

**The Legacy of  
God's People** *(Part-A)*  
**Holy Land Tour** *(Part-B)*

**Mrs. & Mr. Sundara Rao Ts.**

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# **The Legacy of God's People (Part-A)**

## **Holy Land Tour (Part-B)**

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## FOREWORD

**Mr. Sundara Rao Tsappidi** worked as Lecturer in English for about 30 years at K.B.N. College, Vijayawada. As Lecturer he was very popular with his students. He was a man of discipline and dedication. He also worked as treasurer of St.Peters West Parish, Vijayawada for many years and served God.

I have great intimacy with Mr.T.S.Sundara Rao for about thirty years. His scholarship is highly appreciative. He takes great interest in doing God's work. After his retirement he went to America with his wife, Smt. Grace Vijaya, to live with his children. During his stay in America he had the vision of God. Due to ill health he lost 40% of the eye sight. The American libraries provided him with many books regarding Biblical aspects. When he came to India he used to tell me all about his reading and the information looked strange to me. It gives me immense pleasure that he is writing a book out of the knowledge he has acquired from various sources. I have gone through the manuscript of his book, "The Legacy of God's People". It contains 25 chapters. Each chapter is very informative and unique of its kind. For example Melchezidec. His history is unknown to many people as the Bible mentions a small reference in the book of Genesis 14:18 as King of Salem. His writing, "The Legacy of God's People" is the work of the Holy Spirit who has guided him to write the book instead of his stay in America idle but ideal for many. It is my privilege to hear him a good number of times about his vast reading of books and the information he has gathered.

His Holy Land tour with his wife was a turning point in his life. It enabled him to collect a lot of information by reading various books and it motivated him to collect information about the Bible and God's People.

Mr.Sundara Rao's intention is not to earn money by publishing this book but make others know about the Lord Jesus Christ and guide them to the feet of the Lord to attain salvation as he is instructed in his vision while walking with the Lord.

I hope this book will attract a wide readership. I earnestly pray to the Lord to bless him to come out with many more books of this kind. May the Holy Spirit guide him to achieve his goal. May the Lord anoint him with good health.

**D.S. Sundara Rao**

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S.A.S.Degree College  
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# INTRODUCTION



**F**irst of all, I am thankful to God for giving me this blessed and unique opportunity to present a book about some people in the Bible and some general topics. As you know preparing a book is not an ordinary task.

I ventured this due to the following reasons. I have been staying in the United States for some years with my children. When I was with my daughter in Pittsburgh, I dreamed a dream in March 2006. It was an uncommon dream. As per the dream, I died and went to heaven. I saw Jesus Christ in white garments. He saw me and came to me. He caught my hand and we both walked together for about half a mile. The road we walked along was in golden color. There were houses also on either side of the road. We walked till the end of the road where we saw a church. Then Christ asked me to look at the church. He told me to go back to my place., and tell the people about God and about salvation. He also told me to guide the people to go to the church and to read the Bible, so that they too can become the children of God and come to heaven after their death. I woke up from my dream and found myself on my bed, and looking around strangely.

I responded to my dream by constructing a church at a village where it was needed. The name of that church is *Jehovah Jireh* (Genesis: 22:14) means *God is our provider*". Since then I have decided to do some service as far as I can till God permits me. This incident reminded me to honor the motto "*service to humanity is service to divinity*".

The next reason is God gave me a chance to visit the Holy Land along with my wife and went to Turkey, Israel, and Palestine. Turkey is important for seven churches described in the book of revelation because Bethlehem is in Palestine now, we have to visit that country also and then Israel for Jerusalem. We visited most of the biblical places and collected some material about the history of a few places.

The third reason is I was 70 years old and found out that I am 40 percent blind. And then, I was made aware of the "library for the blind", where we can get books in large print. I

contacted them and have been getting books about the Bible and they presented me the Holy Bible in large print in three volumes. I found some new information from these books and collected it.

I read some historical books also. I collected some interesting information. All this matter from various sources that I collected prompted me to venture to put that matter in black and white, so that some people may find interest in this new information

I am thankful to the authorities of the “Library for the Blind” for sending me valuable books and also the writers of the following books mentioned below :

- 1. The book of Jubilees**
- 2. Jewish Traditions**
- 3. The roots of Mount Ararat**
- 4. The secret of happiness and Angels by Billy graham**
- 5. The greatest story ever told by Fulton Oursler**
- 6. The story of Mary and Joseph by Marjorie Holmes**
- 7. Where God was Born**

I thank my three children especially my eldest son David Ravi who spared his weekends in computerizing the manuscript. I owe my better half Smt. Grace Vijaya for her valuable suggestions and encouragement. I express my gratitude to Prof.R.R.K. Murthy, Dr.Devasahayam, the Dandala Brothers and Spandana Publishers, Vijayawada. I also thank Sri.D.S.Sundara Rao, Leturer in English, Vijayawada for rendering his help in correction, proof reading and writing foreword for this book.

I humbly praise and thank God for this opportunity to share this book with you and may the Lord bless us all.

*Ts. Sundara Rao*  
**Tsappidi Sundara Rao**

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## **HOLY LAND TOUR**

**98-108**

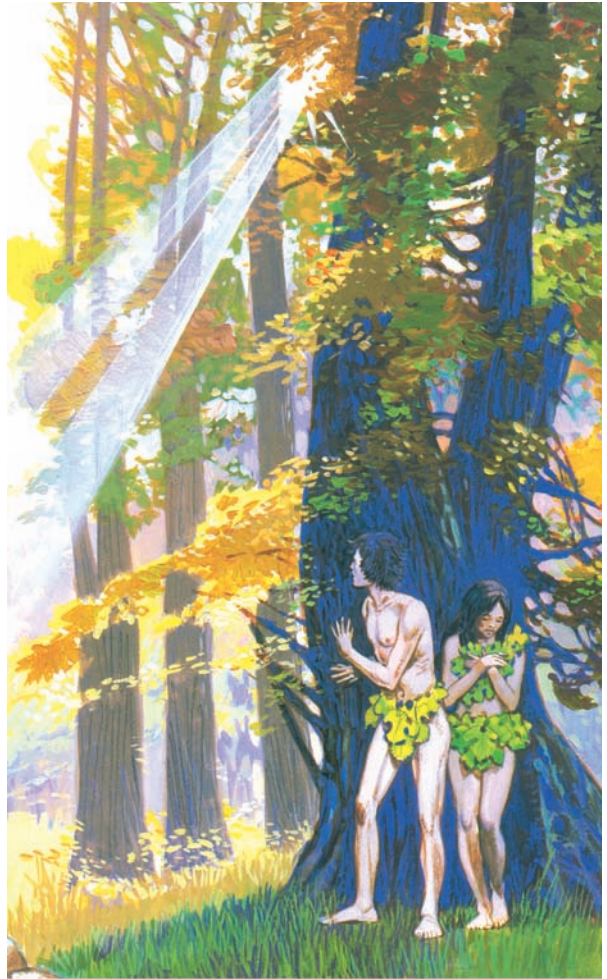
# 1. ADAM AND EVE AND THEIR GENEALOGY

According to the Bible God created everything in nature wonderfully including man and woman. God called them Adam and Eve. But by the evil guidance of Satan they disobeyed the command of God and ate the fruit of knowledge. There by sin came into the world. As a result they were sent away from the Garden of Eden. But they were blessed with two sons, Cain and Abel. Cain murdered his brother, Abel out of jealousy. There was no evidence in the Bible whom Cain married for the continuity of his genealogy.

As per the historical evidence a shepherd boy by name Bedouine found some jars in “Qumran’ caves” near the “Dead Sea” in 1947. These books were 1) The Book of Enoch 2) The book of Jubilees and 3) The Complete Old Testament in Hebrew Language by Prophet Isaiah. These three books were very valuable.

According to the book of Jubilees Adam and Eve had nine children. They were both boys and girls. Cain married one of his sisters. This book of Jubilees was like the Bible to the people of Ethiopia for many years. It was believed that this book was existed even before our Bible. It was considered to be next to the Bible according to the sources. The book of Jubilees was also called “The Little Genesis”

In the Quoran also it was said God cursed only Satan for misleading Adam and Eve as they repented for what they had done. Because they realised their fault. God simply sent them away from the Garden of Eden.



ADAM & EVE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN



## 2. ENOCH

**H**e was faithful to the creator. He was the son of Ja'red, who lived for 962 years. He walked with God after Methu'selah was born. After Adam and Eve Enoch was the 7th generation. He was a great Scientist and Astrologer. He wrote a book called "The book of Enoch" with 108 chapters. It was in two parts. It was about heavenly bodies and their movements and about the fallen angels.

The first part was about wars between the earthly men and giants may be the fallen angels whose leader was Lucifer in heaven and Satan on the earth. It is said their height would be about 25 to 30 feet. The second part was about the stars and other heavenly bodies. He gave wonderful information about them accurately, because he was a great Astrologer in those days. He lived for 365 years and God took him. By faith Enoch had planned he should not see death and was directly taken to heaven.

Enoch also prophesied "Behold the Lord Cometh with ten thousands of his saints"

Due to some reason his book was not included in the Bible. His son Metheselah lived for 969 years and was the longest lived in the Bible.

The Book of Enoch was also found in the Qumran caves along with other books like the original Hebrew Manuscript of the Old Testament by prophet Isaiah etc.



**QUMRAN CAVES**

# 3. NOAH'S GENEALOGY

**M**elchizedec wrote the book, “The Roots of Mount Ararat”. He was the great grandson of Noah who described the history of Mount Ararat and the genealogy of Noah’s family. It is in the form of conversation between Melchizedec and a servant boy “Ali” in his house in Salem, which later became Jerusalem. Noah was the only righteous man in his generation.



**NOAH ARK**

The land around Mount Ararat was called “Adlandia” or “Atlandis” which means the land of Adam. God noticed that the people of this land became wicked and wanted to destroy them except the family of Noah. God asked Noah to build an Ark for his family to save themselves and for some spices because he wanted to kill everything on the earth with flood. Noah took about 100 years to build the Ark with the help of his brother Jaseth and his father Lamech, who lived for about 777 years. People laughed at their work of building the Ark as they did not know what was going to happen to them.

God found a perfect righteous man in Noah in his generation. He walked with God also. So God wanted to save him and his family (Genesis 6:9)

The measurements of the Ark were given in cubits. A cubit is about 17 to 22 inches. The length of the Ark was 300 cubits, means about 450 feet, width 50 cubits means about 75 feet, Height 30 cubits means about 45 feet.

The height of the rain water after 40 days and 40 nights was 15 cubits means about 23 feet. The water remained on the earth for about 150 days.

After the floods, Noah’s family occupied a village called “Heston, which means the village of eight survivors. All the members of the family led their lives as heathens except Noah who believed in Yahweh” (God). He had three sons.

| <b>The Roots of Mount Ararat<br/>Noah’s wife Naamah</b>                                      |   |  |   |
|--|---|--|---|
| First Son is Shem and wife – Sindra  | Second son is Ham and his Wife Carise. He had four sons and one daughter.   |  | Third son Japheth and his wife Elsbeth                              |
| Are called Shemites or Shemitites  | Canaan, wife Shelah   | Cush (means black)   | Japhethites   |
| Terah, wife- Amedia  | Sidon   | Nimrod   |   |
| Abram, wife – sarah .His descendants were Hebrews, Arabs, Persians, Assyrians, Jewish Nation | Melchezidec – was called the king of salem, king of north, king of righteousness. His descendants were called Canaanites, sea people, Phoenicians | He was called king of Shenar, king of south. His descendants were Hamites, Babylonians, Egyptians, Africans, Samaritans. | Europeans, Asians. Japanese, Chinese, Native Americans and Eskimos. |

**About Noah:** He was the only God fearing man in his family. He was a great writer also. What all he wrote in his early days, he maintained a record of everything in the form of scrolls, books and Journals and kept them in clay jars and covered them with salt bags, so that they would not be spoiled.

One day Noah took his eldest son, Shem and showed him all that he had written and how he covered these with salt bags. Shem was surprised to find his father as a great writer and astrologer. Noah asked him to take care of all these things in future and keep some of them in his grave for the future generation. Noah slept with his fathers and was buried in “Huber” in the land of Ararat. He was called the Prophet, the Preacher of Righteousness, the Writer and the Astrologer. He lived for 950 years.

Ham: He happened to see his father in naked condition in heavily drunken state. For that Noah cursed his son Canaan by saying “Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants” (Genesis 9:29). Children suffer for the sins of their parents. Ham had 4 sons and one daughter by name “Kelah”. For some time Ham lived in Shinar with his wife Carise and children, and came back to Noah to find out a girl for Canaan for marriage. Canaan finally married Japheth’s daughter “Shelah”. After that he worked like a servant in the house of Japhith, Noah felt sorry for it because it was only due to the curse.

Sidon was born to Canaan and Shelah and from Sidon’s family came “Melchezidec Noah was unhappy for cursing his grandson, Canaan. One day he called him and said, “A curse often contains the seed of blessing”. He blessed him and said “A King of Righteousness would be your seed and a priest of the most high God Almighty.

Accordingly a boy was born in the family of Sidon after some time. Noah named him Melchizidec which means King of Righteousness.

**Nimrod:** He was the son of Cush and Cush was one of the four sons of Ham. Cush means black. Nimrod means “Mighty or Strong”. He became mighty and powerful before God (Gen 10:8-9). He was a strong and intelligent man but hater of man. He used to say “Blood is no enemy to me”. He also said “I will reach heaven, with other man’s blood”. He was a cruel man.

He challenged wars with his own people, but God was with them and Nimrod faced defeat always. He waged wars for some years and the family was divided in the following manner for the war.





## TOWER OF BABEL

Noah, Jupethitis, Canaan and Melchezidec were on one side Ham, Cush, Nimrod were on the other side.

Nimrod after utter defeat in the wars left the land of Ararat and settled at a place called Shinar. He made it a big city and became its king. After fifteen years gap, he decided to build a city and a tower that should touch heaven.

“Let us build a city and tower

Whose tops may touch unto heaven” He said

(Genesis 11:4)

Nimrod took about 30 to 40 years to build the tower with 20 thousand hands, and sacrificed 10 thousand people. On the dedication day, he climbed certain height of the tower and felt happy. He began to give a long speech as if he

succeeded in his attempt of reaching heaven. He called the Tower “Babilu” which means “gate of heaven”. But God had his own plans against this kind of people.

While he was speaking there was a shock then trembling and the tower began to fall. There was confusion among people. They were trembling and afraid of the situation. In utter confusion, they began to run “helter skelter”. They spoke in strange languages, which nobody understood. In fear and confusion, they moved unto different places on the earth with that incident many languages came into existence. Today we have about 6500 languages all over the world. The Bible is available in about 2450 languages. “So, the Lord Scattered them into all parts of the earth” (Genesis 11:8)

Nimrod also built the city of “Nineveh”

He was called “the King of Shinar”

and also “the King of South”

He was a great builder.

# 4. MELCHEZIDEC, KING OF SALEM

**H**e was from the family of Sidon and grandson to Canaan. He was a shepherd boy. He knew only feeding the sheep and nothing else. God was with him and liked his innocence. He won the wars with Nimrod. God had chosen Melchizedec from all generations of men as God chose Mary among all women for the purpose of the birth of Christ. He chose Melchizedec and anointed him to be the High Priest of the Almighty. Then God asked him to go to a distant place which he would show and build a city in his name. As per the Word of God, Melchizedec left his duty of a shepherd boy and traveled a long distance. He laid a foundation for a new town which he called Salem, that later became Jerusalem. He became the king also to that city. Melchizedec, (Genesis 14:18)

He remained there permanently and served bread and wine at the Altar of high God. He found the surrounding place as a place of milk and honey and called it Canaan the name of his grandfather Canaan. The place was given to Abraham later, as a promised land to his seed Israel. Melchizedec was called the King of Salem. The King of North and the King of Righteousness.

Once, Abraham met Melchizedec while he was returning from the battle with other kings who took Lot his brother's son. Melchizedec was happy to see Abraham. He blessed him and served him with bread and wine. He also gave Abraham the shepherd stick of his young age as a presentation.

Abraham in return gave 10th part of his property to Melchizedec which he got from the Kings. So, giving tithes to God started from Abraham... Since then Melchizedec remained in

Salem permanently serving bread and wine on the altar.

It was he, who laid the foundation for the present Jerusalem. It was he who gave the name Canaan to the land of milk and honey. As a narrator he told the whole story about the genealogy of Noah's family to his servant boy "Ali" and Jerusalem was in existence even at the time of Abraham who lived in about 2200 B.C.



**THE ALTAR OF KING MELCHEZIDEC**

# 5. ABRAM – THE HEBREW

(Genesis 14:13)

**A**bram, the Hebrew means “*stranger*”. He was called “*stranger*” for the first time in the Bible as he was the only God fearing man, among his people including his parents. His parents were (Terah, and Amedia) an idol makers. Their livelihood was to make idols, and king Nimrod happened to be one of their customers. So Abram's parents knew king Nimrod well. It is said Abram lived during 2200 B.C.



**ABRAHAM WAS SACRIFICING HIS SON**

When Abram was born it appeared that a big star in heaven swallowed four small stars. This was seen by king Nimrod. He thought that Abram one day would become a great man and cause troubles to his kingdom. Therefore, the king wanted to buy Abram from his parents. He wanted to keep him in his house.

The king called Terah and told him that he wanted to buy his son. But Terah arranged some other boy and sent Abram with his mother to an unknown place for some time.

From his early days, Abram was a close observer of the stars and other heavenly bodies. He used to wonder at their movements, how these stars were giving light and twinkled during night and not to be seen during day. His observation and thinking about the stars increased from time to time. He

thought that there must be some invisible power in heaven controlling all those things and that invisible power should be God, he concluded. Through close observation, he acquired more knowledge about astronomy and he gave this information to Egyptians and after some time they gave that to Greeks. For his knowledge about astronomy people called him the “Father of Western Science”.

As he grew he understood that his parents were heathens. One day he threw away all the idols in the house and broke them. His father got angry and took him to the King Nimrod.





## INTERIOR DOME OF THE ROCK

Abram found many idols in the palace of the king also. He took all of them and broke them. The king got angry and gave him a severe punishment. He was fastened with ropes and thrown into the fiery burning flames like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. But the ropes were burnt and the flames became water to cool him. The king was surprised at this incident. Abram was a stranger among all his people. He believed in the supreme power in Heaven called God. In return, God guided him and his faith

increased from time to time. One day God asked Abram to leave his place called “ur”, the land of Chaldeans and go to a place which he would give to his seed. God promised him the land called Canaan to his people. For his faith and belief Abram was called the “Father of Western Religion”

One day God sent three angels to the house of Abram to tell the news that he was going to have a son and also the angels told it to Sarah.

According to Genesis 17:5 God blessed him and said he would become the father of many nations. At the same time God changed his name from Abram to Abraham. Prior to the birth of Isaac, Abraham had another son by name Ishmael born to his servant maid Hagar. When Abraham was about 99 years old, Isaac was born to him. But God wanted to test his faith. He asked Abraham one day to sacrifice his son. Abraham was only a listener of the words of God. By faith, Abraham tried to sacrifice his only begotten son, Isaac and God acknowledged his faith and blessed him abundantly. So he was called “*the father of faithful.*” Abraham was the first man in the Bible to under go circumcision along with Ishmael and Isaac. His relatives followed it latter. So he was called “*the father of circumcision*”



God was with Abraham always. He blessed his family who later became Israelites like countless stars in heaven or sand particles in the ocean. So, many nations after Ishmael and after Jacob came into existence .and Abraham was called the “Father of Many Nations”



### **MECHPELAH, THE GRAVEYARD OF ABRAHAM'S FAMILY**

A b r a h a m bought some land in Mechpelah for 400 shekles of silver as a burial ground near mamre for his family. When Sarah died at the age of 127 years, she was buried in that place. After her death Abraham married Keturah and had six sons through her.

W h e n Abraham died at the age of 175 years, he was also buried there. After the death of Abraham, the burial ground of Mechpelah and the Beersheba well had become important tourist centers for both Jews and Muslims for one thousand years. People visited those two places regularly. After some time, both Jews and Muslims began to quarrel among themselves regarding their visit. Finally they compromised and decided that each community should go six months. Only after the construction of God’s temple, in Jerusalem, after 1000 years, people began to visit Jerusalem instead of Mechpelah grave yard and Beersheba well.

There was a story among the people in those days. As per the story, one day a good number of people as a group visited those places. While returning, one of the visitors missed his sword in the grave yard. He went back to find out his sword. While searching for it, to his surprise, he saw Abraham was moving among the graves in a white dress.

According to Genesis 22:12, 17 Abraham was the most faithful man that God admired and honored him saying “I know that thou fearest God seeing thou have not withheld thy son thy only son from me” and God blessed him abundantly

Those who have faith like Abraham were called the children of Abraham (Luke 19:9). Abraham through righteousness became a friend of God. By faith Abraham moved to many places like a wanderer. Without faith it is impossible to please God so we can look to Abraham to follow his faithful life and by looking unto Jesus we can run the race to reach our eternal goal.

## 6. BEERSHEBA

**B**eersheba is 28 miles South West of Hebron. It is also spelled as Beersheva. During the days of “*patriarchs*”, the sons of Jacob, this was only a cluster of wells. It is the last watering hole before the Negev desert but the strong Zionists came and changed the desert into a big town, with buildings etc. Prior to that development, the population was only about 3000. After its development the population went up to 1, 13,000. It is a microcosm of Israel.

Beersheba means “*the oath of seven*” or “*the well of the oath*”. It was here Abraham and Abimelech the King of Gerar took pledge together. It was called Beersheba as two of them swore an oath. Traditionally Beersheba was not only the Southern boarder to Judah’s



**BEERSHEBA WELL "THE OATH OF SEVEN"**

territory, but also it was a Southern boarder to the Promised Land. It was the house of Abraham for some time. In the same place both Abraham and his son Isaac made a covenant with Abi

melech. Here God appeared to both Isaac and Jacob. From this place, Jacob fled to Haran, to escape from the anger of his brother Esau.

When Jacob was going to live with his son, Joseph, in Egypt, he stopped here for sometime and made sacrifices to “Jehovah”. Finally when Elijah fled from Carmel Mountain to escape from the wicked queen Jezebel, he took shelter in Beersheba. He sat under a jumper tree and prayed to God to take him away as he wanted to die. At that time God sent his angel. The angel came to him two times and fed him .with that strength, Elijah survived for 40 days and 40 nights, and went to Horeb Mountain as God asked him to go.

### **Some important points**

1. Abraham lived here for some time (Genesis 22:19)
2. Abraham made a covenant with Abi melech (Genesis 21:23-34)
3. The lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness of Beersheba (Genesis 21:9-12)
4. Isaac made a covenant with the philistine king (Gen.26:23-33)
5. Jacob began his journey to Haran at Beersheba (Genesis 28:10)
6. Jacob made sacrifices to Jehovah in Beersheba on his way to Egypt, to live with his son Joseph. (Genesis 46:1-5)
7. Simeon inherited Beersheba as a portion of his allotted Land (Joshua 19:1-2)
8. Elijah sat under a jumper tree after he received a threat from the Queen Jezebel. (I kings 19:1-8)
9. Samuel’s two unworthy sons were judged in Beersheba (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 8:1-3)

# 7. HISTORY OF JERUSALEM

The name 'Jerusalem' is in two parts. 'Jeru' means house, 'Salem' means peace. Jerusalem means 'the house of peace'. It is also called "*Jebus*" because a tribe by name Jebusites were living in that city from a long time. Even the Judas could not drive them away and so they lived together in Jerusalem even today.

## Jerusalem had some other names

1. The House of Peace
2. Holy City
3. City of God
4. City of David
5. Mountain of the Lord
6. Zion of the Holy One of Israel
7. City of Sunset

## Jerusalem is

1. The nerve center of the world geographically (Ezekiel 5:5)
2. The salvation center of the world spiritually. (John 4:22)
3. The story center of the world prophetically (Zach 14:19)
4. The glory center of the world ultimately (Isaiah 2:15)

**The old city Jerusalem had a wall around and it had eight gates.**

1. Jafa gate
2. New gate
3. Damascus gate  
(It is also called Shechem gate)
4. Herod's gate  
(It is also called flower gate by Arabs)
5. St. Stephen gate  
(Also called the Lion's gate)



**DAMASCUS GATE**





## **GOLDEN GATE**

6. Golden gate  
(Called the Eastern gate)

7. The dung gate

8. Zion gate

(Arabs called it the gate of David prophet)

When God created beauty He created 10 parts of it and gave 9 parts to Jerusalem. When God created 10 parts of knowledge He gave 9 parts of knowledge to Jerusalem. When

God created 10 parts of sufferings He gave 9 parts to Jerusalem. It is the holiest place to Jews, Christians and Muslims after Mecca and Medina.

Israel got independence in May 14, 1948 from the British. Prior to that, it was ruled by many dynasties. It is said sixteen dynasties waged wars and ruled Israel. Jerusalem is first Mentioned in the Bible in (Genesis 14:18) as “*Salem*”. Melchizedec, the king of Salem (Genesis 14:18) the word Jerusalem is used 600 times in the Old Testament.

There are some important places in and around the city of Jerusalem. They are 1. Mount of Olives, 2. The Mount of Moriah, 3. The Gethsemane garden, and 4. Via Dolorosa.

### **THE MOUNT OF OLIVES:**

This is just East of Jerusalem across the Kedrone valley. It is about 2641 feet above the sea level and it is 318 feet higher than the temple mountain area. There are eight churches on the mountain, built by the people from different countries. And the church of Heliona is one of them. It was built by her son Emperor Constantine in memory of his beloved mother. Its Northern summit is marked by the “Ascension church”, built by the Russian orthodox people.

#### **Its importance**

1. It is called the Mount of Olives because the Eastern part of it is full of olive trees.

2. It is called the Mount of Offence (1 Kings 11:4-8)

3. David fled from Absalom’s rebellion (II Samuel 15:20-32)

4. The servant gave provisions to David on this mountain.

(II Samuel 16:1-2)

5. Jesus’ triumphant entry (Mathew 21:1-11)

6 Jesus stayed here for the last week of his ministry (Luke 21:37)

7. Jesus wept here for Jerusalem's future destruction  
(Luke 19:41-44)
8. Jesus cursed the fig tree (Mathew 21.18-21)
9. The olive discourse (Mathew 24:25)
10. Jesus went to that mountain after eating the last Passover (Mathew 26:30)
11. Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to his disciples (Luke 24:49)
12. Jesus ascended to heaven from this mountain (Acts 1:9-11)
13. Jesus will return to this mountain on His Second Coming  
(Zach. 14:4)

### **Eight Different Churches on the Mount of Olives:**

People of different countries constructed churches on the Mount of Olives.

They are:

1. In 378 A.D. "The Matron Poemenie" founded "The Church of Ascendancy". But this church was destroyed by the Persian rulers in 614 A.D.) Later it was renovated by the crusaders. For the second time, it was destroyed by the Muslim rulers and a Mosque was built in its place.

2. The Russian Orthodox people built one church there. Its name was "The Church of Ascendancy".

3. The Lutheran "Church of Ascendancy" with the name "Augustus Villa"; was built at the highest part of the mountain.

4. The Greek Orthodox Church people built another church, "Viri Galilee". It is for the members of Galilee. It is referred to the Messengers of Galilee.

5. "The Church of Peter Noster" (Latin), it means for our father. This was the place where Christ gave the Lord's Prayer to his disciples.



The Franciscan convent at Bethphage on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. According to tradition, Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem began here.



**THE CHURCH OF MARY MAGDALIENE**

6. “The Church of Heliona”. This was constructed by Emperor Constantine in memory of his mother who became Saint later. This is also in memory of Christ and his preaching to his disciples.

7. “Dominus Flivet” This Church looks beautiful with its wonderful structure. It was built by the people of Franciscan Church. This Church tells us how Christ wept for the future condition of Jerusalem and the temple.

8. Russian Church of “Mary Magdalene”. It is built with gold plated onion shaped domes. It can be seen from a long distance.

“Czar” Alexander IIIrd of Russia built this church in honour of his mother “Maria”. Today it is under the control of Russian Orthodox Nuns”.

### **MOUNTAIN MORIAH**

This place is known to the people from the time of Abraham because he tried to sacrifice his son Isaac on this Mount. Its area is about 35 acres of land.

#### **Its importance**

1. Abraham offered his son on this mount (Genesis 22:1-2)
2. David bought the Jebusite threshing floor of Araunah  
(II Samuel 24:18-24)
3. Solomon built God’s temple on this mount (Chronicles 3:1-2)
4. The second temple was also built by Zerubbabel on the same foundation  
(Ezra 3:8-13, Ezra 4:22-24)
5. Herod the great rebuilt and enlarged the temple in 20 B.C.
6. Jesus was presented at that temple on the 8th day of his birth  
(Luke 2:22)



- 7 Jesus came to the temple when he was 12 years old (Luke 2:42)
8. Jesus Christ drove out the money changers (John 2:13-15)
9. Jesus attended the festival of Tabernacle (John 7:10)
10. Jesus gave the judgement on Pharisees and Sadducees  
(Mathew 21:23)
11. The disciples mentioned, the temple rebuilt by Herod, to Jesus  
(Mathew 24:1-2)
12. Peter and John went to the temple to pray (Acts 3:1)
13. The Muslims believed that Muhammad prophet Ascended to heaven from this mountain.
14. The rock on which Abraham tried to sacrifice his son was changed into a mosque.



**TWO OLIVE TREES REMAINED  
EVEN TODAY FROM THE TIME OF JESUS**

Mount of Olives. Then he would pass through the Gethsemane garden and enter Jerusalem city through the golden gate and finally go to the judgement hall. So, when Christ would come to the grave yard, all the People might rise from their graves. With that belief all the important Jews and prophets like Haggai and Malachi were buried there.

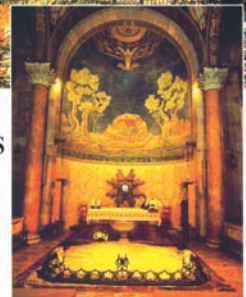
Christ, before he was arrested from the garden by the Roman soldiers, sat on a rock

## **GETHSEMANE GARDEN**

If we want to go to the Mount of Olives we must go through the garden of Gethsemane. There had been some graves in between the two places and those graves have some importance. According to their belief, Christ on his second coming would come down to the



**CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS  
IN THE  
GETHESEMANE GARDEN**





and prayed to God painfully. So that rock was called the “*rock of agony*”. On that rock, a church was built latter with the contributions from about 16 countries. It is said that the church is more beautiful than any other church today. The name of the church is called “*the Church of all nations*” and also “*the church of agony*”. Later three more churches are built on that area. The latest Church was built in 1924. At present the church is maintained by the Franciscons. In that garden there were eight olive trees at the time of Jesus Christ people had a doubt when Titus destroyed Jerusalem in 70 A.D, he must have cut down the trees also. The trees we see today are the over growth of the trees of Jesus’ time.

### **Its importance**

1. Jesus agonized in prayer in Gethsemane (Mathew 26:36-46)
2. Jesus was betrayed by Judas and arrested by the Roman Soldiers.

(Mathew 26:47-56)

### **VIA DOLOROSA**

It is also called the way of cross or the way of sorrow. It is a traditional route that Christ carried the cross to the mount Golgotha. It is now located outside the old city. There are fourteen stations on the way and the last four are in the church campus of the church of the holy sepulcher.

The following are the names of incidents that took place in those 14 stations:

1. Jesus was committed to death
2. Jesus took up the cross
3. Jesus fell under the cross
4. Jesus met his mother
5. Cyrene Simon was forced to carry the cross
6. Veronica wiped out the sweat from the face of Jesus
7. Jesus fell down the second time
8. Jesus consoled the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus fell down the third time
10. Jesus was stripped off his garments
11. Jesus was nailed to the cross
12. Jesus died on the cross
13. Jesus was taken down from the cross.
14. Jesus was laid in the tomb



**WAY OF VIODOLOROSA**



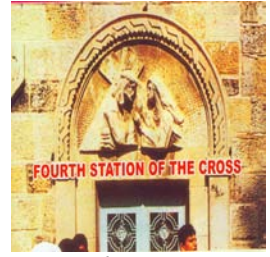
1<sup>st</sup> Station



2<sup>nd</sup> Station



3<sup>rd</sup> Station



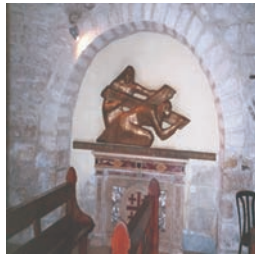
4<sup>th</sup> Station



5<sup>th</sup> Station



6<sup>th</sup> Station



7<sup>th</sup> Station



8<sup>th</sup> Station



9<sup>th</sup> Station



10<sup>th</sup> Station



11<sup>th</sup> Station



12<sup>th</sup> Station



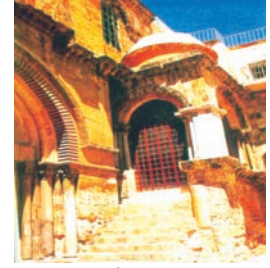
13<sup>th</sup> Station

### Its importance

1. Jesus walked out of the judgement hall at the beginning of the Via Dolorosa.

(John 19:13)

2. Paul made his speech to the people of Jerusalem at the site of Herod's fortress.



14<sup>th</sup> Station

As Christ was crucified on Friday, people called it, "Black Friday" for 200 years. Later it became God's Friday and at present it is called Good Friday. Even today the Franciscan church members go on in a procession on every Friday singing songs in praise of Christ. Some tourists also join the Franciscan church members and go on in the procession to Via Dolorosa.

## JERICH0

This was called the oldest city built in 7000 B.C. It was here the tax collector Zaccaeus touched by the spirit of Christ and gave half of his property to the poor.

It was also here Barthimeas happened to be cured of his blindness. This city is called the fragrance city of palms and is famous for date fruits. There is Elisha spring we can see it even today. The Jericho city is located at the Northern side of the Dead Sea and at the West coast of the Jordan River. It is 17 miles from Jerusalem and about 853 feet above the sea level.



**JERICH0 CITY**

### **Its importance**

1. It is called the city of palm trees (Deuteronomy 34:3,

Chronicles 28:15)

2. Rahab received the spies into her house. (Joshua 2)
3. Jericho was the first city that Joshua captured.
4. Jericho's destruction
5. Joshua uttered a curse against all who try to rebuild Jericho (Joshua 6:26)
6. Elisha's translation (II Kings 24:15)
7. Herod the great built a luxurious palace and made it his winter capital.
8. The mount of temptation can be seen from Jericho

## **NAZARETH**

Today Nazareth is called one of the holiest places. At the time of Christ its population was about 150 people only. It is in two parts today.

The upper Nazareth, where majority of the Israel Jews were residing, and the lower Nazareth, where Israel Christians and Muslims residing together. At present its population is about 70,000. It is in the mid way between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. It was an unimportant village at that time. It was about 1230 feet above the sea level.

### **Its importance**

1. It is the place where the Angel announced the birth of Christ. (Luke 1:26-35)
2. Nathaniel said "*can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" (John 1:46)
3. Joseph and Mary left here to go to Bethlehem (Luke 2:1-7)





## THE CHURCH OF ANNUNCIATION

4. Joseph and Mary came back from Egypt to live here after the Death of King Herod. (Mat.2:19-23)

5. Jesus spent his early years here (Luke 2:51-52)

6. Jesus preached his first sermon from here (Luke 4:16-30)

7. Jesus was called “*the Nazarene*” by his enemies. (Mathew 21:11)

8. After the

sermon and the rejection of him Jesus never returned to Nazareth.

### CAPERNAUM:

It is two and a half miles from where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum is called God’s own Town. It is situated along the trade route from Damascus to Mediterranean coast and Egypt. Tolls were collected by the Roman government and it was here Jesus called Mathew.

It was a military center for Romans in Jesus time. The town had about 10000 population at that time.

#### Its importance

1. Jesus asked peter to pay the tribute money from the mouth of a fish. (Matthew 17:24-27)



GREEK ORTHODOX CHAPEL IN CAPERNAUM



**THE HOUSE OF ST.PETER IN CAPERNAUM**

2. Jesus made his head quarters here (Mathew 4:15-16)

3. The centurion's servant was healed (Mathew 8:5-13)

4. Peter's mother-in-law was healed here (Mathew 8:14-15)

5. Greater multi tude was brought for healing (Mat. 8:16-17)

6. A man sick of palsy

was healed (Mat. 9:1-8)

7. A woman with an issue of blood was healed (Mathew 9:20-22)

8. Two blind men were healed. (Mathew 9:27-30)

9. Raising of a ruler's daughter. (Mathew 9:18-19)

10. Healing of the demoniac (Mathew 9:32-34)

11. Capernaum failed to repent so it came under Christ's Judgement. (Mathew 11:23-24)

12. Noble man's son was healed. (John 4:42-54)

13. Jesus "*the bread of life*" discourse (John 6:24-71)

14. The synagogue of Capernaum was built by a Roman centurion. (Luke 7:1-6)

## **BETHLEHEM**

It was an agricultural village. Emperor Constantine built the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem. It was called the holiest city for Christians. In 614 A.D, the Persians invaded and razed all churches. But they spared this church without much damage. Later this church was renovated by Emperor Justinian. In 1333 the Franciscans were permitted to conduct prayers in the church. Then in later years the Church of Nativity and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher were jointly maintained by Franciscans Greeks, and Armenians. The Church of Nativity was built in 335 A.D with 44 columns on either side of the church. It was built on the same cave or "*grotto*" where the birth of Christ took place.



## **THE CHURCH OF NATIVITY IN BETHLEHEM**

### **Its importance**

1. When Rachel died she was buried here after she gave birth to Benjamin (Genesis 35:16-18)
2. Ibzan, the tenth judge of Israel was born here (Judges 12:8-12)
3. The story of Ruth is centered in Bethlehem (Ruth 1:4)
4. David was born here.
5. David was anointed as the king of Israel (I Samuel 16:4)
6. David killed a lion and a bear here (I Samuel 17:34)
7. David tamed his father's sheep here (I Samuel 17:15)
8. David poured out a drink offering here (II Samuel 23:14)
9. Jesus was born here (Luke 2:7)
10. The shepherds worshipped Jesus (Luke 21:5-17)
11. The three wise men Magi, presented Jesus some gifts here (Mathew 2:7-11)
12. King Herod slew innocent baby boys here (Mathew 2:16-18)





**HERODIUM**

## **HEBRON**

The original name of Hebron was “Arba”. Arba was the name of a great man among the people of Arkins tribe. The place was famous for constant wars. There was a city with that name also which latter became Hebron. Hebron is situated at the south west of Jerusalem. The distance between Hebron and Jerusalem is about 19 miles.

### **Its importance**

1. It is also called Kiriath Arba in ancient times. (Joshua 14:15, Joshua 20:7)

2. In Arabic language it is called Elkhail which means friend (Isaiah 41:4)

3. Abraham came here to dwell after he was separated from lot (Genesis 13:18)
4. Hebron was built in 1700 B.C, (Numbers 13:20)
- 5 God appeared to Abraham concerning Isaac’s birth (Genesis 18:1-15)
6. Abraham made intercourse for Sodom and Gomorrah. (Genesis 18:16-33)
7. Sarah died at Hebron but she was buried in the cave of Mechpelah. (Genesis 18:33)  
After her Abraham Isaac Rebecca Jacob, and Leah were also buried there and it was known as the tomb of patriarchs
8. Isaac also lived here for some time (Genesis 35:27)
9. Jacob lived here after the death of Rachel (Genesis 37:14)
10. The spies took a branch of grapes and bananas from Kadesh and went back to their place (Numbers 13:22-23)
11. Joshua captured Hebron when he took the land (Joshua 13:36-37)
12. Caleb received Hebron as an inheritance (Joshua 14:10-15)
13. Hebron was called one of the 6 cities of refuges. (Joshua 20:7)
14. David was crowned as the king of Judah here (II Samuel 21:4)
15. David reigned here for seven and a half years before he became the king of Jerusalem (II Samuel 2:11)
16. Absalom head quarters was here after he rebelled against his father David (II Samuel 15:7-12)
17. The huge Haram sanctuary was built by Herod the great over the cave of Mechpelah

## **WESTERN WALL OR WAILING WALL:**



## **WESTERN WALL**

This is Jerusalem's holiest site and the closest part of the original Structure of God's temple. The western wall is also called the synagogue of the wall. Every day the Jews will come and pray to God by beating their heads to the wall in devotion. After that they put a letter also in the holes of the wall which is like a message to God.

It is said that the wall is 200 feet long and 90 feet high. The upper part of the wall was built by Ottomans, the middle and the lower part was built by King Herod in his time. King Solomon built this God's temple in 1057 B.C, the Ark of Covenant or the Ten Commandments were kept in this temple. But they were destroyed by the king of Babylon in 586 B.C. In 440 B.C, people like Zerubbabel tried to rebuild the temple on the same foundations called second temple. The king Herod renovated the temple and expanded it in 20 BC.

## **THE SEA OF GALILEE:**

It is 13 miles long and seven and a half miles wide. It is 700 feet below the sea level and 200 feet deep. The rabbis used to say that Jehovah created seven seas and the Sea of Galilee is a delightful one. Josephus called it "*the ambition of Nature*".



The Sea of Galilee has five names :

1. Chimerieth (Numbers 34:11, Joshua 12:3)
2. Kimereth
3. Gennesaret (Luke 5:1)
4. Sea of Tiberius (John 6; 1, John 21:1)
5. Sea of Galilee (Mathew 4:18, Mark, 1:16)

The cities surrounding the Lake of Galilee are Magdala, home of Mary Magdalene.

Plain of Gennesaret, Tabgha where Jesus fed 5000 men. Tiberius, Capernaum and the Mount of Beatitude.



## SEA OF GALILEE

### **Its importance**

1. Jesus performs the miracle of the draught of fish (Luke 5:1-11)
2. Jesus stilled the winds and seas (Mathew 8:23-27)
3. Jesus walked on the stormy water to his disciples.  
(Mathew 14:22-33)
4. Swines plunged to death after Jesus healed the Démoniac (Mathew 8:28-34)
4. Jesus promised his disciples in Galilee after his resurrection.

## **THE DEAD SEA:**

The Dead Sea is called the lowest part of the earth. It is about 1294 feet below the sea level. The lowest part in the United States is the Death Valley in California 282 feet below the sea level. The Dead Sea is formed with the water of Jordan River and other small rivers. It is 60 miles long and 13 miles wide. The Dead Sea lies between the Jordan River and the Judea mountain side of Israel. The depth of the Dead Sea is about 1300 feet. The sea has no outlet and it is estimated that 7000000 tons of water flows into the sea, daily and about the same amount of water will be evaporating daily.



### **THE AUTHOR OF THIS BOOK FLOATS ON THE WATER OF THE DEAD SEA HOLDING A BOOK**

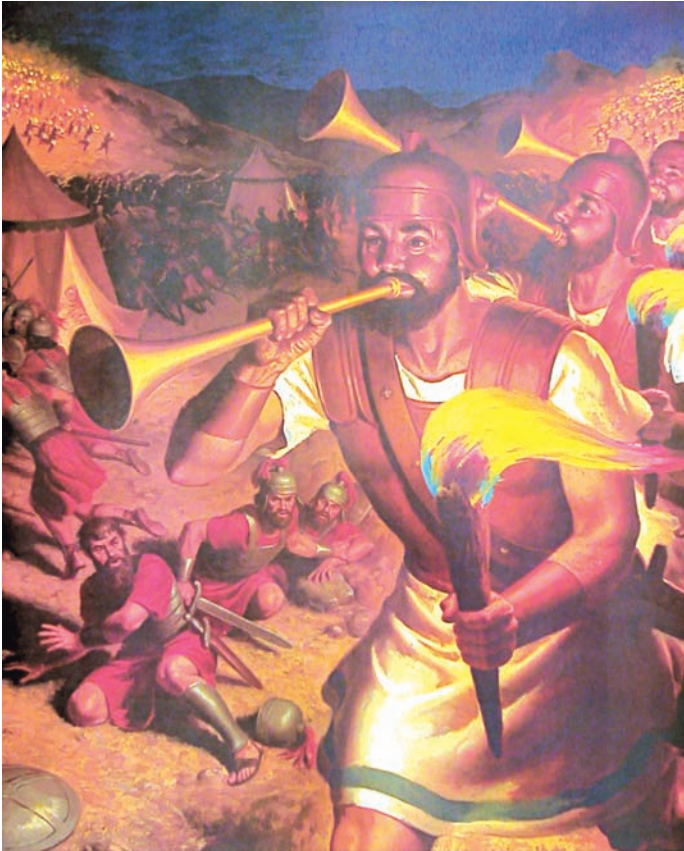
The fresh water that evaporates daily may have salinity and the mineral content of 30 percent in the water. The salt Content is 7 percent. Sodium and Gomorrah existed at the lower end of the Dead Sea, called the tongue. It is also called the Salt Sea. (Genesis 14:3)

The name Dead Sea is suitable to it because no living Organisms will survive in its water. Its geological bottom is full of minerals like sulphur, iodine, and potassium. The Dead Sea is seven times dense as the sea water as 25 percent salt control.

People who take dip in the sea water apply mud to their skin and wait for sometime. Again they take a dip. After that they come out and take bath with fresh water. People float on the water of the sea because of the density. The mud found at the bottom of the sea is medicinal for skin diseases. Actually skin products are commercially produced from the factory which is built near the Dead Sea. Towards the Southern end of the Dead Sea, we can see the pillars of salt emerge from the water, not far away, from the region of Sodom and Gomorrah.

## 8. GIDEON

**G**od liberated Israel from the bondage of pharaoh from Egypt. After that they were living in the Promised Land. But they forgot God and began to marry heathen women and even worshipped their gods. God became angry for their sins. He began to give them to different heathen kings as a punishment. Whenever they repented for their wickedness and cried unto God, He became merciful and saved them from such heathen rulers by appointing some one. This kind of life was continued among Israel for about 200 years.



**GIDEON IN WAR WITH PHILISTINES**

Some people were chosen by God to liberate Israel from the oppression of the heathen kings. Gideon was one among them. When Israelites were ill-treated by the Medianites, God sent an angel with a message to Gideon. The angel came to the house of Joash, father of Gideon and sat under an oak tree. The angel told Gideon that God was with him and he would be the man of mighty valor. Then he asked the angel, if God was with him and with Israel, how the heathen kings like Medianites were troubling Israel. At last, the angel looked at his face and told him to go and save them from the Medianites. Then Gideon said his family was poor, and he was the least man in that house and how he could save Israel. Then God said “*I will be with thee and thou shalt smite*

*the medianites as one man*”. (Judges 6:16) Gideon believed in the words of God. But still he wished for a sign that God came to him and spoke to him all these things.

At the same time he wanted to give some presentation to God. So he asked the angel to wait, and he went in. Then he came out with some burnt offering to God and kept them before the angel. They were consumed by the magical staff of the angel. The angel then departed from Gideon. He was surprised to see the angel of the Lord face to face. Gideon built an altar to God at the place where he met the angel. He called it "*Jehovah shalom*". (Judges 6:24)

In the same night God appeared to Gideon and asked him to throw down the altar of Baal that his father made and also cut down the grove that was near the idol. God further asked him to build an altar of God in the same place. Whatever God asked him Gideon did it. The next day people of the city came to know that the idol of Baal and the grove were destroyed by Gideon. They came in large number to attack him but Gideon told them, if Baal is the real god, he can plead and save himself. And they need not come to do unnecessary nuisance. On that day Gideon was called Jerubaal for his saying "*let Baal plead against him*" because he has thrown down his altar.

This incident made the Medianites to join with the other group like Amlakites and the children of East at a place called the valley of Jezreel to make war with Gideon. Just at that time the spirit of the Lord came upon him. He gathered the other tribes of Israel, through messengers. Gideon got another doubt why God wanted to save Israel only by his hand. To prove God's plan is correct, Gideon wanted to keep fleece of wool completely wet with water, and also the floor around must be wet. The fleece of wool must become dry and the floor remains wet. Then only he said he would believe in God's words. God did accordingly to make Gideon believe Him. He was happy at this. He gathered all his men and pitched his tent beside the well of Harod with 32 thousand men. Then God said the number was too many to fight with Medianites.

To reduce the number God asked him to declare that who ever was afraid of war, should depart from the mount of Gilead. With this order, about twenty two thousand left the place. "*The number is also too much*" God said. He wanted to put a test to the remaining people to reduce the number further. The test is about drinking of water. Some drank water with their tongues and some with their hands. Out of ten thousand men only three hundred men happened to drink water with their hands. And they were selected. So Gideon had to go to war with three hundred men only.

Gideon made these three hundred men as three companies. God was with them. They attacked the Medianites. They were afraid of Gideon and fled from battle field. The Israel ran after them caught two Mediantes princes and killed them.

While persuing the Medianites, the Israel had to cross the river Jordan. They came across a place called "*Succoth*". There the Israel fainted for want of bread. Gideon asked the people of the town to give them some bread as they fainted. But they did not give anything and



spoke negatively. After the battle was over, the Israel realized and repented how much help they got through Gideon with the word of God so, they asked him saying “*rule thou over us both thou thy son and thy son’s son*”. Also thou hast delivered us from the Hand of Medians (Judges 8:22) but Gideon replied “*I will not rule over you neither my son rule over you. The lord shall rule over you*”. (Judges 8:23) These words show us the humbleness of Gideon towards God.

Gideon made a request to all Israel for their ear rings as they were gold. With that gold and the gold ornaments that he collected from the Median kings and from the necks of camels, all that put together and an “*ephod*” was made. He put the *ephod* in that city since then the Medianites never raised their heads before Israelites. They were in complete rest and peaceful for forty years, in the days of Gideon. He died in his old age. He had many wives and concubines. Through them he got seventy sons. One of them, by name Abimelech was born to a concubine killed all his brothers and became the king after Gideon. Today we remember Gideon as there is a book called Gideon Bible.



**MOUNT SINAI (EGYPT)**

# 9. KING DAVID

**B**ethlehem was first mentioned in the Bible in (Genesis 35:16), as Ephrath, in connection with the death of Rachel, wife of Jacob. She was buried here. At the time of the division of the Promised Land, to all Israel, it was given to Judah Tribe by Joshua. Then this place was frequently mentioned during the period of the kings prominently as the birth Place of David. Though Joshua put all Israel in this land, there was a change among them. They did not have a monarch. There was no king in Israel. Added to that, every man was going on his own way in doing things whatever is right in his eyes. For 200 years, their leaders were the judges including Ehul, Gideon, and Samson. The authority of judges came from God and the ultimate task of them, was to see whether the people were upholding the laws of Moses.

But Israelites were not satisfied with that. They were punished by the Philistines very often. At that time, Samuel was the judge reigning the Israel. Samuel did something to Israel to be away from the danger of Philistines. Still they were not happy with what was done by him. They asked Samuel for a king to rule them like the kings of other nations. They declared that they were not happy to be exclusively ruled by God. They wanted a secular leadership based on Social, economic and strong military. The Israel were never happy.

On the Mount of Sinai, and in the wilderness they grumbled for food and lack



**DAVID AND GOLIATH**





**PROPHET SAMUEL WAS ANNOINTING  
DAVID AS THE KING OF ISRAEL**

of proper leadership. They demanded to go back to Egypt. But God repeatedly warned them. God said “*me, they have rejected as king*” so God told Samuel to warn them about the disadvantages of a king and what problems they have to face with the king. Then Samuel gave a prophetic speech which is important in the Bible. He said “a king will take your son to sacrifice him into the battle. He will take your daughters, and make them perfumers, cooks and bakers. He will seize your chosen fields and take a tenth of your grain He will claim your slaves and beasts to burden and put them to work for him. The day will come when you cry out because of the king whom you yourself have chosen and “*the Lord will not answer you on that day*”.

Samuel did not like to have a king to the Israel because the king will not uphold the values of God. If they wanted to have a king then the king must have limited powers. The king could rule the country but he must not dominate over the spiritual life of people. The state and the church must be separated and morality must be observed by the people.

The birth of David was mentioned in the Bible in the first book of Samuel which marks the milestone in the narration. The scholars generously regard the Bible’s first four books Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers as a single unit. The fifth



## **THIS IS CALLED DAVID'S SPRING**

book, Deuteronomy was for its language and style shows that, it was linked with the subsequent books like Joshua, judges, and two books of Samuel and the two book of kings as a second unit known as Deuteronomistic history. Just as Moses was the dominating character, in the first unit, David was the dominating one in the second unit. His name appears more than a thousand times in the Hebrew Bible. Some scholars even supported that Israel's faith should have been called not Judaism (*the kingdom of Judah which David ruled*), but Davidism. By receiving the blessings of the Eternal Kingdom. David also became Messianic forefather to Christianity. Even the Koran honored him as a prophet.. The Bible clearly said that David was "a man after God's heart" but he was also a man of blood. David's story began with King Saul, the first king of Israel. He was a Benjaminite.

After the Israelites settled in the Promised Land each one was assigned a region. But the people of one region tried to over power the other regions and the king was in the control of the central region only. He was unable to control his own country. He became a weak king. So God looked for a worthy king to Israel kingdom. God told Samuel "*I am sending you to a Bethlehemite, Jesse for I have decided on one of his sons to be the king*". Samuel came and selected the eighth son of Jesse by name David. It is said "he is sensible in speech, plays lyre and he has such skills." When King Saul heard the music of the lyre played by David, he



felt happy and the evil spirits went away from Him. He was a younger boy who obtained power over the elders. Like Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. David was also a shepherd boy.

The most iconic symbol of Jerusalem today is the six pointed star known as the “Star of David”. The Star of David was adopted for Israelis in blue color flag. It was to evoke Jewish prayer shawl. The blue color had its historical importance. When God gave the Ten Commandments on a stone, it was a blue sapphire.

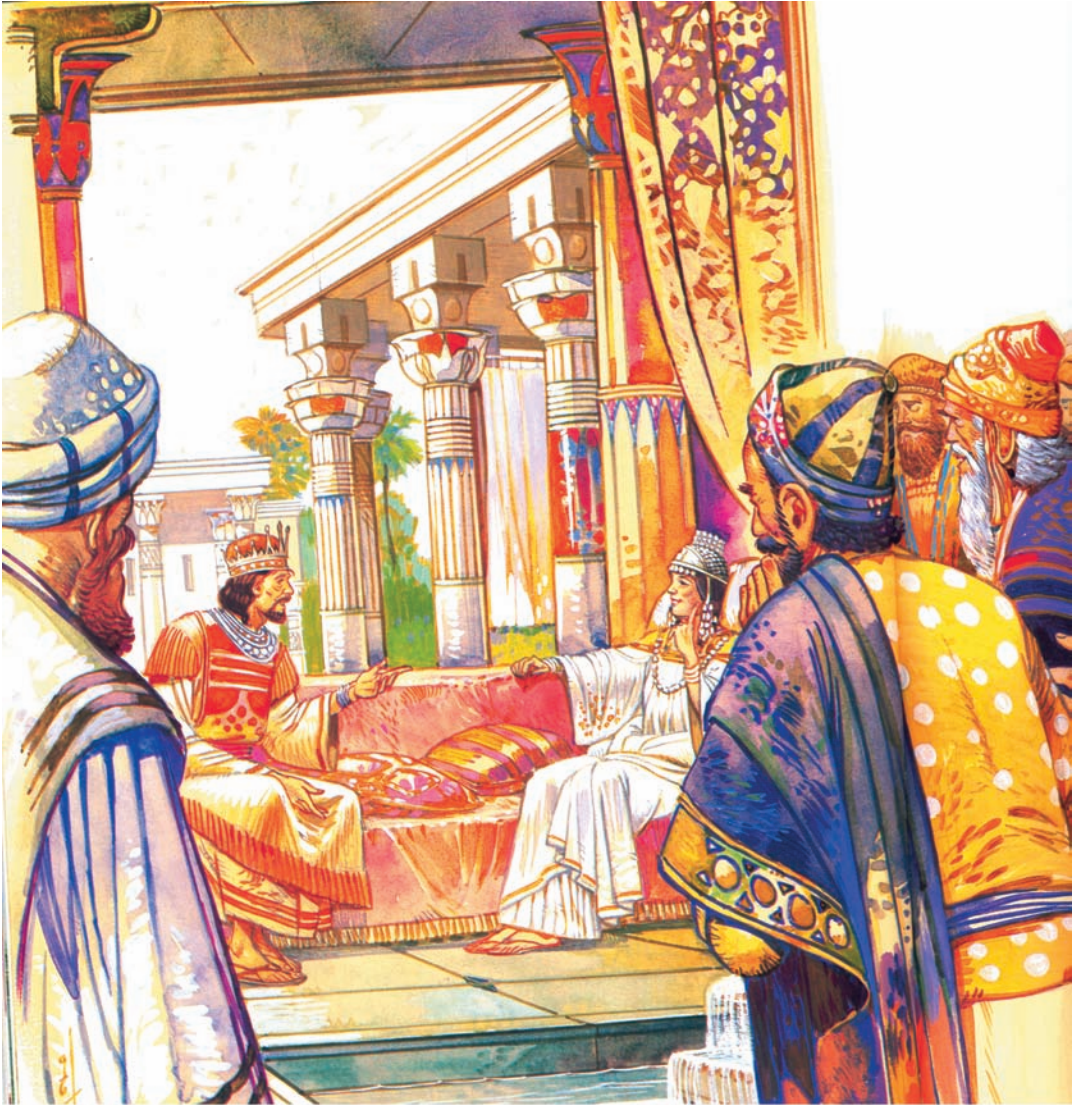
Goliath was nine and a half feet tall. He wore a bronze breast plate and a helmet. Their weight was about 125 pounds. The weight of the javelin he used was about 15 pounds. When David went near him with a few stones and a sling, he laughed at him. He said “*am I a dog?*” to come to me with stones? For that David’s reply was one of the most memorable passages in the Bible. He said “*you came against me with sword, spear and javelin but I came against you in the name Of God*”. Both advanced and David hit him with a stone by using a sling The stone touched his forehead and went into the skull. Goliath fell down and died immediately. Then David cut his head and brought it to Jerusalem. The Bible had a new savior prince. David.



## TOMB OF DAVID

# 10. KING SOLOMON

Solomon was the son of great King David. He became the King at the age of twenty. He went to Gibeon, a Holy place, to pray to God with burnt offerings for his blessings. God appeared to him in a dream. God said “ask of me what ever I am to give you”. He asked for



**KING SOLOMON WITH THE QUEEN OF SHEBA**



wisdom to rule his people Israel but God felt happy at his request as he did not ask wealth or any thing. So he granted him wisdom and wealth thereby he became the richest and the wisest king on the earth. People from different parts of the earth visited him for his wisdom, and appreciated him. One of such was Queen of Sheba. He had seven hundred wives and 300 concubines. Most of them were heathens from different tribes. Though God blessed him abundantly, he neglected God because of his heathen wives. He became almost a heathen king which made God angry with him. There were some reasons for the anger of God.

1. He took only 7 years for the construction of the temple of God in Jerusalem. But he had taken 13 years to build the royal palace, especially, for his heathen wife, the daughter of Egyptian king.

2. He constructed even heathen temples at Baalbeck, the place of Roman gods and goddesses to please his heathen wives.

3. His father King David repented and cried for the sin he had done in his life, when he took Bathsheba, the wife of a military officer as his wife. But there was no such repentance in King Solomon for his blunders

4. He also made sacrifices to heathen gods and goddesses

All these events made God punish King Solomon. The punishment was the division of

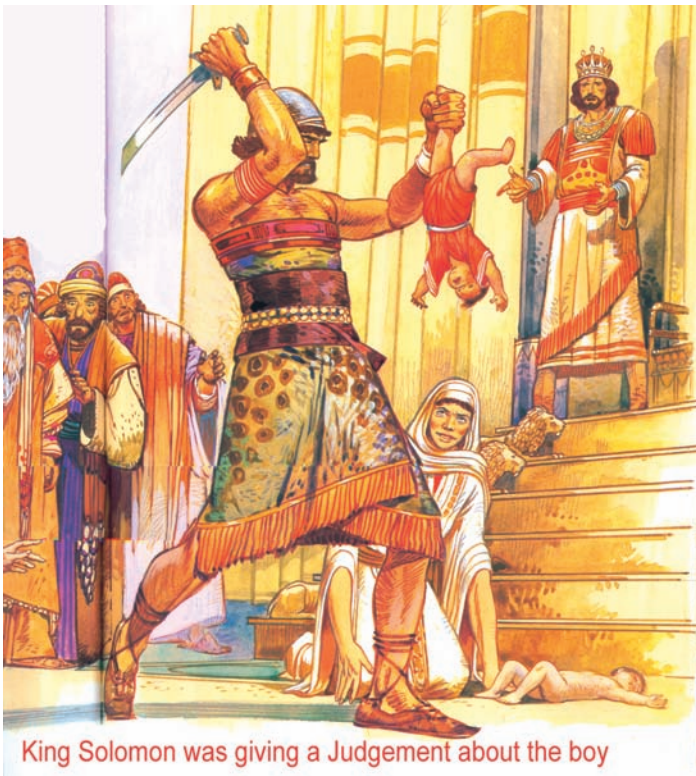
Israel kingdom into two parts. God sent a prophet by name “Ahijah” to the king to tell the news.

Accordingly in 922 B.C, the kingdom was divided as:

1. The Eastern kingdom of Israel with ten tribes. For this kingdom, Jeroboam became the king

2. The Southern kingdom of Judah with two tribes and for this Rehobom, the son of Solomon became the king.

These changes took place only after the death of King Solomon. **The division of Israel kingdom into two parts was an important event in the Jewish history.**



King Solomon was giving a Judgement about the boy

# 11. DANIEL COMES TO JUDGEMENT

**J**ehoakim was ruling the kingdom of Judah. In his third year of reign Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came in 586 B.C, and besieged Jerusalem. As it is said in the Bible, the Lord himself gave Jerusalem into his hands as a punishment because the Israel forgot their God completely. The king razed the city and took some vessels also from God's temple to his temple in Shinar. Along with all that the king took some people as captives. Among such captives there were Daniel, Shadrach Meshach and Abednego. The king kept them under the care of eunuch captain. He asked Eunuch to select some young men who must be the children of kings or from princes families and who must have wisdom and Knowledge to remain in the King's palace. The king wanted them to learn certain things through teaching so that they could be used for different purposes in the royal palace.

The eunuch selected the above four young men. The king called Daniel with some other name Beltshazar. God gave them wisdom knowledge and understanding capacity and to Daniel in particular the understanding of dreams and visions. When they were brought to the king after some time for testing they proved themselves ten times better than the King's own people like musicians astrologers etc. The king was happy at their Progress.

In the second year of his reign, the king dreamed a strange dream. He became restless. He then called all the wise men



**SHADRACH, MESHACH AND ABEDNEGO  
IN THE FIERY BURNING FURNACE**



musicians and astrologers to interpret his dream. While asking them to answer his dream he put a condition also that if they could not answer his dream correctly, they would be cut into pieces, including their wives and children. Their houses too shall be made dung hills. As nobody answered his dream they were afraid of the King's punishment.

Daniel some how came to know this through eunuch captain and requested the king to wait for some time and not to punish anybody. He prayed to God sincerely and got the answer for the dream of the king. Daniel came to him and answered the dream. The king was happy for that Nobody from his kingdom could reveal that properly because only God from heaven could reveal the secret.

The dream of the king was a terrible image stood before the king with gold head; breast and arms silver, belly and thighs of brass and the legs were iron and part of feet were iron and clay. A stone happened to hit the leg of that image. With that the image fell and became many pieces. Then the stone became a big mountain and Spread the whole earth. The dream was cleared by Daniel. He said God made him king of kings to rule the whole earth. God gave him

power, strength and glory and the king could control everything. So the king was the head of gold. After him came another inferior kingdom to him. Then the third kingdom of brass would come which would rule the earth and the fourth kingdom would be as strong as iron.

God of heaven shall establish another kingdom which can never be destroyed like them. The king believed Daniel whole heartedly. He fell on his face and worshipped him. He said that Daniel's God is the God of all Gods and the Lord of all kings and the revealer of all secrets. The king then made Daniel a great man... He gave him good gifts. He made him the ruler of the province of Babylon.



**DANIEL IN THE DEN OF THE LIONS**

He made him chief of the governors and above all the wise men of Babylon. But Daniel was not an ambitious man. He did not accept the offerings of the king.. He requested the King to keep his three friends in charge of those affairs of the province. But Daniel remained at his original post as the king's gate man.

The king recognized the wisdom of Daniel. After some time the king made a golden image of three score cubits height (about 90 feet) and width about 6 cubits about 9 feet. Then the king invited all people to attend the dedication function in Babylon. And the king put a condition that all should fall to the ground and worship that image when the music is heard.. If anybody violates the orders and does not worship, he shall be thrown into the burning Furnace. All people who attended the function worshipped the image. But the three Hebrew young men Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego did not worship as they were Jews.

The king came to know this news. He became angry and ordered for immediate action against them. Accordingly they were thrown into the burning furnace. The next day the king became anxious to find out what must have happened to them. To his surprise, he saw four men walking in the fire unhurt and the form of the fourth one was like the son of God. (Daniel 3:25)

The king called them out of fire. He saw them in perfect condition. Then he commented "*blessed is your God who sent his angels to save you*". The king made a declaration saying anybody says against their God, they will be cut into pieces and their houses made into dunghills. Because there is no other God who can do such great things like saving people. The king promoted them to higher positions. Then the king dreamed for the second time.

In that dream the king saw a tall tree almost touching the heaven. And all living creatures were taking shelter under the tree. Then a watcher, a holy man from heaven came down. He made a loud cry and began to cut the branches. Then the fruits and leaves spread into all directions except the stump. The king called Daniel to answer that dream also.

Daniel said the King's greatness reached unto heaven as the powerful king. Now the Most High in heaven would throw him out of his palace and beasts would come and live in it. God wanted to give his kingdom to whom so ever he liked. Daniel asked the king to accept his interpretation and stop doing anymore sin and he also advised the king to be righteous to be merciful towards the poor and by that he could be peaceful.

But nothing happened to him for twelve months. He became proud of himself and said he was still in the royal palace in Babylon. He also thought the words of Daniel did not work on him. While he was talking like that just at that movement a voice came from heaven saying "*thy kingdom is fallen. It is departed from thee.*" (Daniel 4:31) The king will be driven out by men and he will eat grass like oxen. The beasts will live in the palace. The king must know the most high will rule the kingdom of man. The king remembered the truthful statement of Daniel how it happened exactly. He realized and repented. He praised the most high in heaven and said "*he is the real ruler*".

Through this information we could understand Nebuchadnezzar, who accepted and promised our heavenly father greater than any other God.

### **BELSHAZZAR:**

After the death of the king Nebuchadnezzar, his son Belshazzar, became the king of Babylon. He was a happy go lucky fellow. He wanted to enjoy his life mostly in drinking wine in the vessels his father brought from the temple of Jerusalem.

One day in such a conditions, he found some strange writings on the wall which troubled him a lot. As his father did he called all wise men from his kingdom to tell the meaning of the writing. But nobody answered him. Then the king came

to know about Daniel through his wife. Immediately he was called for. He saw the writings on the wall. He said that the highest God gave his father a kingdom, majesty, glory, and honor. Because of these things every nation respected his father. But he could not keep it properly. He became proud of himself. Then the highest God removed him from the kingdom. Daniel also said that his father was not humble before God and raised his head against him.

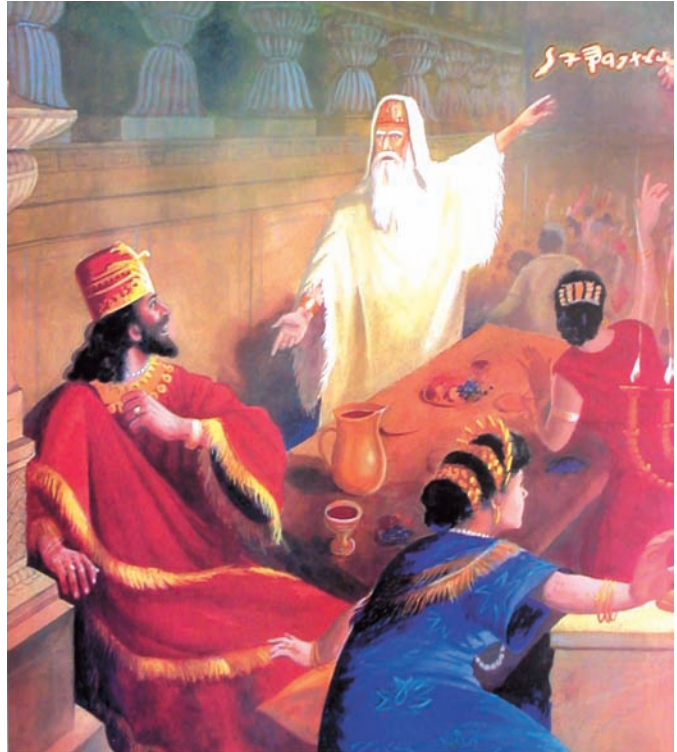
Daniel explained the meaning of “*mene mene take Upharsin*” mentioned by the King as:

Mene = God hath numbered his Kingdom and finished it

Take = thou art weighed in the balance and are found wanting

Peres = thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians

Belshazzar was very much impressed by the interpretation of Daniel. At his command the people honored him. They clothed Daniel with a scarlet and put a golden chain round his neck. After this honor the king made a proclamation that Daniel should be the third ruler of the kingdom. In the same night Belshazzar, King of Chaldea’s was slain and Darius, the Median became the king.



**GOD'S JUDGEMENT WRITTEN ON THE WALL**

Darius divided his kingdom into 120 provinces and over them there were three presidents and Daniel was one of them. He reached almost the highest position in political administration. This could not be tolerated by many other officials in the Kingdom. They planned a plot against him. They wanted to find fault with him some how or other. They got a decree from Darius, that no body should put a petition to his God for 30 days except the king. They knew that Daniel would definitely pray to his god and they were waiting for the opportunity to catch him while praying. They saw Daniel praying.

Daniel did not honor the declaration of the king and began to pray to God three times a day. The king, at the time of declaration, had put another condition, “*if anybody violates the decree shall be thrown into the lions den*”. One day his enemies saw Daniel praying and immediately reported to the king. As he violated the order he was thrown into the lions den. The king did not sleep that night and anxiously waiting to know what must have happened to Daniel. The next day the king went to that place. He was surprised to see Daniel in perfect condition. The lions did not do any harm to Daniel. When king Darius enquired he said God sent his angels and made the lions shut their mouths. The king wondered at this incident. At the same time he felt happy because Daniel was unhurt. He called all the people who were responsible for the incident and threw them into the lions den with their wives and children. The lions had good feast that day.

The king gave a declaration” every dominion of my kingdom men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for He is the living God. And steadfast for ever and his kingdom which shall not be destroyed and his dominion shall be even unto the end. (Daniel 6:26) So Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and in the reign of Cyrus, the Persian king. Altogether he became popular in the reign of four kings. They were 1. King Nebuchadnezzar, 2. King Belshazzar, 3. King Darius and 4. King Cyrus.

Under these kings he enjoyed the highest positions and glorified God with his wisdom and knowledge. As we know wisdom is the gift of God. In his latter days Daniel had two visions of his own. The first vision was about “*four beasts*” And the second one was about ram and goat. Daniel by his skill wisdom knowledge and understanding made those kings to say that Daniels God is greater than any other God and every one should tremble before this God King Solomon prayed to God to grant him wisdom and knowledge to rule his people Israel. But Daniel, spoke to God in his prayers. He confessed his sins and prayed for the sins of Israel. He prayed for the welfare of Jerusalem. He prayed for the betterment of everybody. The Gabriel angel came to Him and spoke “Oh, Daniel, I am come forth to give you skill and understanding”. (Daniel 9:22) we have another man in the Bible like Daniel who was elevated to the highest position. He was Joseph. He won the favor of Pharaoh the king of Egypt. Like Daniel he interpreted the dreams of pharaoh and reached the highest Position in Egypt. He was even called the Father of Egyptians.



# 12. JONAH, A REBELLIOUS PROPHET

The city of Nineveh was built by king Nimrod of Shinar. It became notorious for crimes, adultery and wickedness. God wanted to check the city from such evil activities and chose Jonah the prophet for the purpose He sent a word to Jonah to go to that city and warn the people that they should change themselves from all such criminal activities within 40 days. If they would not do it God would punish them by destroying every thing. Jonah did not want to take the risk of going to Nineveh city with the information. So, he wanted to flee from Tarshish to Joppa. He wanted to escape from God. He found a ship going from Joppa to Tarshish. He bought a ticket and entered the ship. The Assyrians were in full control of political affairs and



**JONAH WAS THROWN INTO THE SEA BECAUSE HE SAID HE WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT TEMPEST IN THE SEA**

Nineveh city was their capital. The population of the city was about one lakh twenty thousand (120,000). It was a heathen kingdom.

According to the genealogy of Noah Assyrians were the descendents of Abraham. The others being Persians Arabs, (Muslims) and Israelites. The message sent by God is: “*yet 40 days Nineveh shall be over thrown*” (Jonah 3:4) Assyria was a powerful kingdom, which became a great

threat to Israel. Since Jonah was a Hebrew prophet, he knew that one day the heathen nation would destroy Israel, and it happened in 722 B.C. So, Jonah was afraid of the heathens and did not go to Nineveh to tell them the message of God. He went in opposite direction to Joppa. He did not regard the word of God. He went to the bottom of the ship and slept there. But God knew the movements of Jonah. He sent a great wind and it turned into a tempest that disturbed the ship.

The mariners thought the ship might break at any time, due to the storm. They realized the situation, and all began to pray to their respective gods. Jonah was at the bottom of the ship without knowing what was going on outside. The captain of the ship came down and found Jonah was sleeping. The captain asked Jonah also to pray to his God as they were in great danger of the tempest.

Finally all decided to cast lots to know who must be responsible for the calamity. The lots fell on Jonah. They concluded that Jonah was responsible for that disturbance. Then they made an enquiry about Jonah. He confessed before them that he was a Hebrew. He was afraid of his God in heaven who asked him to go to the City Nineveh with a message. They then asked him what they should do to avoid the present calamity. Jonah instructed them to throw him into the sea. They did as he said. God put a test to Jonah to repent for what he had done. But he would not keep his children suffer. When Jonah repented for his sin, he already arranged a whale to swallow Jonah and keep him for 3 days in its belly. The whale came out of the water and vomited him in a dry place on the third day.

Then God asked Jonah for the second time to go to Nineveh and preach them. He agreed to do so. He went and told the people that they should repent and change their way of life within 40 days. There was an immediate response to the preaching of Jonah. It was the biggest revival in the history as we see in the Bible. The entire population of Nineveh, from the highest king to the lowest servant put on sack cloth. They even remained in fasting and repented. The king ordered the animals also not to eat or drink. It was really most wonderful and unexpected change in them and that change pleased God. He refused to take any action against the people as God saw the heathen king too changed himself to worship God.

So the book of Jonah reminds us what kind of God we have. God loves us and is merciful towards his children and is slow to anger. Their repentance really pleased God but not Jonah. He wanted God to wipe out the Assyrians from earth because they were the perpetual enemies to Israelites. Perhaps Jonah did not realise that they were the seed and children of Abraham, the father of Hebrews. So, God showed mercy on them instead of destroying them. In this context we can understand the revengeful nature of Jonah. Though God said “revenge is mine”. God also repented at the good nature of the people of Nineveh. He withdrew his plan of destroying them. This made Jonah angry with God.

He ran from God because he knew that God is gracious merciful, and deep loving. In hot temperament Jonah left God and remained in a booth made for him. He lingered in the city for a few days with the hope that God would change his mind about the people of Nineveh. It was really very hot at that time. So God provided some creepers to give him shade. He was happy on that day. Then the next day God sent warm weather to wither the creeper. He wanted to test the patience of Jonah. The heat of the sun made Jonah more curious on the plant because it was withered away.

Then God asked him *“is it right for you to be angry with the plant?”* Jonah replied *“it is right for me to be angry with the plant even to death.”* Jonah felt compassion for the plant that helped him to feel comfort. . In the same way God felt compassion towards the people of Nineveh who for many years they scorned and blasphemed God. They did many evil things against God. Their wickedness, adultery, crimes and every thing was gone with one stroke of repentance. Now Jonah himself was talking about the nature of God. Jonah wanted judgment about the people of Nineveh.

God wanted mercy. Jonah supported death for them because they were heathens, and they must be completely destroyed. But God championed life for the people of Nineveh and God won the game. God said that he was justified in sparing the Nineveh city from destruction. Which has 1, 20,000 population. They were innocent and humble. The book of Jonah is one of the smallest of the books in the Old Testaments. It tells about God’s concern for all people including the heathens. They were hated by Hebrews for many years for their cruelty and political domination. Through the story of Nineveh city we can understand that Jonah is a hot tempered and rebellious prophet.



# 13. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RIVER JORDAN

The sources of the river for the water are the foot of the “Hermon Mountain” probably the melting snow at the top of the mountain and other small rivers near by. The river is about 1700 feet above the sea level. In a distance of 12 miles, it drops down, to the sea level, at the “Lake of Hula”. This decent continues for six miles, until it enters the Sea of Galilee which lies about 682 feet below the sea level. Although the distance between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea is only sixty five miles because of many twists and turns, the distance became two hundred miles between them. The river is normally between 100 to 200 feet wide. But the figure may change at the time of floods.

## **Its importance**

1. Joshua passed through that river to Canaan with the Ark of Covenant. (Jos. 3:13-17)
2. Elijah smote the water. He and Elisha crossed the river. (II Kings 26:8)
3. Naaman was healed of his leprosy in that water. (II Kings 5:10-14)
4. Elisha made the axe head swim in the water. (II Kings 6:4-7)
5. John the Baptist ministered and baptized in that river. (John 1:19-28)
6. John baptized Jesus (John 1:29-34)



**ONE OF THE BAPTISING PLACES IN THE RIVER JORDAN**

The river Jordan is more important than any other like the Dead Sea or Red sea or the Sea of Galilee in the Bible. This river is mentioned in the Bible six times in the first book of Genesis alone and many times till Jesus took baptism, in the New Testament.

God told Joshua that His servant Moses was dead and asked him to lead Israel towards the Promised Land. God further said *“as I was with Moses, I shall be with you, be not afraid and be not dismayed. I shall never fail thee where ever you go, I shall be with you”*. Then Joshua took forty thousand army to attack the city of Jericho. He had to cross the River Jordan. (Joshua 1:5)

He marched with them and the Levite priests carried the Ark of Covenant. The river was full due to harvest season. As soon as the priests touched the water with their feet and the Ark of Covenant, the water was separated like the Red Sea. They crossed freely as if they walked on the dry land. God again spoke to Joshua saying *“Today, I shall magnify thee before all Israel so that they can know as I was with Moses I shall be with you”*. (Joshua 6:7) Then God asked for a sign. God told Joshua to select one man from each tribe to take a stone from the bottom of the river, and keep it before their tents, as a memorial for their children and their children to tell about the wonder of the river Jordan.

## **ELIJAH:**

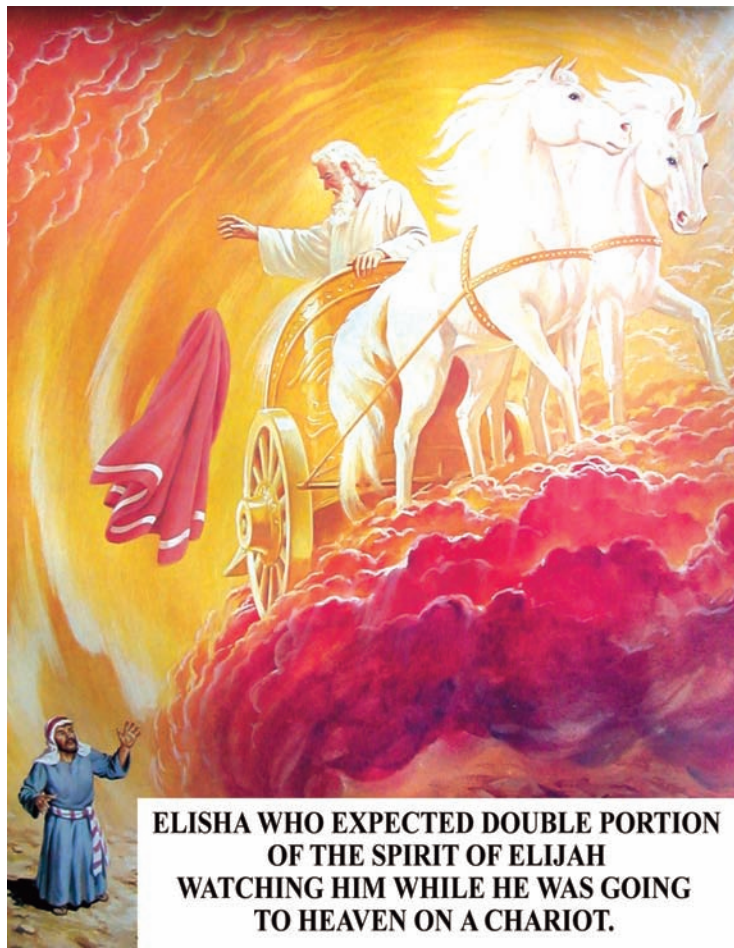


**THIS IS THE CHALLENGING TEST TO ELIJAH BEFORE 450 HEATHEN PRIESTS TO PROVE THAT OUR GOD IS THE REAL GOD**

Elijah may be called one of the greatest prophets. We know how he was fed by ravens, and two times by an Angel. Before he was taken to heaven by God on a chariot in a whirl wind. Elijah went with Elisha and asked him to stay at Gilgal. But Elisha replied he wanted to follow him where ever he would go. So they went to Bethel and from there to Jericho. The sons of priests told Elisha that his master was going to be taken to heaven by God. From there they went to the river Jordan and about fifty sons of the priests followed them and stood at a distance.

Elijah took his mantle wrapped it and smote the water and the water was divided into two. They walked through the river as if they walked on the dry land. (II Kings 2:8) After they crossed the river Elijah asked Elisha

what he could give to him before he would be taken to heaven. Elisha asked him *"the double portion of the spirit to be upon Him"*. Elijah felt that he asked for a hard thing. Even then he said, when Elisha sees him going to heaven, it shall be so unto him if not it shall not be so. As



**ELISHA WHO EXPECTED DOUBLE PORTION OF THE SPIRIT OF ELIJAH WATCHING HIM WHILE HE WAS GOING TO HEAVEN ON A CHARIOT.**

they still went on talking together, a chariot of fire and the horses of fire appeared and parted them. Elijah went up by a whirl wind to heaven then Elisha cried helplessly *"my father, my father"* and the mantle of Elijah fell up on him.

### **ELISHA:**

Elisha took that mantle and stood before the river Jordan. Like Elijah Elisha also smote the water of the river and said *"where is the Lord God of Elijah?"* the water was separated and made the way. Elisha walked on the dry land and finally reached Jericho. In that city, he changed the dirty water into fresh drinking water. It is called even to day *"Elisha spring in Jericho"*

### **NAAMAN:**

Naaman was the captain of the host of Syrian King. He was a mighty man of valor but was a leper. His companies went for a war and brought some people as captives from Israel. From those captives, a young girl spoke to the wife of Naaman. She told her that there was a prophet in Samaria who could heal her husband's leprosy. So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood before the house of the prophet Elisha. The prophet could understand the cause of his coming from a distance and sent him a messenger saying that he should go and wash in the river Jordan seven times, and his flesh would come and he would be clean. (II King 5:10) But Naaman got angry because he thought the prophet would come to him and





**NAAMAN WAS TAKING DIP IN THE RIVER JORDAN  
ON THE ADVICE OF ELISHA**

touch him in the name of his God and say something about his healing. He also said that there were rivers in Damascus with better water than the water of Jordan.

The servant advised him to honor the words of the prophet. Naaman immediately went to the River Jordan and took seven dips. As the man of God said a new flesh came to him as the flesh of an innocent child. He was clean. He was very happy at this change and came to the prophet with some gifts. But Elisha did not accept the gifts in the name of God. Then Naaman commented “*there is no God on earth except the God of Israel*”. The Prophet’s servant followed Naaman for some gifts. The prophet came to know it and cursed him with the leprosy of Naaman. When we visited Turkey, Israel and

Palestine, in connection with Holy Land tour, we also took dips two times in the river at different places.

### **What is the importance of the dip?**

When the people take a dip at the time of baptism, it is believed that their sins will be washed away and they will be clean. We may have to observe the following at the time of Baptism.

1. We must be born again
2. We must have pure, perfect and faithful heart

When Christ was taking baptism, the heaven was opened, the Holy Ghost came in the form of a white dove and a voice from heaven said “*thou art my beloved son I am pleased with Thee*”. So let us hope we may also have the same exciting experience in our lives which taking baptism in the river Jordan.



# 14. CHILDHOOD OF JOSEPH AND MARY

## JOSEPH AND MARY:

Joseph's parents were Jacob and Timna and Mary's Joachim and Anna. Both were the children of David. Jacob lived in Bethlehem. When Joseph was two years old, the family left Bethlehem and came to Nazareth. They settled there. Joachim and Anna lived in Jerusalem. They also left their place and came to Nazareth and settled down there. Anna remained barren for a long time. Only Joachim's immense patience and devotion prevented him from giving divorce to Anna for want of children.

Nazareth is called "*the flower of Galilee*". It was only a village at that time. . Anna used to weep for her barrenness. But one day God heard her prayers and blessed her with a child, Joachim was very thankful to God because He answered their prayers and gave them a baby girl. They gave her the name "*Mary*". The parents thought that she was a "*child of God*".

After sometime they also got a son but he was crippled and blind with twisted limbs

Joachim thought that if Mary were to be a boy, he would have been another David or Solomon. She was actually a gift of God to them.

As Mary grew up, she came to know about Joseph and his family who were maintaining carpentry shop at the end of a street. She used to go to bring water through that shop only. Joseph had a friend by name Samuel. He was a business man from Jerusalem. He used to go to all the places around Jerusalem, including Nazareth on business. He developed friendship with Joseph. Joseph used to tell him about the family matters, and there were no secrets between them. It was a custom in Nazareth and surrounding places that a girl should be betrothed at the age of twelve and to be married at 13.

Even at the age of 11 Mary looked very beautiful, and became a center of attraction. A man by name Abner from Nazareth who studied law wished to marry her. Another by name Cleophas the richest man in Nazareth wanted to marry her. But she rejected both of them. The family wanted her to marry Joseph only. Everything went on in favor of Joseph and Mary and their betrothal took place in a synagogue in Nazareth. Many people attended the function some days passed after the betrothal.

God sent his message through Gabriel the angel of God to Mary. It was almost sunset, when she was giving water to her donkey in the stable, an angel came and the light entered through the door and fell on the donkey. It stopped drinking water in surprise. Then followed a voice "*Mary*", she thought that her father was calling her. So she replied 'yes, father'. The voice was heard for the second time. The spirit made Mary close her eyes and listen to what the angel would say.

Gabriel spoke *“I am sent by God who always loves you. He had watched you while you were growing from child hood to womanhood. Now God had a message of great importance. You shall conceive and bear a son. You shall call him Jesus; He would be great and be called the son of God, The son of the most high”*. Then Mary replied *“the messiah?”*. The angel added *“God will give him the throne of his father David and he would reign over the house of Jacob”*. Mary by closing her eyes and by feeling the fur of the donkey listened to all these words from God. But in the Bible, the same angel said *“blessed art thou among women”*. (Luke: 1:28)

Mary then replied *“I am the willing hand maiden of the Lord”*. Then the Holy Spirit fell on her. She trembled for some time as how to tell all that to Joseph. The finger of God also touched Mary. God spoke to her on certain occasions. Really, she is blessed among women

### **ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH**

They lived at *“Ein karem”* (Luke 1:39) a small town. It was 4 miles away from Jerusalem. They were relatives to Mary’s family. So after she was conceived by the Holy Spirit wished to go to them and spend some time. Only her parents knew about the conception. Joseph also did not know about it. It was four days journey from Nazareth to Ein Karem. Elizabeth was also conceived in her old age as God blessed her just six months earlier than Mary. The same Gabriel angel met Zacharias in the altar of the church and gave him the news from God. Zacharias happened to be in the sacred place for he got his chance to burn the incense at the altar. Just at that time the Gabriel angel, appeared to him at the right side of the altar and told him that he would get a son and his name shall be John.

Zacharias could not believe his words, because they were too old to have children. The angel due to his disbelief to the words of God made him dumb and went away. So he came out of the church and could not speak with the people who awaited him



**THIS IS A CHURCH IN EINKAREM WHERE  
IN ZACHARIA WAS THE PRIEST**

All the time Mary spent about two months with her cousin and returned to Nazareth. After she returned home, Joseph came to know about Mary and was disturbed. But the angel came to him in his dream and clarified everything. He was convinced and decided to help

Mary as a foster father because he had a “*gift of faith*”. His mother Timna accepted the conceived boy as a son of Joseph but Mary said “he was the son of God”

## **JOSEPH AND MARY – JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**

The distance between Nazareth and Bethlehem is about 87 miles. The means of transportation, in those days, was donkey only. Mary was full pregnant at that time. It was the time for the people to go to their respective native places for the purpose of the record of census.

Joseph had to go to Bethlehem for he belonged to it. Mary wished to go to Bethlehem with Joseph in such a conditions. She said “I must go to Bethlehem” and “I must go with my husband”. Finally they got ready and travelled to Bethlehem. They took about seven days to reach the place. Bethlehem was a small town at that time. They, at last, found a place at the back of an inn. There were three caves used for keeping the baggage and also they were used as stables for animals.

They settled in one of the caves. The time had come for her delivery. It was a custom in those days that no man should see a woman while she was delivering. So “the son of God and the son of man “came into this world with blood and pain in that cave. When Christ was born, a large number of angels came down from heaven and sang songs in his praise, saying “glory to God in the highest and on the earth peace and good will towards them. “The angels were the first who came and sang songs in celestial language. After two hours of the birth of Jesus the shepherds came who were guided by the star. At that time, they were feeding their sheep on the Jericho Mountains. The star that showed them the way changed its colors from time to

time. The shepherds reached the place and saw the baby Jesus and worshiped him. They brought some gifts also to Christ. They were:

1. Rabbit skins
2. A sack of fig fruits
3. A new born lamb

The next people that visited Jesus were the three wise men called “*magi*”. They came from Persia and Chaldea. They were philosophers, and physicians. They studied about the heavenly bodies, and had great knowledge. They took weeks to reach Bethlehem. They met Jesus and worshipped him. With their knowledge they prophesied that the child would change the history of the world. They also said Jesus would become the king of Jews.



**THE JOURNEY OF  
JOSEPH AND MARY FROM  
NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM**

The Magi brought some gifts to baby Jesus. They were:

1. Jars of precious myrrh
2. Frankincense
3. A ruby and gold in a velvet case

They, at last, advised Joseph and Mary to leave that place as early as possible because of the mad man king Herod. Then they went to their places in a different way as they were also afraid of the beast like man king Herod. The correct birth place is well preserved even today. In the church of Nativity if we go down through the narrow steps, to the underground there is a chapel and there is a small marble altar attached to the wall. There is a hearth with fourteen point star that marks the exact place of Christ's birth. A Latin inscription is there on the star saying "*Here, Jesus Christ was born to virgin Mary*". The fourteen points Silver Star indicates fourteen generations between Jesus and David and also fourteen generations between David and Abraham. The holiest spot in Bethlehem shows the roots between Judaism and Christianity. Both the Jews and Christians believed that the blood of David passes through Messiah. The birth of Christ changed the history of the world. The B.C (before Christ changed to A.D.) Anno Domini in the year of our Lord.

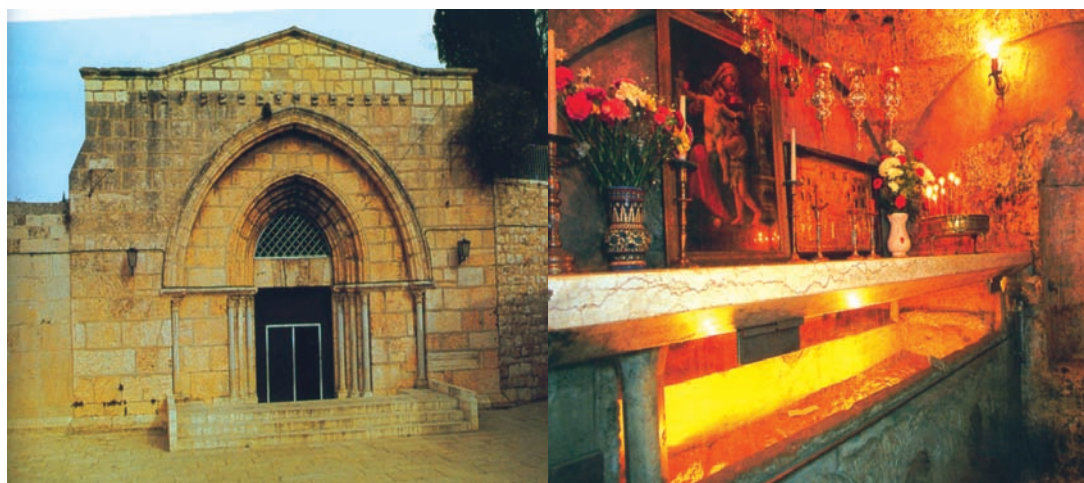


**THIS IS THE EXACT BIRTH PLACE OF JESUS CHRIST WITH FOURTEEN POINTS WHICH INDICATES FOURTEEN GENERATIONS**





**TOMB OF MARY**



When King Herod came to know that the king of Jews was born, he became restless. He thought the three wise men deceived him. So he gave a declaration that all male children in less than two years must be killed in Bethlehem. Joseph and Mary came to know this news and went to Egypt and hid themselves there. Within a short time of his declaration, King Herod died.

According to historical information, the king died in 4<sup>th</sup> B.C. Before Joseph and Mary went to Egypt they took baby Jesus to Jerusalem temple for the presentation before God. It was on the 8<sup>th</sup> day of his birth. There was a man called Simon living in the temple of Jerusalem. He had been in that temple for years. He came and took baby Jesus into his hands. He said that once an angel told him he would see “the Messiah before he dies”. Simon felt very happy because he saw the Messiah before his death.

There was another woman by name Anna, aged about 107 years. She had been a widow for 84 years. She spent all her widow hood in the temple in praying to God and also saw Jesus and felt happy. Thomas, one of the disciples wrote a book “*The Infancy of Gospel of Thomas*” In that book he mentioned some miracles of Jesus in his childhood days. As his foster father was a carpenter, Jesus used to help him now and then. While helping, if he found two wooden pieces in different sizes, he would put them together, and they became equal on all sides without cutting. This is one of the miracles. The other one is he used to make pigeons in his leisure time with mud, and tell them “go”. They flew into the sky as living birds. Jesus went to school regularly in Nazareth. It is said he recited the books of Moses in the school.

Those were the days of hatred among people for foreign rule (Roman rule). The young people in towns and villages hated Romans for their crimes. And the old people were dreaming of the coming of Messiah, to liberate them from the tyrannies of the Romans. He could understand how people were anxiously waiting for Messiah, because he, himself was the Messiah. He also remembered one incident how two thousand Jews were arrested at a time and miserably crucified. In addition to that he heard in schools and public places what people were talking about the Messiah. As Nazareth is on highways, he often met travelers from Asia and Europe. When the travelers talked about ‘nirvana’ he understood it. He was also familiar with Indian Vedic books and some stories from the Mahabharata.



When Jesus was 12 years old, his parents took him to Jerusalem for Passover, festival. It was an important festival for the Jews because it was in the memory of the death of the first male child in Egypt before the people of Israel were liberated from the bondage of Pharaoh. So, the Jews were very particular about this function. They used to conduct prayers for seven days. When they were returning from Jerusalem to Nazareth, they missed Jesus. They returned to the city again and searched for him. They took three days to find him. Jesus was found in Jerusalem temple addressing the people with his wonderful knowledge. The people who gathered in the temple were amazed at his knowledge. He said, *“Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you hoping for nothing. Then you will be called the children of the highest for*



*he is kind even to the unthankful and evil”*. These words were spoken by Jesus when he was 12 years old. When Jesus was between 18 and 30 years of age, his foster father Joseph died. He was growing in age and able to understand the existing problems of the people. He began to think how he could be able to provide joy to the people through searching for truth. He thought that the kingdom of God could be provided through love only. He understood at that age why God sent him into this world .

**CHURCH OF ST.CATHERINE IN BETHLEHEM**

# 15. THE MISSION OF CHRIST

Christ, after knowing the political conditions of his time, how the Jews were ill treated by the Romans, He decided to serve the humanity. But his plan was different. It was not like his foster father's friend Jesus Barabbas who followed violence. Christ wanted to tell the people that they should love God first and then their fellow men for happy living. Just at that time Jesus heard about John the Baptist, his cousin. He was preaching and giving baptism. He used to say to the people about the coming of Messiah. He met John the Baptist for the first time, to take baptism. John was surprised to see Jesus coming to him for baptism. By looking at each other, they understood their mission and also knew that they were doomed men.



WHILE CHRIST WAS  
TAKING BAPTISM A HOLY SPIRIT  
CAME DOWN AS A DOVE

When Jesus was taking baptism, at the age of 30, in the Jordan River, the heaven was opened and the Holy Ghost came down in the form of a white dove and fluttered the wings on Jesus shoulders. Then a voice was heard from heaven saying *"thou art my beloved son. In thee I am well pleased."* (Luke 3:22) John the Baptist sent two of his disciples to know whether he was the same man they were looking for or they had to wait for Messiah. Actually everybody including John the Baptist was anxiously looking for the coming of Messiah. The people came to know later that Christ himself was the Messiah Jesus answered some of the questions put by John's disciples.

Jesus told them that they should inform John what they had seen what they heard about him.

The disciples saw the miracles of Jesus how he healed different people with different diseases. The blind saw, the lame walked, the lepers cleansed the deaf heard and the dead rose. They also saw his attractive preaching to the multitudes and to the poor. Jesus and John knew that they were going to die for a noble cause.

John the Baptist happened to meet Jesus for the second time. He said *"behold him. Who takes away the sins of the world this is the son of God"*. John the



CHRIST WAS HEALING A BLINDMAN



Baptist was six months older than Jesus Christ and he died earlier than Christ. He was beheaded by Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the great. Jesus saw the wonderful work done by John in his limited time. So in appreciation he said the following words *"among those that were born out of women, there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he"*. (Luke 7:28) Both talked about various existing problems for some time, and then departed never to meet again in their life time.

The Church of Beatitudes is built at the place of the mount where Christ gave his sermon. Christ in his sermon on the mount gave to the people some instructions to follow in our Christian way of life. He said *"when you are giving alms, let not your left hand know what your right hand is doing"*. That means we must give our alms secretly. But God sees our alms secretly and rewards us what we deserve. While praying also God wants us to go to a lonely place so that nobody can

hear our prayer and what we are asking for. God knows our needs before our asking. God wants us to seek the kingdom of heaven first and then righteousness. Then the other things follow them. We must be an example to others. We must be strong morally and spiritually. We shall never try to remove a mole from others eye by keeping a beam in our eyes.



**THE CHURCH OF BEATITUDES**

He spoke many things in the Sermon on the Mount but whatever Christ spoke to the people he spoke with authority. And people were surprised of his sayings and wisdom. One day he was traveling in a ship with his disciples. At that time a storm came. All of them were afraid of the situation, and then Christ questioned them about their faith and warned the storm. It was controlled. The disciples questioned among themselves saying what kind of man he was, as the wind and the seas obeyed him. Though the disciples were with Christ all the time they could not understand him properly. The people who heard his sermons surprised of his knowledge.

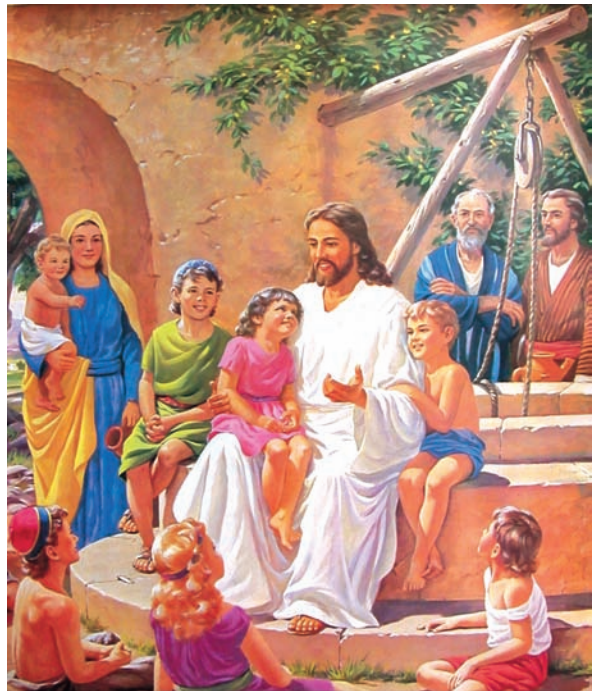
They thought that some supernatural power was speaking, but not the son of man or the son of the carpenter Joseph. Whatever was spoken by him, the people of his native place could not believe him or his greatness. One day Jesus Christ happened to go with his three disciples James, John and Peter to a mountain called Tabor. There appeared to them Moses and Elijah. In their presence Jesus transfigured himself. The appearance of Moses and Elijah and the transfiguration of Jesus Christ were a strange incident to the disciples.

The main work of Christ was to preach the word of God and to heal the sick from various diseases. The disciples observed these two things in Christ and questioned among themselves why they could not do what Christ was doing.

According to Jesus one can achieve any thing in life through “*faith*”. So he said “*if you have a faith of a grain of mustered seed you can remove a mountain from its place*” (Matthew 17:20). Nothing is impossible to man.

When somebody questioned him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? For that Christ simply showed him “a child”. He further said, “*Unless you convert yourself as a child you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven*”.

One must be humble and innocent as a little child. Then a lawyer happened to ask another question “which is the great commandment of the law? Christ said “*thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart with all thy soul and with all thy mind and added love thy neighbor as thyself*” the lawyer could not understand the meaning of Christ’s reference immediately. Christ gave the example of the story of Good Samaritan. We know the story how the Samaritan was called Good Samaritan in the Bible. He happened to help a wounded man on the way between Jerusalem and Jericho. Two men went before him and saw the wounded man. But they did not care for him and went away. Apart from loving our



**JESUS WITH THE CHILDREN**

neighbor, God wants us to be merciful towards others. We should not judge nor condemn but forgive others and God will forgive us “*give and it shall be given to you*”.

God said *“who ever comes to me, listens to me what I said and follows me, he is like a man who builds his house on a strong and deep foundation on the rock and floods cannot do anything to his house because it was on a rock. But he who hears not follows me is like a house built on a loose soil and it would fall when the floods come.”*

Christ told many parables to the multitudes. Among the parables, the story of the prodigal son is really interesting. We know how the younger son took the share of his property from the father and went out of his house. He wandered, went to many places and spent money like water. And he enjoyed life only for some time. When he had no money to spend, no food to eat, he experienced how starvation would be. He ate even bran, the food of the pigs. He repented and cried for his foolishness. He, at last, decided to go to his father with repenting spirit so that his father might pardon him.

When his father saw him he came and embraced him. He felt extremely happy. The father arranged a grand feast for the return of his son. But his elder son grumbled for what was done by his father towards his younger brother. The reference is here we are the prodigal sons and God is our father. What ever mistakes we do in our daily lives, God will forgive us and take us into his arms

One day Christ went to the temple of Jerusalem and found people doing business. He got angry and threw away everything and disturbed them one of them asked Christ with what sign (authority) he was controlling them. Then he said *“destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it”* and another man said that King Herod had taken 46 years to rebuild this temple and *“how can he do it in three days”*? Another Pharisee by name Nicodemus got a doubt. He was a highly educated man among his community. His doubt was *“how can a man be born again”*? When he already became old, *“can he enter the mother’s womb for the second time”*? Christ replied *“man must be born of water and spirit to enter the kingdom of heaven”*. God loved this world so much that he sent his only begotten son to save the people from sin.

So whoever loved him and believed in him shall have ever lasting life (John 3; 16)

Among the miracles Christ did, raising of Lazarus from death is the most striking one, because it touched Christ very much. So it is said *“Jesus wept”* (John 11:35)

Jesus wept two times in his life:

1. At the time of the death of Lazarus
2. When he looked at Jerusalem and God’s temple from the Mount of Olives he prophesied that they would be destroyed without stone upon the stone.

And this happened after forty years of the death of Christ. It was done by Roman king Titus in 70 AD and Christ died in 30 AD according to historical information.



The miracle of the raise of Lazarus from death made some Jews even to kill Lazarus again but made more Jews to believe in Christ. Christ did the miracle of feeding 5000 men with five loaves of bread and two fish near the Sea of Galilee.

His sermons attracted the multitudes. Many people accepted Christ and Christianity. It was like harvest time. So he made another 70 disciples. He made two persons as one group and sent them to villages with empty hands. He



**THE TOMB OF LAZARUS IN BETHANY**



**CHRIST WAS PRAYING WITH AGONY  
IN THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

proposed eight important rules for them to follow. They are called “*beatitudes*” which means beautiful attitudes. We can find them in the 5th chapter of St. Mathew book. According to Christ’s plan, they have to go to the houses and say peace be to this house (Luke.10:5) as they are going to their houses as lambs before wolves. Christ used this method also to spread the word of God even to the remote places.

When he was going to be arrested by the Roman soldiers, at the instigation of the high priest, he told his disciples “*love one another*”. Some disciples expressed their desire to see his father. Then Christ said “*if you see me it means you have seen my father. He is with in me. I am the image of the invisible God, I am in the father and the father is in me.*”

Christ said that in his absence he would send a comforter, to them from the father to guide them that is called “*The holy spirit*”. He further said “*I am the wine and you are the branches.*” Christ asked God in his prayers to sanctify his disciples through his truth as *thy word is truth.* (John 17:17)

It was a custom in those days that the dead bodies should not be kept on the cross even on Sabbath day. Either they must be taken away or their legs must be broken. Accordingly the





**THIS IS THE THIRTEENTH STATION IN THE WAY VIA DOLOROSA**





**THE GARDEN TOMB**



Roman soldiers came and broke the legs of the other two men. When they came to Jesus he already died, then his body was taken away by Joseph of Arimathai who was a secret disciple of Jesus Christ. He took the permission of the Pilate to take away the body of Christ.

Nicodemus also joined Arimathai with some spices. It was Mary Magdalene who went first to the tomb of Jesus. She did not find him first and so she worried. But Christ already arose from the dead and stood at a distance in the garden. He saw her and called her by name *Mary*.

She was excited at this and called Christ "*rabbi*" which means master. Then Christ said "*touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my father*". After he rose from the dead, Christ met the disciples three times and the third time he ate bread with them. (John 21:12-13)

It was also said he was found in a village called *Emmaus* which was about 7 miles from Jerusalem.

According to historical evidence, Christ was born in 5 B.C. and the king Herod who gave declaration at the time of Jesus' birth that all male children below 2 years should be killed in Bethlehem died in 4 B.C. itself. In the same way Christ's death was mentioned as he died on Friday 7th April at 4 PM in 30 A.D.

The prophets in the Old Testament mentioned 129 times of the coming of Messiah. His second coming was mentioned 329 times. This figure shows that the second coming is more certain. Jesus said that "*I will come again*" (John 14:3). John in the book of Revelation said "*behold he is coming with clouds*" (John 1:7)

All the prophets of the old testaments happened to say 129 times about the coming of Messiah, 500 years before he was born. If we look at the face of Jesus we find only love, and mercy but not anger or hatred. He is called "*the Greatest prophet of all prophets*". In his three and half years of spreading God's message, he prophesized more than any other prophet in the Bible. His prophecies were numbered by the following apostles:

1. Mathew recorded 39 prophecies
2. Mark recorded 40 prophecies
3. Luke recorded 35 prophecies
4. John recorded 60 prophecies.

These figures show that Christ is unparalleled to anyone in prophecy. He said prophecy about his disciples especially about John that he would write a book called "*The Book of Revelation*" with a vision in his old age

It is the resurrection of Christ that made Christianity flourish. If he had not risen from the dead "*would anybody attend the church at all?*" If we really believe in Christ that he died for our sins we must pray to him in the following way "*O! God I am a sinner. I believe that you died for me on the cross. Now I receive you as my Lord and savior. I completely surrender myself to you. Amen.*"



# 16. JESUS - BARABBAS

**I**t is very interesting to know the history of the man who was freed in the place of Jesus. His real name was Samuel, who later became Jesus - Barabbas. Samuel was born in Jerusalem. He was a good business man. He used to go to all the places around Jerusalem on business. He happened to go to Nazareth also. His regular visit to Nazareth resulted in meeting Joseph, the foster father of Jesus. He became a good friend to Joseph. By that time Joseph was already engaged to Mary, the virgin mother of Jesus. Samuel used to be a good advisor to Joseph. There were no secrets between them. So their friendship continued for some years. When Jesus was born in Bethlehem his parents came to Jerusalem on the 8<sup>th</sup> day celebration to offer worship. Samuel also came to that function.

As time went on, he had been watching the movements and ill treatment of Jews by the Roman government. Samuel saw even killing of many Jews without reason. Just at that time, the young people who were dissatisfied with the cruel nature of the Romans, forced into the rebel groups. The Romans came to know that they had caught about 2000 revolutionists at a time and Samuel was one of them. They wanted to kill all of them on the cross.

Samuel somehow escaped from them and came to his friend Joseph in disguise. He told him about the political conditions and the cruel nature of the Roman government under King Herod. He also told him that he stopped his business and became a revolutionist. Since then he changed his name from Samuel to Jesus Barabbas in the presence of Joseph.

Along with Samuel, many young people from Nazareth, Galilee and Samaria joined the revolutionary group. As time went on, he became a notorious thief, got, caught, and imprisoned by the Roman government. On the Passover day, every year, it was a custom to free one criminal from punishment. This time, the high priests like Anna and Caiaphas planned for the crucifixion of Christ and free the criminal, Barabbas. Mary recognized Jesus Barabbas as Samuel, a close friend of her late husband, Joseph.

# 17. KING HEROD

About 400 years after the construction of the temple of Jerusalem by King Solomon, the king of Babylon Nebuchadnezzar happened to destroy the city Jerusalem and the temple completely. This happened in about 586 B.C. In the first century B.C king Herod came and renovated God's temple along with other cities. He was neither a Jew nor a Roman, but a circumcised Arab from "Ashkelon tribe". Though he built the God's temple he was not allowed into it. He was a great warrior, but a cruel king. Samuel, a close friend of Joseph, gave a clear picture of King Herod. According to his statement people were terribly afraid of this king even to utter his name. So when they talked among themselves they used a code name "RebNaaman".

He was more than a beast even to shame the tiger. But still he was a brilliant leader and powerful military general. He had a ghastly sister, who was like himself in all things. Her name was Salome. He was 59 years old when Christ was born. He had 9 wives and some concubines. His activities were too many. He even killed his own wife and two sons for no reason. He was a mad man. Joachim, father of Mary gave his own statement about King Herod. He said the king was a monster. He was once feasting with his concubines while 800 Jews were crucified at a time. People were slaughtered like animals in his time. In those days there was a joke about him. "*Better to be born as a pig than the son of King Herod*".

When Christ was born as the king of Jews, he was upset by the news and sent captains to all cities in search of Joseph's family. When they could not find them he gave a declaration that all male children below the age of two years should be killed in Bethlehem. In his last days he realized that nobody would weep for him in his kingdom if he dies. So he had a master plan. He arrested about 200 Jews and imprisoned them. The idea behind their arrest was that after the death of the king those Jews would be killed one after another. While their family members would be weeping over their deaths, the other people might think that they were weeping for the death of their king. And the king died after a few days. Then the soldiers started killing them who were put in the prison. After some of them were killed, the death of the king was announced. So the mourning of the Jewish women and their children over the death of their men coincided with the death of the king.

People who saw it might think there they were weeping over the death of King Herod. He ruled Judah for 37 horrible years. People experienced hell in his regime. The people commented about the king by saying, "he stole the throne like a fox". He ruled like a tiger and he died like a dog. Only after his death Joseph, Mary and Jesus returned from Egypt to Nazareth. According to historical evidence, King Herod died in 4th B.C as Christ was there before his death.

It is said that Christ was born in 5th B.C but not on the day we observe today. The king made many constructions in his time among them, Masada rock fortress, was one. It was near the Dead Sea. It was very strong with narrow and snake like steps, very difficult for the enemies like Romans and Greeks to enter.

# 18. MASADA

**M**asada is to the Israel what Alamo or Pearl Harbor to America. It is a symbol of dynamic leadership and stalwart defense in the face of insurmountable odd certain death.

Masada is half a mile long, 220 yards width. It is a rock fortress. It is near a deep valley 1320 feet below the sea level. It appears to be the lowest part of the earth. Masada is also spelled as “Massada”, in the Bible. (Samuel 24:22 and Chronicles 12:8). David fled from the threat of the jealous king, Saul who tried all means to kill him. David and his 600 men went up to the *strong holds*. The word “*strong holds*” is from the Hebrew word “*metsede*”, which means Masada.

This place became important and popular at the time of King Herod who ruled in first century B.C. He was a great builder. He built Caesarea Samaria and Jericho. He also established a winter palace in Masada. In addition to it he built 18 feet high wall around this rock fortress with 38 towers and each one with 75 feet height. After construction of the wall, it became impossible to the people especially to the Greeks and Romans to enter.

## **MASADA HEROISM AND TRAGEDY:**

When Jerusalem was seized and destroyed by Titus in 70 A.D, the rebellious Jews took shelter in this fortress. The impossible task of attacking and destroying this fortress fell on the



**MASADA THE ROCK FORTRESS  
BUILT BY KING HEROD**

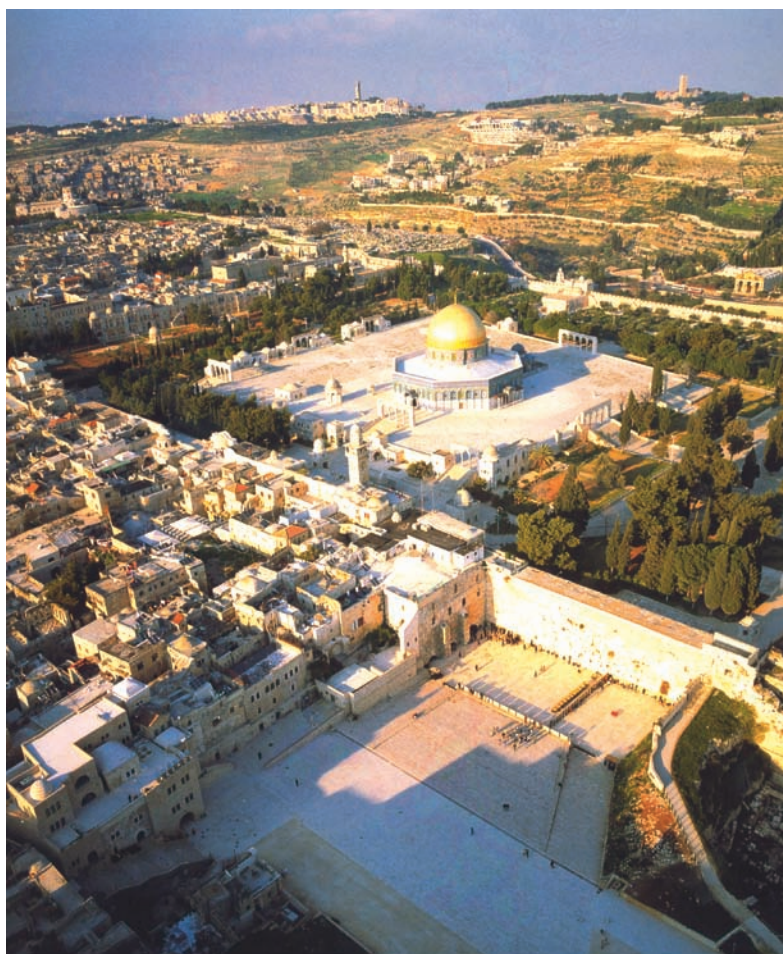
Roman General  
“Flevious salva”

He seized the fortress for three years, 70 to 73 AD. But the general became unsuccessful to go inside and catch the outlaw Jews and drive them away. The Romans tried every device, but in vain. They tried through rock bombardment



battering rams flaming touches seize machines and so on. But of no use. Then, they under took the task of building the earthen ramp to reach the zealots in side. We can see even today how the Romans moved tons and tons of earth in order to build the ramp. The building of ramp is an amazing feat to the Romans. And they were almost at the door of the zealots. The Jews came to know that the Romans had reached their place. Then their leader ‘Eliezer Ben Yair’ made an appeal to the fortress followers saying, it would be far more honorable for Masada doomed defenders to die, by their own hands rather than to be tortured and sold into slavery by the Romans.

All agreed to kill themselves. There was no resistance from them but only a defending silence and suddenly a horrible truth was evident. One of the histories mass suicides had



taken place during night time. The bodies of 960 men women and children were lying side by side, in family groups. The Romans did not realize that Christ way of peace and love was stronger than their swords. This is an important incident of the Jewish history.

After King Herod, his son Herod Antipas, ruled Judah. This king beheaded John the Baptist, killed James one of the Disciples of Christ to please the Jews and imprisoned Peter also. After him his son Agrippa I came to power. And after him his son Agrippa II became the king.

## JERUSALEM CITY

# 19. PONTIUS PILATE

Pilate played an important role at the time of Christ's trial and crucifixion along with Anna's and Caiaphas, the two high priests. They were father-in-law and son-in-law who tried with all their power and influence to prove Christ guilty of something. They appointed seventy judges and six witnesses against Jesus. Nicodemus was one of the judges who tried to defend Jesus in the trial. After they failed in their trials the chief priest and the elders brought Christ to the governor Pontius Pilate. When the Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat his wife "Claudias Proculah" said "*killing of Jesus of Nazareth was unthinkable for his simple saying. I am the son of God*". She sent for Pilate and asked him if he could do anything to that just man, because of him she suffered many things in her dream.

Pilate thought that if he failed to defend Jesus Christ from the critical condition, his life with his wife would be different, because she had high opinion for Christ. At the same time



**PONTIUS PILATE SAID HE DID NOT FIND ANY FAULT IN THAT INNOCENT MAN**

Pilate did not want to displease his wife. So he said he did not want to punish Christ as he was an innocent man. But the chief priest and the elders persuaded the multitudes to shout to free Barabbas and to crucify Christ. At the time of the birth of Christ, Annas was the high priest of Jerusalem temple. He was also a popular politician of the city of Jerusalem. He had the power even to arrest the rebelled people from the city.

Annas means “*grace of Jehovah*”. He was a fearless and dangerous man. He was born to money, married money, and cultivated money. He knew the power of money. He had no friends. But only rich people of his cadre. He taught his sons and son-in-law Caiaphas that every body in this world is a hypocrite and a liar. Caiaphas became high priest at the time of Christ’s crucifixion. Both father-in-law and son-in-law joined together to find fault with Christ and to crucify him at any cost.

Pilate, at last, asked them what evil the man had done. There was no answer for that question, but only shouting to crucify him. The Pilate had really soft corner for Christ but helpless, at the shouts of the multitudes. It became a tradition, in those days to free one criminal on the occasion of the Passover feast. And the Pilate asked them whom he should free, either Barabbas or Jesus? They all shouted that he should free Barabbas a notorious thief and Christ must be crucified. So, he handed over Christ to the public and washed his hands to show that he had nothing to do with the crucifixion of Christ.

When Christ was taken to Golgotha mount (a place of skull) for crucifixion a young girl by name Veronica saw him on the way. She wept for him and bathed his sweating face, with her veil and Jesus’ face was imprinted on her scarf. The Pilate put a banner on the cross with his own writing. It was in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. He wrote “*Ishu Nazaranus Rex Judayarum*” which means Jesus of Nazareth, king of Jews. The high priest requested Pilate not to write the king of Jews but he replied, “*What I have written, I have written*” (John 19:22). Pilate felt extremely sorry for the injustice done to Christ. Who was innocent? He told his wife that he had killed a prophet. But she replied in agony “*you killed a God*”.



# 20. DISCIPLES OF CHRIST

The following books were banned by the religious authorities and not added to the Bible.

They are:

1. The Book of Adam and Eve
2. The Book of Enoch
3. The Gospel of Thomas
4. The Gospel of James
5. The Gospel of Philips
6. The Book of Necedemus
7. The Gospel of Mary Magdalene
8. The Acts of Peter
9. The Apocalypse of Peter in 2 books and 100 more as some writers say.
1. **The infancy Gospel of Thomas :** This Book tells us about Christ's early life. His foster father Joseph's life could also be found in the Quoran. This book became very popular in 185 A.D. It tells us how Jesus helped his foster father in carpentry work. He did miracles even as child.



**CHRIST WITH HIS DESCIPLES**

For example, Jesus put together two wooden pieces of different sizes. They became equal without cutting. In his leisure time, he made some pigeons with clay and commanded them to go and they flew away. Thomas wrote this type of incidents of Christ life.

He was the only disciple who came to India to preach God's word and to spread Christianity. He visited India frequently as a Missionary. One day he was caught while preaching and ripped off with a spear. He was killed in India in Madras.

**2. The Gospel of James:** This book is mostly dealt with the family of Jesus Mother Mary and her parents. Mary's parents did not have children for a long time. Then one day Mary's mother, Anna prayed to God humbly for a child, God heard her prayer and sent an

angel to her. The angel told her that she would get a child and Mary was born. So, Mary was God's gift to her parents.

James also wrote about Mary that she was a virgin even after giving birth to Jesus. It was only God's spirit but not with the touch of any man.

James was fisherman originally by trade. Jesus found him and called for full time Ministry. As a strong leader of the church, James was brutally beheaded by Herod Antipas, son of King Herod to please the Jews in Jerusalem. The Roman soldiers, who guarded him, were amazed as he defended his faith even during his trail.

Later, the Officer who walked with James to the place of execution, overcome by conviction. He declared his new faith to the judge. The Officer knelt before James to accept beheading as a Christian.

3. **The Gospel of Mary Magdalene:** She said about the role of women in the society and in the churches. Her upholding of women was quite opposit to the sentiments of Apostle Paul, his preaching stated that women should not take part in the church matters. St.Paul also said it was shameful to a woman to go to the stage in the churches and speak.
4. **The Gospel of Necodemus:** He was a Jew. The name Necodemus means one who is notorious to the people. He enjoyed the highest position in the Jewish council. He was a good lawyer. He met Christ, on certain occasions. He was crucified just before Christ though he defended himself. It was the belief in those days that one should go to the place of destination before he was decided whether to go to hell or heaven.
5. **The Acts of Peter:** Peter did more work than any other disciple after the death of Christ. We know, how he moved with Paul to different places, how was arrested with Paul and imprisoned. He was also persecuted. He raised a dead woman by name "Tabitha" who was also called "Dorcas" in Joppa.
6. **The Apocalypse of Peter:** It means revealing the secrets of heaven. It is said peter wrote two books of this type. They were like the book of Revelation by St. John. The books tell us about the Sermons of Christ, about the punishment of the people if they do not follow the teachings and possible methods of avoiding the punishment.



**PETER WAS HEALING A CRIPPLED  
NEAR THE BEAUTIFUL CHURCH**

Peter was of the opinion that nobody should go to hell. All must be saved and go to heaven. He argues this point once with Christ also. He was a faithful disciple. He was called the “Father of Roman Catholic Mission”.

He was the most obedient of all disciples. He lived for 129 years; perhaps the longest lived among the disciples. He was crucified on an ‘X’ shaped cross upside down. According to the church traditions he told the terminator he was unworthy to die in the same way as Jesus Christ died.

Jesus prophesied about some of the disciples who came to him for the first time. John and Andrew were the first who met him. They were fishermen from Galilee. They were with John the Baptist for some time. When John told them about the greatness of Christ, they followed him. John told them, “Christ was the Lamb of God” and “He was the Messiah”.

**6. Andrew:** Christ said about Andrew as he would be crucified on an ‘X’ shaped cross in his later days in “Patmas”, Greece. He was whipped by seven Roman soldiers. Later they tied his body to the X shaped cross with cords to prolong his pain.

His followers reported when he was led towards the cross Andrew, saluted with these words. “I have long desired and expected this happy hour”. The cross was sanctified with the hanging of Jesus Christ’s body. He continued preaching the people who were tormenting him for two days till he died.

**7. John:** When Jesus looked at his face, he prophesied. John would see visions in his old age and write “The Book of Revelation”, the last book of the Bible.

He faced Martyrdom when he was boiled in a huge basin of boiling oil at the time of persecution in Rome. However, he was miraculously delivered from death. Then he was sentenced to the mines on the prison Island of Patmas and there he wrote the book of Revelation. He was later freed and served as a Bishop of “Edssa” in Turkey. In his old age, he was the only disciple who died peacefully.

**8. Bartholomea:** He was known as Nathaniel. He was a Missionary to Asia. He witnessed for the Lord in Turkey. He was martyred for preaching in Armenia. He was killed by whipping.

**9. Matthew:** He recorded more prophesies of Christ than any other Apostle. He suffered Martyrdom in Ethiopia. He was killed by the wound of the sword.

**10. Mark:** He died in Alexandria, Egypt. He was dragged by the horses in the streets till he died.

**11. Luke:** He was hanged to death in Greece for his wonderful preaching till the end of his life.

**12. Jude:** He was killed with arrows when he refused to deny his faith towards Christ. He was stoned and then beheaded.



- 14. James:** He was a leader for the church in Jerusalem. He was thrown over a hundred feet down from the South West Pinnacle of the temple. Still he refused to deny his faith in Christ and did not die. Then they beat him to death.
- 15. Barnabas:** He was one of the seventy additional Disciples of Christ. He wanted to send them in groups to different places with 8 rules called Beatitudes: He wrote an “Epistle of Barnabas”. He preached in Italy and Cyprus. He was stoned to death in Salonica.
- 16. St. Paul:** He was tortured and beheaded by the cruel Roman Emperor “Nero” in Rome in 67 A.D. He bore a lengthy imprisonment. In the prison, he wrote all the Epistles to different churches; he had established in the Roman Empire. These Epistles taught the fundamental doctrines to Christianity. They were really laid the foundation for Christian faith and life.



**THE HOLY SPIRIT CAME UPON SAUL  
WHILE HE WAS ON THE WAY TO DAMASCUS**

We can find his entire letter (Epistles) in the New Testament. If we compare our present persecution with that of the Disciples of Christ ours is really nothing before theirs. They faced cruel death while defending their faith towards Christ, so he said, “You will be hated by all men for my sake”.

**17. Stephen:** He was one of the 7 deacons of the church. He was a God fearing man. He was full of faith and power. He was filled with the Holy Spirit. Even the council members of the church saw the face of an angel in his face.

But the Jews, under the leadership of Saul, who became Paul later, took him out of the city and stoned him to death. At that time he prayed to God and said “Lord receive my spirit”. Then the devoted men carried his dead body for burial. With this brief information about the Disciples of Christ we can understand, how happily they accepted the punishment for the sake of Jesus Christ.

# 21. EMPEROR CONSTANTINE

## – 325 A.D.

Constantine was the emperor of the Byzantine Empire. It was the Eastern part of the Roman Empire. The capital city of this empire was Constantinople. After some centuries the name was changed to Istanbul, and that was also changed to the present Turkey. This Constantinople became world famous in those days for art and architecture. He was originally a heathen king, but latter became a true Christian. His mother *Heliona* also became a devoted Christian, and the Catholics made her saint after some time. After both embraced Christianity, they did many things for the spreading of Christian religion.

Let us see under what conditions he became a Christian.

One day the emperor dreamed a dream. In that dream, he saw in the heaven, a cross was hanging and a voice was heard saying “*on my name go and win the war*”. He woke up from the dream and was surprised for getting that kind of dream, He became restless. He wanted to know about the dream and also to know who the Christ was. He called for a meeting of all elders of different churches.

Many elders and priests attended that meeting. The emperor called that meeting “*the Council of Messiah’s*” The counsel members discussed among themselves and came to a conclusion. They told the king that Christ was “*the son of God and son of man*”. The king was enlightened by the statement of the elders and there was a change in him. Then he converted himself into Christianity along with his mother Heliona. After sometime, they came to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. The king saw the pathetic condition of the city Jerusalem, how it was ruined by the Romans in 70 A.D. He renovated the city to some extent. He built shrines and inscribed the life history of Jesus. In addition to that he did many more things for the spreading of Christianity.

1. Until that time, Saturday was observed by the people every where as Sabbath day. He changed it and made Sunday as Sabbath day

2. He declared Christianity as an official religion through out his kingdom

3. The Roman government was killing many Jews in those days on the cross with out reason. If we look into the history, we can know that the purpose of cross punishment was long suffering. They would be hanging on the cross for hours, from suffering and pain and the Romans would enjoy that. This emperor abolished such cross punishment for ever.

4. He prepared the Bible of his own. It is named “*The Bible of Constantine*” which became very popular for 40 years especially in Ethiopia.

5. He verified the 27 books of the New Testament before they were printed as a book.

6. He constructed churches at different places with Persian architecture which we can see them partially damaged even to day.

**Some of them are:**

1. The Church of Annunciation

This was constructed in Nazareth. The cave like house of Joseph and Mary was changed into the church. The meaning of it is how Gabriel angel came and announced the birth of Christ.

2. The Church of Holy Sepulcher

It was built on the way to the Golgotha mount. This was also called “Dolorosa.” It was in the Christian quarters. As old Jerusalem was divided into 4 quarters depending upon the people that lived at that particular area. They are Jewish quarters, Muslims quarters, Armenian quarters and Christian quarters.

3. The Church of Heliona

It was built on the Mount of Olives. It was one of the eight churches built by people of different countries. Constantine built this church in memory of his beloved mother, Heliona, who became a saint latter.

4. The Church of the Nativity

In Bethlehem the Church of the Nativity is the best example for the architecture. The door of the church was from Byzantine Empire. Constantine’s mother identified the site as the birth place of Christ and ordered for the construction of a church there.

So a beautiful church was built there. In 326 A.D, with stone flooring which looked like mosaic flooring. It has been rebuilt in every few hundred years. And they maintained the



**THE CHURCH OF HOLY SEPULCHER  
BUILT BY EMPEROR CONSTANTINE  
IN THE CHRISTIAN QUARTERS**





### **THE INTERIOR PART OF THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY**

height of the door of the church always 4 feet only. It was maintained like that to prevent people from entering the church on horse back.

To the right side of the church there is a Greek church. To the left of that church there is an Armenian Church. In 2001, the Israel army surrounded the church, after the Palestinian army barricaded themselves in side the church, with 160 hostages. For their symbolic 40 days, the prisoners slept in the corners of the church losing 30 pounds each. A priest made soup for the inside people. It is said he used the leaves of the lemon trees and oil from the lamps. And they ate it every 3 days. The church had a wonderful history; we can see even today, partly ruined mosaic floor and the Persian art on the walls of the church.

The king found a place called Baalbek, full of heathen temples, of the gods and goddesses of Romans. There were also some temples built by King Solomon to please his heathen wives. He made sacrifices which made God angry. The emperor destroyed all the temples, and built wonderful churches.

We can understand the greatness and glory of the Emperor Constantine by looking at the old city of Constantnople, as an underground city with partly destroyed structures under modern Turkey. The visitors who ever go to Turkey will certainly see the monuments. Constantine showed more interest to the spreading of Christianity in his kingdom. The Jews and Christians enjoyed real freedom during his rule. The Jews were particularly thankful to the emperor for abolition of cross punishment.

Bethlehem is to day unfortunately under the control of Palestinians. So if the people wanted to go to the birth place of Christ, and to see the Church of the Nativity, they have to take the permission from the Palestinian government. The actual distance between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is just 5miles. At the time of the Roman rule, the Philistines lived in that place. And the Romans called the place Palestine.

# 22. HAPPY ARE YE!

(1<sup>st</sup> Peter: 4: 14)

**H**appiness is a gift of God. Any one who wants to be happy depends upon his/her mental, setup. We may think the rich people with huge money and other things are happy. We are wrong. They will have their own problems and they can never be happy. We may also think that celebrities are happy with their handsome personalities, and money. They too have many problems in their lives only a common man with a little income and with limited wants can be happy. For the rich



people if one want is satisfied, another want will be in its place. But Christian view of happiness is different. Once Mother Theresa said “true happiness consists in doing the will of God with a smile”.

The happiness can be illustrated in many ways, the temporary or superficial happiness. This, we get when we meet our dear friends, after a long time or if we see a good movie or beautiful things in nature etc. This happiness we get from them remains with us only for some time and goes away like the morning fog, when the sun light comes. The second type of happiness is ever lasting that touches our inner joy, and grows at all times. That ever lasting happiness and peace we get from God only. So the key of our happiness is with God. He is the answer for our search of happiness.

Many people died in search of happiness, peace, joy and peace of soul. They did not realize that all those things are with God only. God created man in his own image and had perfect relationship with him. And that should continue forever.

Jesus said “happy are ye” (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 4.14) these three words are the answer for our spiritual, happiness and peace. Who is Christ? “He is the image of an invisible God and “he is divinely appointed savior for sinners.” Christ deepest hunger and his thirst on the cross his one hand with God and the other hand with humanity and his way of life, all these things bring peace, with God, peace within, peace with human life and peace on earth.

Many Christians suffered in this life due to some reason or other. A true Christian will follow the principles of Christ and his foot steps with his spirit. . So we want more Christians of Christ way of living but not Christianity. Let us read the following whether we can find true happiness through them.

### **1. Happiness through poverty:**

We are not concerned with physical poverty but spiritual poverty. The first one is concerned to this material world. And the second one is concerned to the next world that is heaven. Spiritual poverty means the poverty of soul. It is said that “for the love of money is the root of all evil (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 6:10) but a man who has contentment in his life is the happiest man. Only this kind of man can think of spiritual poverty. The Bible says that our souls have a disease called “*sin*” as all are born sinners. It is said “*all have sinned and come short of the glory of God*”. (Romans 3:23) So what we have to do for our spiritual poverty God asks us to confess our spiritual poverty is to stop doing anymore sin and turn by faith towards His son, Jesus Christ said “*happy are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God*”.

### **2. Happiness through love:**

In Hebrew Bible the word “*agape*” is used for love. God is love. Therefore ‘*agape*’ means God’s Love. The most important point in the preaching s of Christ is love. The word love is used many times in the Bible, particularly in the book of John. God said “*love thy neighbor as thyself*”. Every thing that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He who loves God will love his brother, loves his enemy and loves everything. If you do not love a man, whom you see every day, how can you love God whom you never saw? God said “*love your enemy, if he is hungry, feed him with bread, and if he is thirsty give him water and pray for him*”

A true Christian must posses love, compassion, kindness etc. Through love, one can achieve any thing in life, and he is the happiest man with no problems and worries. He will have no enemies, as love conquers all. Devine love is like the sun beam that reflects and penetrates into our body. We can get happiness by showing our love to others. God’s love towards his children is wonderful. Even if we do not love God, He loves us because His love is unconditional. So by loving everybody, we can be happy in our life.

### **3. Happiness through prayers:**

God wants us to spend our time, in non stop prayers so that we can have direct contact with him. If we pray with the spirit, we can even talk with him. And get our needs for our day to day lives. God wants us to pray whole heartedly and with concentration. We must pray to God with repenting spirit God said “*turn to me with all your heart with weeping and fasting!*” We can get happiness with prayers. God is with us always.

### **4. Happiness through suffering:**

There is comfort in suffering because Christ is with us; we know how much he suffered on the cross for the sake of humanity. He suffered and brought us happiness and made us immortals. God loves our suffering because it helps us in the next world.



Suffering is a required qualification, for our eternal life, We know how all his disciples and others like Stephen and Paul were made suffer before their death, Hence happiness comes through suffering.

### **5. Happiness through repentance:**

This is the most essential part of Christian life. God wants us to repent for any wrong thing in our daily lives. John the Baptist used to say to the people that went to him for baptism, “*repent for your sins and come to me*”. Let us see an example of a cancer patient; many people are dying of cancer nowadays. Now it is a dangerous disease. The doctors can tell them in advance, when they are going to die. So, the doctor told a cancer patient that he would live only for a week. Until then, he never thought of death. When he came to know this, he thought he should repent and confess before God. God gave him one week time to repent for his past life. Then he said “*merciful God gave me time to think and to repent for my past life in frustration, anger, fear, and bitterness. God gave me time to think about him and to pray to him for my salvation before I die*”.

We can also remember one of the criminals on the cross with Jesus. . In the last hour, he repented and asked Jesus with that spirit if he can remember him in his paradise. For that Christ replied he shall be with him in the paradise. So repentance is a powerful weapon that a Christian can defend himself always. Therefore, we can be happy through repentance.

### **6. Happiness through persecution:**

Happy are they who are persecuted for righteous sake, their is the kingdom of heaven. A true Christian is he, who lives his life with honesty, kindness, and unselfishness. If we take Christ as a symbol of suffering for our sins we must also suffer in this world to achieve his kingdom. In China, it is said about 30 to 50 million people were persecuted. But they took it as a great honor to suffer for Christ. In all ages, and in all countries, the Christians maintained the spirit of joy and happiness at the time of persecution. So suffering with happiness is a true spirit of a Christian life. In this context the persecution of three Hebrew kids Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, how the king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon put them in the fiery burning furnace when they did not worship the heathen idol. But nothing happened to them as God was with them. The king was surprised at this and said “Lo! I saw four men walking freely in the fire, no hurt, the fourth one is the son of God” (Daniel 3:25)

King Darius also punished Daniel by putting him in the lion’s den for a simple reason. He prayed to God three times a day against the declaration that no body should appeal to his God for thirty days. At that time also an angel came and saved Daniel from the danger of the lions. We can find more examples in the Bible how they were persecuted and even killed during the time of Romans .The Christians also believed that the suffering of this life should not be compared with the reward we get in heaven after death. A true Christian should live with the

spirit of God. And the fruit of the spirit is a long suffering. It is said in the book of Revelation as “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb”. (Revelation 7:14)

### **7. Happiness through purity:**

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. Our heart can be called a seat of emotions, like fear, anger, love, courage, joy, sorrow, hatred etc. At all times, God will look into our thoughts and emotions. God wants our heart must help others and care for others. We must have the attitude of helping others and doing good to others. He wants our heart must possess the above such qualities but not evil thoughts. God said “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit and take away your stony heart out of thy flesh” (Ezekiel 11:19).

Purity of heart is really a new birth, and a new creation. When we receive that peace of heart we can know the secret of happiness .so we must pray and struggle in our lives for physical purity spiritual purity mental purity and moral purity.

God said “be ye holy. For I am holy” (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 1:16) and also said “keep thy self pure” (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:22) therefore the outcome of all these examples is that the purity of heart is God. And the secret of seeing and knowing God is the pure heart and we can get the pure heart from God only. Once we get the pure heart from God we will be the happiest people on the earth.

### **8. Happiness through peace - making:**

Blessed are the peace makers for they shall be called the children of God. We can never expect peace as long as they are war mongers. It is said “*war is the child of pride and pride the daughter of riches*”. Today some countries with modern technology, wanted to feel the superiority over the other countries and such proud thinking sometimes lead to war.

It is proved historically that in four thousand years people were with out war only for three hundred years. Such is the present day position regarding people in the world.

But every one of us can experience the peace of God through Christ because peace comes from God only. Before we think of peace with others or with other countries, let us think of peace at home, with out peace at home among the family members or in the churches we can not expect peace elsewhere. It is said “*let peace prevail at home*”.

For example, at the time of marriage three people are involved. They are the pastor, the bride and the bride groom. The pastor can be a peace maker for any family. Because through the pastor only, we take oath in the name of God in the church at the time of marriage so if we do not stick on to the oath, then no God,, hence no peace at home. If the wife and husband follow God at home, there will be ever lasting peace in the house. There by we can be peace makers, in the churches also as a builder builds the house, with a group of people we too can

do many things in groups. To make peace on earth, we must make peace with God. He is always merciful towards the poor because they remember him when ever they are in troubles. *Happy are the merciful* if we help the needy, help less and down trodden, God will give us greater rewards. We can show our mercy to them by telling about God because spiritual poverty is worse than physical poverty.

If we think about Joseph for a while, we can understand. How much merciful he was towards his jealous brothers. His ungrateful brothers sold him to an Egyptian of course for his betterment. God was with him. And he was filled with Godly Spirit. He had the forgiving nature. He was faithful, with all those noble qualities; he could forgive his cruel brothers and felt for them more than themselves. With these qualities, Joseph could reach the highest position in Egypt, next to Pharaoh.

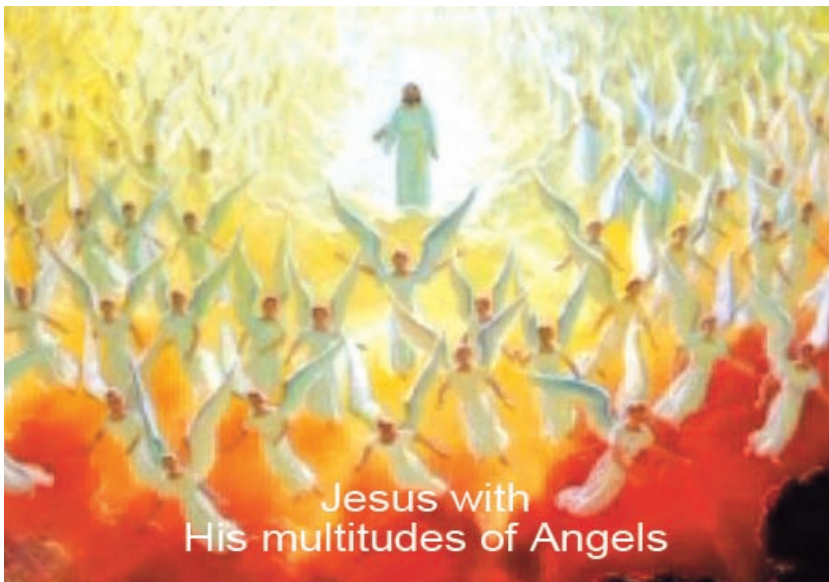
Christ in his *sermon on the mount* gave some examples to his disciples and to the multitudes. They were for the Christian way of living. But the disciples could not understand the inner meaning of his sermons. He spoke about the spiritual Promised Land and high moral values, of the society in which they were living. The Sermon on the Mount made them open their eyes and understand the practical life. It made them look seriously what kind of life they lived all those days. Finally, the disciples decided to live Christ way of living how much more difficult it might be, in order to get salvation.

What impression the multitude had about Christ? For them, Christ was like an attractive and miracle man. He was magnetic with unusual powers. To them he appeared like a teacher, a preacher, a master, a gentleman and a straight forward man. They never come across such a man in their life time. They dreamed of a day spending with him by walking with him into the villages. And see how the Galilean is healing the sick, and blessing the innocent children. They wanted to hear what he would say about God, about salvation, and about his kingdom. All these things remained in the minds of the innocent multitudes as dreams only.



## 23. ANGELS – THE APOSTLES OF GOD

**A**postle means a person who is sent to a distant place with a message. . He may be also called a messenger. As God cannot attend all the needs of his children, he used to send his angels on his behalf. Let us see two examples how the angels helped God’s people when they were in danger. Mr. Williams was a busy doctor in a remote part of China. One day, he came home late, and was about to go to bed. Just at that time, a ten year old girl came and knocked at the door. The doctor opened the door. She requested the doctor to come to her house and see her mother who was in serious condition. The doctor saw her mother and then complemented



that she had a very good and responsible daughter. But the mother replied she had no body at present, and her only daughter died some time back. The truth is that one angel came and acted like her daughter who died and helped her in that helpless condition.

The second story is about a priest. John was a priest in a village in Scotland. Some heathens who did not like the spreading of Christianity in those days, wanted to kill the priest. Whenever they went to him they saw some people were moving around the house. They tried many times but in vain. Then one day the heathen leader came to the house of the priest and

asked him how many people were residing in that house. The priest replied only himself and his wife. Then all understood that God had sent his angels to protect the priest from the danger of the heathens. The heathens realized how God helped his people in times of danger. And they too became devoted Christians. These two examples show that God's concern towards his people was wonderful. He always protects us from any danger by sending his angels.

According to some historical evidence, God created about 1 billion angels along with other creation. They are more handsome and intelligent than human beings. . As they have no sex, they are unfit for marriage, and to beget children. . It is also said that their height is about 25 to 30 feet, and are immortals. They never become old. They are very helpful to God in his administration in heaven. God put them in different cadres for different purposes.

The first cadre is called Arch angels who are next to God. They are Michael, Lucifer, and Gabriel etc. Michel was a good administrator and God liked him most. But Lucifer was more cunning and revengeful type. He claimed equality with God in everything and so rebelled against him .God became angry and at last sent Lucifer from heaven in to the bottomless pit. One-third of the angels followed him. Then he changed his name from Lucifer to Satan. His aim is to take revenge against God's people. Satan's first attack was Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He went to them as a serpent and tempted them to eat the fruit of knowledge. Adam and Eve, obeyed his words, and ate the fruit, and sinned against God by disobeying his words. God got angry and sent them out of the Garden of Eden. As the wages of sin is death, we lost paradise through Adam and Eve.

A famous English poet John Milton wrote a poem called *paradise lost* starting with the following lines:

Of man's first disobedience  
And the fruit of forbidden tree

This poem became very popular in all over the world. And it is said this poem was translated into seventy languages and people read it as the Bible. He also wrote another poem called *paradise regained* with the coming of Christ. After about four thousand years what we lost because of the sin of Adam and Eve we get back with the coming of Jesus Christ. So it is said "in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall be made alive".

An angel appeared to Daniel on two occasions. When he was to clear the dreams of Babylon king Nebuchadnezzar, and when he was thrown into the lions den to save him. Gabriel the angel of God appeared before the woman in her old age and told her she would have a son, and his name shall be Samson. He also said Samson would deliver the Israel from the hands of the philistines. The angel came to Zachariah in his old age and told him that he would have a son and his name shall be John. The same Gabriel angel appeared to Mary and told her he was sent by God to tell her some important message that she would conceive a male child, through the Holy Spirit and he shall be called Jesus the son of God.

The next cadre is called Angels. Their duty is to move around God and sing songs in praise of Him. Like Holy Holy Holy. It might be the same angels who came down from heaven when Christ was born and sang songs in his praise with celestial music.

The third cadre is called Cherubs. Their duty is to take care of the tabernacle and make necessary arrangements.

The fourth cadre of angels is called Cherubims. God appointed an angel from this group at the Eastern gate of the Garden of Eden. So that nobody could enter the garden and touch the tree of life.

The next cadre is thrones, powers, authorities, crowns, principalities and dominions. It seems there are ten divisions among angels.

Three angels came to the house of Abraham and they ate bread in his house. The angels told him he would get a son at the age of ninety nine. Two angels visited the house of Lot son of Abraham's brother. They ate bread in his house and informed him that he should leave his place Sodom immediately because they were going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah for their wickedness and adultery.

An angel came from heaven to Elijah when he was in deep hunger. He fled from the notorious queen Jezebel who wanted to kill him. The angel gave him bread two times. With that he survived for forty days and forty nights.

The angel came to the house of Gideon and told him to save Israel from the oppression of Medianites. The angels sat under the oak tree and spoke with him what God wanted from him to do. Two angels waited at the tomb of Jesus Christ and informed Mary Magdalene that he had risen. He also told Mary that Jesus wanted to meet his disciples in Galilee.

When Paul and Peter were imprisoned the angel went and brought them out. Like this we can quote as many examples as possible from the Bible to prove that the angels are the real, missionaries of God.

If we look into the last book of the Bible, The book of Revelation, we can understand clearly how the angels appeared to be busy at all times and play important roles. Seven angels were in charge of seven churches, seven angels were in charge of seven seals and seven angels were in charge of seven vials etc. According to the prophecy of Jesus Christ about John, we see how he became Saint John to write '*The Book of Revelation*'. Some angels took John and showed him some places including the New Jerusalem. So, by all these above mentioned examples, we can understand clearly that the angels are the real, messengers of God who helps God in his administration.

**When you are in persecution:**

1. Rejoice and be happy
2. You must love your enemies.
3. Bless them that curse you
4. Do good to them that always hate you.
5. Pray for them that purposely use you and persecute you.



# 24. SOME FACTS FROM THE BIBLE



1. **W**e must realize our spiritual poverty
2. We must be sure that we have received Christ as our personal savior.
3. We must have surrendered lives.
4. We must be filled with the spirit of God
5. We must try to produce the fruits of the spirit in us
6. We must be a witness to Christ
7. We must be sensitive to the needs of others in the society
8. We should not be half Christians
9. We must perform prayers always for regular contact with God
10. We must not be critical of others.
11. We must develop a taste for spiritual, things
12. We must be emotional to others and their problems
13. We shall love every body in the society
14. We must stand courageously
15. We must realize that we are immortals and live forever with God in heaven

## Some words from the Bible

1. For in Adam all die even so in Christ shall be made alive
2. By faith Noah prepared an Ark and arranged every thing planned by God and became a righteous man
3. Whosoever has faith like Abraham are called the children of Abraham.
4. Through faith Abraham tried to sacrifice his only begotten son Isaac and received abundant blessings and Provisions
5. Abraham was also called the father of circumcision
6. God gave Abraham a covenant of circumcision and he did that to his son Isaac on the eighth day of his birth.
7. Abraham through righteousness became a friend of God
8. By faith Abraham moved to many places like a wanderer.
9. When Moses became forty years, he wished to visit his brethren, the children of Israel
10. Crossing of the Red Sea was a salvation to the Israel
11. The Red Sea at that time was about 10 feet deep
12. The Ten Commandments are called ten words in Hebrew language
13. The first part of them are religious and the second part is moral binding.
14. The sons of Jacob are called patriarchs
15. King David was also called patriarch
16. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but the fools hate wisdom and instructions
17. The city of Armageddon was built by King Solomon about 3000 years ago.
18. Never try evil for evil nor to take revenge. Because God said "*revenge is mine*"
19. A person is justified by what he does but not by faith alone.
20. If we love each other God will live in us and his love is complete in us
21. God is love whoever lives in love lives in God and God in him.
22. God said "*be faithful even to the point of death and I will give you the crown of life*"
23. Our children do not belong to the devil but to the living God
24. Jews were the children of Judah and Benjamin
25. The twenty four elders in heaven around the throne of God were the twelve apostles and twelve sons of Jacob
26. He that covers his sins shall not progress but who confesses and forsake them shall have mercy
27. A faith in man shall abound in blessing
28. Pentecost means speaking in strange languages and Simon was called the first Pentecost
29. Ephesus was the name of the place famous for idol worship of the Roman goddess, Diana

30. If we live in the spirit let us walk in the spirit
31. We must believe in one God Lord, one faith and one baptism
32. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith
33. Faith and belief result in blessings
34. In the Bible the measurements of Noah's Ark and Jerusalem Temple are mentioned in cubits. A cubit is 17 to 22 inches.
35. Love not this world nor the things of this world if one loves this world; the love for the father (God) is not in him
36. The head of every man is Christ, and the head of every woman is man and the head of Christ is God
37. Man is not created for woman but woman is created for man
38. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, goodness, gentleness, faith and long suffering
39. Herod the Antipas, was the son of King Herod. He beheaded John the Baptist, killed James and imprisoned Peter and Paul to please the Jews.
40. Names of the other two persons crucified with Christ were 1. Dysmus 2. Gertas
41. Jesus is the mediator between God and man.
42. Mathias was taken as the twelfth apostle of Jesus
43. In Joppa a woman by name Tabitha called *Dorkas* was a disciple. When she died Peter raised from her death
44. The angel of God appeared to Cornelius. He was the first heathen who became the Christian
45. Jesus said it is more blessing to you to give than to receive
46. When the people raised from the dead they neither marry nor given to marriage but they remain in heaven without marriage.
47. Repentance is a noble thing because every body will rejoice at this
48. One cannot serve two masters as one cannot serve God and mammon (money)
49. Man must be born of water and spirit to enter into the kingdom of God.
50. As the body without spirit is dead the faith without work is dead
51. The prayer of the faith shall save the sick and the lord shall raise him up
52. Elijah prayed to God sincerely not to have rain and there was no rain for three and a half years and again he prayed to God for rain. People got it
53. God did not spare even angels from punishment when they rebelled against him and committed sin. He cast them down to hell to wait there for final judgment
54. If we confess our sins, God is faithful and He forgives our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

# 25. IMPORTANCE OF NO.40 IN THE BIBLE

1. In the days of Noah, people became wicked and sinned against God. So God wanted to destroy people with rains, and rained for 40 days and 40 nights. (Genesis 7:17)
2. Isaac was 40 years old when he married Rebecca (Genesis. 25:20)
3. Esau was 40 years old, when he married Judith. (Genesis. 26:34)
4. When Jacob died, he was embalmed with spices for 40 days. (Genesis 50:3)
5. When Moses was 40 years old, it came to his mind (heart) to visit his brethren, the children of Israel, and accidentally killed an Egyptian, who was the Governor of Goshan. (Exodus 7:23)
6. The Children of Israel ate Manna for 40 years in the wilderness. (Exodus 16:35)
7. Moses went to the top of the mount Horeb (Sinai) for the first time, to receive laws and the 10 commandments and stayed there for 40 days. (Exodus 24:18)
8. Moses went to the mountain Horeb for the second time and stayed with God 40 days and 40 nights without bread and water to get the 10 commandments. (Exodus 34:28)
9. God asked Moses to keep 40 sockets of Silver under the lengthy board of the Tabernacle. (Exodus 26:19&36:26)
10. Moses sent 12 members from 12 tribes to find out the position of Canaan and they returned after 40 days. (Num.14:34)
11. The children of Israel wandered in wilderness for 40 years till they reached the borders of Canaan. (Number 14:33)
12. Moses explained to the Israel about family relations, when they were judged they must be given 40 stripes as a punishment. (Deu.25:3)
13. Aaron was 40 years old when he left Egypt.
14. Joshua went to war with 40 thousand Israel and crossed the River Jordan. (Joshua 4:13)
15. Caleb was 40 years old when he went to see Canaan with other members of the team. (Joshua 14:7)



16. The Israel lived in peace for 40 years under the leadership of Othniel the son-in-law of Caleb. (Judges 3:11)
17. The Israel chose new gods, when there was war in the gates, was there a shield or spear among forty thousand Israel? (Judges 5:8)
18. After the death of the King of Canaan, the Israel lived in peace for 40 years. (Judges 5:31)
20. God got angry over Israel and handed them over to Philistines for 40 years as a punishment. (Judges 13:1)
21. Eli the priest judged Israel for 40 years. (1 Samuel 4:18)
22. Goliath a Philistine giant of 9' .6" feet height, challenged the Israel in the war both morning and evening for forty days. (1 Samuel 17:16)
23. Prophet Samuel anointed Saul, a Benjaminite as the King of Israel, who ruled them for 40 years. (Acts 13:21)
24. Abner Captain of Saul's army; made Sauls' son Ishbo Seth, King of Israel and he was 40 years old at that time. (2 Samuel 2:10)
25. King David ruled Israel for 40 years. (2 Samuel 5: 4) (1 Chronicles 29:27)
26. In the war with Syrians King David killed 40 thousand footmen (2 Samuel 10:18)
27. Absalom, son of King David said that he wanted to pay his vow to God after 40 years in Hebron. (2 Samuel 15:7)
28. King Solomon had 40 thousand stalls of horses for his chariots (1 Kings 4:26)
29. King Solomon ruled Israel for 40 years (1 Kings 11:42)
30. Prophet Elijah got bread from heaven by an angel twice, and with that strength he lived for 40 days and 40 nights and walked to mount Horeb the Mount of God. (1 Kings 19:8)
31. The King of Syria fell ill and sent his man Hazarel to prophet Elisha with 40 camels load of gifts to him (11 Kings 8:9)
32. Joash or Jehoash was made king at the age of 7 years and ruled Israel for 40 years (11 Kings 12:1)
33. King David said that 40 years long was God grieved for that generation of Israel (Psalms 95.10)
34. Ezekiel, the watch man of Israel, bear the iniquities of Judah for 40 years. (Ezekiel 4.6)

35. No foot of men or beast shall pass through nor inhabit in Egypt for 40 years (Ezekiel 29:11)
36. I will make the Land of Egypt desolate among the cities for 40 years. (Ezekiel 29.12; 28)
37. After 25 years of Captivity. Ezekiel got a vision in which he saw one of the walls of the second temple was about 40 cubits. (Ezk. 41:2)
38. Also. I brought you up from the land of Egypt and led you 40 years through its wilderness to possess the land of the Amorites (Amos 2:10)
39. Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness for 40 years? O house of Israel? (Amos 5:25)
40. Prophet Jonah told the people of Nineveh city that if they did not repent for their sins within 40 days God would destroy them completely (Jonah 3:4)

### **NEW TESTAMENT**

41. When Jesus was 40 days old he was taken to the Jerusalem temple.
42. Christ after taking Baptism from John the Baptist wandered in the wilderness of Jordan River for 40 days and hungered. (Mark 1.13 & Luke 4.2)
43. After resurrection. Christ spent 40 days with his disciples and ascended unto heaven (Acts 1:3)
44. Simon Peter also healed a man near the temple gate who was above 40 years. (Acts 4.22)
45. More than 40 Jews joined together and took oath that they would not eat or drink till they kill Paul. (Acts 23 13)
46. Paul said "Of the Jews five times received I 40 stripes save one. (2 Cor. 11 24)
47. But with whom was he grieved 40 years? Was it not with them that sinned? (Hebrews 3 17)
48. Some Christians observe 40 days as Lenten days and remain in fasting before the crucifixion of Christ. (Good Friday)
49. In 2001 the Israel surrounded " the Church of Nativity" in Bethlehem, because the Philistines with 160 hostages remained inside the church They slept at the corners of the church for a symbolic 40 days They survived with the juice of lemon leaves mixed with oil from the lamps A priest served them juice once in three days.
50. According to historical information Christ was born in 5th B C and died in 30 A.D He wept and foretold the future destruction of Jerusalem and the temple On 70 A.D- King Titus destroyed them just 40 years after the death of Christ.