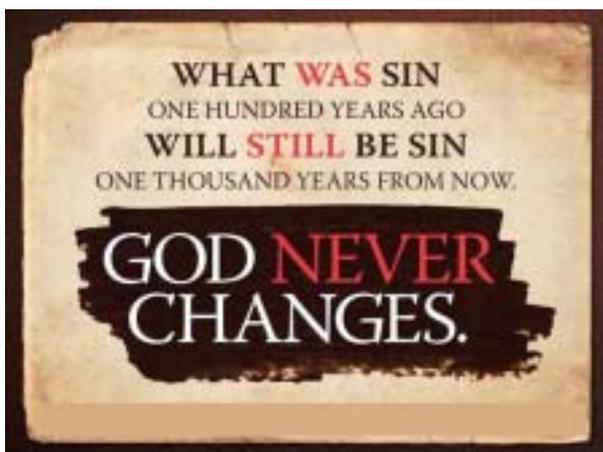
*"O send thy Spirit, Lord, now unto me,
That he may touch mine eyes,
and make me see:
Show me the truth concealed within thy word,
And in thy Book revealed
I see the Lord."* ■

Loving the 'World' Is a Sin against GOD!

**New Series:
Meditations from
"1 John" - 2**

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever." (1 John 2:15-17)

In the above passage, the term 'world' does not refer to the universe created by God but the community of sinful humanity that possesses a spirit of rebellion against God under the dominion of Satan (1 John 5:19). In this sense, the 'world' is the satanic system



opposing Christ's kingdom on this earth. We are plainly warned not to love the 'world' or the things that are in the 'world' since our love for the world is not compatible with our love for God.

All that the 'world' has to offer may be described as the lust of the flesh (sinful sensual pleasures), the lust of the eyes (covetousness or materialism), and the pride of life (being proud about ourselves). The lust of the flesh refers to such sensual bodily appetites as proceed from within our evil nature. The lust of the eyes applies to such evil desires as may arise from what we see. The pride of life is an unholy ambition for self-display and self-glory. These three areas of appeal were presented to Eve, who gave in (Gen. 3:6) and to Jesus Christ, who overcame through the Word of God (Matt.

4:1-11). We should also depend on the Word of God to defeat temptation in our lives.

Living for this 'world' is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic that will sink soon. This 'world' is passing away so there is no point in living for this world alone. To be

consumed with this life is to be unprepared for the next. What a tragedy to invest our resources in what will not last. But we will abide forever when we do the will of God as this will deliver us from the temptation of passing things.

Let us be careful that nothing breaches our spiritual defense. We cannot afford to let down our guard anytime, but need to be alert to what entices us today. A lapse opens the door to sin, which in turn may develop into a sinful habit that will eventually cause us to drift from God. Let us pray this simple prayer today:

"Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

(Psalms 139:23-24)



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Quotable Quotes

"Good is not always God's will, but God's will is always good"

"Our old history ends with the Cross; our new history begins with the resurrection"

"The Spirit is both a builder and a dweller. He cannot dwell where He has not built; He builds to dwell and dwells in only what He has built"

"I must first have the sense of God's possession of me before I can have the sense of His presence with me"



Watchman Nee

Lessons from the sea shore!

I went to the beach the other day. I was walking on the shore with sand under my feet, birds flying. There were a lot of activities going on at the shore and it was filled with people, children and pets. Everyone at the shore seemed happy and joyful. Something stuck my mind as I looked at the waves. I saw the waves kept lashing at the shore unceasingly. As soon as one wave recedes another takes its place - sometimes even stronger than the previous wave. Every receding wave was followed by another and then another. I looked at the waves and wondered if the waves will ever stop hitting at the shore. I felt sorry for the poor shore; it seemed to be helpless and incompetent to face the relentless attack of the strong waves.

Looking at the waves a thought came to my mind that we could compare our lives to the sea shore that is continuously hit upon with waves of anxiety, troubled thoughts, problems and uncertainties lashing at our lives one after another. Christian life is never without problems and as humans we are bound to be anxious when problems arise.

What does the Bible say about troubles and anxiety? Bible repeatedly states 'Do not be anxious about anything', 'Do not fear'. It's surprising to note that 'Do not fear,' is stated 365 times in the Bible - one for each day of the year! God states this because as humans He



Anoop Chacko, UK

knows that we will be anxious and fearful when problems arise. God wants us to stay calm and rely on Him and not be anxious.

The Bible says that He has set boundaries for the seas: "I placed boundaries on it, I set a bolt and doors" (Job 38:10). Similarly, in our life He won't let us be overwhelmed with problems nor will He give us anything which is beyond our capacity to bear. The waves that are lashing will not be able to drown us as God is in control of the waves.

The Bible also says that our God is mighty to calm the sea: "You rule the swelling of the sea; When its waves rise, You still them" (Psalm 89:9). "He caused the storm to be still, So that the waves of the sea were hushed" (Psalm 107:29). But we just have to call on Him and He will answer us. In the gospel we see Jesus calms the sea and the sea becomes still. The Lord was waiting to see the reaction of His disciples to the

waves and then calmed the storm. Similarly God can calm our anxious thoughts and help us get through our problems if we land in His arms rather than panicking about the situation.

Jesus walked on the waves and we see that Peter also was able to walk on the waves for a little while until his faith gave up. Similarly as Christians God expects us to rise above the waves and walk on it. We can do that if we trust God without faltering.

The waves of the sea washed the grains of sand on the sea shore making it clean and sparkling in the sunlight and making a beautiful beach where people can come and relax. "Testing of your faith produces perseverance" (James 1:3). Job says: "When He has tried me I shall come forth as gold" (23:10). Likewise, when waves of this world hit us we should not be discouraged because we will come out purer and stronger.

Therefore my friends, if you are going through troubled times, don't worry - just remember the seashore. All throughout the shore remained calm and did not grumble or moan or did fight back the waves. May God help us to be still and know that He is God. In our difficult situations let us look up to Him and trust in Him because He is an omniscient God. Nothing can happen without His knowledge and He will victoriously lead us through it.

Let God lead our lives!

We beat our chests and lift our heads
With pride call ourselves the chosen ones
The sons and daughters of the Almighty One
The maker of earth, moon and sun

We have shunned a lot of things to darkness
What we consider strengths is our weakness
Aren't we supposed to be in His Likeness?
Aren't we to strive to be a bit righteous?

Then, where is our kindness
Our words have more hate than hymns



Jobin Mathew

Pride reigns more than the Almighty
We act all big when to Him we are all tiny

We don't forget let alone forgive
We give with closed hearts and fists
Remember that on borrowed time we live
Are we forgetting this life is a gift?

We are sinking in greed
Overcome by anger within
In this hour He is all we need
He is our King, our lives let Him lead

An Easter Poem

Exult! For Death is slain!

Death has knocked on every door,
The rich man's castle,
The poor man's hut.
He has ventured every street,
Every groove and every inn.

*Has anyone befriended you, O Death?
Have you ere' been called to dine?*

The woman beat her chest,
She washed his feet with her tears;
They hid his face from her,
With flowers, they garland him!

*But roses shall not awake him,
The music shan't soothe him;
Neither the darkness beneath bother him!*

The new-born child is wrapped in white,
The corpse too is wrapped alike!
With a loud cry, he is born;
Wailing, they let him go!

*The children had lost their lamp,
The toddler lost his path!
Weren't you concerned, Death?
Or you pretended not to care?
Where do you carry them, O Death?*



**Asher John
Mumbai**

Are you the shore we refuse to reach?
Are you the door men refuse to knock?
Beyond which lies a crystal land,
A land where spring shall never fail,
And time shall not interrupt!

*Would you write back to me? No you won't!
Would you spare me then? No you won't!
Death is certain, if nothing else is.*

But I have heard of an empty grave,
The rich man's tomb, on that Easter morn!
When Death laid his weapons down;
Eden's fault had found it's cure.

*Man's folly in the Garden,
Ascended Death o'er Adam's race!
But now dethroned, in the rich man's garden;
Christ has trampled Death and Hades!*

And then they chuckled at your face-
"Where O Death, is your victory?
Where O Grave, is your sting?"
Exult! For Death is slain.

**Christ has risen, and so shall we;
We shall trounce the ancient foe!
You are the last enemy, O Death,
This world shall ever know!**

Views of Men and Plans of God!

In life, some may walk and others may run, but remember the Lord gave tortoise and the horse
the same number of days to reach Noah's Ark!

Jacob looked at Joseph and saw a good son.
The brothers looked at Joseph and saw a useless dreamer!
The travellers looked at Joseph and saw a slave!
Potipher looked at Joseph and saw a fine servant!
Potiphers wife looked at Joseph and saw a potential boyfriend!
The prison officers saw in Joseph a prisoner!

**How wrong were all of them!!
God looked at Joseph and saw a Prime Minister of Egypt!**

Don't be discouraged by what people see in you.
Be encouraged by what God sees in you!!
*Never underrate the person next to you
because you never know
what the Lord has deposited in that person!*



**Rev. George Samuel
Jhansi**

Faith in God: *Its True Meaning*

The Bible gives a clear definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen". Simply put, the biblical definition of faith is "trusting in something you cannot explicitly see or prove".

Faith is at the center of Christian life. We profess that we have been saved by faith, and that we now live by faith. But what does it really mean to have faith? What does it really mean to believe? Faith in God means we rely on Him and depend on His reliability. Having faith means realizing that God is bigger, greater, and better than me - and He loves me greatly.

Examples of faith.

Hebrews 11 is known as the "faith chapter" because in it great deeds of faith are described. By faith Abel offered a pleasing sacrifice to the Lord (v.4); by faith Noah prepared the ark in a time when rain was unknown (v.7); by faith Abraham left his home and obeyed God's command to go he knew not where, then willingly offered up his only son (vv.8-10, 17); by faith Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt (vv.23-29); by faith Rahab received the spies of Israel and saved her life (v.31). Many more heroes of faith are mentioned "*who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies*" (vv.33-34). Clearly, the existence of faith is demonstrated by action. Noah spent 120 years building an ark - all because he trusted God's promise to destroy everything on the earth with a



Michelle Cherian
Houston, USA

flood. During that time, all Noah's neighbors laughed at him. But Noah never gave up. Would your faith have survived such a test of time and hardship?

As Christians, we have to recognize that Faith is perhaps the single most important aspect of Christianity. Without faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer, we are nothing. Faith in God, although it seems easy, will take a lifetime of effort

We stand on faith; we live on faith. Faith is loved and honored by God more than any other single thing. The Bible teaches that faith is the only way of approach that we have to God

to keep. It is the true Faith that every Christian should aspire to have. Don't let your Faith waver when things in life don't go as planned. Faith pleases God more than anything else. Christian life is dependent upon faith. We stand on faith; we live on faith. Faith is loved and honored by God more than any other single thing. The Bible teaches that faith is the only way of approach that we have to God. No man has sins forgiven, no man goes to heaven, no man has assurance of peace and happiness, until he has faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in James 2:26, that faith without works is dead. Faith with works (action) is alive. Faith without

works (action) can become an unfulfilled fantasy. That being said, once we are saved, we are expected to do good works. We are a reflection of Christ. As such, we do good to those around us (Galatians 6: 10). We are new creations (2 Corinthians 5: 17), so we act in new ways. The works we do should come from a transformed heart. Jesus said that people would know His followers by their love (John 13:35). In this way we are a light to the world (Matthew 5: 14). Good works, then, demonstrate our faith and the character of God in whom we believe. If we truly believe God is who He says He is and that the Bible means what it says, we will act accordingly.

Also, what's so amazing is that Jesus said you don't even need a lot of faith. Jesus in fact said that just a little amount can move mountains. In other words just a little faith can do

amazing things in your life and in the lives of those around you. (Matthew 17:20; 1 Corinthians 13:2).

Jesus said our faith could be compared to a mustard seed. What's interesting is that a mustard seed is the smallest of all seeds. But it also is a seed. A seed is worth more when it continues to grow. You water and feed the seed of your faith by giving it nourishment. We get nourishment by reading God's Word; worshipping; praying. All those things feed the seed of faith in your life. (Matthew 17:20)

All of us have faith, but will your anchor of faith hold in the storms of life? Is your anchor of faith a true anchor? Is your faith built upon the truth of scripture. Do you know how valuable, revealing and full of love, faith in Christ is? Only faith in Christ is true, tested, and timeless.



Billioanire Bill Gates' tip!



Bill Gates

Bill Gates after eating in a restaurant gave \$5 to the waiter as a tip. The waiter had a strange look on his face after he took the tip. Gates realized that and asked, "What happened?"

Waiter: "I am just amazed because on the same table yesterday, your daughter gave a tip of \$500 and you, her father, the richest man in the world only gave \$5?"

Gates smiled and replied: "She is the daughter of the world's richest man. But I am the son of a poor father!"

Never forget your past. Wise men have said that your past is your best teacher!.But experience shows that many of our friends have forgotten their humble beginnings!



Jennifer Gates

Palace of Sennacherib

The Islamic State soldiers ransacked various ancient tombs and landmarks to collect valuables to sell in the black market before they were pushed out of areas in Iraq and Syria that they controlled since 2014. Archaeologists are being given the chance to study new discoveries in those areas. In such a search by the archeologists, the ancient palace of the Assyrian King Sennacherib has been uncovered in Syria.



Remains of the palace

Archaeologist Layla Salih said: "We believe they took many of the artifacts, such as pottery and smaller pieces, away to sell. But what they left will be studied and will add a lot to our knowledge of the period". Along with the palace, archaeologists uncovered stone sculptures of an Assyrian demi-goddess also among other findings.

The palace of King Sennacherib dates back to the seventh century B.C. The Assyrian King is mentioned in the Bible in 2 Chronicles 32:1 which says, "After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself".

All the archaeological findings add to the historical truth of the events mentioned in the Bible. How can anyone close his eyes to these truths and continue to refuse to believe in the Bible?

Total Solar Eclipses of Aug. 21, 2017 & April 8, 2024

A total solar eclipse is about to happen in USA. On Monday, Aug. 21, in the middle of the day, the sky will go dark. The temperature will suddenly get several degrees cooler. And tens of millions of people, crammed into a 60-mile-wide path from the Pacific Ocean to the Atlantic ocean, will be looking up at the sky. Such a total solar eclipse that crossed America last happened 99 years ago. It is a massive nationwide spectator event.

For many people of faith, eclipse is an evidence of God's majesty and for some, a sign of the end times. Hugh



Path of total eclipse across USA

Ross, who is both an astronomer and a minister argues that God made the universe beautiful and one of the beauties is a solar eclipse. Ross will be leading a group of 80 people interested in finding spirituality in science to the west coast to watch the eclipse.

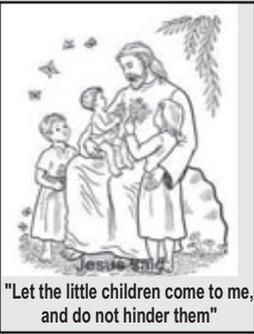
Sign of 'Rapture': Gary Ray, an evangelical Christian writer views this eclipse as one of several astronomical signs of 'Rapture' when Christians will be whisked away from the Earth. Another total eclipse is expected to travel across USA on April 8, 2024 just 7 years away. Ray thinks the two eclipses could be the starting and ending signs bookmarking a seven-year period of the Great Tribulation that is waiting in store for nonbelievers who are left behind on Earth when the 'Rapture' occurs.

That time frame of 2017 to 2024, is speculative. But it makes a lot of sense. We can buy some dark glasses and get prepared to watch the spectacular solar eclipse, but more importantly, we must get ready to meet our Lord and not be left behind.

A Kenyan church fights for the true gospel!

Pastor Charles Karuri of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Nairobi, Kenya, is fighting to promote the true gospel. In many places in Africa, the gospel is often mixed with superstition and apostasy. Karuri says, the "prosperity gospel" is prevalent in Africa and "apostles" or "prophets" often promise supernatural healing or claim to be able to reverse bad fortune, restore marriages and break curses. He adds: "These are the very things the witch doctor back in the village had been doing long before the prosperity message arrived on our shores. Those that faithfully preach the gospel continue to be less and less the face of Christianity as they are overtaken by numerically superior, flashier, noisier and more outwardly successful prosperity churches".

Very true! The real meaning of the gospel is being diluted and presented for purely selfish interests!



"I can do all things through Christ"

One day a father and his little daughter were taking a trip down the woods. While they were admiring its beauty; the little girl was fascinated by a beautiful flower on one of the trees. She wished to pluck that flower but to get to it she had to pull a strong branch down.

The daughter asked her father: "Dad I like the flower but do you think I can pluck it out from that tall branch?"

Her father confidently replied: "Yes my dear, I am sure you can do it if you try with all your strength". Hearing her father's confidence in her; she tried to jump and stretch to reach the flower. After several unsuccessful attempts she was disappointed. She gave up and said to her father: "Dad, you were wrong. I am too short to reach the branch".

Her dad replied: "My little girl, I said

you could do it only if you try with all your strength, but you did not use all your strength. I still believe you can do it as you have not used all your strength".

Puzzled the daughter asked: "But dad, you saw how hard I tried. I have no strength left to jump and reach". Her dad said: "Dear, you tried with only your little strength. You did not ask for my help, even though my strength was available to you. Only with my help will you have used all your strength. On your own you are weak".

She then understood what her dad meant and said: "Dad, let us try it again, this time you help me".

Her dad lifted her up and she reached for the flower and was happy.

Dear friends, just like the little girl in the story many times in our life we try to do things on our own with our own strength and blame God if we are unsuccessful. But the truth is that we did not rely on God and ask His help. Many times we believe in our strength even though we know that we are not strong enough for the job. When God says you can do a particular thing, He means that we can do it with His help. We forget that our God is an omnipotent God.

Paul says in Phil 4:13: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me". So friends, next time when you start to do anything ask God to help you with the task.



Juby Anoop, UK

A woman of Samaria came to draw water.
Jesus said to her "Give me a drink"
- John 4:7



Jibin Shaji Varghese
Nagpur

Adam & Eve in the garden of Eden



Evelyn Cherian,
Bangalore

Enoch walked with God



Evan Cherian P., Bangalore

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and don't hinder them, for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."



Joel Jose
Nagpur