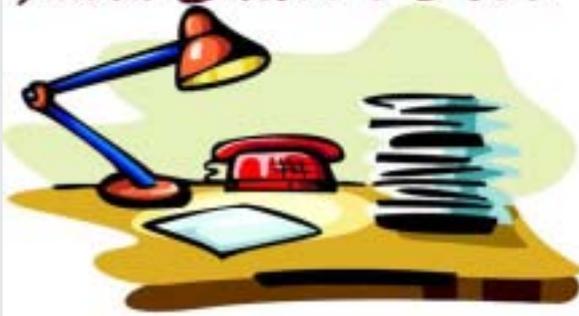


From the *Editor's Desk*



25th Anniversary Issue of "Suartha" Magazine!

Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the Lord has helped us" (1 Samuel 7:12)

"Ebenezer"

In the January 2016 issue of "Suartha" I quoted

the above words of Prophet Samuel and mentioned that we are entering the silver jubilee year of the publication of the magazine. Now as we publish the last issue of the year, we still have to remember God's grace and His continued guidance during the year that is about to end. Hence we joyfully present this issue as the 25th Anniversary Issue of the magazine. We, in the 'Suartha' family, gratefully thank God for enabling us to publish the magazine till now against many odds. We join Prophet Samuel and cry out: '*Thus far the Lord has helped us*'. We are also thankful to our friends and well wishers who pray for this ministry and give us financial help. We are especially thankful to the Board of Executives who are our major financial contributors and who wholeheartedly support us to ensure the magazines's uninterrupted publication.

Year End reflections:

The small, but powerful word, 'IF'

'IF' is one of the tiniest words: just two letters, one syllable. But it is filled with enormous consequences and limitless potential. We face "if" moments everyday of our life. The word "if" implies that we are faced with a situation when we have to choose between different options. 'If' we choose one option, 'this' may occur. 'If' we choose another option, 'something else' will be the consequence. 'If' I choose this path, 'this' will be my destination. We face such moments every day. Our choice will determine our destiny.

There are important choices regarding our eternity. Jesus said: "*If the Son sets you free, you shall be free indeed*" (John 8:36). Here, the Lord is offering a choice of real freedom through Him. We have the option to accept it or reject it. The great call in the Old Testament to seek the face of God begins with the same tiny word: "*If my people, who are called by my name,*

will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chro. 7:14). "*If you seek the Lord your God, you will find Him, if you seek with all your heart and with all your soul*" (Deut. 4:29).

Then there are some important choices with respect to our place in the society and our behaviour among the people of the world. "You are the salt of the earth. *But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot*" (Matt. 5:13). "*If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles*" (Matt. 5:41). "*And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?*" (Matt. 5:47).

The choices that affect our journey to eternity begin with the small word 'if'. May God Almighty help us to make the right choices on all occasions which will keep us in the right relationship with Him.

Recipe For A Happy New Year, 2017:

Take twelve whole months. Clean them thoroughly of all bitterness, hate and jealousy. Make them just as fresh and clean as possible.

Now cut each month into twenty-eight, thirty, or thirty-one different parts, but don't make up the whole batch at once.

Prepare it one day at a time out of the following ingredients: One part of faith, one part of patience, one part of courage, and one part of work and mix them well into each day.

Add to each day one part of hope, faithfulness, generosity, and kindness. Blend with one part prayer, one part meditation, and one good deed.

Season the whole with a dash of good spirits, a sprinkle of fun, a pinch of play, and a cupful of good humor.

Pour all of this into a vessel of love. Cook thoroughly over radiant joy, garnish with a smile, and serve with quietness, unselfishness, and cheerfulness.

You're bound to have a happy new year.

- Selected

We are gladly presenting the last issue of 2016, as the 25th Anniversary Issue. As always we can only thank God for His grace and guidance in enabling us to publish the magazine till now and join Prophet Samuel to cry out: '*Ebenezer, Thus far the Lord has helped us*'



**Johnson
K. Samuel**

Lessons From A First Generation Spirit-Filled Church

I recently spoke at a church outside USA and spent some time in dialogue with the senior pastor and the leadership team of that church. Unlike the churches I am associated with in USA and India, this 3200-member congregation was made up of mostly first generation Christians. The Pentecostal churches in India are proud of their century-long heritage. They are now led by third and fourth generation leaders. The American Pentecostal churches, likewise, are proud of the claim that the modern Pentecostal movement has its roots in Topeka and Azusa in USA. They are also proud of the fact that their missionary efforts had great success, generally speaking, across the world. The church I recently visited had no right to such claims.

This gave me an opportunity to make some observations about the differences between Spirit-filled churches claiming long traditions and one that has no such claim. I will list the most noticeable differences below.

First, the congregation was overwhelmingly young and fast growing. Many of the members in this city church were young professionals and other workers. The group of people older than 45 years old was less than 10 percent. This meant that their gatherings for worship were full of energy and enthusiasm. These young people were not just observers at worship services. They were leaders and active participants.

Secondly, worship at this church was time-conscious but spiritually alive. Younger people had a busy schedule of work, child care, etc., so while the services were adequately long, they were less than two hours each. The congregation sang mostly new songs and choruses and used modern instruments and technology. The volume was higher than in

typical traditional Pentecostal churches.

According to the leadership, the congregation practiced tithing. Most young members gave more than 10 percent of their income. A significant number of young professionals gave 20 percent or more, especially during a recent church building project.

I was surprised to note that most of the key leaders in this congregation were less than forty years old. Many were in their thirties and some in their twenties. If these young people did not accept these leadership positions, there were no one else older available to accept them as most of the members are first generation Christians. Their parents and elders were still

members of other religions who, in many cases, were not supportive of their Christian faith. In fact, the pastors have been threatened with law suits from some families for the church accepting their adult children's tithes!

The church's practices and rituals were contemporary and self-developed. Being a pioneering church plant imitated by a first generation pastor, they had no

preexisting models to follow. They had to invent ways of doing ministry. They had no fathers or grandfathers in the faith to look to for models and instructions regarding these matters. Some of their practices looked simple and different, but very refreshing compared to the stale traditional ways of doing ministry I see in many places. Think of the way traditional Keralite Pentecostals do funeral services and wedding ceremonies. Have you noticed the imitation of Orthodox communion service in our communion services?

The young congregation I visited is very active in missions. They not only support



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Being a pioneering church plant imitated by a first generation pastor, they had no preexisting models to follow. They had to invent ways of doing ministry. They had no fathers or grandfathers in the faith to look to for models and instructions regarding these matters.

This church values ministry training for all ministry leaders, both lay and ordained. The church is paying the cost of tuition and fees for the ministers' continuing theological education and ministry training.

missionaries with their prayers and finances, but also go on short term missionary trips.

This church values ministry training for all ministry leaders, both lay and ordained. Key staff members are enrolled in bible colleges and seminaries to improve the depth and quality of their ministry. They have a ministry of excellence now, but they seem to desire a more excellent way. The church is paying the cost of tuition and fees for the ministers' continuing theological education and ministry training.

In many ways this church reminded me of the first century church that had no Christian traditions to follow. They had to come up with ways of doing life and ministry based on their Jewish traditions, words of Jesus, apostolic guidance, and spiritual revelation.

I do not want to claim that this is a perfect church. There are no perfect churches in this world. However, I believe there are several things our tradition-bound churches and ministries can

learn from this congregation.

While our Pentecostal traditions have given us some advantages in terms of doctrines, practices and spiritual stability, we can consider the following lessons from observing this younger first generation congregation as we look to the future of our movement.

1) *We must review the way we do wedding, funeral and communion services.*

2) *We must let young people hold important leadership positions in our churches.*

3) *We must reconsider the order and nature of our worship services.*

4) *We must get involved in missions more*

actively.

5) *We should financially support the education and continuing education of our pastors.*

6) *We should teach our church members to give tithes and offerings faithfully.*

7) *We must seek the Lord about the future of our churches.* ■

In many ways this church reminded me of the first century church that had no Christian traditions to follow. They had to come up with ways of doing life and ministry based on their Jewish traditions, words of Jesus, apostolic guidance, and spiritual revelation.

God's Book for Mankind - Part 17 Continuation from page 7

Are there examples for me to follow?
Are there commands to obey?
 Are there promises to claim?
Are there sins to flee from or errors to avoid?
 How can I continue to apply God's Word in my life?

by asking the right observation, interpretation and application questions and finding the answers. Remember to use your study tools when you do not find the answer in the Bible itself.

Paragraph by Paragraph or Chapter by Chapter: As you study larger books it is better to read, one paragraph, one incident, or at the most one chapter at a time. Look for details in what you are reading. Again ask the observation, interpretation and application questions and find its answers from the text you read. Of course, keep your note book and pen handy and write down what you have learned.

3. Book Synthesis Method

In the synthesis method of studying a book of the Bible you take what you learned in the survey method and in the analysis method and

summarize it. The English word synthesis is derived from the Greek word, 'syn' which means to put together, or combine. Take the major persons, events, thoughts and teachings and organize, unify and summarize it in a few sentences. A great Bible teacher and scholar Dr. Howard Hendricks says that, "synthetic (synthesis) Bible study approaches the book as a unit and seeks to understand its meaning as a whole". While analysis method is taking apart synthesis method is putting together.

Some Application Questions to Ask.

Are there examples for me to follow? Are there commands to obey? Are there promises to claim? Are there sins to flee from or errors to avoid? How can I continue to apply God's Word in my life?

As you are blessed by the study of God's Word, encourage others to do the same in an attitude of humility and love. ■

Guidelines

For a Good Sleep

*"I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me."
(Psalm 3:5).*

What do you do before sleep? There are various ways of going to bed. Some people will like to read in bed and finally you will find them sleeping with an open book on their chest. Some people watch TV and doze off to sleep, the remote still in their hands. Some may have their earphones plugged in and the iPod still playing. However, there are a number of people who go to bed fighting thoughts that wage war in their heads.

The psalmist who penned Psalm 4 talks about two such people because their thoughts while going to bed are different. While Psalm 3 is generally considered as a morning Psalm, Psalm 4 is considered as an evening Psalm. That means, a Psalm where the psalmist gathers his thought before retiring to bed.

The psalmist has been facing immense opposition from his enemies. His main worry is the plot of his enemies to spoil his reputation. He is a man of some standing in the society, a king and a person of reputation. However, the plot is to spoil his reputation in society. That is why he cries, *"How long will you people ruin my reputation? How long will you make groundless accusations?" (Psalm 4:2 NLT)*. A good name is important in his society where the controlling factor was shame. In his culture whether you are guilty or innocent doesn't matter much, but what matters is what people think of you.

This is enough to give sleepless nights. If his accusers can find enough buyers for all the false accusations they are making, then his very life even will be at risk. However, the

psalmist is cool and composed. He is so cool to say to himself while going to bed: *"In peace I lie down and sleep" (Psalm 4:8)*. His cool stems from his faith in God who makes him dwell safely (Psalm 4:8).

However, the people who are bent on spoiling his name in the society go to bed restless. Their heads are booming with plots and schemes to

destroy the godly person who wrote this psalm. However, the psalmist, full of confidence in his God, has an advice laced with some sarcasm. *"In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent." (Psalm 4:5)*. His advice is that do not lose your sleep thinking about the harm you can do to me. I am special to God and no harm can ever happen to me.

We can carry the anger and frustration of the day to bed at night and keep ourselves awake. Most of the time, the people who hurt us or people whom we are

envious of, take shooting positions in our thoughts when we descend to bed. We lose our sleep because we fight battles that we should not fight in our thoughts. Some of us worry a lot about the harm others can do to us and lose our sleep. However, the example of the Psalmist is to sleep trusting in God. That quiet trust, which the psalmist who authored Psalm 3 also echoes is important: *"I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the LORD sustains me." (Psalm 3:5)*.

The psalmist is cool and composed. He is so cool to say to himself while going to bed: *"In peace I lie down and sleep"*. His cool stems from his faith in God who makes him dwell safely.



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The Gospel of Jesus and *The Act of Giving!*



**Rev. Sam
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The Gospel has transformed the act of giving from something that is celebrated on holidays or festive moments to something more sacred that carries eternal ramifications. If you embraced the Gospel, then you have a call to respond. A call to give that which you have received.

With just a few weeks left, Christmas is one of the most wonderful time of the year! One aspect that makes it so wonderful is the giving and receiving of gifts. There is so much preparation and presentation behind every gift that is unraveled this season. Some of them that began almost a year ago and some frantically completed just few hours before the big day.

However, the sad fact is that the excitement and joy of giving dwindles down to a mere day. After that, its back to "normal life" as some say. It is undoubtedly a different experience of giving during Christmas, but giving should not be confined to a Christian's calendar as an annual event.

In a Christian's life, giving is a response to a call of obedience. A call from the Gospel that should ring in every believer's ear. The Gospel that a Father gave His only Son to be a blessing to the whole world. The Gospel that is void without the act of giving.

Giving, even before the time of Jesus' life on earth, was portrayed through sacrifice, condition and result. You had to bring the best of your cattle or stock and give it to the temple. You had to present it in a certain way and sometimes at a certain time of the year for it to be acceptable. Furthermore, you would only be blessed if it was done the right way.

However, in the New Testament era, through the Gospel in Christ Jesus, the act of giving has received a new definition. Giving in itself is a gift. It should not be limited to some presents, or a monetary offering towards a certain cause, or charitable donations or even tithes and

offerings in church. Christ gave His own self in obedience to the Father and glorified God. We the temple of the living God, must resemble the Christ like attitude of giving our self towards anything that glorifies God.

Here is another way to perceive the gift of giving. A gift does not fulfill its purpose until its received. The gift of a donated heart or any

human organ gains greater value when it is received by a recipient who is in need of that gift. The gift of salvation is valued and bears meaning when it is embraced by a lost heart. The question that remains is not if there are needful recipients, but if there are faithful givers.

The gift of preaching, teaching, hospitality, serving, encouraging, greeting, etc. all become a blessing when it is given with a cheerful heart with the sole purpose of glorifying God. There is a world out there that is longing to be served by

such givers. A giver who is not concerned of fame, or pride or recognition but longs to give what one has received.

The Gospel has transformed the act of giving from something that is celebrated on holidays or festive moments to something more sacred that carries eternal ramifications. If you embraced the Gospel, then you have a call to respond. A call to give that which you have received. A call for faithful givers. Let us take a challenge to make this season a memorable one because of the joy of the Gospel in you - The Gospel of Everlasting life, peace and hope that was given with a selfless heart and unconditional love.

Giving should not be confined to a Christian's calendar as an annual event. In a Christian's life, giving is a response to a call of obedience. A call from the Gospel that should ring in every believer's ear. The Gospel that a Father gave His only Son to be a blessing to the whole world. The Gospel that is void without the act of giving.

God's Book for Mankind:

- Part 17 -

'Bible Book Study' Methods

Even though the Bible is one book, we know that there are sixty six individual books in the Bible. The focus of the book study method is the study of just one of the sixty six books at a time. Each and every book that is in the Bible is included in the Biblical Canon because God, who is the



wanted it as part of the Bible. Let us not forget the fact that God is the author of the Holy Bible and human beings were simply inspired writers that God choose to use. God determined which book should be included in the biblical canon and by God's Holy Spirit he helped the holy men of God to discover those books.

Let us look at three different methods of studying a particular book of the Bible. These are: Book Survey Method, Book Analysis Method and Book Synthesis Method.

1. Book Survey Method

This method will help you to get an overview, a bird's eye view or a telescopic view of a particular book of the Bible that you study.

Start with shorter books. Choose which particular book out of the 66 books you wish to study. It is better to decide to study one of the shorter books at first and when that one is finished go to the next larger book and so on and so forth. So you will not get discouraged. If you decide to study one of the four Gospels, start with the Gospel of Mark since that is the shortest of the Gospels. Or if you wish to study the epistles of Apostle John, you may choose the second or third epistle of John and then the first epistle of John.

Read the entire book in one sitting if possible or in one or two days. This will help you to get the flow of the thought of the book. It is also good to read in more than one translation if it is available to you. Remember when these books

were originally written, there were no chapter or verse divisions.

Write down the names of main characters, main events, main themes, words or phrases that are repeated, key word or words, key verse, and other thoughts and impressions you wish to write down.

Gather 'Background Information'. Ask the following background information questions and find out the answers from your Bible itself or from study tools (books). Who wrote this book? Who were the original recipients and readers? Where was it written? When was it written? Why was it written? Or is it written to address a particular concern or issue in a church? Is this a book of prophecy, poetry, narrative or a letter dealing with doctrines and/or practical Christian living? Ask questions and find the answers. Some of the answers will be in the book itself, and other answers will be in other books that are your study tools.

Tools. You can learn all this information and more from study Bibles, Bible Handbooks, Bible Encyclopedias or Bible Dictionaries. These are the tools you need for this study. Be sure to have a notebook and pen.

2. Book Analysis Method

Analysis comes from the word analyze and it means to carefully study something to learn about its parts, what they do, and how they are related to each other. So the book analysis method of Bible study is a careful, detailed study of a book of the Bible by taking it apart as section by section and thought by thought.

Start with shorter books. At first, use this method with the shorter books of the Bible. So you can analyze the entire book in one sitting

.... Continued on page 4

Bible Study



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How wonderful it is to know that Jehovah God, our all knowing Heavenly Father does not want His children to be ignorant concerning matters that are vital to live a life here on earth that pleases Him!

We will REAP one day, What we SOW today!

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." (Gal. 6:7-8)



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As Apostle Paul was closing his letter to the church at Galatia, he mentioned about a very important principle that is so evident in nature, and which can be transposed into our spiritual lives as well.

This is the principle of 'sowing and reaping'. When a farmer plants seeds of a particular grain into the ground, he does not have to second-guess what plant that will sprout and emerge in due time. It is natural to assume that the sheaves of grain reaped in the future will be an exponential multiplication of the seeds sown into the ground today. However, there is a waiting period between the sowing and reaping events, but we will reap fruits of whatever seed we have planted - one day in the future!

Thus the seeds that we sow today will determine what kind of fruit we will reap tomorrow. What we plant that we will reap (v. 7). Our choices have consequences and that includes how we spend our time, talent and treasures every day. They also include how we choose to treat other people. When we choose to hate, the consequences can return in hatred just as Isaac Newton's third law of motion has stated: "every action has an equal and opposite reaction". When we follow a path of hatred, we will get alienated from others and fall into the same pit that we have dug for others. A good example from the Bible is the case of the wicked Haman, who got hanged in the very same gallows (Esther 7:9-10) that he had prepared for Mordecai (Esther 5:14).

There is a striking relationship between sowing and reaping in our spiritual lives as well.



When we live just to please our fleshly desires and passions, we will reap corruption by coveting what is not ours; we will be self-centered and selfish in our attitudes and we will live always looking inward all the time. On the other hand, when we walk in the spirit and live

to please God, we will reap the fruit of the Spirit that include "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22-23).

Let us choose to 'sow to the Spirit' today and reap eternal life in the future (v. 8). We must do good to everyone within our area of influence (especially to fellow believers in Christ), and we will reap the rewards in due time if we do not get discouraged (vv. 9-10). We should sow good seeds pertaining to our eternal destiny in order to experience the fruit of God's blessings in our lives. Let the following prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi be our prayer today:

*Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O divine Master, grant that
I may not so much seek
To be consoled as to console,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
It is in dying that we are born to eternal life. ■*

Get back up!

"The Lord said to him (Elijah), "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet" (1 Kings 19:15, 16)

When we read: "Elijah was afraid and ran for his life" (1 Kings 19:3), at first glance, it appears to be a normal reaction - a man got afraid and he ran. However when we read it in the context of Elijah, we realize that this was not normal, this man was not just any ordinary man – this man had seen God move powerfully in His life. He had seen God respond immediately at the voice of his command. At Elijah's voice, God stopped the storehouses of rain over the land of Israel (1 Kings 17). Elijah called a drought over the land because the people were idol worshipers, they followed false gods. We see how even throughout the drought, God protected and cared for Elijah by taking him to brooks, providing ravens to feed him and even a widow to care for him.

When the period of drought was to end, God tells Elijah to go to King Ahab: "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth" (1 Kings 18:1). When Ahab calls Elijah, the troubler of Israel (1 Kings 18:17), Elijah courageously replies: "I have not troubled Israel, but you have, and your father's house, because you have abandoned the commandments of the Lord and followed the Baals". Elijah declares a showdown between the One true God and the prophets of false gods. He wants the people to see that the gods they serve are incapable of responding, hearing, and speaking. Elijah sets the premise: the God who responds to prayers by sending fire on their altar is the true God. The stakes are very high, but Elijah is confident that when he calls his God, He will respond and bring fire



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from heaven. The prophets of Baal begin to call upon their god until midday but, "there was no voice, no one answered; no one paid attention". Elijah then calls all of Israel to gather around the altar that he made, he calls upon the one true almighty God the maker of the heavens and the earth – he prays, "O Lord, answer me, that this people may know that you, O Lord, are

It's interesting how Elijah was told to get up and eat – it makes me wonder if God is telling us that when the journey of life is getting too hard for us, that we must actively get up and eat from God's word. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God"

God, and that you have turned their hearts back" (1 Kings 18:37). "Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench". God responded, God heard, God showed up. Quickly after, Elijah seized the prophets of Baal and killed all of them. After hearing what had happened, Queen Jezebel becomes furious and instantly sends a threat to

Elijah that she would kill him in the same way that he had killed her prophets. And this same Elijah, the Elijah who saw God move at the sound of his voice - runs for his life. Later on we see that Elijah is actually running from his life. He asked that he might die, saying "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life". The Lord, even here patiently provides for Elijah – sending an angel to give him food. We see this when Elijah is in the wilderness running from Jezebel, God sends an angel that instructs him to "Arise and eat, for the journey is too great for you".

It's interesting how Elijah was told to get up and eat – it makes me wonder if God is telling us that when the journey of life is getting too hard for us, that we must actively get up and eat from God's word. God said that "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4). We must surround ourselves and renew our minds by God's truth that gives us strength, hope, and a new perspective to continue on in the journeys of life. Elijah gets up eats, and is sustained for the rest of the

40 nights and 40 days of journey that he takes to travel to Mount Horeb.

Elijah lodges himself in a cave. The word of the Lord reaches him there: "What are you doing here, Elijah?" Often times when we come across hard times in our lives, we resort to being in a "cave", where it's dark, lonesome and a place where you're susceptible to lies of the enemy and your own thoughts of doubt. A cave is a place that isolates you from God -

His voice, His people and their opinions and advises. Having a community of believers to support and pray for you during difficulties is vital – we need people to lean on and people who can pray for us and speak words of life and wisdom when we are unable to do it for ourselves. I love how here, God calls Elijah to come out of his circumstance – to come out of isolation so that the thoughts he hears are not just his thoughts, worries, nor concerns – but now it’s God’s life giving truth, encouragement and presence that enables him to get back on the journey with courage. I believe it is not that Elijah lacked courage - we saw his courage on Mt. Carmel – Elijah is bold, and has incredible faith. But sometimes fighting the battles of life can become so exhausting that they can be just as dreadful as the exhaustion of failure.

Elijah wasn’t running from his life because He didn’t trust God nor because he was afraid of Jezebel – it was because he knew that he had yet another battle to fight again. Fighting battles makes us wearisome and they can take so much out of us. In these situations, God calls us to step up our courage - it’s not that we don’t have it, it’s just malnourished. It’s not that you don’t have self-control, because as believers in Christ you do *“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7)* - it’s just that you aren’t exercising and growing what you already have. God calls Elijah out of

his weakness and calls him to stand on the mount. The Lord passed before him as a wind, an earthquake, and a fire. God didn’t speak to him through any of those things but lastly in *“the sound of a low whisper”*. When God speaks to us – He comes to us in a way where we know He is near. That He is not a God that is distant or too powerful for us to approach – He approaches us in the still small whispers where we have to be close to hear Him. We can’t be in the caves of our lives, we must position ourselves in a way that we are able to hear and

are able to see ourselves in the light of who we are in Him and subsequently we begin to see our impossibilities, our failures, and our struggles through the very lens that He sees them. God speaks to us in a way that we realize who we truly are – the bold, brave, and strong people that He’s called us to be. He enables us in His grace and compassion, to trust Him again, to get back up again, and start and finish things with His perspective. He breathes life into dead lives, situations, and dreams. You name it – God can revive it – and He wants to, too. You

When God speaks to us – He comes to us in a way where we know He is near. That He is not a God that is distant or too powerful for us to approach – He approaches us in the still small whispers where we have to be close to hear Him. We can’t be in the caves of our lives, we must position ourselves in a way that we are able to hear and receive from God.

just have to trust Him, get out where you can hear Him above all the other noise of self-doubt and worries and rely on the One who is more than able to respond in your situation like He did at the showdown on Mt. Carmel.

After God asks Elijah where he is, Elijah is able

to see himself and his situation in the light of how God sees it. God commissions Elijah to go back the way he came and anoint the next King of Israel. Elijah goes his way – empowered and ready to take on life’s tasks again. When God speaks to us He heals us and then He enables us to get back on the journey of life that we are called to endure with persistence and joy – because we have Him on our side always until the end. And with Him on our side every battle, every struggle, is overcome with the strength that He gives us when we stay close to Him.

receive from God. Your position will often times determine if you will hear from God or not. Don’t let where you are hinder you from receiving and hearing from God. It doesn’t have to be a cave or a position that can hinder this – it could also be the things that you hold to be more valuable than God. Enable God to set you free from the addictions and chains that are holding you back. Elijah had to step outside of his cave, he had to step outside his situation to be in a place where he could hear from God. God speaks to Elijah again in that whisper and asks again, *“What are you doing here, Elijah?”* When God speaks to us we

Quotes from Watchman Nee



Watchman Nee

** "The sight of any trouble strikes terror into the heart of those who do not have faith, but those who trust Him say, "Here comes my food!"

** "A little carelessness brings in defeat"

** "God has supplied all my needs and has not failed me once"

** "Carnal Christians tend to show off their differences and superiorities in clothing, speech or deeds. They desire to shock people into a recognition of all their undertakings"

** "If you would test the character of anything, you only need to enquire whether that thing leads you to God or away from God"



&
JKS



Supposed Site of Moses' Death

According to ChristianToday.com, the supposed site of Moses' death is located on Mount Nebo in Jordan, 20 miles southwest of Amman. From atop the 3,300-foot mountain, you get a sprawling view of the West Bank, Jericho, and Jerusalem. After archaeologists left the ruins at the site in the 1930's, it has been a popular pilgrimage site for Jews, Christians and Muslims. Pope John Paul II visited the site in March 2000 and Pope Benedict XVI visited the site in 2009.



Pope Benedict at the site (2009)

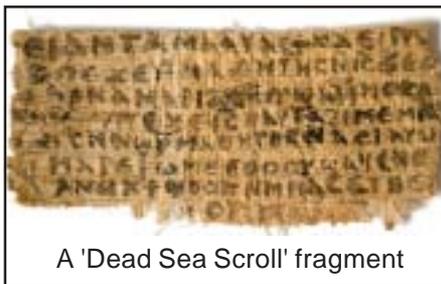
The site was closed to the public for nearly ten years for restoration and has been reopened. Cardinal Leonardo Sandri, special envoy for Pope Francis, presided over the opening of the newly-renovated church and monastery. He said: "Moses, as a prophet, friend of God and giver of the law, is indeed held in high esteem by our Jewish, Christian and Muslim brothers". Sandri also used the opportunity to encourage those gathered to work toward peace.

Archaeologists might have found enough evidences that led them to suppose that the site was, indeed, the place where Moses died. Every finding points towards the authenticity of Biblical accounts!

Dead Sea Scrolls

The texts from 25 Dead Sea Scroll fragments, each holding various excerpts from the Hebrew Bible dating back almost 2,000 years, have been

published in two books, "Gleanings from the Caves: Dead Sea Scrolls and Artifacts from The Schøyen Collection" and "Dead Sea Scrolls Fragments in the Museum



A 'Dead Sea Scroll' fragment

Collection". The fragments, found in the Qumran caves in the West Bank, come from the books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Samuel, Ruth, Kings, Micah, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Joshua, Judges, Proverbs, Numbers, Psalms, Ezekiel and Jonah. The Schøyen Collection details fragments from the Book of Leviticus, in which God promises rewards for obeying the 10 Commandments and observing the Sabbath.

The scrolls are some of the oldest known biblical manuscripts in existence, and were originally hidden in 11 caves in the Judean desert somewhere around 68 BCE in order to protect them from approaching Roman armies. They were discovered in a series of findings between 1947 and 1956 at the archaeological site of Qumran, with researchers unearthing thousands of fragments from nearly 900 manuscripts. The History channel notes that it's not known who exactly wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, though scholars believe they were created by the Essenes, a devout Jewish sect who lived in Judea while it was under the Roman Empire. The scrolls have been carefully preserved and made the subject of major efforts by Israel's national museum and Google, making their digital copies available online to the entire world 2011.

We should be thankful to those pious Jews who had immense respect for the Word of God and who took great pains to preserve its purity for years!

Nick Vujcic's wonderful tour of Eastern Europe!

The inspiring evangelist, Nick Vujcic, who has no arms and legs is quite well known all over the world. He recently toured Ukraine and Slovenia in Eastern Europe where he spoke to thousands of people who gathered to hear him talk



Nick Vujcic with no arms & legs

about his own struggles and how Jesus has helped him overcome them. At one gathering in Ukraine, where 5,000 people were in the crowd as Vujcic spoke, half of them reportedly gave their lives to Christ as he shared the gospel with them. He said, "With me, in my life, I know that there are people who can get encouraged to see how God can use a man without arms and legs to be his hands and feet, but I wanted people to know that I am not a superhero, it is not about me, or how well I speak or articulate - it is the Spirit of God. It is an active relationship with him".

May the inscription on Nick's picture; "If you can't get a miracle, become one" be an inspiration for us!

Something to think about!

"I can safely say, on the authority of all that is revealed in the Word of God, that any man or woman on this earth who is bored and turned off by worship is not ready for heaven"

- A.W. Tozer

God's plan for you!



After the church service an elder noticed a young believer looking worried and anxious. The elder asked the youngster the reason for his worry. The youngster said that he was feeling a little insecure about his future and that he cannot understand God's plan for his life as everything that happened in his life seemed to be different to what he thought was right. The elder smiled at the youngster and took him to a rosebush outside the church. The elder plucked out a rosebud and asked the youngster to open up the rose petals without damaging the petals. The youngster was curious and did not quite understand what the rosebud had to do with

understanding the will of God. But due to his great respect for the elder, he tried to open up the rose flower, while keeping every petal intact. It wasn't long before he realized how impossible it was to do so. The elder noticed that the youngster was struggling to unfold the rosebud, keeping the rest of the petals intact. The elder then took the youngster to a quiet room and said: "If you could not unfold a rosebud without damaging the petals which is only a

small thing out of God's vast creation, then how can you ever imagine to unfold God's big plan for your life?"

Dear friends, Bible says in Jer 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations".

The same truth is expressed in Ephesians 1:4, "For in Him God chose us before the foundation of the world, so we should be holy and blameless before Him".

God has a plan for us even before we were born. God only wants us to trust in Him and surrender our lives to Him. Therefore whenever you feel that your plans are going wrong do not worry just surrender and wait on the Lord because God has a better plan.



Juby Anoop, UK



Saul has slain thousands and David his ten thousands



David playing harp for Saul

David coming out of the Saul's palace



Banage P.K.



Saul hurled his spear at David

