

## From the Editor's Desk



# "The end of all things is near!"

*"The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God" (1 Peter 4:7-11).*

End of all things is near and our Lord is coming soon. Although it is interesting to study signs of times and their interpretations in relation to the Lord's coming, it is of utmost importance to be ready for His coming. Let us set our minds diligently on our 'blessed hope'!



**Johnson K. Samuel**

The second coming of our Lord is our 'blessed hope'. We are looking forward to His coming. All the signs of His coming are predicted in the Bible. The prophecies connected with the second coming are favorite topics for sermons and Bible studies. It is quite exciting to have an in-depth knowledge of the prophecies and their interpretations. Serious debates are going on whether rapture is 'pre-tribulation', mid-tribulation or post-tribulation! We want to become experts in interpreting signs of times connected with prophecies. It is all very good and highly academic. The Lord will surely come at the appropriate time. The relevant questions to be asked are: Are we prepared for His coming? What does the Bible teach about our readiness?

To find answers to these questions, we will briefly consider the passage quoted above where Apostle Peter has a few things to say on the topic. He begins the passage by saying: "The end of all things is near", obviously referring to the second coming of the Lord. The first instruction in his list (*'as the end is near'*) is that our prayers must be made with an alert and sober mind. If we are sober we would know the nature of the Person to whom we are talking. Almighty God is the Creator of the universe and does not take orders from us. But in His love and mercy, He has given us access to His presence through Jesus Christ where we can interact and relate with Him at a meaningful level. He is loving, He looks into our hearts, knows our needs and always desires the best for us. Prayer is not an opportunity for us to show off. Prayer keeps us in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ, wherein we humbly communicate, worship and sincerely seek His face, knowing that He hears us, loves us and will respond, though not always in a manner we may expect or desire.

The second advice in Peter's list (*'as the end is near'*) is that we love one another deeply, *above all*. Take note of the phrase, *'above all'*. Brotherly love is ranked even above worship. Didn't Jesus command: *"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be*

*reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift" (Matt. 5:23,24)?* Our praises and worship will not go beyond the roof of the church if we harbour anger and ill feelings towards any one. Haven't we noticed brothers occupying certain seats in the church to avoid shaking hands with certain others? The Lord is, certainly, not coming for such worshippers!

Peter's third instruction (*'as the end is near'*) is that we should offer hospitality to others. Hospitality is more than just giving food and being hospitable in our homes. Hospitality refers basically to how we treat other people. Are we cordial, receptive, pleasant, generous? Do we treat other people in a manner as we would treat an honoured guest 'without grumbling'? Haven't we heard people say they won't go again to a certain church because no one there bothered to talk to them? People want to feel welcomed and loved. Christ wants us to show His love to others.

The fourth point that the apostle makes (*'as the end is near'*) is about being good stewards of God's grace which has been bestowed on us. All our enormous debts were forgiven by God's grace. Therefore we ought to be good stewards of that grace by forgiving the debts of our brothers and being reconciled with them at all times. We have no reason to keep anger or malice with any one. Be reconciled with our fellow brothers before the Lord comes!

Next, Peter talks about preaching the true word of God. In these days when false prophets are in abundance, we need preachers who can boldly declare, *'Thus says the Lord'* and *"I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you"*. Ministers of the gospel must be true to God's word in their preaching and should not dare to deviate from it in any aspect. Apostle Paul even pronounces a curse against those who preach any other gospel (Read Gal. 1:8,9). False preachers may gather innocent followers on this earth, but the Lord does not want them in His kingdom!

Are we just trying to be scholars in interpreting signs of the Lord's coming, or are we in a state of readiness for His return in the light of Apostle Peter's exhortations?

# Addressing the Discipleship Challenge

In this era of “praise and worship,” “fire conferences,” and “mega” everything, the modern church is suffering from a real shortage of Christian discipleship. This seems especially true within the Indian Spirit-filled fellowships where no teaching is deemed necessary beyond children’s Sunday School. How should this issue be addressed?

The American situation can shed some light on this matter. For instance, 77% of Americans identify themselves as Christian. Forty four percent (44%) say they belong to a Christian congregation, but only 20% actually show up to worship

weekly. What is the problem? An increasing number of Christians are cultural Christians, like many Hindus who are cultural Hindus in India. *There seems to be three groups of Christians:*

- 1) cultural Christians,
- 2) congregational Christians and
- 3) Christians who are true disciples of Christ.

It appears that crusades that ask people to “make a decision” for Christ are not necessarily producing “converts” and “disciples.”

There are Christians who affirm the Christian confession, but do not live what they confess. They will claim that they “believe,” but do not practice what they claim to believe. They may belong

to a church, but do not feel the obligation to support the church. These are spectator Christians, not participating disciples.

Cultural Christianity or nominal

There seems to be three groups of Christians:  
1) cultural Christians,  
2) congregational Christians  
and 3) Christians who are true disciples of Christ.

The church must make disciple-making a priority – not just crowd gathering. The word of God must be central to the task of disciple-making.

Pentecostalism will not produce true followers of Christ. God wants to develop Christ’s disciples. He is looking for men and women who have counted the cost of following Christ in their generation. He is looking for people who do not mind being different in this conforming world. He wants to make them citizens of heaven and participants in the Kingdom of God.

Studies have shown that discipleship has to be intentional. Disciples are not made accidentally. The church must make disciple-making a priority – not just crowd gathering. The word of God must be

central to the task of disciple-making. God’s word is a disciple’s rule book for faith and practice. A community of faith is needed to develop disciples. This has to be much smaller than mega. It takes a small group to train disciples. Disciples are formed and shaped in the community of faith. This can certainly happen within a mega church or ministry, but the actual formational work happens in a smaller group of committed followers of Jesus who are guided by godly mentors within the larger context.

Every church needs an intentional plan for disciple-making. It takes more than love and support to produce disciples. It takes a commitment to provide the

teaching and the relationships to make it happen. The Lord’s command is not to gather a crowd, but to make disciples!



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## "Addressing the Discipleship Challenge"

# Lying Lips & Deceitful Tongues: *Weapons of Destruction!*

*"Save me, O Lord, from lying lips and from deceitful tongues"  
(Psalm 120:2).*



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Lying is a reality in our society. Parents lie to their children and children to their parents. The reason for denying something to their children may not always be lack of money though that is what the parents try to convince them. Spouses do lie. Coming home late from office is not always some urgent work that landed on the table as 'I was about to leave the office'. Politicians have perfected this art so much so that the expression 'honest politician' is obsolete and is a contradiction of terms in most of the cases.

Exaggerated resume, tall claims of achievements, grades, qualifications - the list goes on.

How often do people lie? A study on American students a few years ago found out that on an average, they lied almost 3 times in a 10 minute conversation with strangers. Another study in Britain found out that British men lie six times a day and women three times.

Saints of the Old Testament especially those who composed the Psalms took lies very seriously. The word translated as 'lie' in this Psalm occurs in 21 Psalms and many times more in the rest of the Old Testament. Its synonyms come many more times.

Isaiah was concerned with speech that is not truthful but deceptive and misleading. He cried out, *'for I am a man of unclean lips, and I*

*dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips' (Isa. 6:5).* He had to fight political lies and deceptions all throughout his ministry.

It is not a problem in the Old Testament only

but the New Testament also exposes the sin of lie. Jesus had warned His disciples that Devil is the source of all lies: 'for he is a liar and the father of lies' (John 8:44). As in all other cases in this aspect also Devil's character is diagonally opposite to the character of God for whom 'it is impossible to lie' (Heb. 6:18).

Followers of Christ who has put on the new nature and is growing into the likeness of Jesus Christ are exhorted not to lie. Especially to one another: 'Do not lie to one another, seeing that

you have put off the old self with its practices' (Col. 3:9). John's vision of those saints who make it to heaven is very much in line with exhortation to Colossians. They are the ones in whose 'mouth no lie was found, for they are blameless' (Rev. 14:5).

The early Church also had its share of liars. The story of Ananias and Saphira stands out among them. Though they lied to the elders of the church about the proceeds of the sale of their property, it is considered as a lie to the Holy Spirit.

But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?' (Acts 5:3).

Lying is a spiritual problem. It comes out of fear and lack of trust in God. It reflects the character of the Devil (liar par excellence) than of God. It is not then surprising that those who belong to him lie. I have come to realize that it is easy to estimate spiritual status of a person from how spontaneous is lying to that person.

Some by nature resort to lie and avoid being confronted by the truth of the Word of God or good counsel by their pastor or spiritual peers. They sow immense damage to themselves as

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they spiritually wilt away in the course of time but in the process mislead many and sometimes hurt the body of believers. That is why the one who lies and the victims of their lies need God's protection.

Lying for some is a way of life. They lie not realizing they are lying. Lying is built into their system for managing conflicts and maintaining self esteem. Many psychologists agree that people lie in order to avoid 'social conflicts.' For example when they are late for a party or dinner with a friend it is usual for people to resort to a lie - most of the cases it would be adverse traffic conditions, an unexpected visitor, or any other convenient lie. Friends lie to each other about their status, finances, relationships and so on, all with the intention to keep good relationships.

Psychologist Robert Feldman finds the main reason for lying is a threatened self esteem.

Many people have a 'real self' and 'ideal self.' When the ideal self (or what they really want to be) is farther away from their 'real self' (or what they really are now) they bridge the gap through lies. People claim what they are not and what they did not achieve.

There may be a number or explanations why people lie but one thing is clear: lies hurt. Lies hurt first the person who lies and then it hurts the people whom they are lying about.

There may be a number or explanations why people lie but one thing is clear: lies hurt. Lies hurt first the person who lies and then it hurts the people whom they are lying about. It also hurts who act on the lies that they believe. That is why the Psalmist prayed for deliverance from lies.

Lies hurt the person who lies. I know a man who opened the door of a running car and jumped out of it hurting himself. The driver had slowed down spotting a large truck that was about to enter his lane. However, according to the one who jumped out, the car was about to ram into a truck. The door on the passenger side opened on its own as the driver applied the brake suddenly and he was thrown out of the car. I checked with the driver. It was true there was a truck ahead of them and he had to slow down. But the door was intact and it will not open in any situation on its own. It has never happened with that car before or after.

This person has a problem of seeing things and hearing voices. That runs in the family. He sincerely thought that the car is about to ram into the truck. Out of panic he opened the door and jumped out. He acted on a lie that his sick

mind told him. When he later recognized his mistake shame made him to blame the door and the driver. It hurt him physically and emotionally. It hurt also the driver emotionally who had to take the blame. We can forgive this man if we are willing to accept the fact that he did it trusting his mind which was a bit faulty at times. However, lies hurt.

We need protection from lies for many reasons. First of all, our lies backfire to our own harm. We may be caught and the self-esteem that we built up through lying and false pretensions collapses under its own weight.

Secondly, lies distance us from ourselves. When we lie we have to tell more lies to keep the lies alive. Then as we build upon each previous lie we go far from the reality and end up living in a false reality. We end up in a false self image: an ideal self than the real self. The

real self which need care, nurture and growth is ignored as we live in 'an ideal life'. Lies distance people from us. Lies hurt the villains.

Lies also hurt the victims badly. Lies that people say about us hurt our reputation and our

relationships. Lies can be harmful to an extent that some lies could turn to be mortal. When two scoundrels gave a false testimony about Naboth he not only lost his property but also his life (1 Kings 21:1-16).

Victims of lies are not only the people who are lied about but also those who believe the lies about others. Those who are gullible distance themselves, hate or even attack the innocent victims of lies. Thus those who believe and act upon lies become victims of the lies they are told.

Lies are harmful but who can protect us from lies? I am not aware how many lies about me are out there doing their rounds. Even if I know, I cannot go around and defend myself. Even if I defend myself people still may not believe me! I am least aware of the damage it has caused and it would cause. Lies are silent destroyers. Lies never build up anybody. We are totally helpless as victims of lies.

It is this sense of helplessness that makes the Psalmist turn to God for deliverance as he cries out, "*Deliver me, O Lord, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue*" (Psalm 120:2).

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# God's Book for Mankind:

- Part 9 -

## Reliability of the Bible

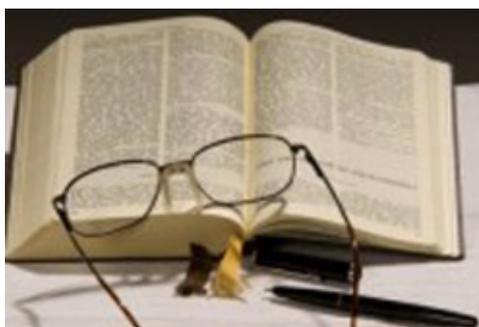


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There are so many internal and external evidences that clearly show that the 66 books of the Bible are the most trustworthy documents there are.

We hear many people making statements such as "the Bible is full of fairy tales", "The Bible is full of mistakes", and "People who wrote the Bible made up those stories". Those who make such statements have not really studied the Bible or all the facts and evidences that have established the reliability, dependability and trustworthiness of the Word of God. Some of them chose not to believe the Word of God. There are so many internal and external evidences that clearly show that the 66 books of the Bible are the most trustworthy documents there are. In this article we will look at a few internal evidences first and then the external evidences.



1. **"Thus says the Lord"** is a phrase that is found about 400 times in the Old Testament. Similar statements such as **"God said"** is found 42 times in the Old Testament and 4 times in the New Testament. **"God spoke"** is found 9 times in the Old Testament and 3 times in the New Testament. The Old Testament refers to itself as the Word of God hundreds of times.

2. **New Testament Quotes and References** from the Old Testament:

New Testament writers quote from over 240 Old Testament scriptures and make reference to over 160 Old Testament events such as creation, the fall of man, call of Abraham, giving of Manna, healing of Naaman, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonah in the belly of the fish and many more.

3. **Jesus Christ's words:**

He made so many references to the Old Testament people, places, and events as real people, places and events such as creation, Noah's Ark, Lot's wife, Abraham, Issac and Jacob, Sodom, Gomorah,, Elijah and the widow and many other places, people and events. Jesus quoted from 24 Old Testament

books. He made references to "the Law and the prophets" and "the law, the prophets and the psalms". Another time He made reference to the entire Old Testament by saying "all the prophets from Abel to Zachariah". He began his earthly public ministry by reading

from the book of Isaiah in the synagogue in Nazareth.

4. **"Have you not read"** is a question Jesus asked many times when he was speaking to the Pharisees and other Jewish leaders and people. With this question He sought to turn their attention to Old Testament scriptures.

5. **"It is written"** is a phrase Jesus used repeatedly as He made reference to or quoted from Old Testament Scriptures. Jesus used it when Satan came to tempt Him after 40 days of fasting.

Apostles also followed this example of Jesus in some of their preachings and writings.

6. **"It might be fulfilled which was spoken"**. This is another phrase our Lord used when He made reference to Old Testament.

7. **Fulfilled Prophecies:**

All the prophecies concerning the birth, life, ministry, death, resurrection and ascension of the Messiah were fulfilled in the first coming of Jesus Christ and that is proof to believe that the rest of the prophecies concerning the messiah will be fulfilled during His second coming. So many prophecies concerning the nation of Israel and gentile nations such as Babylon, Media - Persia, Greece, Rome and others have already been fulfilled and that is proof that the rest are being fulfilled in history and / or will be fulfilled.

8. **Human writers wrote what they saw and / or heard:**

Moses and Joshua were there when the miracles of plagues, parting of the red sea,

mana from heaven, water from rock and many other miracles took place. Joshua was there when the walls of Jericho fell. Disciples were in a closed room when the resurrected Lord Jesus appeared to them. Luke, John and Peter made it very clear in their writings that they were eye witnesses or that they have first hand information about what they wrote.

**9. Archeological Evidences:**

There are so many archeological evidences that have been discovered which prove the trustworthiness of the Bible. Archeological findings agree with what was recorded in the Bible so long ago. These discoveries confirm that what is written so long ago in the Bible is reliable. The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered between 1947 and 1956 in caves along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in an area known as Qumran have been a blow to the skeptics. There are remarkable evidences supporting the reliability of the Bible. So many of the biblical narratives have been confirmed even by those who are not Christians because of the incredible records of the Dead Sea Scrolls and so many other archeological discoveries. Archeologist *Joseph Free* has said, "Archeology has confirmed countless passages of the Bible which had been rejected by critics as unhistorical or contrary to known facts".

Archeological excavation brought to light so much proof to those who once doubted or did not believe many historical facts of the Bible. *Sir William Ramsey* was an unbeliever when he began to look into the history of the New Testament. He came to this search as a skeptic. But after many years of research and study he became a strong believer of the Bible because he was so convinced of the accuracy of the Bible.

**10. Historical Accuracy:**

Jesus Christ believed in the historical accuracy of the Old Testament as He made references to so many Old Testament events, places and people as mentioned above. *Publius Cornelius Tacitus* was a Roman senator and a historian of the Roman Empire. He wrote about Jesus Christ and His followers, the Christians. *Pliny the Younger*, a historian and Roman Governor in Bithinia in Asia Minor, wrote about Christ and Christians who worshipped Him.

*Flavious Josephus* was a Jewish historian. The writings of these and many other secular historians are consistent with the writings of the New Testament.

**11. Scientific Accuracy:**

Even though the primary purpose of the Bible is not to give instruction in any particular field of science, the Bible has much scientific information than what we usually think. As a matter of fact many of the scientific information that was written in the Bible was considered wrong by many scientists. But it proved that Bible was correct and that the scientists were in the wrong. We will look at a few of them here:

It was believed that astronomers can count all the stars in the sky. A very famous astronomer, *Claudius Ptolemy*, was dogmatic in the second century A.D. that there are only 1056 stars. Later other astronomers found more stars and then some more and more as time passed. But it is written in the Bible long ago that no man can count all the stars and science finally came to accept this Bible truth.

Scientists used to believe that all stars are the same. But the Bible stated that there are differences between stars.

The common belief for many years was that the earth is flat, but *Isaiah* wrote by the Holy Spirit about 750 years before the birth of Christ that the earth is globular .

Scientists did not know how the earth stayed in its position and common people used to believe that the earth sat on a huge turtle or elephant or another huge animal. But it is written in the Bible that the earth is suspended in space.

There was a medically approved practice among many countries known as bloodletting. That is cutting the bodies of sick people to induce bleeding, thinking that blood was a carrier of sicknesses. This practice resulted in many people bleeding to death. But the Bible said very clearly that life of man is in the blood.

The Bible is reliable, dependable and trustworthy in its totality in each and every subject matter that it talks about. If any information in the Bible is not true regarding physical and temporal matters how can we trust it in spiritual and eternal matters? ■

The Dead Sea Scrolls discovered between 1947 and 1956 in caves along the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in an area known as Qumran have been a blow to the skeptics

The writings of *Publius Cornelius Tacitus*, *Pliny the Younger*, *Flavious Josephus* and many other secular historians are consistent with the writings of the New Testament.

The Bible is reliable, dependable and trustworthy in its totality in each and every subject matter that it talks about.

## Let us *Refocus* our **PRIORITIES EVERYDAY!**



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*"Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, 'Everyone is looking for You.' But He said to them, 'Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth'"*  
(Mark 1:35-38)

Our Lord Jesus was a very busy person after he started his public ministry, as he was always surrounded by people who wanted to witness the various miracles that He performed and hear the wonderful words of wisdom from his mouth. Even after ministering the whole day, people would still come to him in the evening time after the sun had set and bring sick and demon possessed people for healing (v. 32). In fact, he was so much in demand that Mark records in verse 33: "and the whole city was gathered together at the door" where Jesus was. In order to avoid further publicity, Jesus even told the healed individuals (1:43, 3:12) or, the demons (1:34b) not to speak about Him. However, the news that Jesus was a healer spread rapidly, and many sick and demon possessed came to Jesus and He healed them all (v. 32-34).

In the midst of such a busy schedule, Jesus rose up early in the morning before daylight, and went to a "solitary" place and spent time communicating to His heavenly Father. This was the time for Him to prayerfully refocus His priorities. This is evident due to the fact that when His disciples came to Him and told Him that everyone were looking for Him, Jesus wanted to move on to the other parts of Galilee

and reach other people in Judea as well. This new direction was only due to Jesus being able to refocus His priorities through prayer!

Jesus saw the need to gain inner refreshment, renewed intimacy with God, and strength for facing the challenges before Him. He opened His ear each morning to receive instructions for the day from God the Father about how He will accomplish His work for that day. If Jesus felt the need of this early



morning quiet time, how much more should we! Notice too that He prayed when it cost Him something; He rose and went out a long while before daylight. Prayer should not be a matter of personal convenience but of self-discipline and sacrifice. Through an early morning prayer, we too can understand what God wants us to do during that day, which in turn will help us to refocus our priorities every day!

*"The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned. The Lord God has opened My ear; and I was not rebellious, nor did I turn away." (Isaiah 50:4-5)*

**Keep "Suvantha" Ministry in your prayers**

# Courage To Change!

*"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord"  
(Psalm 31:24).*

## Courage is ...

*Feeling fear, yet choosing to act, Following your heart, Persevering in the face of adversity, Standing up for what is right, Expanding your horizons; Letting go of the familiar, Facing suffering with dignity or faith...*

### Change:

Nobody likes change. Many people feel that things have taken a long time to get them where they are. Naturally there was a certain cost involved. The way things are is quite comfortable and normal. Most people would like to keep things as they are. In other words, it is comfortable for everybody to maintain things just like they are!

But the relevant question is whether God wants every thing to be as they are now? What if He is not pleased by

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Most people would like to keep things as they are. But the relevant question is whether God wants every thing to be as they are now? What if He is not pleased by what it is right now? What if it would please Him if some change could happen?

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what it is right now? What if it would please Him if some change could happen?

Nothing wrong can be found when a place or condition is covered by darkness. But the situation completely changes when light is shone. In the absence of light, darkness prevails. Before there was light, it was all darkness. As the Creation narrative goes:

*"And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the*



**Rev. Dr. Shibu Samuel**

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*waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness" (Gen. 1:1-5).*

You and I have a choice to make. Are we going to allow darkness to prevail in our lives and in the lives of those around us or are we going to let His light shine?

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When darkness surrounds you, it is sometimes scary to pull out your light. *"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see*

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*your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5 14-16).*

When I think of change, I think of the effect that light has in a dark place. Just a small flame can light up a deep and dark canyon that has never seen light.

*"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5).*

It's interesting to see that light has the ability to overcome darkness, but that darkness has no comprehension of the work that light is doing. The rest of the world may not comprehend or understand the change that God is making in your life. They may say, "We liked it better when everything was dark"; "We liked you better when you were a party goer"; "We liked you

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better when you told dirty jokes"; We liked you better when we could act the way we wanted around you"; "We liked it better when there was darkness in your life".

When I think of courage, I think of...

\* **William Tyndale** - In the early 1500's he translated the Bible into English, which at the time was forbidden and punishable by execution. For his controversial views and belief that everyone should be able to read the Bible in their native tongue, he was later arrested and executed.

\* **Winston Churchill**.- In 1940,

Britain stood alone against Nazi Germany. Some in Britain wanted to seek a deal with Hitler, but Churchill wanted to fight on, and he inspired his country and the rest of the world through their darkest hour.

\* **Rosa Parks** - On December 1, 1955, in Montgomery, Alabama, she refused to obey bus driver James F. Blake's order that she give up her seat in the colored section to a white passenger. Her act of defiance became an important symbol of the modern Civil Rights Movement. She became an international icon of resistance to racial segregation.

\* **Helen Keller** - Overcame her dual disability of being both deaf and blind and championed to improve society's treatment of deaf people.

\* **The Unknown Rebel** at the 1989 Tiananmen Square Protests who faced-off with the tanks of the People's Liberation Army on June 5. Stuart Franklin's famous photo of the stand-off went on to become one of Life's Magazine's "100 Photos that Changed the World" and TIME listed the obscure and Unknown Rebel as one of the 100 most influential people of the 20th century.

\* **Malala Yousafzai** (1997) - Pakistani schoolgirl who defied threats of the Taliban to campaign for the right to education. She survived being shot in the head by the Taliban and has become a global advocate for human rights, women's rights and the right to education.

\* **Jesus Christ** - In spite of the shame, He suffered the death of the cross for you and for me.

The factor that limits so many people to a common, normal, ordinary life is fear - fear of an undesired outcome - fear of other people's opinion - fear of failure. These are all natural fears. We all have these fears. But the difference between someone being fearful and someone being courageous is the fact that in the face

of their fears, they attempted and even accomplished what they were afraid of.

#### **Courage:**

It takes courage to stand up for what is right. It takes courage to make a difference. And it takes courage to live a life that is pleasing to God when the rest of the world would condemn you for it.

Change does not come easy. Most

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The factor that limits so many people to a common, normal, ordinary life is fear - fear of an undesired outcome - fear of other people's opinion - fear of failure. These are all natural fears. We all have these fears. It takes courage to stand up for what is right. It takes courage to make a difference.

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people do not like change. Change exposes certain things. Change reveals some short comings. Change shows that what we had before was not good enough. Change means something better has come.

"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19).

I found out the day when I gave my life to Jesus and decided to serve Him that not everybody was going to understand my decision.

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Those people who have made a decision to follow Jesus are my heroes. It takes courage to step out of the crowd and say, "I want change".

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\* My friends laughed at me.

\* Some of my family members did not believe me

\* I stood alone in a dark place - just my little light and me.

But change was needed. My life couldn't continue in the direction it was going any longer. I couldn't allow my soul to be destroyed by what was going on in my life at that time.

Change had to happen.

Repentance had to happen -

\* Regardless of what other people thought;

\* Regardless of how it would affect their thinking;

\* Regardless of the family traditions;

\* Regardless of how they were brought up;

\* Regardless of who their God was or what their religion was -

I needed change in my life.

My world was a pretty dark place and I needed God to shine some light into my life. It takes courage to say yes to God when everyone around you is laughing and pointing fingers. It takes courage to do what is right not only for yourself, but for

the people you love even when they don't understand your actions.

Those people who have made a decision to follow Jesus are my heroes. It takes courage to step out of the crowd and say, "I want change". It takes courage to admit that you need His help! It takes courage to face your demons and say I choose Jesus Christ. It takes courage to change! A courageous person is not without fear. But in spite of their fear, they do what they feel in their heart as needed to be done. It takes courage to be able to look at your life from an outside perspective and be able to say, "I am willing to change".

It takes an incredible desire to decide that you are no longer going to let your life go waste and that you are going to stare it in the face and take it back. If you are tired of feeling that your life is worthless or meaningless, then it is time to let go and step bravely ahead into a new life.

Do not allow another day to go by without knowing in your heart that you have made a decision to do what you know God is asking you to do. Take courage to change!!

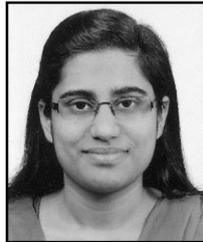
# Carrot, Egg or Coffee?

A daughter was complaining to her mother about the various difficulties she was facing. She said that as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Seeing her daughter grumble about her difficulties, the mother quietly took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed a carrot, in the second she placed an egg and in the last she added ground coffee powder. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished out the carrot and placed it in a bowl. She took out the egg and placed it in another bowl. Then she poured the coffee out into a third bowl. Turning to her daughter, mother asked: "Tell me what you see". "Carrot, egg and coffee", she replied. Her mother asked her to feel each item. The daughter noted that the carrot was very soft.

When she peeled off the egg shell, she observed that it was hardboiled. A rich aroma was coming out of the coffee bowl and she felt so happy to sip the tasty coffee.

The daughter then asked, "What does it all mean, what are you trying to tell me, mom?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity, that is, boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went into the water strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became very weak. The egg was fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its soft interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. On the other hand the



Juby Anoop, England

ground coffee was unique. When it was put in the boiling water, it changed the water into a sweet smelling tasty liquid. "Out of these three, which one are you?", she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or coffee?"

This story helped me to change the way I saw an adverse situation. The carrot seems to have been very strong,

When we face a hard situation, would we become soft like the carrot, hard like the egg or bring fragrance like coffee? Christian life is not very easy and we may go through difficult times but each difficult situation should only make us stronger and firmer in God and bring glory to His name.

but with pain and adversity it turned soft and lost its strength. This kind of life is reflected in the Bible by Peter. He appeared very strong but when he had to face the Roman soldiers during Jesus' trial he stumbled to the extent that he even denied his Lord.

The egg starts with a tender heart, but changes with the situation because it was not strong in the inside. Similarly people who are not strong in God's word harden and stiffen after a financial hardship or some other trial. Cain's heart hardened in the same way,

God's people, Israel, also hardened their heart and rebelled against God when they saw Pharaoh and his army chasing them.

On the contrary, coffee changes the nature of the hot water, the very circumstance that brings pain. When the water gets hot, the coffee releases its fragrance and flavour. Similarly, when things are at their worst, we need to wait patiently and surrender completely to God. Then we can change the adverse situation for God's glory like Job and Apostle Paul. Paul when he was in the jail with Silas changed the adverse situation by trusting in God and praising Him. God used that situation to bring jailor to repentance. God sent many afflictions and sufferings in the life of Job. But in all that Job persevered and continued to trust in God, bringing glory to His name. God's testimony about Job proved right.

*Dear friends,* whenever we face difficult situations in life we need to decide how we will respond. Would we become soft like the carrot, hard like the egg or bring fragrance like coffee? Christian

life is not very easy and we may go through difficult times but each difficult situation should only make us stronger and firmer in God and bring glory to His name.

*"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:12,13). ■*



Stephen Hawking declares there is no God! It is final, no appeal!!

Theoretical physicist and Cosmologist at the University of Cambridge, Stephen Hawking has finally declared that he is an atheist and there is no God. Once the great man (?) declares something, can anybody oppose it? Hawking said in an interview: "Before we understand science, it is natural to believe that God created the universe. But now science offers a more convincing explanation". He added: "Religion believes in miracles, but these aren't compatible with science".

On hearing this statement, one person commented: Even medical profession agrees that every single part of the human body is a miracle. For example, looking at the human eye, one wonders what scientific explanation could be given for how that exciting 'ball of jelly' could have come into existence!!

With absolute certainty, Hawking told the interviewer: "In my opinion, there is no aspect of reality beyond the reach of the human mind". If that's true, the human mind still has to develop exponentially to explain everyday phenomena like social behavior, creativity in music, literature, etc.

*Looking at the miracle of the human body, King David exclaimed: "I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14). If any one says that all the miracles of creation happened by chance, we can only join with David and say: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1).*

'Noah's Ark Theme Park' will open in 2016!

A theme park based on Noah's Ark is being developed in Kentucky, USA. When the company starts hiring employees, it proposes to ask them to



Noah's ark being built to scale



David's Tent on the grounds of White House

sign a faith statement saying that they believe in the biblical flood. State officials say if the theme park requires employees to affirm their beliefs, that could be seen as discriminatory. Then the park will lose the approval to collect a rebate from the sales tax revenues generated at the park. Over 10 years, that tax credit could be worth about \$18 million.

*Situation is getting more and more difficult to stand for one's belief!!*

"David's Tent" outside White House!

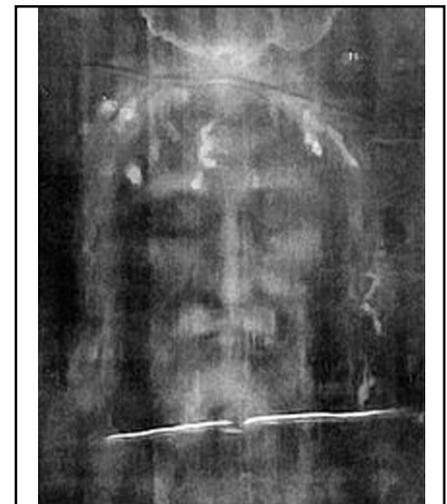
An event called "David's Tent" was held outside the White House for 50 days from Sept. 15 till Nov. 4. It is based on the book of Chronicles when King David set up a tent outside his palace to house the ark of the covenant. Bands from across the country came to lead worship around the clock for 50 days. There were also prayer and scripture reading. Jason Hershey who founded the event in 2012, said: "David's Tent is a love song to the heart of God. David, even as a young shepherd boy, understood that God was the most important thing to his life!" A new area called Ezra's Platform was introduced this year where people could come and read aloud from God's Word. Within the first 10 days, they read all the way through from Genesis to Revelation. Reading continued again day and night,

alongside songs of worship.

*Hershey said it is a miracle that they got all the proper licenses to hold the event "in today's time of religious oppression"!*

'Shroud of Turin' - Experts' conference again!

14-foot-long stretch of cloth mysteriously imprinted with a faint, brownish image of a naked man and wounds that mirror those of a crucifixion has inspired decades of debate over



The Shroud of Turin - digitally processed image of face

whether it could be Jesus' burial shroud. An international four-day conference of experts, scientists and enthusiasts was recently held in St. Louis, USA to present the latest research on the shroud. The puzzle surrounding the origins of the cloth was solved in 1988 when laboratories in the U.S. England and Switzerland determined through carbon dating that the Shroud of Turin originated around 1260 to 1390. Researchers at that time had concluded that the linen of the Shroud was from medieval times and not connected with the crucifixion of Jesus.

*The validity and the interpretation of the tests are still contested. The nature of the image and how it was fixed on the cloth remain deeply puzzling. The shroud continues to remain one of the most studied and controversial objects in human history. Some blind believers would like to keep it as "one of the greatest unsolved mysteries in the world"! No doubt, there are some vested interests involved!*

**Hobby Lobby president's Bible museum**

Hobby Lobby President Steve Green plans to build a \$800 million Museum of the Bible in the US Capital. (Hobby Lobby is a huge craft store chain and Steve Green is a Baptist in his church affiliation). Green said in an interview:

"From the person that knows nothing to the highly scholarly visitor, I think we will have something for everyone". Construction of the eight-story, 430,000-square-foot Museum of the Bible will start soon and the museum is scheduled to open in 2017. The museum will house more than 40,000 items of rare biblical texts and artifacts like the earliest known



The proposed Museum

form of a Jewish prayer book, first editions of the King James Bible, several previously unpublished New Testament fragments on papyrus, fragments of Dead Sea Scrolls and cuneiform tablets

*Let us hope the Museum will demonstrate the authenticity of the Bible as the Word of God.*

**Christians Threatened in Ukraine**

It is reported that the pro-Russian rebels are threatening churches, interrupting services and even holding

pastors hostage in eastern Ukraine. The Institute for Religious Freedom, based in Kiev, has reported several incidents of religious persecution including the capture of four men from Transfiguration Evangelical Church in Donetsk. One man escaped and said the others had been tortured and shot to death. Other church buildings were looted and taken over by pro-Russian forces.

*Persecution of Christians is increasing in many parts of the world. But firing squads have not been able to turn people away from the love of Christ. Praise God!*

**"Atheist Church" is expanding!**

We had reported in these columns about the launching of 'The Sunday Assembly Atheist organization', better known as the "Atheist Church" in January 2013 by British comedians Pippa Evans and Sanderson Jones. More than 60 "Atheist Churches" have been planted so far worldwide. The number has nearly doubled in the last one year! Their website declares: "Their vision - a godless congregation in every town, city and village that wants one; Their motto - live better, help often, wonder more; Their mission - to help everyone find and fulfill their full potential".

*Satan is working over time to turn the minds of people from God because he knows the time is very short!*

**Quotable quotes**



C.S. Lewis

- \*\* "We regard God as an airman regards his parachute; it's there for emergencies but he hopes he'll never have to use it".
- \*\* "A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word 'darkness' on the walls of his cell"
- \*\* "Atheists express their rage against God although in their view He does not exist"
- \*\* "The Son of God became a man to enable men to become sons of God"

\*\* "Refuse to be average. Let your heart soar as high as it will"

\*\* "When we become too glib in prayer we are most surely talking to ourselves"

\*\* "As the excellence of steel is strength, and the excellence of art is beauty, so the excellence of mankind is moral character"

\*\* "Christians don't tell lies they just go to church and sing them"

\*\* "It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction is God"



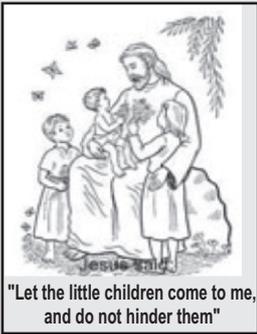
A.W. Tozer

# Children's

CORNER



## Forsake all sinful ways



Jean was studying for nursing. Her roommate Jancy was a Christian. Jancy shared the gospel with Jean. Jean was angry at Jancy for sharing the gospel and hence she created a lot of trouble for Jancy. Yet Jancy kept on sharing the love of Jesus with her. God opened Jean's heart to receive the Lord as her Saviour. She started to study God's Word daily. She also heard messages from God's servants. One day she read Rom. 8:13: "for if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live". She realized that she needs to put to death the deeds of the sinful nature by the Spirit. She started praying about her sinful attitudes. She asked God to

help her to forsake her sinful ways that always bothered her. She practiced the commandments of God she learned from God's Word. In a matter of time she realized she could overcome her sinful ways by the power of God. Now she is helping others to grow in the knowledge of God. She is able to share the gospel and the saving grace of God with her colleagues.

*Dear children, we are called to live a life that is obedient to God's Word. If*

we continue in our sinful attitudes, we will be lost for eternity. Gal. 5:19-21 tells us about the acts of sinful nature. In that list we see 'hatred, selfish ambition, jealousy, fits of rage, envy', which we often ignore as minor sins. But that verse ends by saying "...those who live like this will NOT inherit the kingdom of God".

*Dear children, we must steer clear of all sinful ways in our life. We should live a life that is pleasing to God in obedience to God's Word. We should also grow in the fruit of the Spirit, that is, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. Read Gal. 5:19-21 May God bless us as we sincerely obey God's Word.*

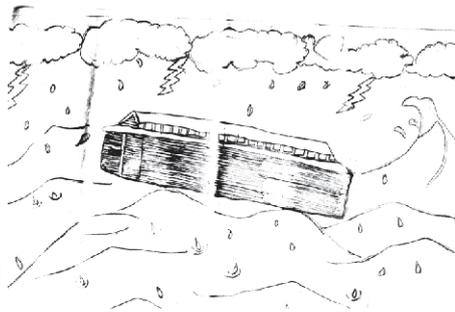


**Shiny Aunty**

### Noah's Ark



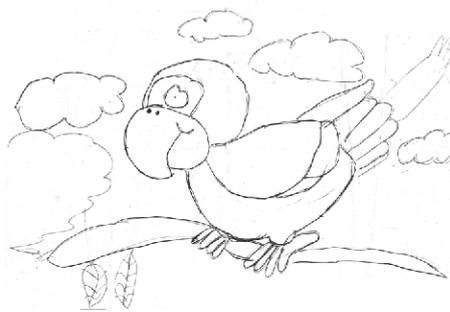
**Barnabas E. Johnson**  
Nagpur.



### God's Creation



**Jemeema M. Johnson**  
Nagpur



### Praying for the Sick



**Rufos Roymon**  
Bahrain

### Holy kiss of Christian Love



**Jeff Sam Scariah**  
Kerala