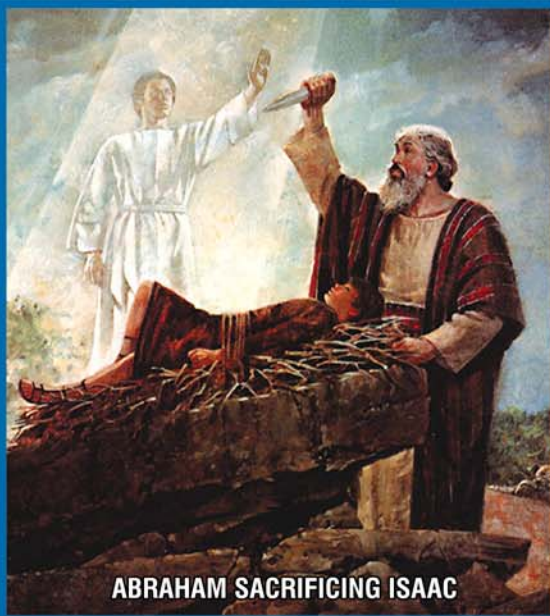


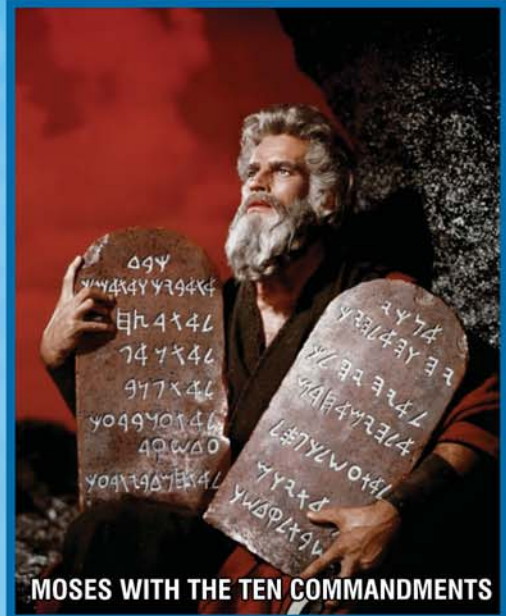
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By

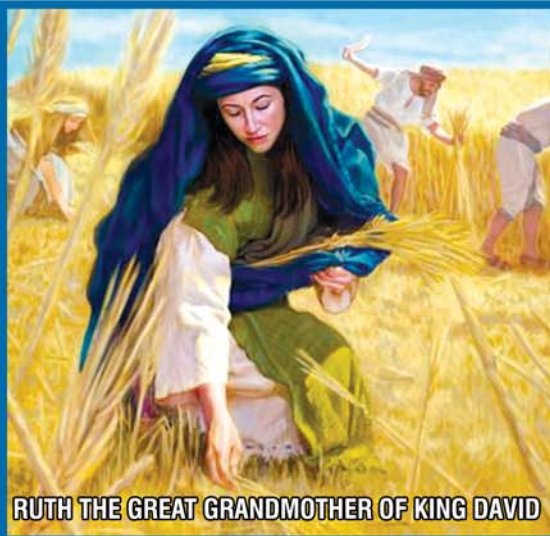
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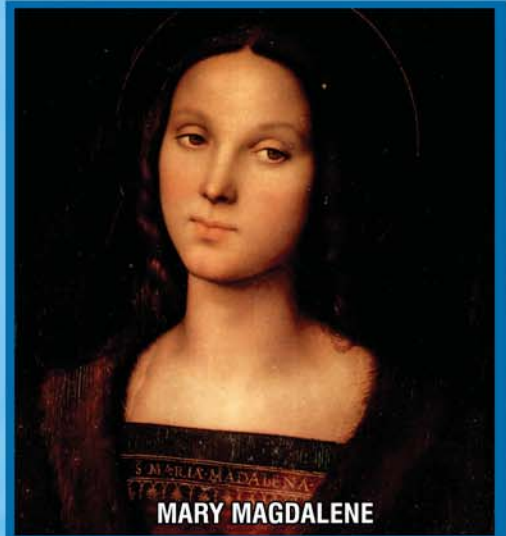
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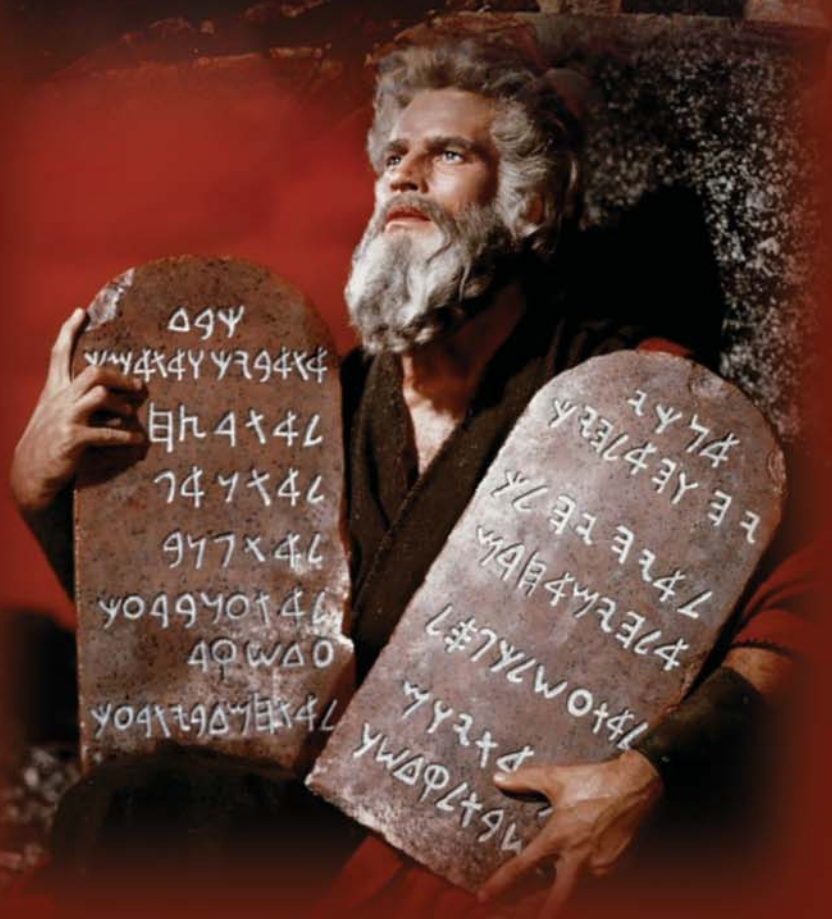
**MOSES WITH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**



**RUTH THE GREAT GRANDMOTHER OF KING DAVID**



**MARY MAGDALENE**



# **SHOOTS OF JERUSALEM**

By

**SUNDARA RAO TSAPPIDI**

**PHILIPS PUBLICATIONS**

D.No. 47-2-7, Lourdunagar, Gunadala,

VIJAYAWADA - 520004. A.P., India.

Phone 0866-2451783

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# **Shoots of Jerusalem**

Sundara Rao Ts.

First Edition - January 2016

(C) The author

Price : Rs.75/-

Published by :

## **PHILIPS PUBLICATIONS**

D.No. 47-2-7, Lourdunagar, Gunadala,  
Vijayawada - 520 004. A.P., India.

Phone : 0866 - 2451783.

*Printed at :*

## **Arunodaya Notebook Mfrs. Pvt. Ltd.,**

# 35-5-9, Papaiah Street, Seetharampuram,  
VIJAYAWADA - 520 002. A.P., India.

Phone : 0866 - 2431422.

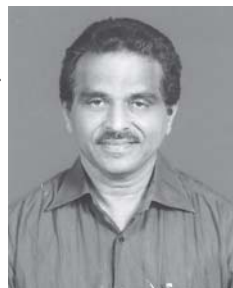
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## FOREWORD

“I will praise the lord who counsels me.” psalm 16:7

Majority of aged Indians who stay with their children in the USA find it difficult to spend their time for not having work to do. Therefore, majority of them lead idle life. But in case of Rev. Dr. Ts. Sundara Rao, he utilises time in reading books on the Bible and is writing articles on them. Rev. Dr. Ts. Sundara Rao is not a clergyman. He is a retired Professor, but not a writer. At the age of 70 God bestowed upon him the skill of writing and he started bringing out books based on the historical facts about the Bible. Now he is 80 and is able to produce 8 books with beautiful essays providing so much information about the incidents, events and persons in the Bible starting from Genesis. All the essays are thought provoking. The information, the essays provided, is unknown to many, even to the scholars of the Bible. The present book “SHOOTS OF JERUSALEM,” is another masterpiece.



What are the shoots? When some trees like olive or neem are cut off to the ground, only the stump remains. In course time some shoots would come out from the stump as well as from the roots. It is because of the survival of the tree and the life in it. Similarly Jerusalem is destroyed many times by the enemy rulers who are around it. But it is not totally extinguished. It survives like the above said trees as God protects it and it is the chosen place of God and it is given to the children of Abraham. God has great concern for the Jews and for Jerusalem, the city of David. Hope all these essays of the, “SHOOTS OF JERUSALEM,” would be useful for the Bible readers as each essay brings out hidden truth.

I pray to God to provide good health to Rev. Dr. Ts. Sundara Rao and his wife Mrs. Grace Vijaya, who is an inspiration for him. I also congratulate their children Mrs. Dr. Beaula and Dr. Samuel and their families. May this book be a blessing for many Bible readers and everything is for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With best wishes and compliments

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D.S. Sundara Rao'.

**D.S. Sundara Rao**

Evangelist,

Associate Professor of English (Rtd)



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# CONTENTS

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1. THE SEED OF THE WOMAN	-	1
2. IN THE DAYS OF NOAH	-	10
3. THE REJOINING OF ISRAEL	-	17
4. PROPHET HAGGAI	-	30
5. DATES AND EVENTS OF PERSONS IN THE BIBLE	-	34
6. CHRIST AND HIS CRUCIFICATION	-	43
7. WHO ARE ANGELS, ARE THEY REAL ?	-	54
8. THE GLORY OF GOD	-	65
9. THE LOVE STORY OF RUTH	-	75
10. AN EXTRAORDINARY PRAYER OF PROPHET DANIEL	-	88
11. THE STORY OF THE CALENDAR	-	99
12. FINAL VISION OF DANIEL	-	107
13. HEATHEN KINGDOMS THAT RULED ISRAEL	-	117
14. PROPHET JONAH	-	127
15. WOMEN OF THE SAME MIND WITH THE LORD	-	132
16. TESTING OF FAITH WITH FIRE	-	143
17. WHAT HAPPENS TO US AFTER WE DIE	-	150
18. SOME BIBLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS	-	162

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## The Seed of the Woman

As true believers with the knowledge of the Bible, we can understand how the battle began between God and evil Satan in the Garden of Eden. The battle is in connection with Adam and Eve our first parents. Satan seduced them with his cunning words to commit sin by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree in the garden. God told them clearly that they might eat all the fruits in that garden except the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. But Satan trapped Eve somehow and made both of them to eat that fruit. As a result, sin came into existence death came and man is separated from God.

The actual name of Satan was “Lucifer” and he was an arch angel in Heaven. It is said he was more intelligent and a good administrator. So God called him most intelligent. Yet he had evil plans in his mind. He took the advantage of his position before God and proclaimed equality with God and rebelled against Him. God could not tolerate his foolish behavior and finally threw him into the earth. He could not take revenge against God in heaven but he started his revengeful activities on earth, and his first victim happened to be our first parents Adam and Eve.

Lucifer had different names like Dragon, serpent, devil and Satan, with those four names put together, Satan was called “deceiver” (Revelation 12:9)

And also his activities are by nature evil. So, the battle has been going on between God and Satan since the beginning and we have some examples in the Bible also. This battle would be intensified in course of time, especially at the end of the age. It will secure a prominent place in the human history. The battle that is going to take place is very important according to the Biblical history because God Himself will be involved. In that battle all the Muslim nations apart from others as one go against God and Satan will be the commander of them. And God will fight in support of Israel, which means “God prevails”.

I can take it for granted, that at least the believers can understand the implications of this remarkable battle of the Satan and all the nations of the world on one side and God with Israel on the other. The real intention of God through this battle is that He wanted to implement His redemption plan to all believers after the battle. Let us know more about Satan. He is real, alive, and exceedingly active in his crooked plans against the believers of God. To say more accurately along with the arch - angle Michael, this Lucifer (Prior to his fall from heaven was called the highest in wisdom and purpose).

It is said due to his pride and arrogance Lucifer was expelled from Heaven and after coming down to the earth his name was changed. He posed as more than God in heaven, So, in his pride, he said, I will and in earth existence he exalted himself, above God. And at the fifth time he said I will, I will be like the most high,” (Isaiah 14:14) Generally, only one can be the highest but never two persons. We call the God as the most high and there is no place for Satan to call him self most high. So God expelled Satan from heaven for his wickedness and from his expulsion his plan was changed from ruling the Heaven to rule the earth and receive the worship of man. To achieve that end, (to rule) as a venomous serpent he became responsible to Adam and Eve to disobey God and bring sin into the world.

As if it is a regular work, Satan used to go as an angel of light and tells people to enjoy the pleasures of sin to their at most satisfaction but he does not tell people that those pleasures are purely temporary and the people do not understand the severity of the punishment they are going to face for their sinful way of life. Satan is also always moving about as a roaring lion to catch hold of someone to make him commit sin and irritate God.

It is said God created one hundred crore angels and all remain in heaven attending various works of God. They are divided into 10 cadres and arch angels is the first one. It is also said that one third of the angle population followed Satan when he was expelled from heaven. So, he can use of the services of the angels as messengers whenever any emergency occurs.

The Apostle Peter also described the activities of Satan in this way. Be sober, be vigilant because your adversary the devil (Satan) as a roaring lion walketh about seeing whom he may devour (1 Peter 5:8). The greatest influence Satan has over mankind is to influence he possessed over the nations. As we see in the Bible, the main purpose of the building of the tower of Babel was to make a platform from which the people wanted to worship the sun, the Moon and the stars. So, the origin of idol worship and false religion were started at the time of building of the tower of Babel by King Nimrod, the mighty man and warrior at that time.

This false religion and idol worship spread like wildfire into many places and Babylon became the headquarters for spreading and encouraging them. So, in the Word of God it is said “Mystery Babylon, The great the Mother of Harlots, and the abomination of the earth” (Revelation 17:5)

God saw what man was doing regarding the Tower of Babel. He came down from heaven to confuse the language the people spoke and scattered them across the world. As they scattered into different parts of the world,

their virtues, and their false religion and also the idol worship went along with them to their new) places. They practised all this at their new places.

According to historical background the nations from the earliest times had been plagued by idolatry and false religions. In this connection Apostle John wrote, and we know that we (believers are of God and the whole world leith in wildness) (1 peter 5:19) All nations after the incident of the Tower of Babel were under the strong influence of Satan. It we look into the historical books carefully all the nations for centuries remained in idol worship and false religion. Among such nations, the most notorious for idol worship were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. They were also famous as persecutors of the Jews, when they ruled that country. All these heathen nations not only led people away from the true and living God, the God of Israel, but also indiscriminately persecuted them. But what exactly happened to the people of Israel which was a small nation. Even the secular historical books did not reveal. For all this mishap the person behind is Satan.

Satan is out and out the dead enemy of God and adversary of man. As we know before his rebellion against God in heaven he was called “Lucifer” and that name was translated in King James Version as Son of the morning” (Isaiah 14:12) After his rebellion against God he was given four designations. Which clearly indicate his wicked intentions. And he (a strong angel) laid hold on the “Dragon” that old “serpent” which is the “Devil” and “Satan” and burned him for a thousand years. (Revelation 20:2) This Satan will be utterly defeated and eternally dammed by Jesus Christ at the end of the age after the battle that will take place at Armageddon. The battle, we studied already between all heathen nations and majority of them will be Muslims under the leadership of Caliphate or Antichrist or Satan. Their battle is against Israelites and their leader is Jesus Christ.

As mentioned in the Bible, it was the first prophecy and it will be fulfilled. It is said in that prophecy the seed of the woman (Christ), who will be the descendant of Abraham and King David has to crush the head of that serpent. God cursed the serpent like this when he deceived innocent Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden. God cursed Adam and Eve also along with the serpent. The curse God gave to the Satan was most terrible. He had to crawl on the earth and live by eating dust for his survival. So, in the first of Genesis 3:15 it is clearly said that the seed of the woman Christ will crush the head of the serpent (Satan) in that battle, and the survivals of the battle will be redeemed. We are advised to wait until that precious time and to be careful about the tactics of Satan as revealed in the four designations mentioned below.

The meaning of “Dragon” said here as “crafty”

The meaning of “Serpent” is “Subtle”

The meaning of “Devil” is “Accuser”

The meaning of “Satan” is “Adversary”

with all these names clubbed together Satan is called “deceiver” All his activities are the embodiment of evil. Satan became very successful as a deceiver through centuries. But some people think about this Satan as a myth and ignore about him. As a matter of fact, it is a grave mistake on the part of those people who understood Satan in a different way. Actually our impression will increase more and more as we are approaching the seventieth week of prophet Daniel and what he spoke in it in his book 9:27 and the “great Tribulation period” (Matthew 24:21) if man gives scope to Satan to flourish then he become helpless, hopeless, and becomes stranger to God. As a result, man loses chance to have reconciliation with his down creator (God) against whom he has sinned. But God in His infinite grace and compassion would not leave man his own creation in his own useless conditions for centuries.

So, God went to the city of ‘ur’ in the land of Chaldeans, which was a well noted place, for adultery. It was located along the Euphrates river in the nation of Babylon. from that city ‘ur’ God chose a man by name Abraham who later became father of a new nation. His descendants were called Hebrews, Assyrians, Jews, and Muslims. The nation his descendants formed was Israel and their capital was Jerusalem. The people and the nation which was occupied by the descendants of Abraham would be instruments in the hand of God to oppose and even to destroy and defeat Satan and to give to the gentile world chance to turn themselves from idolatry and false religions to the son of God. Jesus Christ has the experience of forgiveness, of sin, and gained eternal life and those who do not like the way of life of Jesus, God has to deal about them. But God gave to humanity through the Jewish nation history those most valuable gifts.

Unfortunately, those gifts were not appreciated by the people. They were not liked by the people because of the relentless attack of the Satan against the Jewish people for the last 4000 years. This attack has been continued even in the present days, and this is called anti – Semitism. According to Biblical history Abraham came from Semitic tribe. The origin of this Semitic tribe was Sham. The first son of Noah. Eventually, Abraham was from this tribe and he became great grandson of Noah. Another surprising was that Melchizedek and King Nimrod were the descendants of Ham brother of Sham. They were the contemporaries of Abraham.

But a tragic thing here which is beyond belief is some Christians with their perverted theology joined program of The Satan at anti - Semitism. It is also the explanation behind Gods declaration to Abraham that those who blessed the descendants of Abraham, God would bless them and those who cursed the descendants of Abraham, God would curse them. This was really very important and straightforward promise of God to Abraham. We have to remember that it is a promise from God to the patriarch Abraham.

The first of the gifts God gave to humanity through Israel was Monotheism when the whole world was steeped in “Polytheism” which means belief in a multitude of Gods. And polytheism was initiated and championed by this very Satan. God taught Israel through Moses that He was the only true God and there is no other God to them to have faith. God gave the Ten Commandments written with His own hand on a blue stone and about one God is one of them. He said “thou shalt have no other god before me, they shall not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth, beneath or that is in the water under the earth” (Exodus: 3:4)

Added to that, Moses the spokesman of God and the servant of God wrote “Hear O Israel the Lord is our God is our Lord.” The parents used to be very particular about this. They taught this to their school going children to get by heart. This belief saying can be found in the book of Deuteronomy 6:4. We must believe up to this very day of biblical history of the Jews that no one believed in any God other than their one God Jehovah. This verse impressed and emphasized more the oneness of God. And it is called “Schema” means (Hear) and it was taken from the first word of the verse and it is at the heart and soul of the Jewish people.

A small parchment of paper concerning that “Schema” is literally placed in a “Mezazah” case mounted on the right of the front door of the Jewish home as a reminder, whenever anyone exits and enters into their dwelling.

The second gift God gave to the humanity through the Jewish people is the “word of God”. That gift is so important, so precious and so vital, because when the people open the book to read the Word of God their fingers will shiver due to fear of God, because every word is blended with truth. We must realize that our eternal God from everlasting to everlasting spoke the word for its existence. Then He shaped man from the dust of the earth. He breathed into man the breath of life and he became a living soul. God made this miracle regarding the creation of man.

The last book of the Bible is called “Revelation”, The title comes from the world, Revelation, and this appear in the first verse of the book and it is a translation of two Greek words. These two worlds were combined together to man away from veiling or we might say an unveiling or “revelation” Some scholars called this book of Revelation as the fifth Gospel, and also the book at seven. So the last book of the Bible is the unveiling making known or Revelation of Christ during the last years of history. The entire Bible is composed of 66 books, 39 in the Old Testament and 27 in the New Testament. All these books were written in about 1500 years by about 40 writers who were inspired by God. The Bible declares to us, where we came from and where we are going and how we are supported to live in order to please God and many more things we find in that ‘Holy Bible’. A scholar commented that the Bible in the greatest of all love letters and from this book came the Judeo - Christian culture.

As a matter of fact we will not imagine how different and how terrible human history would have been, if we did not have the word of God before us. The people of any country who know the word of God and turn down from the Holy scripture will always go rapidly downhill. The world of God from the first book Genesis, the last book Revelation were penned by about 40 luminary personalities. Among such persons, the lawgiver to the Israelites was prophet Moses. Then prophet Isaiah an evangelist and weeping prophet Jeremiah who shed tears and he looked at the Pathetic condition of Jerusalem. After them was King David, a sweet psalmist, then the next one was Daniel a premier prophet who gave to the believers the backbone of prophecy.

And coming to the New Testament, Apostle Peter was considered the intimate companion to Jesus Christ and the solid Rock, James was called half brother of the Lord Jesus Christ, John the beloved apostle and a member of Christ’s inner circle. Apostle Paul was considered the most brilliant theologian and faithful missionary and courageous martyr. All these men mentioned above are the descendants of patriarch Abraham, then Jacob as mentioned in the Bible The Lord used those people under difficult circumstances to get the word of God to us.

The third gift God gave to the world through the Jewish people is Messianic expectation. It is the belief in the coming Messiah that He is an anointed one by the father God. The main purpose of His coming is to defeat the Satan, to be the savior and King of the world. From the Holy Bible the books from Genesis to Malachi give us the account of the nation of Israel, travelling to give birth to the Messiah. As a matter of fact, this statement is only not an exaggeration from the reality. After the fall of Adam and Eve in

the Garden of Eden, God proclaimed the seed of the woman (a man) would. Crush the serpents (Satan) head. (Genesis 3:15). The promise of the seed of the woman, “ who would defeat the Satan was the beginning trail of the coming Messiah the redeemer”.

Since man was created to be the King of the earth, only a man should recapture mans destiny, To get back what is lost, the man should be “deity the God man” Cain the sinful descendant of Adam and Eve was influenced by Satan to kill Abel. The righteous descendant of Adam and Eve the heinous act of this one day the righteous seed of the woman would not be able to crush his head (Genesis 4:8). God counter attacked Satan and the righteous lineage continued with the birth Seth, the son of Adam. Then Satan continued to attach God more by corrupting humanity, bloodline by mixing the sons of God with the daughters of men. (Genesis 6:1-4). Unfortunately, it remained as unchallenged for some time, because there was no seed of the woman to crush the head of Satan.

The bloodline of humanity remained silent for some time, and Satan took the advantage of this and thought he would certainly win the battle and all humanity would die in their sins. They have to be separated from God and live forever. Anyway, God inspite of His love, compassion, grace, mercy, and power over His own creation was compelled by the circumstances to take actions against His people because of their sin. So, God killed all humanity except the family of Noah with universal flood on the earth. As a result of the flood, perhaps hundreds of thousands being inflected with genes that came about as a result of the union between the sons of God (fallen angels) and daughter of men (human women) were miserably killed. But believers or people would be born with the blessing of God on this side of flood and there would be no disturbance for the continuation of the bloodline and the seed of the woman to crush the head of the serpent is still awaiting.

Satan is in continuation of his evil doings. This time we cannot hold of the grandson of Noah King Nimrod for his purpose. The meaning of his name is “revolt” He could infect humanity with a belief in many God’s called polytheism. We all know that God called Abraham after some years contrary to the attempt of Nimrod to come from Ur, the land of Chaldeans to Canaan the Promised Land to established a nation with one God. The seed of the woman would come through miraculously born son Isaac but not Ishmael, who was the son of the flesh. (Genesis 23-25) one of Esau who sold his birth right. Jacob had twelve sons and they became twelve tribes of Israel. The seed which of will defeat Satan comes from the tribe of Judah the Fourth son of Israel.

TIME FOR THE SEEDS OF THE WOMAN TO COME: The first verse from the first chapter of the first book of the New Testament begins with the following words. The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Mathew 1:1). In loud voice Matthew proclaimed these words Hear He is the Messiah, who was a perfect human and undiminished deity. He was the seed of the woman. The trail in identifying the coming Messiah further reveals that the redeemer and victor over Satan would be a descendant of King David (2 Samuel 7:12-16) Satan has been trying to keep the seed away from coming. He used all kinds of dirty wicked and evil means to avoid his coming but now the time has come for the fulfillment of all his plans.

As the scriptures foretold, he was born at the most appropriate time as a redeemer after 4000 years. For seed of the woman, who was going to crush the head of the serpent is dwelling with men. The Messiah who was longed for, who was hoped for, and who was prayed for, was now among His people. Herod the great agent of Satan and usurper of the throne of Israel heard that the descendant of David. the real king of Jews was born and the throne of Herod was threatened Immediately king Herod sent his solders, to kill all the male children in Bethlehem and around. It is said, the soldiers killed about two hundred boys and there is a room among three rooms near the birth place of Jesus Christ.

But Joseph was warned of this danger by an angel and he took both Jesus and Mary immediately to Egypt for their safety. (Matt 2:13-14) eventually thirty years later the Lord Jesus began his pubic ministry. In his daily routine work he helped the needy, healed the sick people, and preached the Gospel about the eternal kingdom. He called his people to repent for their sin, while preaching so, when He came to His own creation and His own people received Him not (John 1:11) then the Jewish leaders also along with the prophet turned against Jesus and the Roman governor Pontius Pilot politically found him worthy of crucifixion. He was finally crucified and with his death and all the disciples went into hiding. Then what the Satan and the army of fallen angels did.

Satan and his followers must have extremely felt happy over the death of the King of Jews. For centuries the Satan must have tempted the human on many occasions who was going to crush his head from coming into this world. Satan was wrong on two points. The first point is that Satan was not the controlling authority and responsible for the death of Jesus as he thought. Jesus said no man taketh it (my life) from Me but I lay it down of Myself (by my choice) I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it



(again)” (John 10:18). Again He said, for even the son of man cannot to be ministered unto but to minister and to give his life as ransom for many (mark 10:45) Jesus is our great high priest, and as our high priest, He has to offer to His father a sacrifice for our sin. So He could do both the high priest and the sacrifice.

The second point is Satan posed himself premature with the shouts of “Checkmate” again and again. It is an Arabic word which originated in the Middle East. and the meaning of the word is your king is dead. The seed of Abraham who was going to give blessing to the world had not been checkmated. He had one more merit most wonderful thing that is on the third day Christ came out of His grave and conquered death as He promised with this incident Satan was defeated but not executed after His resurrection He spent forty days on the earth and then went to His father to sit at the right-hand side of the throne. He would come again to destroy Satan completely.

The time has been passing after this event and Satan will be trying to rule the world again with the support of his progeny the Anti-Christ. This will happen during the seven years period called Tribulation. The major attack will be launched against Israel during the great Tribulation period. (Matthew 24:18) also referred to as the time of Jacob Troubles” (Jeremiah 30:7) and a time of troubles such as never was (Daniel 12:11). At that time Satan and the Anti - Christ are on the threshold of victory but only one thing will hinder them. It would be the time called the day of the Lord. Jesus will return to the earth with the power of Omnipotent and indefinite glory. Then the world will be purged of its sin. The Anti - Christ and the prophets will be cast into the Lake of fire (Revelation 19:20)

Then what is the punishment Christ will give to the Satan? He will be cast into a bottomless pit during 1000 years. It is also called the Millennial kingdom of Christ. During that 1000 years Satan will not be allowed to deceive the nations. After 1000 years Satan will be loosed for a short period, and then cast into the lake of fire, to be tormented forever day and night (Revelation 20:10) The final punishment of Satan will be the fulfillment of the prophecy which explains the seed of the woman will crush the serpents head. (Genesis 3:15)

## In the Days of Noah

The first coming of the son of God is based on the virgin birth. He led sinless life. He became victorious in everything and subsequently ascended to heaven to sit on the throne of His father at the right side of Him. Then from there He will serve as our advocate and guide “High Priest.” He actually came to this world to pay our debt that we made through our sin. During His first coming as the son of God, He accomplished every work that was entrusted to Him by His father. And also Jesus with His grace and through His faith made it possible to all sinners to become saints and eternal sons and daughters of God our Father.

This wonderful transaction cannot be seen but only experienced and this change has been given a good number of designations. Apostle John called it “born again” (John 3:7). Luke called it “saved” (Acts 2:21). Titus then Apostle Paul’s faithful helper called it “regeneration” which means “rebirth” (Titus 3:5), Apostle Paul, who was called according to history of the Bible, the greatest theologian missionary and perhaps the greatest scholar of all times called this “quickened,” which means “made alive” (Ephesians 2:1). The stars from the universe will not be sufficient to broadcast our creator and Lord our gratitude for His so great salvation (Hebrews 2:3). In spite of our Lord’s ministry on our behalf, His father’s plan is not yet completed. It is very important, but not correctly understood what we are as believers, today, and it is the only “earnest” of our salvation. The earnest is its down payment and there is no much more by ours at the second coming of Christ until that time we are saved but still.

- 1) We have the Adamie nature.
- 2) We grow old and tired.
- 3) We are warned to put on the whole armor of God so that we may stand against the cunning devices of the devil.
- 4) We die and return to the dust.
- 5) We live upon the sin cursed earth which has hurricanes, earthquakes, famines, plagues, marching armies, carnivorous animals, corrupt governments, wicked dictators and so on.

The above mentioned points should not give the impression that Jesus had not done anything for our redemption during His first coming. According to His plan those things are supposed to be done during His second coming. Until that time, we have to honor the Gospel because it is the word of God with power. “Unto salvation.” Yet in Christ, we are safe and secure. But still, like our patriarch Abraham, we have to look for a city which will save good and strong foundations. In addition to that the maker and builder must be our Lord, we have before us a new heaven and new earth, which will be free from Adamic curse and perfect in everything. The new

heaven and the new earth have to be brought out, but that can be only done by Jesus Christ, when He comes for the second time.

As a matter of fact, the first coming of Christ is perfect, but incomplete without His second coming. And the second coming of Christ becomes powerless without the first coming. The first coming of Christ is actually focused more on the gracious and gentle Jesus who came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life as ransom for many" (Mark 10.45). In spite of all memorable things, He did for the people with false allegations He was put on the cross at Calvary and died for the holiness of His father God. Every believer is curiously awaiting the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is believed that, His second coming will make Him to come to limelight and it brings Him a total and unconditional victory to Him as the Lion of Judah. Then He will purify the earth, all its evil and in a millennial kingdom.

The fact is that the two comings of Jesus into this world will certainly compliment at each other. The prophetic scriptures that speak about the return of Jesus and the end of the age, are not described in such a way simply to satisfy our curiosity about the last days, but the main purpose is to share with us the glorious consummation of our salvation and the historical final battle Jesus Christ is going to fight. As the king of Lion of Judah, He will fight against the Satan. He will win the battle completely and unconditionally on our behalf because of His eternal love.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about His second coming and end of the age "as the days of Noah were so shall also the coming of the son of man be" (Matthew 24.37). How it was the life of humanity before the universal Noahic flood, the condition of the humanity will be the same, before the second coming of Jesus. The above said sentence is very important and let us try to understand the hidden meaning. It is as the humanity was wicked and sinful before the flood, of Noah, the humanity will remain sinful before the second coming of Jesus the Messiah. Actually, the world has been with sin since the time of our first parents Adam and Eve, Now a days, we hear some indications that we are going toward the end of the age and return of Christ.

So, in the mind of the Lord, we may be the generation, when He said, "this generation" will not pass away until all be satisfied. Then what is that generation will be like, and to know about that generation has become most important to all believers. Then what must have prompted to speak about Noah's flood at this stage, His second coming and the end of the age.

**WHY MESSIAH WAS REJECTED:** It is frequently said that the Gospel of Matthew is like a bridge between the old and New Testaments. Sometimes it is pointed out by some commentators that the Gospel of Matthew points out Jesus as the son of David and rightful King to sit on the throne of David. It is

also pointed out as the gospel of Matthew explained that Jesus is the promised Messiah the seed of the woman who is going to crush the head of the serpent. All the three points are correct.

The main purpose of all those statements of Matthew was he wanted to see repentance among Israelites. So, repentance is the central point in the Gospel of Matthew. John the Baptist, the herald and fore runner of Christ forcibly preached to Israel "Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3.2). The Lord Jesus Christ also preached the same for the repentance of Israel. The twelve disciples were asked by Jesus to go over different parts of Israel, and preach same message to the people, that they must repent as the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. This call was mainly for Israel to repent for its sin.

As time went on, the Israel nation itself bluntly rejected Jesus and it was intensified. He so called leaders from the Jews deliberately misled the common people into the wrong direction against Christ. Finally, the religious and political leaders (pharisees and Herodians) joined together and asked the son of God some silly questions in the public. King intention was not to get the answers for the questions they put, only but to trap and discredit Him before the common people. Jesus understood the wicked nature of those leaders. As a little boy Jesus, who was meek and mild attacked them with most powerful and direct words; and with the voice of the king "woe unto scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites and after each woe," He illustrated how they were hypocrites.

The word "Hypocrate" means a fake head. It is said, those Scribes and Pharisees were a group of "grade A" hypocrites. They had the authority to try to trap and discredit the religious son of God. Their exterior was something and their interior was opposite to it. Jesus as the King of Israel, felt much as the Israelites did not repent for their sin. So, Jesus from the depth of His heart and with the anguish of His soul made even the angels weep and proclaim the following words.

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them, which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children to gather even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold your house is left unto you, ye shall not see me since forth till ye shall say blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 23.37-39).

This disciples were stunned when Jesus proclaimed His departure from them. In the beginning they left everything of them in their houses and simply followed Jesus when He called them and remained with Him for three years. As true followers, they listened to His teachings. They witnessed His life and

the miracles Hedid. They were under the impression that Jesus would rule Israel, and His disciples would get some positions and power and prestige. When they were in such high hopes His announcement regarding His departure was like a bombshell. They became desperated and wanted to ask Him something more. They asked Him the sign of His coming again and the end of the age. They asked Him two questions. The first one is about “time” they wanted to know when the temple and the building would be destroyed.

It is said, there is no proper answer for this question, except reminding us the statement of Christ, He said, the presence of God would not dwell in the temple, unless the Israelites repent for their sin at least by the time Jesus comes for the second time. The second question of the disciples was regarding the identification the disciples desired to know about the sign of His second coming and the end of the age. According to prophetic saying there is only one sign of the coming of our Lord. The events concerning the last days can cast shadows and those shadows are getting larger and clearer. As a results many bible teachers basing on the present situation, in both Israel nation and the Middle East, it is one way conformed that we are really going toward the coming of Christ and the end of the age.

God provided the “signs” which were like miracles to authority to substantiate the significant truth. And also signs are different from prophetic shadows. If we observe carefully, there are more than hundred signs in the Old Testament itself. There is sufficient reason when apostle Paul said “For the Jews require a sign and the greeks seek after wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:22). At the time of Israelites wilderness, wanderings for the purpose of liberating them, Moses happened to enter the court of Pharaoh and Aaron threw down his rod, which became a serpent. The rod of Arondevoured the rods of the servants of Pharaoh. The main purpose of this reference was to be a sign or proof to pharaohthat the God of Moses was the real Godand Moses was the obedient messenger of God. Some hundreds of years before Christ was born. God told prophet Isaiah to give the house of Israel a sign, so that they would recognize the Messiah as and when He would come. In addition to that He would be virgin born.(Isaiah 7:14)

About seven hundred years later the angels appeared to shepherds who were tending their stock of sheep in a field of Bethlehem. The angles delivered the news to them. They further told them that the savior was born, and that would be a sign of miracle to substantiate that He was the real “Macoy” and He was born of a virgin. Then during the early ministry of Jesus, the Pharisees came and attracted Him for a sign of His authority for doing revolutionary teaching and the power of His wonderful miracles. Jesus told them they were an adulterous generation which is looking for a sign. They have been faithful to the writings of Moses, and the prophets, and along

with them they would have known who Jesus was as the scripture spoke about Him. In their final request for a sign Jesus chose to give them one sign. He said “kill me and on the third day I will raise from the dead.” Hear the sign or the miracle the Lord indicated would be enough for his teaching and miracles would be His resurrection.

The Bible teachers called the Olivet Discourse, because it was a discourse given on the mount of Olivet, Jesus began to answer the questions of His disciples in connection with His second coming and the end of the age, what He was telling. So, He moved directly and logically to the last seven years of history, which was also called “Tribulation” and more accurately called “seventieth week” of the prophet (Daniel 24-27). The two high ranking archangels Gabriel and Michael would give this kind of salient facts to prophets like Daniel concerning his people Israelites.

The first seventy seven weeks or 490 years are determined upon the people of Daniel (Israelites) by God to bring them to a victorious and religious completion at the end of human history. Secondly, after accurately revealing the starting point of 445 BC the commandment to restore and rebuild Jerusalem—and following the completion of sixty nine weeks of years (483 years) which would reach to 30 AD the messiah would be cut off (Killed). The crucifixion of Christ had taken place exactly just three days after His Olivet Discourse.” The third point is that the seventieth week, the final seven year period is not a grieving with the first sixty nine weeks following the crucifixion of Christ. The church which Apostle Paul taught was a mystery, not revealed in other generations had its origin with the beginning of the church, age Israel was stopped. Those which function again, unknowingly make a covenant with the Anti-Christ. This covenant is repeatedly referred to (Daniel 9:27) here as a covenant with death. It was the Jewish people who were called to repent. It was the Jewish religious leaders who tried to discredit Him. It was the Jewish Temple on the Mount Moriah that could be divided of the divine presence and be destroyed. It was Jewish people who manhandled Jesus to some extent and finally killed Him. It was the Jewish people who killed the prophets and stoned the Messengers of God and rejected Christ. It was Jewish Apostles, who asked their leader for the sign of His second coming and the end of the age.

In the book of Matthew, Chapter 24 verses 4 through 43, the Lord describes the events that will occur during the seventieth week of Daniel which is still in the future. But in the “Olivet Discourse” the Lord clearly answered the question the disciples asked Him regarding the sign of His coming and the end of the age. The “Olivet Discourse” of the Lord actually deals with the final seven years period. In it the Lord decided at last concerning Israelites. He speaks about the church, which is the indication of the wrath of God,

about to commence. This is the sixth seal, but before the seventh seal is to be opened and the scroll is also to be opened for the diving wrath comes out of it and 1,44,000 Jews will be sealed by God, and be able to serve God's wrath during the day of the Lord. And then a great multitude from every nation, that they will be so great in number that is uncountable. This uncountable multitude is the resurrected, raptured and glorified ones. The church now is in Heaven with the Lord. It is a pre-wrath rapture. It is said in the Bible after this I held and a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindred's, and people and tongues stood before the throne and before the Lamb clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands and cried with a loud voice saying salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the lamb and one of the elders answered saying unto me, what are those, which are arranged in white robes? and whence came they? and i said unto him, sir thou knowest, And he said to me, these are they which came out of "great Tribulation" and washed their robes and made them white in the blood of Lamb "(Revelation 7:9-13).

The church is raptured during time because Jesus is coming to begin His wrath upon the earth and church, is not going to be a victim to the wrath of God. Yet, it is not exempted from the persecution of the Anti-Christ The sign of the coming of Jesus will be the happiest news for the entire Christendom. The presence of his intrinsic eternal perfection, will dispel the world wide darkness, which has been caused by the cosmic (disturbances) that shut off the light of the Sun, the Moon and the stars. Immediately after the Tribulation of those days, the power of the scroll is much that the sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall down from heaven and finally all the powers of the heaven shall be shaken totally.

After all these things happen, we can have the appearance of the sign of the son of man in heaven and then, all the tribes of the earth will mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels, with great sound of a trumpet and they gather together his elect from the four (winds) from one end of heaven to the other. Any way Jesus Christ answered the question of His disciples regarding the sign of His coming and also end of the age. He said, "Now learn a parable of a fig tree." The word parable comes from two Greek words (para and bullo) when these two words, put together or to throw orto each alongside the popular definition is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. The earthly part of the parable is that the Lord is using the fig tree when a branch of it is tender and put forth leaves, which indicate (spiritual) meaning of its parable. So, likewise ye (in the same manner) when ye shall see all these things (the things leading up to His coming and just shared) know that it (His coming and the end of the age) is near even at the

doors” (Matthew 24.33). Then the Lord continued His speech. “Verily I say unto you. This generation (this is a reference to a generation living during first seven years of history) shall not pass till all those things be fulfilled (Matthew 24:34). Jesus with absolute authority concerning what all He said, about His second coming and end of the age, declared that heaven and earth shall pass away but the words of my coming shall not pass away. So to say it is hundred percent guaranty of His coming and nothing on the planet can stop it. He will come and accomplish everything according to His plan, and that should be correctly understood by the believers. The Lord reminds the believers the impact of (Noah’s) flood, and its severity. The Lord will make a powerful statement first and then proclaims. But as the days “woe” were so shall also the coming of the son of man be” (Matthew 24.37).

If the people pay deaf ear to the words of the Lord, they shall automatically reap the consequences. Every believer knows perfectly that the days before the flood were sinful. Here the Lord gives the Bible the wonderful description of the life of the people before the flood. They were eating and drinking, they were marrying and giving their children in marriage to others. Those things had been going on until Noah entered the Ark. In Genesis chapter 6, it is described how the life before the flood. The words used in 12 verses for the people of the Noahic generation were wickedness, destroy, corrupt, and violence. And more pathetic about them was that those ugly things were repeated again and again against them so God had a very bad impression about them.

The Lord particularly pointed out in their character as they were eating, drinking, marrying and giving in marriages. There was no wrong in doing all those things because they were part and parcel of the society. But they paid more attention to those things only, and did not care what was going on around them. Noah the builder and the prophet while entering the Ark with his family cried unto them painfully to come and enter the ark, they simply laughed at him and went on their way. This point showed their arrogance finally reaped the consequences. It is said Noah and his family members had taken about 120 years to build the Ark.

The Lord finally says, those who were unsaved and refused to listen to the word of God and come to the cross will have to face, and due punishment like consummation before a holy righteous just and all knowing judge. The warning is clearly mentioned in the scriptures it is said, “Be not desired; God is not mocked,” forwhatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap” (Galatians 6.7). Our life is very short in this world and we will have to face the wicked days very soon as the days of Noah. God is calling all of us whole heartedly to go to Him and repent with faith in Christ let us question ourselves humbly, whether we should hear the call of our God almighty and walk on His foot prints.



## The Rejoining of Israel

The believers must have faith in the word of God regarding the end of the age; but not upon the events which have been occurring time and again. Though, the events appear to be more significant they are no way concerned to the future of our life. Sometimes the Bible teachers magnify the prophetic sayings and explain them, that they are fulfilling the truth of the prophecies. We shall try to understand with our balance of mind the events that have been occurring during the end of the age. "Are, the readers might expect a detailed illustration from the Book, Are you ready for the end of times" written by J.C. Ryle some time ago, He was a servant of God, with a wonderful insight into the plan of God, for human history and also about the end of the age.

Here, he mentioned two salient points regarding the difficulties in unfulfilled prophecies. The first point is the second advent of Jesus Christ (before the Millennium). The second point is the rejoining of Jews, who were scattered into many countries and form Jewish nation and finally their restoration. We have to take it for granted that those two events must be fulfilled and then only salvation would be achieved for the entire humankind. As true believers we should not deny these two happenings, and if we do so, it is nothing but the denial of the divinity of Jesus Christ. The author Ryle clearly pointed out about the Jews, who rejoined their native land from different countries. At that time, there were only about 20,000 Jews in Palestine. According to the information given by Ryle, only a moderate number of Jews came to their homeland Palestine at that time. But there was continuous persecution of Jews Russia and East Europe, which was called "to go up". It is a general reference to going up to Jerusalem because Jerusalem is the Home of God.

In 1897 Theodor Herzl who was mentioned by many as the modern Father of Israel and he became the moving force behind, "The first Zionist congress". Then under his leadership the first meeting took place in Basil, Switzerland. In that historic gathering Herzl pleaded for the formation of Jewish homeland. After the first world war, there was a dramatic change politically, in the Middle East, More area of Palestine and the surrounding areas came under the control of British and France and that continued for about 400 years (1517 – 1917) and the rule Ottomen of Turkezah empire. Then in 1917 the British government approved the "Balfour Declaration" which was named after the architect Lord Balfour. The outcome for the declaration was for the establishment of a homeland to the Jews in Palestine.

Then in 1922 a League of Nations was formed and gave to the British a “mandate” and authorized it, to declare a Jewish nation in Palestine. The league of Nations was an International legal body that stamped for the formation of Jewish homeland. Then during the period of 1933 and 1945 about six million Jews were murdered in the death camps which were tactfully controlled by Adolph Hitler the dictator of Germany. It was really heinous act beyond comprehension. This brutal act gained sympathy for the Jews, which finally supported them for their homeland. Then in 1947 president Harry Truman found on his desk in the “White House” U.S.A. with the words “The Buck stops Here”. It demanded that Americas state Department and Ambassador to the United Nations” strongly supported the United Nations resolution regarding the partition of palestine for Jews and Arab state. And without the intervention of president Harry Truman at that time in this matter, there would not have been the existence of Israel Nation today.

The resolution of United Nations was passed on 13<sup>th</sup> May 1947. It is really strange exactly fifty years earlier, that is in 1897 Herzl wrote in his dairy that a Jewish nation would become a reality in “five or fifty years”. J.C.Ryle never imagined that the Jews had to fight wars to defend themselves during 1948, 1967, 1973 and 1982; apart from frequent terrorist attacks. Those attacks in the Israelites made to fight for their survival. In the recorded human history there were no people who happened to be driven away from their homeland for 1900 years, and finally returned home with some hope. For many centuries, and many generations they lived the life of depression and desolations. No other country in the world had such bitter experience expect Israel. The reason is God Himself proclaimed such decree as a punishment for their disobedience. The historians social scientists and also liberal theologians could not help but accept this kind of unprecedented historical event. As a matter of fact, they have no logical explanation people have to either honour the words of God of the Bible or only serach their heads in utter confusion. This kind of unfortunate event never happened in the history of any nation. J.C.Herzl saw the Jews have been returned to their homeland after constant struggle and spending their lives like Nomads in different countries for about 1900 years.

J.C.Ryle could not come to his own conclusion by honouring the human logic. He did not consult any fortune teller nor had any authentic information from the events of the world, which have not yet occurred. But he reached his conclusion only through on source. It was the word of God. Ryle had strong faith in God, and His words. His belief was that whatever was impossible to human beings would be quite possible to God Almighty. The return of the

Jews to their native place is not a surprize to the believers today, but a greater advantage. And the Christians have also got the advantage of watching the events that are mentioned above, which are going to be successful. These wonderful events are like open window that allow light to enter into the house. Likewise they have allowed us to see actually the beginning of the “dry bones” coming together and Israelites regathered in their homeland. To say briefly this is what the prophets foretold (Ezekiel 37.1-14). As recorded the events have been occuring very rapidly, which threw more light on the word of God, concerning Israel, and their reunion in their native land in the last days. The nation of Iran, which has been working on Nuclear capability happened to announce, time and again, her intention to destroy the nation of Israel and wipe out it from the world map. And this event has it greatersignificance. Added to that, the indifferentattitude to Lurking toward, Israel is another Bibli-cal indication of coming event.

The book of Zechariah 12<sup>th</sup> chapter begins with those words. “The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel”. The literal meaning of the word “burden” is “heavy load” carried by a donkey (Exodus 23.5) or like a deep or heavy concern (Job 7.20). But in this connection prophet Zechariah used the word burn as a “divine message” or revelation from God. It is a message generally heavy laden with warnings of coming divine judgement. If we study this article carefully we will certainly find out to be very informative because the message of the Zechariah prophet will help us to see and understand the radical and disastrous path Israel nation and the world are put in. But this does not keep us in suspense. It speaks about a great victory in Christ. Zechariah’s 12 to 14<sup>th</sup> chapters do not convey a message against Israel as the major Bib-lical transaction suggest but only a message concerning Israel. This prophetic message also speaks about the activities of the neighbouring nations against Israel, during the last days they may also involve but never play a major role.

Judgment and Blessing: The message of prophet Zechariah removed the curtain and permitted us to see clearly the last chapter of glory before the establishment of Millennial kingdom by the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The prophet modietconspicuous, says that at the end of the age, those Jews who would survive the”Great Tribulation” the Lord taught that the period be shortened and it is less than 3½ years in duration. Then all the Jews who will have faith in Christ during the “Day of the Lord” enter the kingdom age. This is the period of time about which Apostle paul also spoke. He wrote that blindness in part has happened to Israel, until the fullness of the gentiles come in. All so all Israel, alive at that time shall be saved (Romans 11.25 - 26) We as

readers and believers must appreciate this happy news.

Though the prophetic words appear to be good, they point out that before the Israelites are taken to Christ, two third of the population will perish during the “Great Tribulation” period as already mentioned and the time shall be shortened. The statistic was prepared by one of the prophets of Israel and so that information would cause anguish in the hearts of all believers. But later following the time of “Jacob’s Trouble” there shall be a foundation opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness. Then regarding dark days period to Israel’s national redemption, God said through His prophet I will gather all nations against Jerusalem for the battle, and the city shall be taken the people shall not be cut off from the city”. (Zechariah 14.2)

God said further that for His people there would be unimaginable suffering before their repentance and salvation offer is really tragic and unfavorable news and about the nations that attack the prophet wrote the following lines, “And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem (those whom God in His grace spared) shall even go up from year to year to worship the king the Lord, of hosts and to keep the feast of Tabernacles”. (Zechariah 14:16)

The surviving Israelites would enter the Millennial kingdom and worship their king, who sets on His throne in new Jerusalem. This is really encouraging news to the readers and believers. The prophet added to this that the gentile nations must also stop rebellion and surrender themselves to their creator whole heartedly. Otherwise they too will experience unbelievable devastation from the Lord. In their connection the prophet quoted following lines. And this shall be the plague where with the Lord will smite all the people that sought against Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass, in that day a great tumult from Lord shall be among them and they shall say Lord, everyone on the hand of his neighbor and his land shall rise up against it land of his neighbor. (Zechariah 14.12-13)

The gentiles have to suffer a lot before they become eligible for salvation and their participation in the Millennial reign of Jesus Christ. This news is really shocking but one has to suffer in order to get salvation as Christ suffered for our salvation. For both Israel and heathen nations a time of incredible peace, joy and blessings are foretold. Yet before the blessing a terrible judgment will take place. There is a law that men cannot avoid it. God shall not be mocked at and men cannot turn up their noses at God, God has long suffering and He has perfect memory.

For the men of Israel and heathen nations a day of reaping will come. There is a popular saying in the Bible. "What we so we reap". If men sow flesh they will reap flesh only. And if men sow the spirit, they will reap spirit. Same is to case with the plants only. The world has sown the flesh and the end of the age will be the time for reaping. It will not be beautiful to look at but righteous.

It is a question of time: As a matter of fact, we are not left in doubt regarding the timing of the prophetic message of Zechariah. The expression occurs, not in that seventeen times in Zechariah and chapter 12.14 but it appears seven times and in short fourteen verses of 12th chapter.

In that day will I make Jerusalem (12.3)

In that day said the Lord (12.4)

In that day will I make the governors. (12.6)

In that day shall the Lord defend (12.8) at ——— at that day be as David (12.8)

In that day ——— I will seek (12.9)

In that day, shall there be a great morning (12.11)

The expressions "that day" or "in that day" in the above quoted passages are associated in the text with the Day of the Lord. So, the Day of the Lord, should not be confessed for a twenty four hour period of time. The importance lies in using the word "day" in expression. Actually, the day of the Lord is indefinite time period, which begins at the end of the age and it will lost perhaps a year or two, when God is going to involve directly in the efforts of men. It seems some commentators of the Bible tried to find the fulfillment of the prophecy of Zechariah in the centuries that followed its utterances. Some attempts have been made to associate the prophecy with the expeditions of Alexander the great along the west coast of palestine and down to Egypt in the third century B.C. we can also remember the destruction of Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D by Roman mercilessly. But in reality these examples will not resemble the wonderful events described by prophet Zechariah.

The commentators are of the opinion that God has washed away his hands with re-gard to Israelites, because they bluxily rejected Him. So, they last the sympathy of God and could not claim for His divine protection consequently. His redemption of the nation at the end of the age whatever is said in favour of Israelites, it is simply a foreign to their theology. Apart from

that the commentators also vainly attempted to explain the obvious teaching of this prophecy as well as some other prophecies. It is crystal clear to any honest inquiry that events mentioned in the 12th chapter of Zechariah have never fulfilled according to the history.

The fact is that no one confidently say that Israelites have repented of their sin and believed in their true Messiah Jesus Christ. Keeping these things in view God has declared what is going to happen “in that day” to His chosen people Israelites. So He said, “And I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem and shall be in bitterness; for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born”. (Zechariah 12.10)

In that great day, there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for their sin and uncleanness. So, it is quite clear that the events that are mentioned by Zechariah in 12th chapter will certainly occur at the end of the age particularly during the second half of Daniel’s. Seventeenth week or otherwise known as and which is commonly called the “Great Tribulation”.

Location of Jerusalem: According to the geographical location of Jerusalem and the events mentioned by prophet Zechariah in the message it appears some commentators twisted the meaning of it due to their half knowledge. As a prophet, Zechariah mentioned by name in his 12th chapter that the city of Jerusalem about eleven times in fourteen verses. Then six times the tribal region of Judah which is located South and East of Jerusalem, mentioned. There is five times reference to the house of David. For the purpose of information, Jerusalem, Judah and all places of Israel are clearly pointed out. If we look into the bible sincerely and believe in what all God said is true, and also faith in the message of God, then we must take it for granted that Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel located with the following boundaries. To her west there Mediterranean sea. To her North, South and East, there are Arab Muslim countries.

But some past and present commentators, passed their own comments without proper knowledge on the message given by prophet Zechariah. They gave their opinion regarding the proper location of Jerusalem. Their twisting of the meaning of the message of God, caused the prophet of Israel, to have different opinion about God’s word and toward His character.

Battle where God takes part: The message of God given to the prophet Zechariah appears to be auto biographical. It does not seem to be about the conflict between Israel and Gentile Nations at the end of the age, But the most significant of the message is the direct involvement of the Lord in that

conflict. After reading the above passage of prophetic words, some readers may be confused and confronted regarding the direct involvement of the Lord. The Lord openly de-clared that He will do whatever He wants as the king of the universe. Then what is going to do depends upon the impact of the issue. So, we have to understand His character. The pur-pose of His second coming with the sound of trumpets His consummation of this age, inpreparation for the “golden age” to come, all these things we have to understood by paying more attention to them.

In the chapter 12 of Zechariah, it is said in not less than seven times what Lord is going to do. If we think for a while it appears the prophet is taking dictation when God begins his message with two words, “I will” and what follows is a summary of what the Lord will do what must be the purpose of God to accomplish is always backed up with aim of omnipotence. God has spoken the following words to the prophet Zechariah.

1. I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all people round about. (v.2)
2. I will make Jerusalem a burdensome sensation for all people. (v.3)
3. I will smite every horse with astonishment and his rider with madness. (v.4)
4. I will make the governors of Judah like an hearth of fire coming the word. (v.5)
5. I will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem (V.8)
6. I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem(v.9)
7. I will pour on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplications (v.10)

The Statements like “I will” given by the Lord Himself are not simply literary because or exaggeration or allegory or Hyperbole or science fiction. As a matter of fact such state-ments can my vital concrete and prophetic truth. As per the prophecy at the end of the age, many nations are going to join together and want to attack the Holy City Jerusalem and seize it. Actually such attacks were not new to Israelites, because they were forced to participate in a good member of battles. But this is a different attack. This is not one day battle. This is part of larger campaign linked with the second com-ing of the Messiah. Jesus Christ from the heaven to the earth with the music of trumpets. He is coming to take part in the battle of Armageddon to destroy all the gentile nations and establish His Millennial Kingdom in Jerusalem as its capital. Another prophet Ezekiel also mentioned about this battle on the holy land. He said the attack would take place in the later years (Ezekiel 38.8) in the

later days (Ezekiel 38.16). Some scholars are under the impression that the gentile nations would attack Jerusalem within twenty five years and also earlier. They said the following nations will attack the holy city.

1. Magog can be associated with the ancient Scythians. The magogites were located between the black and Caspian seas. The rugged causes mountains served as their southern border (Ezekiel 38.2). They comprised the region of southern republics of the former soviet union. Today the population is more than sixty million. This Magog includes major part of Russia.
2. MESHECH: Closely aligned with Magog. It is located in Cappadocia in northern Turkey.
3. TUBAL: Like Meshech was also closely aligned with Magog. Tubal is located in southern Turkey in the region of Cilicia.
4. PERSIA: It is located toward east of Jerusalem. In the history this Persian kingdom was considered most powerful in its time. Today it is no more as Persian nation. It has changed into name to modern Iran in 1935.
5. CUSH : It was the name of the region of North Africa and south of Egypt. At present it is part of Sudan and Ethiopia.
6. LYBIA : This name is seen almost every day with some thrilling news.
7. GOMER: It is located in the area of the ancient Cimmerians in central northern Turkey.
8. TOGARRNNAH: It is located near the important ancient Biblical cities of Carchemish, etc. It was the place where Babylonians under the command of Nebuchadnezzar defeated the Egyptians in the battle, and also Harn. Abraham started his journey from Ur to the promised land happened to stay at Haran on the way for a season. Togarrnah is located in eastern part of Turkey.
9. SHEBA : It is located may be in the region of the south western Arabian peninsula.
10. DEDAN : this is also located in the Arabian peninsula.

These are the nations going to attack Jerusalem (Israel) at the end of the age. They are = Magog, Meshech, Tubal, Iran, Cush, Lybia, Gomer, Togarrnah, Sheba, and Dedan, and the place of battle is Armageddon.

These ten nations going to attack Jerusalem are identified a number of important facts that came to lime light. According to the guessing of the commentators and prophetic view these 10 nations first surround Israel on



the north, south are east with the Mediterranean sea on the west. Israel will feel it is trapped. The second point is that all ten nations appear to have joined together and form a coalition or calphate. Then they move under one leader with unifying power and influence. The third most important point is all ten nations will be identified as Islamic. So, it is confirmed that ten Muslim nations join together to attack Israel. To give a clear picture, the attack is not against Israel, but against Christianity and ultimately against the Lord Jesus Christ himself of the fourth points is Meshech, Tubal, Gomer and Torarrnah, these regions are within Turkey. As a matter of fact, Turkey is a large country with more population. It has more powerful Islamic army in the world. In addition to this, Turkey is controlling the waters of the rivers of Euphrates and Tigris with many bridges or dams till they go to the Middle East.

Turkey through her extreme Muslim president has turned to a constitutionally mandated Muslim religions government. As a result, the warm friendship between Turkey and Israel has turned into hostility. So, the plan of all these nations is to destroy the people of God. Then God proclaimed his decree through prophet Jeremiah the following words with assurance to the Jewish people, "Then saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by the day, and the ordinances of the Moon and of the stars for a light by night . If those ordinances (the Sun, Moon and stars) depart from before me saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also ceases from being a nation before me forever." (Jeremiah 31.35-36)

The meaning of the word of God is that if men can first destroy the Sun, Moon and stars then they can succeed in wiping out the Jewish people. Therefore, to defeat Jewish people means, they should defeat Jesus Christ who is coming as a legitimate heir to a legitimate throne over a legitimate people. He is not a usurper like Satan. He is lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Messiah and king of Israel. Such great and most powerful Messiah will never be defeated. Whatever may be the capacity of the enemy nations that are going to attack Israel, ten nations against one is really uneven and not fair. But those ten nations in spite of their massive force, cannot stand in the battlefield. So it becomes one sided war, and the enemy cannot understand who is hitting them unseen.

Actually the plagues God brought upon Egyptians were insignificant, what God is going to use in ensuring battle at Armageddon. It is said God is going to do all seven things against the attackers, who are planning to harm His home, on earth. The plan of God is wonderful. Six of them are leveled against the attacking nations, and one is directed toward Israel. What are the

seven things God is going to do?

1. The Lord said, "I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling into all the people around about when they shall be in the seizure both against Judah and against Jerusalem". (v.2). The enemy will be very anxious to go and destroy Israel, as early as possible. But their nations will become psychologically intoxicated and become dizzy, Irrational and without sound. People of other nations have already seen the same above said temperament on the part of Middle Eastern nations in their politics toward Israel.

2. The Lord said, I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for the people, and that burden, themselves with it (the stone) shall be cut into pieces, though all the people of the earth shall be gathered together against it.

What is that heavy stone for all people? Then, while attempting to leave the stone away why will the nations be cut in pieces? In this context the heavy stone which will cut the nations in pieces as they attempt to leave is no other than Jesus Christ Himself. It is only because of Him, the nations are planning to attack Jerusalem. According to the scriptures Christ is represented as a stone repeatedly. In the book of Daniel, chapter 2 Christ is described as a smiling stone, who will smash the feet and toes of the statue of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. The whole story behind is that the statue represents the gentle world powers but it will come tumbling down. (Daniel 23.4-35)

Then in the Ephesians chapter 2 Christ is described as the chief corner stone. Here apostle Paul explained that the true church is built upon the foundations of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone (Ephesians 2.20) Peter which speaking about in his 2 chapter revealed that Jews stumbled as the "stumbling stone". (1 Peter 2.6-8) They did not stumble over a Christ but the Jews believed in a coming Christ or Messiah. They stumbled over a crucified Christ because for them the crucified Christ was a stumbling stone. So, the scriptures presented the son of God as the smiling stone to the nations, the chief corner stone to the church, and the stumbling stone to Israelites. Again in the book of Zechariah, Christ is presented as a very "heavy stone". The nations at the end of the age can do nothing to Him. But they will try to leave the Messiah of Israel away and replace with Islam "Allah". Of course in the attempt they themselves will be cut into pieces".

The same type of truth is shown in psalms 2 chapter. The psalmist said, "Why do the heathen (nations) rage and the people imagine availing. The kings of the earth, set themselves (in defiance) and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed (Messiah) saying. Let us

break their bands asunder and east away their cords from us”. (Psalm 2.1 – 3) At the end of the age, the nations of the world wish to break the bands and cast away all divine restraint and accountability. They want do things according to their whims and fancies. Still those pagans inspite of their attempt, cannot succeed in casting away Christ because God has decreed. It is said “yet (inspite of men’s rebellion) have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree the Lord had saith unto me with a rod of iron thou shalt dash them nations in pieces like potter’s vessel”. (Psalm 2.6-9)

3. The Lord said, I will smite every horse with astonishment and his rider with madness (v.2) For the ancient warriors the horse was the symbol of power and might. But those pagan nations attacking army can never be equal to the son of God. He will smite the horses with wonder or to say more clearly with confusion. Then the riders of the horses with experience madness.

4. The Lord said, ”I will” make the government of Judah like an heart of fire among the wood and like a torch of fire in a sheaf and they shall devour all the people round about on the right hand and on the left and Jerusalem shall be inhabited in her own place even in Jerusalem (v.6). The impact of this passage is that God wants to strengthen the governor or leaders of Israel. And for the confirmation the Lord uses two similes. The leaders will be like “fire pan”. The fire pan is used to carry hot coal for the purpose of starting a wood fire. Then the leaders will be like a torch used to set dry weeds on fire. The two similes to “fire pan” and ”torch” are mentioned to illustrate the power of God to devour like fire the armies that attack Israel in the last days.

5. The Lord said, “I will defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David and the house of David shall be as God, as the angles of the Lord before them” (v.8) According to the Bible, king David was considered as the greatest warrior. The strength of king David in the battlefield was exceedingly great. The house of David shall be as good as the angle of the Lord before them. The real meaning is that Jesus Christ Himself of the house of David, will fight for Israel at Armageddon as the angel of the Lord.

6. The Lord said “I will seek to destroy all the nations that come against Jerusalem” (v.9) The meaning of this passages that God says He will destroy those nations that attack Israel in the last days. There will be no excuse for the nations when they appear as sinners in the sight of the angry God prophet Haggai the contemporary of Zechariah also spoke about this day in the following manner “I will shake the heavens and the earth. And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms and I will destroy the strength of kingdoms of the

heathens and I will overthrow the Charriots and those that ride in them and their horses and their readers shall come down every one by the sword of his brother". (Haggai 2.21 -22)

7. The Lord said "I will pour upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplication and they shall look upon me who pierced me and they shall mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first born". (v.10) Here, the sum is suddenly changed from sevre judgment upon the attackers and God showers the spirit of grace upon Israel. The meaning of the passage is that the emotions of that day hour and moment simply cannot overstated or fully comprehended. The Jewish people are not blind be-cause they rejected Christ.Their blindness madethem to reject Jesus Christ the Messiah.

Israel became blind and disobedient throughout the Old Testament. Their blindness and disobedience caused them many disadvantages in their lives. They became re-sponsible for the Gospels to go to the Gentiles. But this has to happen for the fulfill-ment of Abrahamiccovenant."In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed". (Genesis 12.3) And their blindness will continue until the fullness of the gentiles become in (Romans 11.25). When their blindness istaken away at the end of times they look at the face of Jesus Christ as Messiah. As a matter of fact, the Jesus remained out of the sight of God for about 2000 years. Jesus was born spotless in the Jewish family. In addition to that the same Jewish prophets wrote about Him as Messiah the son of David and thus king.Since they rejected Him as their Messiah and king they have to mourn. But one day, Jesus as their Kingsman and redeemer will oneday wipe out their tears.

When Jesus comes as the king of Jews. He will become king of all kings and Lord of all Lords. And out of Zion shall go forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem". (Isaiah 2.3) Jesus in his second coming will do the following things-

1. When Christ returns, He will consummate the redemption of all believers through resur-rection or rapture.
2. When Christ return He will recapture man's lost destiny as the king of the earth.
3. When Christ returns, the spirit of the Lord will rest upon Him. His wisdom will be perfect. His power infinite and his reign benevolent.

4. When Christ returns the wolf will be down wise the lamb.
5. When Christ returns He will bring about everlasting righteousness and peace.

Mark Twain a popular writer happened to visit Israel during nineteenth century. He was actually unbeliever yet he gave wonderful statement about the Jewish nation. He said "The jar could be vain of himself and not ashamed of it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian and the Persian arose filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream, stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed them and made a loud noise and they are gone, other people have sprung up and held the torch high for a time, but it burned out and they set in twilight or have vanished. The Jews saw them all beat them all and is now what he always was exhibiting no decadence no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no showing of his energies, no dulling of his alert aggressive mind. All things are mortal, all races will part away, but the Jews remains immortal what is the secret behind then immortality?"

What is the correct answer for this is that the Jewish nation has a date for its destiny. One day she will meet the son of David her king and her Lord, at Jerusalem. The moment Israel is reconciled to her God, through faith in Christ then blessings like life giving water flow over all believing humanity. When the world is purged from all its defilement, where the glory of God fills the earth then the believers take to heart and rejoice. That wonderful time is not far off.

## Prophet Haggai

Haggai was called one of the Minor prophets in the Bible. Haggai means “festive or festival” According to some of the Bible scholars the four noted messages of His book were written authentically during the following dates. The first message was in August 29, the second one was September 21, third one October 27 and the fourth one was December 18th of the year 520 BC. The contents of these four messages was the political and spiritual conditions of Israelites during that period spiritually the Israelites ignored their God who saved them from the bondage of Egypt and became idol worshippers. God got angry for their strange behavior and handed them over to the heathen kings like Nebuchadnezzar as a punishment. When they realized the truth, God became kind and merciful always in His redemption and restoration.

The Israelites forgot the God of their forefather, though they were His chosen people. Then God put them in the hands of heathen kings for their repentance and about two hundred years before God used the services of prophet Haggai. The nation of Israel was already divided into two because of the way of life of King Solomon in 922 BC. They were the Northern kingdom of Judah with the tribes of Judah and Benjamin with Jerusalem as their capital. Then the southern kingdom of Israel with the remaining ten tribes and Samaria as their capital. In course of time, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon became more powerful among the heathen kings. He attacked Jerusalem three times, completely destroyed both the city and the Temple of Solomon and took many people as captives to Babylon. When Haggai, as a prophet, began to think about the condition of Israelites. They had already completed 70 years of captivity and experienced hell in Babylon.

Then in the year 538 BC Cyrus the great king of Persian Empire was already in control of Babylon. He was really a generous king. He proclaimed a decree with the following words. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia “the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth and He hath charged me to build a house at Jerusalem which is in Judah and the God is there among His people. He is their real God in the city of Jerusalem. This wonderful statement gives the impression that Cyrus was the true believer of the God of Israel and through His blessings only Cyrus became the king of such vast empire.

He also asked people to offer gold and silver and freewill offerings for the construction of the temple of Israel which was already in ruined condition. The Jewish people about 50000 of them who suffered enough in 70 years captivity decided to go to their native land Jerusalem. Those Israelites under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who was also appointed as the governor of Judah came to Jerusalem. They wanted to build the Temple as early as

possible on a new foundation. Joshua a high priest also followed Zerubbabel. In addition to them, two more prophets namely Haggai and Zechariah also followed them.

All the returned Israelites became very enthusiastic to build the God's temple at the earliest. They laid the foundation also. In the meantime the Samaritans who were living nearby raised an objection for the construction. Added to that the emperor Cyrus also died in 530 BC and he was succeeded by his ruthless son Cambyses who was naturally unsympathetic towards the cause of the Jews. The Samaritans became successful in stopping the progress of the temple and this disturbance continued for 16 more years and during that time their attention was diverted towards their personal affairs, like building fancy houses for themselves.

In the meantime, Cambyses also died in 522 BC. He was succeeded by Darius the most loved and favorite king of Jews. Then the movement of spiritual growth started among the returned Jews and both Haggai and Zechariah continued their preaching's. They encouraged the Jews to start the construction of the temple, perhaps the following words of Haggai must have inspired them. Haggai said "it is time for you O ye to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house be wasted?" (Haggai 1:4) Thus spoke Haggai the Lord's messenger in the Lord's message unto the people saying I am with you saith the Lord (Haggai 1:13)

Haggai as a prophet, was a different man. His habit was that he would come to the topic directly. He used to say everything from the outset in the second year of king Darius of Persia in the sixth month in the sixth day of the month came to the word of the Lord, by Haggai the prophet (1:1) According to some historian and scholars the time was August 29th 520 BC. It is really surprising how they must have calculated. Actually it was the year at that time more important for any assessment in Judah particularly the political back ground. In addition to that Haggai was also, pointing out in verse 1 that his message was to be delivered to Zerubbabel the appointed governor and to the High priest Joshua. The same message for all Jewish people also who returned from their exile.

Haggai was unlike Nohum and Zephaniah, other minor prophets who served God before him. His main job was to preach and encourage people to work for the temple of God. He appealed to their reason, when he asked them "Is it time for you to dwell in your ceiled houses and the house lie wasted" the Jews were originally not dull headed or mum, because of their 70 year captivity made them desperate in life and that dullness was continued even after they returned to their native land. They appeared to be inactive only with building of the Temple, but not in the activities.

After returning to their places the Jews began given to cultivate their lands. Since they remained barren for seventy years, they were unable to grow any crop. As a result, they could not have enough food and good water to drink. They appeared to have everything but they half starved. They could not make both ends meet. In such peculiar circumstances Haggai asked them one question. He said Why do you suppose do this is? And finally he answered his own question Because of mine (the Lords) house that is waste and ye run every man unto his house” (Haggai 1:9). This is a brief reply but very rich in meaning. Let us look into the part of the proclamation of king Cyrus again that he addressed to the exiled Jews. Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he hath charged me to build Him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. who is there among you of all his people, his god be with them, and let him go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (Ezra 1:2-3)

The Lord particularly asked the returning Jews to rebuild his Temple. They began to rebuild accordingly but there was staunch opposition from the Samaritans and some of the Jews themselves. Then they stopped the work but after 16 years gap Haggai had a message from God that the time had come for restoring of the construction work. The following message is also as important as the above said one. Then Zerubbabel son of Shealiel and Joshua son of Josedech the high priest (priest) with all the remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the Lord their God and the words of Haggai. The prophet as the Lord then God had sent him and the people did fear before the Lord (1:12). The people of Israel obeyed God through one of his prophets. Then they resumed the work of constructing the temple of God. It s really wonderful, that the Israelites seemed to have learned a lesson only after they were banished from their homeland. In return God also felt happy for their obedience and stirred their spirits to work more effectively God created more interest in the governor Zerubbabel and high priest Joshua also to encourage the Jews.

God was happy over the humbleness of His people and filled them with His spirit. In the book of Haggai, the second chapter begins with the discouragement among the Jews they took about four years to complete the work of the temple. They could not give the original show that it had before it was destroyed. Men and women that were born prior to the captivity could know the exact shape of the temple of Solomon. The survival elderly people simply lamented at the insignificant appearance of the temple, when they compared to the old one. The prime aim of the message of Haggai was for the encouragement of Israelites but not for judgment God encouraged Israelites by saying that though the temple appeared small and not worth in appearance. They must wait for its future Majesty and glory. So, God said I will fill this house with glory. The glory of this later house shall be greater than of the armor and in this place, will I give peace? (Haggai 2:7-9). This is a reference



and wonderful prophecy about the coming Messiah Jesus Christ. That is the glorious presence of the coming Messiah will give more majestic appearance to the temple. If the workers would understand the impact of the prophecy of that the coming of Messiah glorify more than they might work with more vigor for its completion and their hands be honored. And the long awaited Messiah could certainly bless the hands of the builders with Holy Spirit so that they would do their duty with more enthusiasm. It would be a most filling reward for their obedience toward their God. Anyway, Haggai completed his short book with applauding and wonderful reassuring promise to the governor Zerubbabel but the message was extended for beyond the arena of the governor of the exiled Jews.

So, Haggai said, in these days saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel my servant, the son of Shealtiel saith the Lord and will make thee as a signet for I have chosen thee saith the Lord of Hosts (Haggai 2:3). This wonderful prophetic utterances of prophet Haggai pleased Zerubbabel in the Messianic line. Even though the returned exiles did not know when their Messiah would come at least they could look upon a direct ancestor of the Messiah, and see in him the down payments of the Messianic promise. The meaning of the message is quite clear in spite of the destruction of the Temple, though the people were taken as captives to their pagan land, and their suffering for seventy years God did not forget his chosen people (Israelites). He would keep his promise and then their Messiah.

The people during the time of prophet Haggai could react assured of such great promises it would take four years but the past exiled temple would be completed in 516 BC. (Ezra 6:15) The book of Haggai speaks about the priorities of Israelites rather than God. So, he reminded us as true believer, that God makes us suffer occasionally so that we can keep him in our heart and worship him. We must always keep our relationship with God.

Haggai gave us a prophetic idea that the shaking of the universe would be at outland. God would over thrones and kingdoms one day and they would be totally destroyed. He finally advised all the believers to leave all our sinful way of life and turn toward our loving God for His blessings and eternal life.

1. The book of Haggai is the second shortest one in the Old Testament of the Obadiah.
2. Haggai is the first prophet through whom God spoke to the returned exiles, and Zechariah followed him.
3. Though the book of Haggai contained only two chapters, he claimed divine authority of his calling. He mentioned the saying "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts 25 times in is two chapters and claimed divine authority.
4. The name Haggai is mentioned in Ezra 5:1 and 6:14 and nine times in his own book.

## Dates And Events Of Persons In The Bible

God in His creation in the Cosmos wished to create mankind in His image. So, He said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness. So that they may rule over the fish in the sea, and the birds in the sky over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground so “God created mankind in this own image in the image of God, He created them male and female He created them “be fruitful” God blessed them and said to them and increased in member fill the earth subdue it, rule over the flesh in the sea and the birds in the sky, and over every living creation that moves on the ground. Then God said, I give you every seed, bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree has fruit with seed in it. God provided fruits to mankind as food, and He provided something to eat and live to birds and animals, fish in the water and for every living thing on the ground. Finally, He looked at everything He created and said to Himself “it was good” all these things He did on the fifth day.

By seventh day, God had finished the work He planned, and took rest. He blessed the seventh day, and made it Holy because on that day He took rest from doing any work. Then the Lord God planted a Garden in the East in Eden, and the man He created in it. Then He put all kind of fruit trees in that garden, which were pleasing to the eye and good food. After this in the middle of the garden he put two trees, the tree of “life” and the tree of “knowledge of good and evil” The Lord God put that man in the Garden of Eden to work and take care of it. He commanded and told the man you are free to eat fruit from any tree, but you must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die. God formed out of the ground all wild animals, all flying birds in the sky. He brought all of them to this man and asked him to give names to all of them and Adam gave suitable names to all livestock.

Again the Lord God said, It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him. But to Adam no suitable helper was found. So, he made the man to fall into a deep sleep and took one of his ribs and made a woman. With it, and brought her to Adam, Then Adam said “this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, and she shall be called woman for she was taken out of man.” He gave the name to that woman

also as Eve which means mother of all living. A woman became part and parcel of man, he leaves his father and mother, and stick on to his wife after marriage and become one flesh. It is also said in the Bible genesis 2 chapter 24th verse “Therefore, shall a man, leave his father and his mother and shall leave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh” (genesis 2.24).

This saying holds good to hear, but there are some disadvantages in this statement. The young men as soon as they marry, they cling to their wives and forget to take care of the parents in their old age. I know a couple of the old parents who became street beggars for want of food even though they have sons and daughters. Sons who love and honor their parents in their old age, shall have long and blessed life and we must give due respect to the Commandment. “Honour thy father and thy mother.”

Both Adam and Eve were very happy with God in the Garden of Eden enjoying all fruits. But one day a serpent came and tempted Eve after a brief conversation to eat the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. What is the background of this serpent? According to the Biblical history, Lucifer was one of the arch angels in heaven. One day, he rebelled against God by saying that he was equally good in everything with him. God got angry at the remarks of the serpent and pushed him down to the earth. When he was thrown down to the earth, one third of the angel population also came with him to the earth. Since that time, the Lucifer with the names Satan, Evil, Devil, Dragon and Serpent was trying to take revenge against God, and Adam and Eve, his first human creation, became the victims.

Eve believed the tempting words of the Satan and ate the fruit of that forbidden tree. She gave some to Adam also and he too without any forethought ate it. God could know this and immediately called Adam. He said. Adam where are you? Did you eat the fruit of the forbidden tree? “while answering these questions, we don’t find any humbleness or repenting spirit in the tone of Adam. So, his answer was, the woman you provided me as a helper, gave me and I ate it. When God asked Eve she said” the serpent tempted me with her cunning words and I ate it and gave it to Adam. Adam blamed Eve for giving him that fruit but he did not accept his sin. And Eve blamed the serpent for convincing her with cunning words. By eating the forbidden fruit both Adam and Eve had already committed sin. But here, they did not accept it and blamed others. So doing something wrong, and

not accepting their fault but blame others is called the second sin here Adam and Eve committed second sin also. So, the three serpent, Adam and Eve involved in the four sin according to the Bible and they received due punishment for their unpardonable mistake.

God understood the deceptive nature of the serpent, against the innocent Adam and Eve, God gave due punishment to the serpent. He said, cursed are you above all livestock, and all wild animals. You will crawl on your belly, and you will eat dust, all the days of your life, and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring's and hers he will crush your head and you will strike his heel. This has become everlasting punishment to all snakes in the world. Then it was Eve first who committed the sin by eating the forbidden fruit. So, the punishment of God to her was. "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe with painful labor, you will give birth to your children. Your desire will be for your husband." God punishment to Adam, was cursed is the ground because of you, through painful tail you will eat food from it all the days of your life. I will produce thorns and thistles for you," and ye shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow, you will eat your food. Until you return to the ground since from it you were taken from dust, you are and to dust you will.

Then God thought, it would be dangerous to keep Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden because they had the knowledge of good and evil as they ate that fruit. So He banished them out of that Garden. He kept them at the Eastern side of the garden. Since that time entrance was forbidden and for more security God kept Cherubim angel with flaming sword, to guard those two trees, which were kept in the middle of the Garden. After they were thrown out of the Garden, they lived according to the punishment outside of it. Adam loved his wife, and got two sons Cain and Abel. God loved Abel more than Cain, which caused Cain to kill his brother Abel. After them, we have no clear picture about the children whether Adam and Eve had further children and descendants.

But we have one source of information According to Biblical history, some books in original Hebrew language were found in the "Cumran Caves" near dead sea were found in 1947 by a Shepard by name Bedowine. He found "the book of Jubilus" and "the book of the Isaiah" etc. In the book of Jubilus, it is said Adam and Eve had 8 children both men and women and

married within the family and their genealogy was continued. After Adam and Eve the seventh generation was important because in that period, “Enoch” was the prophet of God. He prophesied. “Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints.” He lived just 365 years and directly went to God without seeing death. But his son lived 969 years the longest lived in the Bible. His name was Methuselah. Next comes Noah in the 10th generation. He was also a great builder of an arch and a prophet. During these 10 generations God completely understood the wickedness of man starting with Cain. God saw every point of their thinking was only evil all the time.

God regretted and repented for making human beings on the earth. His heart was deeply troubled. So, the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race have I created.” Unfortunately, for the decision of God all animals, birds, and other creatures on the earth became victims along with mankind and perished in the flood of Noah. If we study the genealogy of different people in the world today, they were all the descendants of the three sons of Noah. After the great builder and prophet Noah, the next great and important man in the Bible was Abraham. The historical background of Abraham tells us that he was the grandson of the first son Noah. It was shem, whose descendants were called Steamete tribe or Semite tribe from ‘ur’ the land of Chaldeans.

He was born in 2166 BC and his family members were heathens. His parents used to make idols and sold them for their livelihood. Abraham remained faraway from the idol worshippers, and looked at haven to know about the real God. So the people called him “Hebrew” that is Abraham the Hebrew, means a stranger. In such situation one day God called Abraham, to leave his place ur, and all his people, and to a new place called Canaan. God also told him, it was a promised land to his people, which was rich with milk and honey. So, he accepted the call of God and started his journey, leaving that place once and for all. Lot, his brothers son also followed him. He left ur in the year 2091 BC. That is, when he was 75 years old he left his native place. Then Isaac was born to him in 2066 BC.

From his early days, Abraham used to look at heaven for God who was controlling everything, God also loved him most, and we know how he was blessed abundantly, God know that Abraham was very righteous and faithful toward Him still He wanted to test his faith. So one day God asked

Abraham to sacrifice his only son Isaac. He did not say a word, but simply took his son and went to the Mount Mariah to sacrifice his only son who was born when Abraham was about 100 years old. This event took place in the year 2050 BC. God was very happy at the faith of Abraham, and showered on him countless blessings, and what kind of blessings Abraham received from God:?

Abraham was called:

- 1) Father of Western science.
- 2) Father of western religion.
- 3) Father of Righteousness
- 4) Father of Faith.
- 5) Father of many nations.
- 6) Father of circumcision.
- 7) Father of monotheism.

Isaac married Rebekah when he was about 40 years old. She gave birth to Jacob and Esave in 2006 BC after Abraham died in 1991 BC. Rachel wife of Jacob gave birth to Joseph in 1915 BC. Isaac also died in 1886 BC. Joseph was sold to some Egyptians by his brothers, as a slave 1898 BC. But God was with him and protected him in all stages. Finally God elevated him to the position of a deputy to Pharaoh. He liked Joseph very much and put the entire responsibility of the nation in his hands when famine came to the land, the father and other family members of Joseph came and settled at a good place called "Goshon" in 1820 BC, then in 1859 BC Jacob died.

After the death of Joseph in 1805 BC the next Pharaoh's did not know, who was Joseph or what he did not know, who was Joseph or what he did to the nation, or his family members, but all the Israelites were treated as slaves. Added to that because of the promise to Abraham by God the Israelites were multiplied amazingly. They remained as slaves in Egypt for about 430 years and finally cried into God to save them from such condition. God heard the cry of His chosen people. He reacted and choose a man to liberate them from that bondage. It was Moses proposed by God for that noble task "Moses means "drawn from water" Moses was born in 1526 BC. God sent 10 plagues to change the mind of pharaoh. Finally in the year 1446 BC, they were forced to leave Egypt and go to their promised land Canaan. It is said

about 1.5 million people of all kinds joined together in their journey. They started during spring season in 1446 and then first halt after crossing the Red sea was at the foot of the Mount Sinai. Then God called Moses to the top of the Mount to give him some instructions.

God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, the blue print of the Tabernacle, otherwise known as the Noble Temple of God, and some instructions, which were rather called the law of Moses or Torah, from the date of their leaving Egypt, their stay at the foot of Mount Sinai, and building of the Tabernacle. All these things completed in one year. So, the Israelites wanted to celebrate first anniversary function and they invited God also. God witnessed the function felt happy for meeting His chosen people, with the intention of meeting them. He introduced seven feasts or festivals. They are Passover, the feast of unleavened bread, the feast of first fruit, the feast of weeks, also called Pentecost, the feast of Trumpets, the feast of Atonement and the feast of the Tabernacle. God introduced these seven feasts of His Redemption plan.

During their wilderness wanderings God sent “quails and Manna” as food for them. God punished them for becoming idol worshippers and made them wander for 40 years to reach their promised land. Spies were sent to Canaan in 1443 to know the condition of the heathens living at that time. In the meantime Aaron head of the priest Lord died in 1406 BC. Then Israelites held their camp at the places of morah in 1406 though they resisted. Moses the servant of God led Israelites up to now and died in 1406 BC at “Mount Nebo” Then God appointed Joshua to lead Israelites to reach the Promised Land. He continued it with battles. In all the battles of Joshua, his battle with Jerico a wicked Canaanites city is important. He sent spies to that city, who were helped by harlot. She helped them and encouraged them that they would certainly become victorious. For all her help and moral support, the Israelites treated her as a queen. Finally she became one of the leading heathen women in the genealogy of Jesus Christ, by marrying Salmon who had Messianic link. At last the Israelites reached Canaan in the year 1406 BC to 1375 BC and Joshua died in 1375 BC.

After the Israelites settled peacefully in different places, judges began to rule them. They continued for about 325 years. That is from 1375-1050 BC. The important judges that ruled were Deborah from 1209-1169 BC for

40 years. Gideon from 1142-1122 for about 20 years. During this time a Jewish lady from Bethlehem happened to go to Moab due to famine in Bethlehem. She stayed there for 10 years and lost her husband and two sons, then she returned with her daughter-in-law Ruth. She was also a Moab heathen woman, and married a rich Jewish farmer Boaz. She played the most important role in the genealogy of Jesus Christ and became the great-grandmother of King David.

Samuel was born in 1105 BC. He grew up and began to minister under the prophet Eli. At that time, the Israelites were disgusted with the ruling of judges and asked Samuel for a king as they had seen in the neighboring countries ruled by kings. So, Samuel proposed the name of Saul as the first king of Israel, but he became a selfish man, even God was not happy with him. Anyhow, he ruled for 40 years and died. His regime was between 1050-1010. Saul tried to kill David as and when he got chance, because he thought David would be a hindrance to his rule. As he would be the next king after the death of Saul, God protected him from all dangerous situations.

David was anointed by Samuel as the next king of Israel. He rose to that position from an ordinary shepherd boy to the status of the king of his chosen people in 1025 BC as a shepherd boy, he happened to kill Goliath a Philistine leader with the help of a sling and small stones. It is said, his height was about 9.5 feet only after the death of Saul in 1010 BC. David ruled Israel from 1010-970 BC. Though the blessings of God were with him, David forgot them and committed adultery with a woman who was the wife of a military officer by name Uriah. David somehow managed to get the officer killed and married his wife whose name was Bathsheba. King David had a son Solomon through Bathsheba. After David, Solomon became the king of Israel and ruled from 970-930...for 40 years like his father.

God blessed Solomon abundantly and made him the richest and wisest man of his time, but he forgot God and misused his blessings. He took many heathen women as wives and even built heathen temples to please them at a place called Baalbek. It is said he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. In addition to that he took Queen Sheba also as his wife and got a son through her. Though he built the temple of God, he took only 7 years to complete it, whereas he took 13 years for the construction of the royal palace for his



wife, the daughter of Egyptian Pharaoh. He built the temple of God between 966-959 BC, just seven years. His adulterous way of life made God angry and cursed king Solomon by dividing the kingdom of Israel into two parts in 930 BC as the northern Kingdom of Israel with 10 tribes and its capital was Samaria. Then the Southern Kingdom of Judah with two tribes named Judah and Benjamin and the capital was Jerusalem. This division became regular only after the death of king Solomon.

Rehoboam son of king Solomon became king to the Southern kingdom of Judah and ruled between 930-913 BC. For the northern kingdom Jeroboam became the king and changed it into a heathen nation by not allowing Israelites to go to Jerusalem and to visit it the temple of God. Instead of that he built heathen temples everywhere, and forced them to worship the idols only. Gradually the Israelites forgot the God of their forefather and even mixed with heathen marriages and so on.

After Jeroboam a cruel man Ahab became the king of Israel between 874-857. In this connection we can remember the most crooked woman Jezebel the wife of Ahab. Then for the kingdom of Judah Jehoshaphat became the king between 872-848 BC. Now God saw how the 10 tribes of Israel had forgotten Him completely. He became exceedingly unhappy about it, and began to send messengers to that nation one after the other. Accordingly the first messenger was Elijah Prophet. He went and started his ministry during 875-848. The second person was Elisha and he did his ministry during 848-797 BC. The third person was Amos "an uneducated shepherd boy, but God called him for his work between 710-750 BC. The fourth person was Hosea. He started his ministry between 750-715 BC. All these were prophets of course. During the reign of Ahab, his wife Jezebel tried to kill the prophet Elijah, but he escaped from her somehow.

The kingdom of Israel finally fell into the hands of Assyrians the heathen rulers in 722 BC. They waged war against them and took many Israelites as captives to Assyria in the same year. According to historical background these Assyrians were to the descendants of Abraham. At that time prophet Isaiah began his ministry in Judah during 740-681 BC and Hezekiah was ruling Judah at that time between 715-686 BC. Then Manasseh reigned during 697-642 BC. Ammon reigned between 642-640 BC just two years only. Then Josiah reigned between 640-609 BC prophets also changed one after another as the people of Judah and Israel forgot God and became idol

worshippers.” So, prophet Jeremiah began his ministry in Judah in during 620-585 BC. Jehoeakim ruled between 609-598 BC and Zedekiah was the last of Davidic Dynastic rulers, and in his time Judah had completely gone into the rule of heathens called Babylonians. When he tried to escape with his family members, he was caught and taken to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. His two sons were killed brutally and Zedekiah’s eyes were removed. He was kept in the prison permanently and he died there only. The king of Babylon did all this in his third attack on Jerusalem and the temple, which he ruined totally in 586 BC. So, the first heathen rule started with Assyrians. They were defeated by Babylonians who were the second heathen rulers over Israel and Judah. Many Jews were taken as captives in three stages and Ezekiel was one of them to the third stage. He began his ministry to the exiled Jews in Babylon. These captive Jews remained in Babylon for seventy years as a punishment, from God. So, prophet, Ezekiel continued his ministry during 593-571 BC.

Daniel was also taken as captive in the first stage in 606 BC along with his friendly Sheldrak, Meshach and Abednego, and Daniel started his ministry during 606-536 BC. Nebuchadnezzar reigned between 606-562 BC. But Daniel, by virtue of his wisdom and understanding was elevated to the highest position after the king. Added to that God was with Daniel, whom God called His beloved prophet. Then Babylon was conquered by Medo-Persians in 539 BC. These persons were kind enough to release and send back all the Jews to their native land. Accordingly in 538 BC the first batch of Jews from Babylon returned to Jerusalem. Simultaneously, Haggai and Zechariah continued their ministry between 520-480 BC.

King Xerxes reigned in Persia between 485-465 BC. In the year 479 BC, the Queen of beauty Esther became the Queen of Persia. She in her capacity solved the most complicated issue concerning her own people the Jews. She punished Haman, who hatched a murderous plot of eliminating all Jews from that kingdom. That day of freedom the Jews have been enjoying even today as the festival of —purim is just in memory of her. The second batch of exiled Jews returned to Jerusalem in 458 BC under the leadership of EZRA and the third and final batch returned to Jerusalem in 445 BC with the guidance of Nehemiah.

## Christ and His Crucification

We have some knowledge of how Christ was crucified brutally and also remember some of the comments of the onlookers at that time. They said, "you, whowould destroy the temple and laid it in three days save yourself." if you are the son of God, come down from the cross. The chief priest with the elders mocked at him and said among themselves, He saved others but He could not save Himself. He is the king of the Jews and we will believe in him. He trusts in God, let God deliver Him now if he desired him for He said" I am the son of God" and the robbers were crucified along with Him also revealed Him" (Mark 15:29-32).

The spectators with different comments gathered around the cross and watched how Christ was bleeding. He was fighting the battle with ungodly people, somehow or other but now it was in climax. Let us examine clearly the echoing of the public on the spot. If you are the son of God, come down from the cross." As a matter of fact these voices were not the voices of the bystanders, but they were the words of Satan, who was the prime accuser and the tempter." On curtain occasions prior to this Jesus happened to go to the river Jordan and took Baptism from John the Baptist. At that time, Jesus heard the voice from heaven. "you are my beloved son, I am will pleased." Then the Holy Spirit immediately took Him into the wilderness. Just at that Jesus heard the similar voice of Satan saying, If you are the son of God command those stones to be made bread". "If you are the son of God, cast yourself down and the Angles would look after you." These words were the cunning voice of Satan, but they were really difficult to recognize him.

The Jews at the time of Jesus Christ were in discontent and look for God to come down into their midst and into history. They wanted God to lead them to triumph against the most cruel Roman rulers, who had been oppressing them for generators. They wanted to enjoy at least some freedom, which they really enjoyed when they were liberated from the bondage of Egypt under the able leadership of prophet Moses. Open the Israelites celebrated that happy day of liberation as the day of "Passover" even today. They wanted to smell again the scent of the victory that God had given to them over the 'tyrant ruler Antiochus Epiphanies two hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ. This wonderful achievement, the Israelites have been celebrating as the festival of "Hanukkah."

These incidents promoted Israelites to have a longing hope that God would one day send a Messiah, who must be like king David, who was a

powerful warrior and who would fight against the new Goliath. The personal enemies to Israelites were the Roman rulers. But Jesus Christ came to this world for different purpose. He did not come to liberate Israel from the oppression of the Romans. when they understood the mind of Jesus, their minds were shattered and became revengeful in their attitude. Actually God sent Jesus, to fulfill their important things. They are, to heal the sick people of all diseases to spread the word of God throughout the world and to die on the cross to redeem the sinners of the world.

When the Jews understood Jesus did not come to liberate them, they rebelled against Him. They tried even to harm Him as and when they get the chances. They finally found the occasion. They caught him and led Him to the cross, with false allegations. Now, we have to understand the story behind the cross. The cross was first invented by Phoenician tribe long time ago, but it was used much during the reign of Romans. Now, we have a big question' what is the meaning of the cross, for the Jews for the gospel writers and the readers like us whether Jesus was a failed Messiah on the cross, or a successful one, whether the cross was an unfortunate and missing interval between His successful life, and His triumphant resurrection. There are actually many more questions in this regard.

What is the importance of the cross? It is the embodiment of one man two wooden poles, three long nails, four wonderful gospels, five wounds, six hours and seven words. It is a symbol of peace, It is the symbol of salvation. Most important of all, it is the symbol of forgiveness and redemption. But for the crowd that gathered there, the Messiah was a failure. The crowd also understood, that it was not the voice of the Satan The writers of the gospels must have felt, it was through the death of the Christ, through His apparent failure, through His abandonment, God has worked out His own purpose which ran deeper than the crowds, or the disciples or even Jesus Himself.

The parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem every year on the eve of the feast of Passover. So as usual, when Jesus was twelve years old, they happened to go with Him. While returning to Nazareth after the festival, they did not find Jesus with them. They were confused and disappointed. They went back to Jerusalem in search of Him. They at last found Him in the Temple of God, after three days search. They saw Him sitting with teachers and listening to them and also questioning them people that gathered in the temple wondered at His extraordinary intelligence. His parents also astonished at His knowledge. Then His mother anxiously said that she and His father

desperately searching for Him. For that He replied, How is that you taught were? “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house.” The parent really did not understand what He spoke about, but are went home peacefully.

It was not only the Jews in agony and despair on that “Good Friday” but also the disciples. They too hoped Jesus would redeem Israel. The disciples made Him walk on the dusty roads of Galilee, and Judah, but they could not understand, what He was teaching about Mary, the mother of the God, was to take upon herself the labor pains of the new age, not only Bethlehem but also in Jerusalem, during “Passover” time, not one but twice, at the climatic point of her whole life we do not have any authentic information that Mary said anything as she stood at the foot of the Cross. But we are told Jesus had handed over His mother to His beloved disciple John Jesus asked John to take care of His mother till the end of her life. She had to observe the agony of the death of her son for three more days measuring the ends of Israelites at their better future. We are called to be the believers of God, in Christ, we do not yet understand and seeking Him in our own sorrow ready to search for our young Lord, wherever He maybe.

Here, we see the impressions of the two criminals. who were hanging along with Christ. One of them asked Christ, whether He was not the Messiah If so, he requested Him to save Himself and save them. The other criminal questioned Him whether He was not afraid of God, as He was in such harsh punishment. The two thieves accepted the punishment, as they deserved it, but they commented, this man had done nothing wrong. Then one of them said, Jesus remember me when you came in your Kingdom.” And Christ said unto him. “Truly, I say unto you, today you will be with me in paradise.” The main purpose of putting Him on the cross was to make people understand that He was Messiah. At the same time, the purpose of crucifying Him between the two thieves was to say that Christ was also this type of man.

The dying thief put his finger on the point and said. This man had done nothing wrong. “He is answering us, He appeared as if He was a cursed man as we are cursed even clean as we are unclean.” But something appeared strange in this contest. Jesus hanging on the cross was Jesus the coming Messiah. (King) and Jesus on the cross was Jesus the saving king. But we see the son of God was dying as a criminal He died the death of a failed rebel against Rome He appeared to have failed in His attempt, but in reality, He succeeded in the task, He has been set The Jewish leaders framed there alligators against Him. They were, He was leading people astray. He

was forbidding people to pay the tax to Cesar and He was posing Himself as the Messiah, the savior and king. As a matter of fact, Jesus has not done any one of them. He had come on His father's business to extent His love to those who bodily needed it Jesus was really an innocent person and had done nothing wrong. He had come to do something to Israel, and the world, which cannot be achieved either by Israel or by the world. He came to die the death of the world, so that the world would be saved through Him.

Who was the real enemy then? It was not Rome, it was only political enemy of the people of God. The real enemy was Satan sin and death, which were called the unseen spiritual enemies. Satan with the face of a foe tried all means to distract but in vain. At the appropriate time Satan the rebel of all people has been trying to attack the innocent Jesus Christ, who is the king and who is going to establish His New Kingdom called the thousand years Millinnied Kingdom and rule victioursly from the cross. Any way the high priest, and the other leaders, influenced double tongued mob to shout their Jesus must be crucified. So, they took Him with His own cross, bearing Himself to the place called, the place of skull and in Hebrew it was "Golgotha." The Pilot also wrote a title as "Isee ...isu nazaranus rex Judariam" which mean, Jesus of Nazareth King of Jesus.

Many Jews happened to read it, but the Christ priest objected and told Pilot not to write like that. but the Pilot replied, there he was the king of the Jesus and what he has written he has written pontius pilote was not noted for his tact. The Jewish historian Josephus recorded many instances of his blunt offensive and inipet handling of Jews. Actually such a man pilot should be kept only, at the back of the corrected persons, the same type of pilot was put on the head of Jesus, to tell the onlooker the nature of crime the man committed. That is, if a slave has stolen anything from the master, he would be labeled as runaway slave or thief. But in the case of Jesus the crime was summed up in the ironic words. The king of the Jews and sometimes on four INRI, really for pilot this is another way of mocking at the Jews. As far as pilot was concerned Jesus was a political Messiah and a failed one in their matter. Jesus stood up for the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of Caesar had come down upon him clavery. He had given what was due to God on the cross and He rendered to Caesar what was due to him. Behind, Caesar and his rivals and behind the Jewish nationalism too, we heard of sinitir claim made by an old acquaintance in the wilderness.

“To you I will give all authority and its glory for it has been delivered to me and I give it to whom I will.” The claim of Satan is that human beings have allowed him to rule over them, instead of God allowing God to be their supreme. So, when they worshipped Caesar it means they worshipped Satan. But the intention of God was different. He wanted rulers of the world to be obedient to Him and put all their energies to serve His purpose, of life and creativity. Those rulers forgot God, and ruled their nations according to their \_\_\_ and fancies. Added to that sometimes they felt themselves as Gods when Jesus died as a failed non-political or political Messiah, pilot embodied for a while apparent triumph of Satan over Jesus. He told that it was the time of soldiers their howr and power of darkness. Let us remember how Satan offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world on one condition. That He should fall down and worship him. When he refused to do so, cross was the result of his refusal. Not only the Romans Empire or officials of Judaism, but also the entire world rejected Him and finally killed Him. Here, the cross was not a defeat, but a wonderful victory. It is a dramatic resurrection of the fact that Gods love is sovereign. He Therules of the world, did not have the last word, that the kingdom of God defeated the kingdom of Satan. So, the final result of all this, is that the kingdom of the world have become in principles the kingdoms of our Lord, and the Messiah and He would rule our them for ever and ever.

The nations plotted against God and His anointed one, but God from heaven saw and laughed at them for their foolishness, and utter failure he further replied, “yet I have set my kingdom upon my holy hill.” But the holy hill is in question not now Zion the temple mount. The joy of the whole world. It is the ugly little hill about a mile further Jerusalem just outside the wall of the old city This is the place, the king of the Jews is enthroned his west still smarting with the crown of thorns, His cross is a sign of God’s victory over the world.

Jesus was oppressed and afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth like a lamb that was taken to the slaughter house. But oppression and false judgment He was taken away, he was put on the cross like a wicked man and finally in the grave. God called the Israel to be the mean for dealing with the sin of the world. If we appreciate God who called Abraham to remove the sin of Adam, there must be truth in it, God believed in Israel as true humanity, and so He wanted to fulfill the purpose of this world. His humankind is created in His own image before the world of rule the representative of God Israel would be Gods representative to the remaining human race. What

God expected from the race of Israel? King David and his son king Solomon could do something. King Solomon as the wisest and the richest king of his time, proved himself as worthy. But the rulers after him forgot God and diverted from the path of virtue. They became even idol worshippers because of the influence of their wives. The result of all their disobedience was that God punished them and they were taken as exile for seventy years. God wanted to condemn them with this kind of punishment. The sin of the world had to be heaped upon Israel, and since Israel could not bear, the entire weight of the sin of the world, their representative Jesus the king of the Jews had to bear that heap. The Messiah has come to rule the world as a nationalist king a rival to Caesar. He has come to rule the world as God always intended to have His kingdom ruled with love and if it necessary die for that. He had come to bear the pain of the world by carrying the heavy loaded cross on His shoulders and by keeping to the crown of thorns on his head. Then three long nails were brutally pierced into His hands and feet. Added to them were the Roman justice and the anger of frustrated hopes of the Jews God seemed to have decided that the death of one man would suffice to forgive sin of the whole world. In addition to the above said reasons, the Biblical scheme of thought is richer and very simple, which exhibited in five points.

- 1). The world and the human beings are the good creation of the wise and loving God.
- 2). Since the human beings rebelled against the creator they were kept as slaves to the dark powers that ruled the world.
- 3). God had a plan by which He could heal and restore the humans and the entire cosmos and His plan involved the calling of Israel as a nation and it should share its plight of humanity.
- 4). God promised that He would implement the act of salvation by sending his own spirit to complete the healing and removal of humankind and its whole cosmos.
- 5). God made a promise to send one who can bear the task of Israel and who will save Israel and the world by dying on their behalf. The ultimate result of the promise was He Himself had come to fulfill it.

But on that particular night He was betrayed after He took bread and wine. He maintained the word of "Passover" service. This Jewish covenant festival became a reference to the forthcoming death of Jesus Christ. Finally Jesus as the representative of Jews was put on the cross. He was facing the



last which was supposed to be done by Israelites that if they did not repent God would judge them by sending to the king of Babylon as a punishment by attacking Jerusalem Jesus also warned them, to repent otherwise God would use Rome as the instrument of wrath against them for their disobedience.

Let us think of David for a while who was a man after the heart of God. He went to meet Goliath with five smooth stones and defeated him in the name of the God of Israel. If we think of Adam who was driven away from the Garden of Eden according to Jewish and early Christian legends there was a temple in Jerusalem area and when Adam died, he was buried on the very spot, where Jesus was crucified. That must be the reason why in paintings and stained glasses windows, we see Adams skull at the foot of cross.

Jesus was hanging on the cross and it was six o'clock time in the evening and getting dark. Then at the ninth hour He cried desperately with a loud noise "Eli, Eli lama sabachthani," which means." My God, My God why have you forsaken me" but some people who were standing near the cross, thought Christ was calling for "Elijah" prophet to come and save Him. And with that final shout he yielded up his spirit. Some of the onlookers were really interested to see if Elijah would come and save Jesus. From the very early times, there has been a tradition that Prophet Elijah would come both to deliver the people of God or to prepare the way for the messianic delivering Himself.

The Jews even keep cup of wine on the "Passover" night and keep the door open. The Jews during time of Jesus believed that Elijah would come and set right the Israel nation before the establishment of God's kingdom. They were longing for God to act and save them from the oppression of the Roman rule. They also expected Elijah would come during Passover week to save Israelites. then who was this Elijah, the Jews adored so much and longing his presence. He was the man of fire. It was he who called fire to burn up the troops sent by the wicked king Ahaziah.

As a matter of fact, Jesus did not call for Elijah, It was misunderstood by the crowd. Jesus mentioned the word Eli only, which means my God. Jesus as an innocent one drew himself on to the holy wrath of God against human sin in general. So that human sinners like us can look at the cross. The load of sin and the guilt we have been carrying all the time is taken away from us and took it on himself The sins have been properly death with and we need not worry anymore. This is one of the reason why "Easter" followed

“Good Friday” after the death of Christ, that Friday was called black Friday for two centuries then it became God’s Friday and finally became “Good Friday.” The sin of the world that caused the death of Jesus, has been properly death with, and death could hold Him no more.

We have another question to answer in this connection, that is when Jesus was on the cross, we have to enlighten the public, whether He was a failure Messiah or a successful one. The crowd mocked at Him and said. “If you are the Messiah come down from the cross and we will believe in you.” Because He was the Messiah, he had to stay on the cross. He was doing what He could do. He was the sole, unique innocent patiently bearing the pain, shame and guilt of the world. If he were to come down at that crucial moment it would show His disobedience to His unique purpose had He done so, the game would be over and the Satan would have won the game. The result of the game must be, the world would never be redeemed God thought, the sin of humankind has become a universal problem, and so He said, He would come and rescue Him. First God tried to interest the task of redeeming Israel by themselves, and when it became impossible for them, God took the whole responsibility of not only redeeming of Israel but also the entire cosmos.

**GOD CALLED PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN PURPOSE:** God called Abraham and said, go from your country and from your kindred and from your father’s house to the land that I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your nation great, so that you will be blessing I will bless those who will bless you and the one who curses you I will curse and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed (genesis 15:1-5). Jesus also while passing through galilee called Simon and his brother Andrew he told them “follow me I will make you fisherman of people.” After some time James and John followed Him. During the Biblical days there was a standard tradition of calling of God so. Abraham took it as the voice of God, and continued his journey. From that incident onwards, honored and he followed word of God and believed in Him strongly. We have some more example like Isaiah, Samuel, Paul, peter, James, John etc. Above all the call of Abraham was more important. God thought, the arrogance, chaos, rebellion despair and beautifully created world itself were all out of order, because the keeper its steward had abandoned his task. So God called Abraham to take the responsibility, which Adam vacated by committing sin. God wanted Abraham to work for the unity of the family which was scattered (ed) and which was unique. So, the call of Abraham and the promised land, had become the sign of the whole new world and He called His people Israelites in the prophetic voices through

out the old Testament when God called a man, he called him to come and burn-burn with a new love a new desire, that would take all mixed desires and ambition and burn till it was completely refined. People had to undergo this treatment when God called with some purpose.

That was the destiny of whom God called to be consumed by fire. He wanted us to be were and gentle in all our relationship. He would us to be forgiving creative and sustaining for his word, His human children, His church and finally he would call us to follow him in his word his human children his church and finally he would call us to healing His battered and beautiful world. It we say we are the children of God we must also say we are the heirs to His kingdom, rather join him with the Messiah if we suffer with him.

Apostle Paul said in this contest that the hole creation is in bondage and the tribulation is the glory of God's children. In the same way the future glory of the church is simply not going to shine like an . There is a long Christian tradition which is stressing this point more to say briefly the glory of the church is the glory which Adam lost at his fall., Apostle Paul here using exodus language as a reference to the whole world. According to Paul there was a chain or exodus within the purpose of God, the coming Israel of Egypt, the coming of Jesus out of His grave by conquering death, the church being born again, with baptism, as said in Romans to the chapter, and the present amazingly the whole cosmos.

The creation in this condition, because of the rebellious humankind, God and the world the is dying love of Jesus, the redeeming power of the Cross, resurrection, and the brokenness of human reach, and held together within our humaneness . So, Paul was reminding the church leaders and representatives to love through the process of the prayer of longing or grooming and then they must have creative attitude for the improvement of the church, so that God in heaven would \_\_\_ God would remain incognito in the midst of his people. This hidden presence is a major theme in St. Luke's Gospel. After the earlier healing miracles of Christ people began to say "a great prophet has risen up among us and God has visited His people."

The event of dwelling with His people, automatically reminds of Jewish temple. Actually the temple was the first and foremet place for God to remand Jews believe that the creator of the earth is their God and lived in their midst. The idea of God living in a temple was not at all a unique thing to Judaism temple used to have a shrine, with an image of some God of which was inanimate image. But Israel is called to be His true humanity and true image

reflexing in this world. The God of Israel was the creator of this world, are living among His people. God met sinful people and instead of burning them, He forgave and restored them as the members of his big family. Now Jesus came and declared God's judgment on the temple because Israel made the temple a bring and God would come as a fire, as a hammer, and then break rock into pieces.

**GOD REMAINED WITH HIS PEOPLE :** He remained with His people by preaching to them by healing and by forgiving their sins. Here God's presence in Jesus is still secret. Jesus is the true and beautiful temple in Jerusalem when the human beings were remade in the church of God, they began to set one more in authority over the world. when the storm healed the lepers, and multiplied stilled the whole creation leaped into new line the torch of the incarnate of God. His splendour will one day fill the earth as the water covers the sea. Jesus was filled with the glory of God, that was revealed supremely on the cross, because it was the glory of love. Then the whole earth was to resound with the glory of God, as Jesus was answering to His father God.

When we worship humbly and obediently, "God the father in the person of His son and the power of His spirit," would become for a while the symbol of bread and wine. And worshipping of those, two would not at all adulatory or some Christian form of paganism (or protestants always suspect cathories). It is the condemnation of an continuously at work and with the intersection of eternity. It is the presence of Jesus of Nazareth the crucified and the raised one as the new temple and also the first fruit. It is the presence of one to whom the angels say "Alleluia" non-stop it is the living presence of the living God, and the loving presence of the loving God.

We can find some valuable information from the book. "The idea of a Christian society." written by a famous English poet "Ts Eliot," God wants us to move the Christian society will not be one which is on the way. It is already in existence like a pilgrim age to the future age to come. And for its confirmation were must have the glance of the vision St. John saw in the book of revelation. I saw a new heaven and a new earth, but not the first heaven and the first earth for the first heaven and the first earth have passed away and the sea was no more. And I John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem. coming from out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride .....Behold I make all things new (Revelation 2.-5).

The idea of the Christian society cannot be an idea of perfect condition of affairs. It cannot be started in a day or in a year with some minor adjustments. But a Christian society must continue ever and forever. When we are talking about a Christian. We must keep in mind two things. First the vision of the new heaven and the earth will be opened by God himself, because we cannot build such endomorphic structures, But only pray second point is we must look for a society which is not longing and praying, but what is seeking obedience to that vision. Therefore, the idea of a Christian society must be always paradoxical over our citizenship is in heaven,” but that is the model and type for your citizenship upon earth. T.S. Eliot in one of his popular poems used the image of a wonderful surgeon. The surgeon who was operating on the wounded person himself wounded and suffering that is the image of Christ, stark and shocking. The church does not have a blue print for Christian society in this pocket to hand down to the later generations with a patronizing smile. It has a different type of print to offer the print of the nails in its hands and feet, the marks of the wounds.

The church does not wave a magic hand to abolish all evil from the society but it holds up the cross of Jesus. The answer the church can have is the answer God himself gave on Calvary. The idea of a Christian society is a vision partly realized in which the love of God is expressed and their healings for their benefits and the transformation of the society around them. Then a country finally the word can be purified and transformed by the fire of God’s wounded love.

So, according to T.S. Eliot, the vision of Jerusalem is not a blue print in our brief case, nor simply a priest’s charter nor something that bears us as Christians in our division. We may put a question what made Jesus to go to Jerusalem? It was to draw together only what we sang on Christmas day the hopes and fears of all the years, but also the pains and tears of all the years. With the cross as the underlying step of our lives by the resurrection and then implemented by the fire of the Holy Spirit. We can have no confidence to take on the world with the sovereign love of God, Jesus said in the world “you have true believers, but be of cheerful and good I have overcome the world.”

## Who are Angels, are They Real ?

We see as believers the frequent mention of Angels in the Bible as heavenly messengers or servants of God. A popular English writer “Mary K Barter” clubbed the Biblical teaching with her personal experiences. She really gave a wonderful thought provoking and enlightening food for the people of intellectual caliber. Mary K barter in her book “A divine Revelation of Angels,” She gave her personal experiences with the angels, and how they help us in times of need with the permission of God. As a matter of fact, the work of angels, as the messengers of God, can be seen throughout the scriptures.

People from generations, and all walks of life, have been living in wonderland and very curious to know about the existence of angels, what kind of work they are? whether they are mortals or immortals whether they marry and beget children, and doing soon. If we look into the history, most of the religious believe regarding the spiritual beings as powers and principalities. In ancient days the pagans were under the impression that the so called angels were the spirits of departed souls of ancestors or spiritual being or fairy beings from another world. But the archeologist have their own interest they discovered the representation of some being with wings in the early cave art, carved on walls and cliffs then in the medieval period, some classical artists made popular artistic symbols in their works such symbols could attract people immediately and they recognize as angels.

The artists showed the angels to the public as human like figures, with wings with robes and other with harps or some other musical instruments in their hands. The wings put on their shoulders signify that they are heavenly beings. The white robes they were symbolized their purity and holiness. The musical instruments they kept in their hands indicated that they would sang songs in praise of their God Almighty. Therefore, the description of angelic beings during the medieval and renaissance period contributed something for our thought as what they were how they look like and so on.

The angles and their purpose as heavenly bodies has become an important topic for people in the society because everybody is interested to know something about the angels. Even the orthodox Christians exhibited their anxiety to know about those celestial beings. The lyrics of many popular songs speak about the angels on birth day candles, and wedding invitations, we came across the representations of celestial creatures. Most popular time

magazine also published a cover story with a title “Angels among us.” Now with all this background, let us come to the main topic again, who are angels, and whether they are really in existence, and also with we can see them. So to say we can have many questions to answer about these angels.

I have my own interest to know about them as I read in the book of Biblical history. It is said that the angels would be about 10 to 15 feet height, they can walk with their legs and also fly. I have my personal experience in this matter, that is since some years I used to dream strange, dreams like flying from one mountain to the another, and from one house to another. This kind of flying dreams I got many times, but I could not understand the meaning behind them, but my curiosity is insisting me to know about them. As ordinary human beings we cannot understand the ways and means of our God as He is the omnipotent. For one thing I am immensely thankful to Him because He awarded me the gift of writing. I have written so far 7 books, and the subject of them is historical background of the Bible. So, the only thing we can do is to count our blessing from God, and pray, expressing our thanks.

We must accept whole heartedly, that God is always merciful toward all of us. I understand, some people get visions and dreams only for the purpose of realization. God is always working among us. As the Bible says, “surely the Lord God does nothing unless He reveals His secrets to His servants the prophets”(Amos 3.7). God would reveal those things to give us hope to encourage and to show that He is with us always. So with the work of God, we can take it for granted that the angels are real but not myth or legends. They are meant for various programs of God. They are the reveal spiritual beings, we have to pray and glorify God because He would do everything even without our asking through His messenger the angels. The result of our constant prayer in this world would help us to spend our with Christ in heaven, but God who is rich in mercy because of His great love with which He loved us when we were dead in trespass, make us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”(Ephesians 2.4-6). I pray that God would free us directly or indirectly with the help of His angels from all our burdens and also heal the sick and free us from the oppressors.

“It is the desire of God to lose the bands of wickedness. to undo the heavy burdens to let the oppressed also free and break, every yoke”(Isaiah 58.6). Since God is merciful He will send His angels to help us whenever we

need. Then what is the truth about the angels? To study about them is a serious and saved matter. At the same time, much of the teachings about the angels was false. In the present days, when we are experiencing the wave of angels mania. We must look into the words of God, about them. There are two types of angels as operating in this world today. Due to that some people used to be confused about the true nature of the celestial bodies. There are good angels as well as bad angels. Good angels always try to do good things according to the will of God. Regarding evil angels their intention is always deceiving people with bad motives. They are the embodiment of demonic nature So, it is very dangerous to learn about angels from those who don't have enough Biblical knowledge. Let us understand about the good angels, basing on the information about them.

According to the matter available, good angels played prominent role in the Bible on many occasions. Actually, Bible is the best source to know about them, and their way of life because they are in the world of God. It is said, "Every word of God is flawless." In the scriptures the word "angel or angels" appear about three hundred times, and the work of angels mentioned about two hundred forty times, In the scriptures in about thirty four books angels are mentioned. The Hebrew word used for angels in the Bible is "Mal ak," and the Greek word in the New Testament is "aggelos," and the meaning of both of them is "a messenger." The fact is that scripture made a true reference about the origin and various types of angels.

First of all let us know the origin of the angels and whether they exist always. The Bible tells us that angels are a company of spiritual beings created by God Himself. But the Bible does not say exactly, when the angels were created. And through some other sources, it is believed, they were already in existence even before the creation of earth. In this connection God asked "where were you before I tried, the earth's formation. Tell me of you understand who marked off the dimensions,? surely you know who stretched the masonry line across it and who were its footings, set or who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sing together and all the angels shouted for joy"(Job 38.4-7).

Many people are thinking today that angels are divine and they look for direction in life. This approach is contrary to the word of God the fact is angels are not at all our Gods, nor our direct spiritual (beings) guards. They cannot come to us at our command to do anything. They are only the servants of God, but not ours. They would come and go at His command. They will



respond to the voice of God, but not to our voice. We should not pray to them nor call them for their guidance, when you talk with a being who appears to be an angel, you may be talking to a deceiving spirit, by feeling that you are talking with an angel of light. It is God whom we have to love but not angels. Bible does not tell us to love God only but not angels. God is so kind and merciful toward His people, and He Himself says “My glory I will not give to another” (Isaiah 42.8). But we should respect angels and admire them for their dedication to God. We must praise their ministries to God to us also, but we should not worship them.

We understood so far about angels as they are the servants and worshippers of God, with human beings. St. John saw in his vision in heaven and angels were giving glory, honor and praise to one who was sitting on the throne. He saw all the heavenly bodies praising God with one voice with the words “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, “who was and is and is to come.” (Revelation 4.8). He saw the twenty four elders bow down in worship and cast down their crowns before the throne of God. The angels used to worship the Lord without interval. They simply obey Him and carry out His commands and do things according to His will.

Jesus Christ became a little lower than the angels. (because He was a man of flesh and blood), for our sake. So that with the human birth he could achieve our salvation and then the glory was returned to Him. We see in the Bible some of the angels rebelled against God, and these would be judged and eternally punished at the end of the age. The Bible tells that at certain point Satan is also referred to as Lucifer or devil. Who rebelled against God, and expelled from heaven. Satan it is said belonged to one of the groups of angels known as Cherubim but his heart was corrupted by pride. Some other angels followed him in his rebellion and all fell down from their sinless position in heaven. It is believed, one third of angels followed Satan, and it is clearly mentioned in the Bible, how God took action against them. All were cast into hell and awaiting the judgment at the end of the age. So, Satan became the leader of the fallen angels Jesus said the devil “does not come except to steal and to kill and to destroy” (John 10:10).

The activities of those angels of God in the lives of His people, were not confined to Biblical times only, they have been continued even today. God would send His holy angels to protect His people, who love and serve Him. These special messenger angels in action come with the power of God. They are something like intermediates between God and man. Angels are a

unique creation, with some specific qualities, that reflect, who they are and for what purpose God created them. Angels are spiritual beings, but not flesh and blood like human beings God “made His angels, spirits, His ministries a flame of fire.” There are some spiritual qualities in their attitude, because they are spiritual qualities in their attitude because they are spiritual creators. And also we must be aware of them that they are immortals. Those spirits are not subject to physical limitations. Those spirit lane no gender, in the sense they do not marry and have children as baby angels. As it is in the Bible in the resurrection (people) will not marry nor are given in marriage but are like angels in heaven (Matthew 22:30).

ANGELS ARE HOLY: Scriptures tell us that angels are holy beings when the son of man comes to His glory and all the holy angels with Him. Then He will sit on the throne of His glory (Matthew 25:31). Angels must be holy because they are serving the holy Lord.

THE BIBLE DESCRIBES ANGELS AS ELECT: Apostle Paul wrote in 1 Timothy 5.21, I charge you before God and the, Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels that you observed those things without “prejudice doing nothing with partially.” The word elect in Greek means select or chosen. The angels of God are known as the elect that He chose to let them live eternally in heaven.

ANGELS ARE INTELLIGENT BEINGS: They are intelligent beings, but they or not omniscients like God. They are mentioned in the Bible as carrying the instructions from God with wisdom and efficiency. They know only what God will choose to reveal to them or allow them to know the Bible tells us that angels use to learn things by observing God’s working.

ANGELS HAVE SUPERHUMAN POWER: God gave the angels the superhuman power, but they are not omnipotents. Apostle Paul, said angels are great in power and magnitiertan human beings. They are given great strength and ability by only to carry out His will and command. However, the might and power of the angels were shown on many occasions when they fought battles in support of the people of God. He would send His angels with a great sound of Trumpets and they gather together His elect from the four wends from one end of heaven to the other.

WHAT MUST BE THE MEMBER OF ANGELS: There are different references, for the number of angels in the scriptures in Mathew 28:53, Jesus referred to regions of them. “Do you think that I cannot now pray to my father and He will provide me with more than twelve regions of angels.” Generally, regions

according to Romans was about three thousand up to twelve thousands, including different cadres in them, Prophet Daniel saw in his vision, the God sitting on his throne. Then he saw, ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him, and this number came to more than one hundred million apart from the member of angels, that stood up around the throne of God along with the twenty four elders. That is to say there are too many angels for us to count. I studied in a book that God created one hundred crore of angels to serve His purposes.

HOW DO THE ANGELS APPEAR IN THE BIBLE: We have to think for a while how the angels look like. It is said they are choice able specimen of beauty clubbed with grace. They are nothing but the reflection of their creator, angels are spirits, yet they can take different forms as they carry out the work of God. Human beings must have observed angels, since the time of mankind, when God put the Cherubim in the garden of Eden to guard the way to the "Tree of Life" with a flaming sword (Genesis 3:24). It is said, in the Bible as the angels, appear to humans some times in different positions. In this context, we have the example of the parents of Samson; who saw the angel of God.

The angel came and said to the mother of Samson, and then she said, "A man of God came to me and his continence was like the continence of an angel of God," (Judges 13.6). The appearance of the angels is frequently shining and delighting wherever they are seen in their positions. They reflect the Glory of God Himself another incident, when the angel announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherd was followed by the glory of God called (Shekinah glory). Behold the angel of the Lord, stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they are greatly afraid" (Luke 2.9).

Then we have another example of two angels with shining garments at the time of Jesus Christ, and John wrote, I saw another angel, coming down from heaven having great authority and the earth was illuminated with His glory. So today, God declares and reveals His glory through the angels. Some angels appear in strange form. For instance, we have the description of four living creatures that prophet Ezekiel saw in a vision. He identify them him later as Cherubim. Prophet Isaiah described Seraphim angels as having six wings. John gave the example of another angel. "I saw still another mighty angel coming down from heaven clothed with a cloud." And a rainbow was on his head, some times they appear like human beings, in genesis 18th chapter, we can find how angels followed God with the appearance of man to speak about the two wicked eluis Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the vision of Ezekiel the angels, who carried out the judgment of God, appeared like men prophet Daniel mentioned about his encounter with the angel Gabriel who appeared like man. So, when the angels appeared in human born, they almost always looked like mobs, but there is some exception to this statement. The Bible tells about two angels who had to appearance of woman, but their names are not mentioned anywhere in the biblical account even in Biblical history. It is said they had wings like the wings of a stork and the wind was in their wings. They perform their mission, in a most spectacular way. They used to lift a basket of wickedness between heaven and earth.(Zechariah 5.5-11).

The Bible teaches us about the angels how they are really among us. Sometimes, we see them, but never realized the truth. If we have faith and belief, in the word of God, then we can understand the angels are always around us. They are helping us without our notice and also watching us. They continue the will of God in the earth. So the angels of God always serve Him in love and give Him the glory. Shall we try to follow such faithful in that matter?

**DIFFERENT RANKS OF ANGELS:** There are different ranks among angels. The Bible clearly pointed out the kingdom of angelic beings, include holy beings called angels, Arch angels, Cherubim and Seraphim. The Bible also suggests a kind of well-organized young cadre of angels and even demons. The reference of Jesus Christ in Matthew 2.53, to regions of angels is a direct reference to the organizing angels. The fact is that there is an hierarchy of angels, where in they enjoy some authority having seen the different ranks among them seen to be the angels.

Even among churches in many countries this hierarchy of angels has been developed. So according to the information there are about nine cadres among the angels. They are - Arch angels, angels, principalities, powers, virtues, dominions, thorns, cherubim and seraphim. It is said, this list and the cadres have been formed partly by Apostle Paul in his writings.

**ARCHANGELS:** The Bible tells more about archangels, cherubim and seraphim angels. According to Jewish tradition the arch angels are only four in number. They are, Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel. There are only two places mentioned about archangels in the Bible. "For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of arch angels." This passage is taken from 1 Thessalonians, another passage, "yet Michael the archangel in contending with the devil." This is taken from Jude 9th Chapter.

MICHAEL: He was the only arch angel mentioned the scripture particularly called archangel. He is also one of two angels and the other one is Gabriel. The name Michael means, who is like God.” He was also called commander of the angelic army. The presence of Michael is very clear in both old and New testaments. We can see his name whenever any conflicts (spiritual) take be place in the Bible to fight the devil and the wicked powers. So, Michael is considered to the supreme commander of the angelic army who do warfare for God to save His people. In the book of Daniel 12.1 Michael is addressed as “great prince.” who will remain as guard our the people of God at the time of the end.

In the New Testament Jude recorded a sobering fact, It is about, the prophet Moses the servant of God. When he died on the Mount Nebo, the devil came and claimed his body. But Michael being God’s angelic general challenged the devil and rebuked him in the name of the Lord. Michael the archangel also fought with Satan in the great conflict that is recorded in the book of revelation. This Michael a duty bound commander is mentioned in the Bible with due respect, for his noble character and we may get inspiration from that kind of angels.

Gabriel is designated as chief messenger: This is the second archangel mentioned by name in the Bible. Gabriel means “Man Of God.” He was the most important messenger angel, who stands in the forefront with messages from God and played a prominent role, in the scriptures. Gabriel angel appeared in the Bible about four times on different occasions. His appearance on each time, was related to the mission of announcing the purpose of God and programs concerned to the Messiah Jesus Christ and the time of the end. Prophet Daniel wrote about his meeting of Gabriel after receiving a second vision from God. Gabriel went on explaining to Daniel the events of the “seventy weeks” that they would be like turning point in the slavery of Israel. The angel explained the purpose of God and His programs for the unyielding Israel and also the importance of the Messiah.

In the New Testament, this Gabriel angel commanded the birth of John the Baptist to his aged parents, The same angel messenger commanded, the birth of Jesus Christ, to His mother Mary, Gabriel was often depicted as a celestial trumpet player. It is said regarding the second coming of Jesus Christ to the earth, For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel and with the trumpet of God (1 Thessalonians 4.6). Gabriel angel is God’s trust worthy messenger, who

stands at His presence and brings important news to His people. So, the duty bound nature of Gabriel and His reference to God, for his word, His work should inspire all the believers to love and serve God whole heartedly.

CHERUBIM AND SERAPHIM: Apart from Michael and Gabriel the other important angels in the Bible are Cherubim and seraphim. Cherubim or Cherubs are not like today's description of them with wings etc. They are very powerful and holy beings For the first time, cherub angel is seen in the Bible in Genesis 3.24, when God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden as they rebelled against Him. After God sent the first parents out of the Garden, He put the Cherubim angel and a flaming sword at the eastern side of it, to guard the way that leads to the "Tree of Life." The origin of the name Cherubim is not known. But these angels are closely associated with God. In about seven places we come across these angels in the Bible.

One instance, God gave Moses on the Mount Sinai, the blue print of the Tabernacle, and ark of covenant. At that time, He instructed Moses to keep two replicas of the Cherubim angels on the arch of the covenant and a mercy seat upon it. The main purpose of that show was, whenever God came to see his people, Israelites, he would sit on the mercy seat, which was kept on the Ark of the covenant inside the Tabernacle. This Tabernacle is otherwise known as mobile temple of God. whenever God came to speak with Moses, who stood at the door of the Tabernacle, and God from His mercy seat would speak to Moses, then Moses explained to Israelites who gathered around him. The main purpose of keeping these Cherubim angels, near the mercy seat is to sprinkle the blood of sacrificed animals for the atonement of the sinners.

Israelites believed that the presence of God, would dwell between the two Cherubim in the Tabernacle, king Solomon also decorated his Temple, in Jerusalem with elaborate and elegant earnings and sculptures of Cherubim. He had the temple curtain embodiment with Cherubim angels.

SERAPHIM ALL SERAPS : These angles are directly mentioned only in one passage in the book of Isaiah He said, in the year that king Uziah died I saw the Lord sitting on a throne high and lifted on the train of His robe filled the temple and above if stood seraphim each one had six wings with two he covered his face with two he covered his feet and with two he flew. And one cried to another and said Holy, holy, holy as the Lots of hosts, the whole earth is full of His Glory (Isaiah 6:1-3) of all the angels it is said seraphim angels are closer to God, because they will be lowering over the throne of

God. Those seraphim angels used to attend at the throne of God, appear to dwell in the midst of His holiness. In Hebrew the word seraphim means, “burning or fiery.”

HOW DO THE ANGELS PROTECT US IN CALAMITIES?: “God has guided me in times of danger and distress, call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you and you shall glorify me” (Psalm 50.15). The Lord knows, how to deliver the Godly people out of temptations, Like this there are many wonderful assurances of God, delivered in the book of the Psalms. So, God is truly a deliverer. When we cast out Satan, we must say Satan you must go in the name of Jesus, when demons cast out of people angels will stand with chains ready to drag them (those evil spirits). But there is something we have to do for God. He expects us to worship Him, to serve Him, to praise Him, and have faith that He would deliver us from all kinds of calamities. To these those people who love God and follow His commandments the Holy Spirit will come, with angels and do the needful.

Sometimes, the angels of God, do His will and break those yokes, through the word of God and with the spirit of God. People now and then used to say, after prayers, that they feel better, some heavy burden has gone their bondage has broken in the spiritual sense God wants us to follow this - we must be honest in our hearts before God. We must possess the noble qualities like forgiveness. By the word of God we must forgive anybody for his or her wrong doing, who must have hurt us or hated us unforgiveness on the part of any body is horrible and unpardonable. We must forgive others, so that the heavenly father will forgive us. Jesus said in this context, if you forgive man, thou trespasses your heavenly father also forgave you. But if you do not forgive men their transposes neither will your father forgive your trespasses.

God will answer the prayers and intercessions of those who are devoted to Him. The outcome of our prayers is that, God will suppress the devil that as haunting His people at all stages. So, it is very important, on the part of believers to have an honest and close relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. The name of Jesus Christ is not an ordinary name. He is our provider our savior and worthy to be worshipped and honored if we utter his name with due respect, with true honor and faith Satan cannot stand against him.

We have to remember one thing, with regard to deliverance, that can be done by God only, but never by Satan because he is the only created being by God. Satan is not omnipotent, omniscient, or omnipresent as God. God has multitude of angels at his disposal. He will have victory over everything He is the deliverer of all kinds of disturbances, “the Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer my God my strength in whom I will trust my shield and the horn of my salvation my strong hold” (Psalms 18.2). In the Bible it is said, the angels will join us when we worship the Lord, “praise the Lord, Praise lord from the haven praise him in the highest praise him and his angels ”(Psalms 148.5).

It is also believed that the angels would collect the prayers of God’s people and take them straight to heaven and present them before God and Jesus Christ. Then as messengers they bring back the answers for our prayers. God wants the sincere prayers of the believers. Apostle Paul also taught us “to pray without ceasing.” The study of angels will provide us with a wonderful chance to know about God, and His works through them, God has angels at his command to send whenever we need their help “casting all your care upon him for he cares for you.” (1 Peter 5.7). The word of God and the angels are always in action fulfilling His purpose. God is always encouraged Himself in His works, of salvation, redemption and Judgment for the world. Angels are the best examples to know the importance of worship all the heaven and the universe echo with the praise of God’s angels. So let us take the example of the angels for our worshipping of God. The four living creatures each having six wings and full of eyes around and within and they do not rest day or night but saying only, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come —————” (Revelation 4.8-11).



## The Glory of God

Is life like living unstrained sinners? and inviting pleasures at all times? or should people live like ancient stoic philosophers, who were taught by reason with self-control and suppressing what is generally called destructive emotions. Is there any purpose of man's life only for a few years on this earth; or is he just spinning around without knowing where he stops? Or it can be simply said life is nothing about a blind fatalism?

A brief answer to all the above motioned questions can be available in the West Ministry shorter catechism (which was written in 1646 and 1647) by the West Minister Assembly to bring it to the churches of England, into greater conformity with the church of Scotland. It begins with man's end of life is to "Glorify God" only and enjoy the blessings from Him forever. As a matter of fact, this statement is derived from many passages in the Bible and through them the truth is performed and it is really wonderful. Apostle Paul expressed this in the following manner. "For of Him and through Him, and to Him, and all things to whom be given forever Amen." (Romans 11:26).

According to Paul all things are of Him. He liberally spoke to the Universe into existence. All the things are concerned to Him, only because He is the creator of everything in nature. He is the sustainer. By His power all things adhere. If it were not for that sustaining power the Universe would disintegrate. As far as Apostle Paul was concerned all things are to Him only. He is the consummator Paul was of the opinion that only in God, life can be completed and reach its pinnacle in perfectness. Life would reach symphony of meaning, purpose and satisfaction. So, only in God all things on earth have their origin, movement and consummation.

God is the creator of the cosmos, sustainer and consummator of all things on earth, and so, He is to be glorified (Psalms 19: 1). Then what are the things created by heavens? The angels and ascended saints are heard proclaiming "Thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honor and power" (Revelation 4:4). What is the Lord receiving? At the birth of the son of God, angelic messengers announced to men on earth "Glory to the God in the highest." (Luke 2:14). Again what is the great thing that the God is receiving? And what is this thing the glory of God? The fined purpose of humanity's existence is only to glorify God and then understand what that glory is, and to explain further, it is nothing but the highest intellectual creator of the humanity, and its outworking is humanity's greatest priority. Some friends

may find interest to explain about the meaning of the Glory of God! First of all, I would like to know how far they could understand the meaning of it. Some people (believers) suggested God's retained glory can be understood through the saving of souls. Some others quoted verses from the Bible (verses) that made references concerned to the Glory of God; which are to some extent related to the holiness of God. But, unfortunately, those references are not up to the mark. They are not clearly quoted references to serve our purpose; and also underestimate the fact, that the concept of the glory of God. To define it more clearly, for most of us know the importance of it, but still it remains vague for all of us.

Anyway, a major theological book of references gave us the clue of these words "God's Glory," is that which makes Him glorious," This reference also really does not give satisfactory answer for our clear understanding. So, nobody can define the word by using the word, in the definition. The question is asked again, since the purpose for humanity's existence is to glorify God as long as the people live on earth. Then what is that glory of God?

The word glory (Kabod) has a Hebrew root; which means "weighty" that gives weight to God. That is the nature of God and His attributes when the nature and attributes of God are revealed in, then by His actions God is glorified. Some years ago, a friend of mine shared a definition in connection with the glory of God". He explained that the glory of God, which has stood for him as the test of time (test). He further suggested that "The glory of God is the sum and substance of His intrinsic eternal perfections. With the explanation, that God's glory is intrinsic. It is meant that God's glory (whatever it may be for a movement expressed wholly from within His own being). It does not depend upon anything external to Himself.

People sometime speak about some precious stones or metals like gold, silver, diamonds, nine pagodas etc. They speak volumes about them and say those things are very precious and costly. They have intrinsic value after they are seen in the form of ornaments in the jewelry shop. In the same way the Glory of God has its own intrinsic value. It does not dependent on any outside influence and even man or woman cannot add anything to the glory of God. So God's glory is intrinsic. It is His and His forever. And so God has proclaimed "My glory will I not give to another." (Isaiah 42:8). Besides being intrinsic God's glory is external (Psalm 104:31) while calling God's glory is external alternation of the believers drawn for the assessment

of the duration or legality of “it” we must remember, always that the intrinsic value of the precious metal and the glory of God will remain forever. It has been always and always be.

The Psalmist wrote, from everlasting to everlasting thou art God. In saying about God’s glory is His perfection in view are the imaginations that compass the divine being . Those ingredients includes His existence, His essence, personality, sovereignty, deity, and attributes. These are the important words used by that popular theologian but let us have a close look at each of the word.

THERE IS HIS DIVINE EXISTENCE: “God is without beginning and without ending. Everything has its origin except God”. He is uncaused, alone, but He is the cause of everything. Think of anything of its beginning and God is there. Think of anything that is of the past, God was there. He is the omnipotent. We can say, men were, men are, and men will be but God has only one tense as He is from everlasting to everlasting.

THERE IS HIS DIVINE ESSENCE: God is a spirit being here, the emphasis is not on His spirituality, but on His essence. If there is His existence there is His Essence. The essence of man is corporal (concerned to human form). That is to say man is mortal, corruptible and a physical substance prone to decay and become dust. In contrast, God’s essence is non-corporal and not in human form and He is immortal incorruptible and a spirit substance. God is a spirit and in truth. Because God is a spirit in Israelites were prohibited from making any graven image or likeness of God. What likeness can mean give to spirit essence.

THERE IS HIS DIVINE PERSONALITY: God is a spirit. He is the embodiment of intellect personality, and well power God can feel, think and act. He is not an impersonal force or mother nature; and through emotional to His creation. In contrast, God has possessed perfect personality and immutable character. God created man in His own image. He created man not in physical likeness because God is a spirit with that likeness He gives man ability to interact with his creator by using his mind (his intelligence, his heart and emotion ) and his will.

THERE IS HIS DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY: God is a spirit. He is possessing, intellect personality and will power. He does things according to His will and pleasure. He does not come to the earth, when it is in perfect condition, and

calmness. But He does, whatever is necessary to His believers at the most convenient times. God does things according to His good pleasure because He is the supreme authority over His own creation. So, God's will, shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

TEHRE IS HIS DIVINE DEERU: God is a spirit. Having possessed perfect personality intellect and will power He does anything and everything according to His will and pleasure whatever comes to Him, He will do it actively and promisingly one writer said in this connection, Aim at nothing and you will hit it every time. If we study the working of God, He does not aim at nothing. He will have a plan for history. It is His deeru and He is bringing it to passive every detail right on scheme God is never caught by sinning and never has to respond to unanticipated circumstances.

HIS DIVINE ATTRIBUTES: God is a spirit possessing intellect personality and will power. He always does things according to His will and pleasure. He does things actively and promisingly that comes all that comes to pass in perfect harmony, with His own character. As mentioned in the Bible there are certain things attribute to God only. A theologian simply calls them the attributes of God and some of them can be seen in His creation. Like His existence, His wisdom and His power whereas His divine attributes are different. Most of them are known to the believers through His self revelation in the Bible.

Following are some of the divine attributes that are formed in the Bible. They are God is infinite. He is eternal, immutable (Unchangeable), omnipotent (all powerful), omniscient (knowing everything), omnipresent(present everywhere). True, righteous, just gracious, loving, good, merciful, faithful, and kind hearted. God always functions in perfect harmony, with all His attributes. When we say God is infinite it means He can understand anything and everything eternally and act accordingly when we say He is immutable it means He is perfect in His character under all circumstances. His power will never diminish on any occasion. His presence will be all pervading and there is nothing He does not know. It is said in the Bible that even a single hair from the head of a person cannot fall without His knowledge.

The glory of God is intrinsic because it belongs to God; as the light and heat belong to the sun it is the divine everlasting plan that His glory should be proclaimed and demonstrated on the stage of the planet of the earth; through the outworking of the human history. It must be tackled delightfully and diligently because the glory of God is the pinach and

consummation of all things. God is self-seeking and self entered since He is by His very nature will seek the highest and the best. As He is the highest and the best, He has to bring all things to completion in himself.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF HUMANITY?: God created man in His own image to spend his time happily with God, in the beginning in the Garden of Eden. At the same time, He put some responsibilities on his shoulders, that is to bring honor and glory to his creator. With this point, it is crystal clear that God created man and woman only to glorify Him. So humanity is the only instrument in the hands of God. And by living the life of eternal perfection He expected them to bring honor and glory to Him. Some of the social scientists, suggest us that the most common word used in the English language “I” and it should be “He” or “Him” (He) people are becoming self entered day by day, instead of becoming God entered. If we consider this a bit seriously they are wrong in their approach. They think that their philosophy has its own value and their deeds are all directed toward self gratification and quit contrary to their creator. In such a circumstances the very purpose of their creation was defeated and we have to go back to the Garden of Eden, where Satan played a pivotal role in defeating man and made him commit sin.

Satan spoke to Eve in the day, ye eat thereof your eyes shall be opened and ye shall be as God’s knowing good and evil Genesis 3.5. It was God who breathe unto man the breathe of life so that he became a living soul. So for these people who know about God and submit themselves to His will can have perfect peace, joy unspeakable and highest destiny. But for those people who rejected the will of God will face distress and eternal damnation.

Declaring the Glory of God let us go back for a while, and look into the question. “The heavens declare the Glory of God” (Psalms 19.4)

How the heavens declare the glory of God? The heavens declare with the following words.

- 1). The heavens declare the existence of God.
- 2). The heavens declare the wisdom of God.
- 3). The heavens declare the power of God.
- 4). Since the universe is endless, that heavens reveal God’s infiniteness. And because of the advancement of science and technology there are more and more discoveries made and knowledge is increasing from time to time. The universe is so vast that there are many more things to be discovered, by the

scientists. All the new discoveries testify the existence of God and radical evolution on other land. These radical changes are causing pride on the part of human beings so, humanity is looking into the earth more than toward heaven to find out new things, that may be useful and beneficial to the present day society. As new inventions are coming up, wants for humanity are also increasing. If one want is humanity are also increasing. If one want is satisfied another want will be in its place.

Man wants to see the fullest massive testation of the glory of God on this planet. The heavens may reveal his existence wisdom power and infiniteness, but His holiness, Justice, love, mercy, goodness and faithfulness are proclaimed and experienced on the earth only. It is the holiness of God that forced Adam and Eve, to flee from the garden of Eden, after they committed sin. As a result, they were forced to use animal skins as the dresses to cover their shame and finally the justice of God was established. The out come of the sin was that some one had to shed his blood to redeem the sin, and God had to sacrifice His son Jesus Christ as a redeemer for the sake of all sinners.

God could forgive the sin of Adam and Eve, through His justice. Actually god was not the person responsible for their sin but it was Satan. But God allowed Satan to work on them to check their faithfulness and obedience to His word, not to eat the fruit of the forbidden tree. After this they happened, God felt it necessary, to display His divine attributes like holiness, justice, long suffering, grace and mercy, to keep His own creation in harmony.

THE EXPERIENCES OF PROPHET MOSES: According to Biblical history, Moses was appointed by God, to liberate Israelites from the bondage of Egyptians to their promised land Canaan. This historical event took place in the year 1446 BC during spring season, with one and half million people including all. After one year in their wilderness wanderings they happened to settle as the foot of the mount Sinai. There, they prepared the Tabernacle, a moving temple. Moses received the Ten Commandments from God, and God began to visit His chosen people frequently. When Moses went to the top of the mountain for the first time, because of his forty days absence, the Israelites forgot God and Moses and began to worship a gold calf prepared by themselves. He returned and saw the situation and broke the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

Then God called Moses for the second time to the top and gave him the same. At that time Moses seemed to have tired, and wished for the fresh glimpse of God. So, he requested God, Now therefore I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight show me. “Now thy way that I many know thee that I may find grace in thy sight” (Exodus 33.13). Moses was very curious to know how God would like so, he continued “I beseech thee, show me thy glory” God finally told Moses, that nobody could see His face and live anyway God wanted to show Himself partially and in order to view the fullness of His glory, which included His holiness righteousness and justice, when still in unglorified condition, means inviting death. But God kept his servant Moses in the cleft of a rock and passed by and let Moses see His back only that is His non-consuming attributes like mercy, grace, longsuffering, goodness and truth. After this abnormal experience, Moses did not have any more desire. He came down from Mount Sinai, with the glory of God on his face. Since then, with his glowing face he continued the task of leading those stiff necked Israelites to word Canaan, the Promised Land to the descendent of Abraham, which was also called the land of milk and honey.

More manifestation of God’s glory: In course of time God found some interest to dwell among His people. He wished to remain in the Tabernacle, a moving Temple prepared by Israelites at the foot of mount Sinai in their wilderness wanderings, and later in the Temple built by king Solomon on the mount Moreah in Jerusalem. In view of His interest, God introduced seven festivals more to be observed by his chosen people forever. God introduced a code of conduct called Laws of Moses then with the birth of Jesus Christ, the age of Mosaic law of the old covenant had to give away to the age of “grace”.

The code of conduct of the Old Testament, paved the way to the new principles in the New Testament called New Covenant. According to this covenant, gathering of people at a particular place is called church. And in that church, the body of Christ was indwelt by the Holy Spirit. The believer in Christ is in a unique position and became a vessel suitable for the use of the master (Christ).

Jesus conquered death, and after his resurrection grace, compassion, and truth were kissed at Calvary. Love played a prominent role at Calvary Holiness is eternally revealed at Calvary. The believer after experiencing all the above mentioned attributes first hand at the foot of the cross, at Calvary is to reflect the attributes his God to the people of the world. So, the glory of God is revealed in his creation in the garden of Eden, on the glowing face of

prophet Moses in connection with his giving away to law and the Ten commandments, in the Tabernacle, in the temple of king Solomon, in Jerusalem and finally in the face of the believer. But this glory was crystal clear only among the descendants of Abraham, Luke, Issac, Jacob-Israel, and whom God called "My Glory." So, God declared "I will place salvation in Zion for Israel My Glory" (Isaiah 46.13),

The fullest reflection of the intrinsic eternal perfection of God, can be seen in his relationship with Israel. As a matter of fact, the world had understood very little about this fundamental truth. To say in nutshell, the existence, essence, personality, sovereignty decree and attributes are shown completely, in the election, preservation future restoration and glorification of His chosen people because of that reason, God called them "My Glory" if we study His dealings with His people, we can understand His sovereignty. If we study God's dealings with Israel, we can understand His power over them. If we look into the history of Israel we can understand His grace toward them if we study God's dealings with Israel, we can understand his long suffering forth sake of His people of about two thousand years, we can understand, how far, god was more concerned and faithful toward his chosen people. If we study their history, we can know how many times those tickle minded rebelled against, the God of their forefathers and again how many times the prayed to save them, all this became a continuous process in their lives. He saved them and loved them. In spite of the wicked nature of His chosen people God is always immutable toward their attitude.

GLORY OF THE SON: There is another way of testifying the glory of God. It was through His beloved son Jesus Christ. It was wonderfully described by Apostle John, the beloved disciple of Jesus Christ. John wrote "the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Faith) full of grace and truth" (John 1.14). John referred this particularly to Jesus Christ the son of God. In the same way Apostle Peter also wrote about Jesus. He wrote, for we have not followed cunningly some devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ, but were eyewitness of his majesty" (2 peter 1.16.). So, according to those two statements, John "beheld" where as peter was an "eyewitness." And both of them were reminding the occasion that they were with Jesus on the movement of "Transfiguration" and His eternal glory shone out of His humanity (Matthew 17.1-2).



The written to the Hebrews Apostle Paul spoke about the unsurprising glory of Christ. He said that the very brightness of the glory of the faith was Christ Himself. Unlike the other manifestations of the glory of God, Christ was the exact reality and substance of that glory because Jesus was also God. "God in flesh" (Hebrews 1.3.) This is the reason when He said clearly, He that hath seen Me hath seen the father" (John 14.9). So, men can see the attributes of the invisible father in the person of the visible son. After understanding correctly the glory of God how as believers should respond to the Lord Jesus Christ, regarding the father truth of His Glory? The believers should respond as it was done by prophet Isaiah, when he conformed with the glory of God, He cried out, woe is me, for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts" (Isaiah 6.5).

Men and women, can see themselves what they are, really only when they first see God as what He is really, therefore, the intrinsic eternal perfections of God, (His glory) are the only platinum your dislike by which people can measure life. For instance, if a man in his relationship with his wife fulfill the purpose of life, for which he was created that means, he would proclaim and, demonstrate God's intrinsic eternal perfections. The result of this is, he would be holy, just loving, good, merciful and long suffering toward his mate. To say more clearly, if the people were in a position to fulfill the real purpose for which they were created.

Undoubtedly, the earth would be a paradise so, it is clear, that God created people for the purpose of the reflection of His glory and that is the center point And this point the believers can take into consideration. The difficulties, we come across in our day to day life proved us ample opportunities to show us the attributes of our Lord, God used to show His unconditional love, though we look at him as a stranger. It is due to that love He died for us on the cross to redeem us from our sin.

We should exhibit the purpose of our creation in our hearts and try to fulfill it. The Apostle Paul a great theologian put the essence of this entire article in a few words. "He said whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10.31). He expressed the same idea on some other occasion in a bit different way. For to me to live is Christ (that is by word and deed to show forth His glory" and to die is gain to win) (Philippians 1.21). The next point is that the believers should fall prostrate before the divine wisdom by remembering what the Lord said my

thoughts are not your thoughts, neither your ways my ways. For the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

The Bible teachers, the unregard human is an enemy to God and under divine condemnation. (Romans 1.1, 3.19). By grace through faith, in Christ the redemptive work on Calvary has been going on and humanity is justified. The humanity has yielded to the induring Holy Spirit and people are sanctified. And one day, they will be glorified God never leaves such people and anything that is half done. If he starts anything, he will take rest only after completing that particular work. Generally, His plan will be he begins with a condemned individual. He will mould and then shape the person until one day confirmed to the glory of God.

He takes, a person who is an enemy to Him and makes him an exalted eternal child, but Apostle Paul put this wonderful statement in the following words. Whom he did predestinate them, he also called and whom he justified them he also glorified (Romans 8.30) when God completes His shaping and redeeming a child, that child will reflect fully and perfectly his father intrinsic eternal perfection in all ages. Even the Biblical great personality like Moses could not in his un-glorified condition look at the glory of God, when the Lord is finished with his blood bought sons and daughters are made perfect and faultless.

## The Love Story of Ruth

The genealogy of Jesus Christ was involved in the life story of Ruth. It was a wonderful love story beyond comprehension. Her love affair was of three types and she was faithful to all of them. Ruth was a Moabite heathen woman. She first loved her mother-in-law whole heartedly and her name was Naomi. This woman was an Israelite lived in Bethlehem. She happened to go to Moab, due to unexpected famine in her land. In that strange land one son of Naomi married Ruth. She was a heathen woman. After her marriage, Ruth somehow became a true believer of the God of Israelites. So, she loved the God of Israel, with due respect and honour. In course of time, she learned more about this God and there by her love and respect increased on Him further. Then her third love affair was with Boaz, a land owner in Bethlehem after she came to this place along with her mother in law, Naomi.

Boaz was a compassionate teacher who was loved by everyone in Bethlehem and finally Ruth married him for his noble qualities.

There are 39 books in the Old Testament and the ‘Book of Ruth’ is the 8<sup>th</sup> one from the beginning. It has only 4 chapters and 84 verses altogether. Yet that small book secured an important place in the heart of all Bible readers because of her noble character. This small book is also the embodiment of morality. There are 27 books in the New Testament that all of us know. But one thing, we have to remember in this connection. That is, out of 66 books of the Holy Bible 40 books are with the names of persons. And among 40 books 38 are with the names of men and 2 with the names of women. They are the “Book of Ruth” and the “Book of Esther”. However, there is one woman in the Bible who became famous for her book as well as for her direct link with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. And that wonderful Moalite heathen woman was Ruth. It was this woman whose book was written only in Hebrew language in the Old Testament and her story ended in the New Testament as a link with the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Though she was a genetic woman, she was highly respected by the Rabbis of Jews. The book of Ruth used to be read in the Synagogues regularly every year at the time of Jewish feast called “the first feast” that they used to celebrate during the spring season. This was the third feast in the order of seven feasts. God established to Israelites to observe. These feasts were also called “Divine appointments.” God created these feasts or festivals with the purpose of meeting His chosen people. The four spring feasts are –

- 1) The Passover – This feast speaks about Christ as the Lamb of God, that was crucified.
- 2) Unleavened bread – This feast speaks about the spotless Lamb that remained in the grave for three days.
- 3) First Fruit – This feast tells about the resurrection of the Lamb of God.
- 4) Feast of weeks also called Pentecost – This feast speaks about the ascendance of the Lamb of God after resurrection.

According to some commentators of the Bible the book of Ruth is not only most spectacular and beautiful love story, but also it is predominantly a book containing rich and wonderful and remarkable doctrine. It is a book for the genuine search of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, including the first patriarch Abraham, and King David that would reveal many surprises one of such surprizes was the inclusion of four women in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

In the order of those four women the first one is “Tamar” a gentile Canaanite who somehow managed to sleep with her father-in-law “Judah” by disguising herself as a harlot. The result of that was as she wished she got a son and his name was “Pharez or Perez”. He was called fifth in the genealogy list of Jesus starting with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah and Pharez. The second woman is Rahab. She was also a gentile woman, who led her life as a prostitute. But to her surprise she experienced the grace of God. She became a true and reliable one and finally became a heroine in the sight of Israelites when we see her in the Book of Joshua. She appeared as a harlot who lived in the wicked Canaanite city of Jericho. Once Joshua happened to send two spies to Jericho in search of that city. Those two spies accidentally met this Rahab and she gave them shelter by trusting their God, the God of Israel. With her personal risk she helped the two spies, physically and spiritually. The timely help was really great when the Israelites were trembling with fear She convinced the Israelite leaders that they would get final victory over Jericho. As a result of her risk and timely help and encouragement the Jewish people got victory. They embraced her as heroine and entered the promised land.

Then in course of time, Rahab happened to marry Salmon. (This Salmon was not king Solomon son of king David) who was in the Messianic line. Rahab gave birth to Boaz. The third woman was Ruth. She was also a heathen Moabite woman. But she was not like Tamar, who behaved like

harlot, and trapped her father-in-law, Judah and through him got a son by name pharez. She was not like Rahab who was a harlot, before coming to faith in God. In the case of Ruth there is no black spot in her character. She was highly praised and respected for her nobility even by her rich husband Boaz.

The fourth woman we come across in the genealogy of Jesus must be Bethsheba the most familiar and of course wife of King David. The above three women, we have seen were of gentile origin. But in the lineage of Jewish Messiah this Bethsheba was a Jewish and originally the wife of Uriah, an Israel soldier. Later she committed adultery with King David and at last became his wife. She was the mother of King Solomon too. It was mentioned by a commentator that the genealogy of Jesus Christ reveals to us some touching surprising. One of such surprises was discovery of a spectacular “rose” in a desert. And that beautiful rose was Ruth, the Moabite. One important thing we can find among these four women mentioned in connection with the genealogy of Jesus Christ is, the son of God; who is also called the sovereign God. He knows how to choose correct persons to accomplish His purpose. Now let us look into the three persons Naomi, Ruth and Boaz because these three were the main characters in the Book of Ruth.

It is the most wonderful love story and apart from that it was a book of more powerful practical and critical doctrine. By reading this book, I am confident that all readers of the book of Ruth will certainly appreciate the contents. She was no doubt an extraordinary character and Boaz also ultimately proved himself as the most suitable person to be her husband. We find in the book how the story starts abruptly. It commences with the description of the crisis of severe famine in Bethlehem and in the entire Israel nation. Bethlehem means ‘House of bread’. It was called so because that small town was filled with farmers residing along the steep valleys and cultivate their crop. But now that house of bread had no food to eat. Such conditions forced the family of Elimelech and Naomi to leave their homeland Bethlehem and go out in search of food. They, at last, reached the heathen land Moab.

At this stage, the readers and believers may get some doubt. What must have made God to bring such famine to His promised land. Moab was a strange place for a Hebrew family like Naomi to go and live there especially during the time of Famine when God planned to destroy both Sodom and Gomorah for the wickedness of the people. He told Lot to leave that place at once. Accordingly while He was leaving with his wife and two daughters, his

wife happened to look back out of curiosity and became a pillar of salt. Then he went with his two daughters and took shelter in a cave. It was a strange place for them. In that cave the two daughters hatched a wicked plan and slept with their father. As a result both became pregnant. The elder daughter got a son whose name was Moab. This same Moab became the founder of Moab city and the Moabite clan. Unfortunately, there was an uncompromising enmity between Israelites and Moabites. Though Elimelech knew this fact he happened to go to that strange land with his wife Naomi and two sons as it was the critical time of famine. The same Moabites strongly opposed prophet Moses, when he tried to enter their land with Israelites on their way from Egypt to their promised land Canaan.

Moab was about 50 miles from Bethlehem. Actually it was not a long distance either to go on foot or on a donkey. Yet, it was exceedingly difficult way to travel because of the following reasons –

- 1) Elimelech and his family had to cross the wilderness of Judah.
- 2) They had to descend down about four thousand feet, to the lowest part on the earth and thirteen hundred feet below the sea level.
- 3) They had to go around the Northern end of the Dead sea.
- 4) They had to cross the Jordan river.
- 5) They had to ascend again four thousand feet high of the Mount Nebo. From that particular spot only, Moses the servant of God was asked by God to see the promised land. Moses saw that from such a distance and died there only and he was buried there itself.

The family of Elimelech somehow settled in Moab. But in a very short time Elimelech died. His name “Elimelech” means “My God is King”. After his death the two sons married two Moabite heathen women and their names were Orpeh and Ruth. And the names of the two sons of Elimelech and Naomi were Machilon and Chilion. Naomi stayed in that strange land Moab for 10 years and during that period, she lost her husband and two sons. The time between the death of her husband and the marriage of her two sons was also not mentioned anywhere. And also the reason for the death of her sons after marriage was not said anywhere. To be clearer, whether her sons died natural death or due to any foul play was not quoted anywhere. But we have to feel sorry at the pathetic situation of Naomi. In just ten years time, she lost her husband and two sons in that heathen and idolatrous land.

After ten years of painful stay in Moab, Naomi received a happy news from Bethlehem, that there was no more famine in Israel. But there was none to her to give a piece of advice at that time. She decided herself to go to her native land Bethlehem. She recollected also the past seven years famine in Egypt at the time of Joseph, and four hundred thirty years of captivity. Finally, with much pain in her heart she asked her two daughters in law to go to their parents. She sincerely loved the two ladies eventhough her sons were not there but last faith in God because of the death of her husband and two sons.

And Naomi said turn again my daughters why will ye go with me? Are thou yet anymore sons in my womb that they may be your husbands? Turn again my daughters go your way, for I am too old to have an husband (perhaps she must be in her early fifties). If I should say I have hope if I should have an husband to night .....the Lord is gone against me. (Ruth 1.11 – 13) Naomi, in her desperate condition though there was no one to continue her family name, She did not find any source of help from anywhere. She finally advised her two daughters-in-law to return to their houses (to their parents). For these words, Orpah hugged Naomi and left her. But Ruth was a different woman. She was only in her late twenties. She did not want to leave Naomi at any cost. With that strong decision she spoke courageously the following words which we find nowhere in the entire Scripture.

“And Ruth said entreat me not to leave thee or to return from following after thee, for whether thou goest, I will go and where thou lodgest, I will lodge they people shall be my people and thy God my God and where thou diest will I die there and will I be buried, the Lord do so to me and more also if right, but death part thee and me”. (Ruth 1.16-17)

The above said remarkable words touched and melted the heart of Naomi. The perfect and innocent heart and love of Ruth conquered her. Her negative thinking about Ruth had gone away from her forever. Then without second thought Naomi had decided to take Ruth to Bethlehem. The golden words the Gentile Ruth said, “Your people are my people, your God is my God”. These precious and noble words stamped in the heart of Naomi. Added to that the friends, who could survive the famine came and met Naomi and gave her more happiness. The tie Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem was the beginning of “Barley Harvest”.

This barley harvest was also called the “feast of first fruit”. In the order of feasts, adopted by God to Israelites, this feast would come as the

third one. In the cultivation of the land, this barley crop would come as the first harvest, during the spring season. This spring season would come either at late march or early April. During this time, the priest in an established ceremony would walk from the Temple Mount of Olives to a small field of barley and plant on that occasion. After that the first riped one should be taken to the Temple and offered it to God. Then the people would take it for granted that the harvest of the spring is ready in the ground.

Apostle Paul wrote in the book of Corinthians “But now is Christ risen from the dead and became the first fruit of them that slept”. (1 Corinthians 15.20). There were some others in the Bible like Lazarus who died and raised. But Jesus died, when it became necessary and resurrected and never to die again. He was the first fruit to all believers. He conquered death Like Himself all the believers who died will raise again in His second coming. Naomi and Ruth came to Bethlehem from Moab just at the time of barley harvest; They saw the farmers had gone to their fields for harvesting the crop. When Naomi left Bethlehem ten years ago it was really bad time.

The second chapter of the book of Ruth is no doubt another episode in her love story. The event is, “Naomi had a kinsman of her husband a mighty man of wealth of the family of Elimelech and his name was Boaz” (Ruth 2.1). The source of information regarding the wealthy Boaz was no way concerned to Naomi, but she knew about him and his social status through her husband Elimelech, who happened to be his relative. Ruth, by taking this opportunity and by considering the poor condition of her family, one day she requested her mother in law that she would go into the field for gleaning. It is quite clear, Ruth used to consult everything with Naomi because of her respect. In the Mosaic law also God commanded that the following people would deserve for gleaning. They were the poor, needy, fatherless, widows etc. Such people were allowed to go into the fields and collect the left over things. When the farmers with their workers harvested the field some pieces of crop would be left for this purpose. So helpless people like Ruth would go into the field for gleaning. Let us see what God commanded in the Mosaic law? It is said, “when thou cuttest thine harvest, in thy field and hast forgot (missed) a sheaf in the field, thou should not go again to fetch it, It shall be for the strangers, for the fatherless and for the widows that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the works of thine hands”. (Deuteronomy 21.19 and Leviticus 19.9-10)



God knows the people, who really needed His help. So, even without their asking, he will provide all their needs. Now both Naomi and Ruth were in that position. And as per the law of Moses, they had every right to glean in the land of wealthy Boaz, who was the relative of Elimelech, father in law of Ruth. First she did not know who Boaz was and in the same way, Boaz did not know who Ruth was and they were relatives. But in a very short time, Boaz came to know that Ruth was a young woman of self-respect from Moab. then he wished to know what happened to Elimelech, his relative and to his sons her wonderful treatment of Naomi and her perfect love toward the God of Israel. Boaz as a man, pitied and protected both of them. But Ruth was still a Maobitess remaining in a foreign land without a husband.

The third chapter of Ruth is a beautiful description of timely reaction of Naomi regarding the future life of Ruth. In this context, I would like to mention one quotation. "Strike while the iron is hot" and Naomi was going to do the same. She was always looking for the opportunity to provide happy life for her beloved daughter in law Ruth. Israelites after 10 years of suffering due to famine could have a good harvest. They were very happy for the outcome of the harvest. Whenever they had this kind of harvest they used to celebrate to show their gratitude, satisfaction and fulfillment and finally thank God. The workers would go to their houses with the due from the farmers. Boaz because of some reason remained in the field during night time to take care of the harvest from the thieves.

Naomi thought it was the most suitable time to do something to Ruth. She had a master plan to send Ruth to the place where Boaz was alone at that time. She gave brief information to that heathen woman Ruth about the culture and life style of Israelites. Naomi also advised her to get ready according to the customs of Israelites and go to Boaz. Ruth simply obeyed and followed her instructions. She went to him and uncovered the feet of Boaz and laid down beside him. During midnight he got up and surprisingly saw someone was sleeping at his feet. He might have thought some stranger came in and shouted who it was. She replied that she was Ruth, his hand maid. Perhaps, she might have not known the correct approach of a man by a woman in Israel culture.

Ruth was very young whereas Boaz must be almost double the age. In such situation it was not proper for him to advance further. Since she herself made the proposal, everything went well. The simplest definition of a kinsman redeemer came to us through a conflict between the Sadducees and the Lord

Jesus. When they tried to entrap Him between the speech in the crowds. The Sadducees put Jesus a question by disturbing Him in the midst of His speeches. The question was Moses in the Book of Deuteronomy 25.5 if a man dies having no children his brother shall marry his wife and raise up seed into his brother". (Matthew 22.2-4). Finally everything went well and Boaz whole heartedly accepted Ruth for marriage and to be the kinsman redeemer. Then Boaz said, "And now my daughter fear not I will do to thee all that thou (requestest) for all the city of my people doth know that there art a virtuous woman". (Ruth 3.11)

Here is one technical point to be thought over Boaz was a kinsman to Elimelech either as brother or cousin. But this relationship was no way concerned to Ruth to be her kinsman redeemer according to the law of Moses. Added to that there was another nearer kinsman than Boaz, who had every right to help her according to the law of Moses. So the nearer kinsman had to say whether he wanted to redeem her or not. He had the first choice to say yes or no. Then Boaz told Ruth, "And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman even then there is a kinsman nearer than I." (Ruth 3.12). Any way both met in the presence of elders to settle this issue. And the nearer kinsman openly refused to redeem Ruth due to some reason. Then Boaz said unto the elders and to all people "Ye are witness this day that I have brought all that was Elimelech and all that was Chelions and Malton's (the two sons of Elimelech and Naomi) of the hands of Naomi" (Ruth 4.9). There are three things to be accomplished if Boaz wanted to redeem Ruth

- 1) Boaz must be a kinsman.
- 2) He had to be willing to redeem.
- 3) He must have the redemption price.

All this depended upon how much obligation the dead kinsman left behind. Any way all went well and the marriage was done in a grand scale according to his status. As a man he commanded great respect in Bethlehem. Naomi had a good member of friends and they too attended the marriage. At last Ruth became the wife of Boaz. And with the blessing of God, they got a son whose name was "Obed". Naomi was no doubt a wonderful woman, who one's thought all was last and life became hopeless. Now there was happiness in the face of Naomi. She took the child and laid him in her bosom and became nurse to do all kinds of service to that boy. This boy Obed grew up and became a man. Then he begat Jesse, and Juse begat David. And the Ruth a Moabite woman, who loved most of God of Israelites, now, became

the great grandmother of king David, and thereby in the physical lineage of the son of God. Jesus Christ If we look into the New Testament and the first chapter of the first book, Matthew gave the details of the genealogy of Jesus Christ starting with Abraham. In the fifth verse of the first chapter of Matthew, it is said that Salmon begat Boaz, through Rahab and Boaz begot Obed through Ruth, and the genealogy continued till the birth of Jesus Christ. Let us remember one point at this stage that a kinsman redeemer had to be a kinsman, and he must be willing to redeem and have the price to redeem.

Some Bible teachers compared this Boaz kinsman redeemer to the redeemer Jesus Christ. At the time of His birth Jesus Christ became a flesh for the unique purpose of being our redeemer. He could not remain in heaven and provide us redemption. God created man to become the king of the earth, and give names to the animals and so on but he lost the inheritance of the earth in the Garden of Eden. When the evil Satan made man to commit sin. Then the Satan by using his intelligence and cunningness took hold of the earth from man's rule. In such circumstances Christ came to our rescue to redeem the entire humanity. It is said in this context, "He came but be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many to seek and to save that which was last" (Luke 19.10). One fact we find in the book of Ruth, that is it ended with the genealogy of the royal family of King David, though that book contained only four chapters and 84 verses. The book started with the story of pharez and ended with king David. The genealogy is involved with four permanent personalities of the Bible and they were, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Judah.

The tribe of Judah, was called the royal tribe from which the Messiah has to be born. It is said in the Bible, "the Scepter (royalty) shall not departure from the tribe of Judah."(Genesis 49.10). We feel strange at the very first glance regarding his omission found the genealogy was ended only with the King David and exceeded the name of king Solomon. Pharez was the son of Judah and Tamar (Judah's daughter in law). Pharez was the fruit of the result of sexual relationship between Judah and Tamar. If we study carefully the whole 38 chapter of Genesis it was dedicated to the description of the wicked event because it involved with some complications. The most important of such complications was the truth of Pharez. He was considered to be the illegal son of Judah.

God gave a proclamation regarding this kind of events the illegal birth of people like Pharez. Prophet Moses, the law giver to Israelites wrote, “A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 23.2). The correct definition for the word bastard is an illegitimate child. And in this context, he would not become the true descendant of Judah and so, he was not qualified to sit on the throne of Israel for 10 generations starting with Pharez. Basing on the declaration, let us see the 10 generations. Pharez begat Hez’ron, Hez’ron begat Ram, Ram begat Ammin’adab, Ammin’adab begat Nahshon, Nahshon begot sal’mon, sal’mon begot Boaz, Boaz begot O’bed, O’bed begot Jesse, Jesse begat David.

Since David was the 10<sup>th</sup> generation from Pharez, he did not come under the judgement of God; because, his judgement was only on the first nine generations. Ruth as the wife of Boaz gave birth to Obed. That means Ruth was the great grandmother of King David. To explain in details, she was the royal lineage of Jesus Christ. Many scholars and Bible teachers believed that the book of Ruth was written by Prophet Samuel. And the same Samuel happened to anoint David as the king of Israel after the ungrateful king Saul. “Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brethren and the spirit of the Lord came upon David and from that day onward. So, Samuel rose up and went to Ramath.” (1 Samuel 16.13)

It is important for if Samuel particularly penned the Book of Ruth, to show that David would come under the tenth generation and never be in the judgement of God, if the generations were counted correctly from Pharez to David.

Some Biblical scholars compared this 4 chapters book of Ruth, to Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament and to the “Revelation”. The chapters from the book of Revelation provide foundation for everything that is going to happen in the rest of the book like bringing the earth and all other things there in to an unconditional victory. According to chapter 4 apostle John was taken to heaven either through spirit or in body we have no authentic information. But he saw the throne and somebody was sitting on it. John gave the wonderful description of the throne of God, the significant sight, and the Angelic beings that surrounded the throne unfortunately. What was described by John was not correctly understood by the readers. Another important event John saw was four angelic beings remained standing continuously shouting in praise of God who was sitting in the throne. They were shouting, “Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty’ which was, and is,

and is to come (Revelation 4.8). Here, we see three fold proclamation of God's holiness is for the strongest possible emphasis.

After the proclamation, the chapter is ended with these words, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power for thou hast created all things and for thy pleasure, they are and were created." (Revelation 4.11). It is a fact that all things in the universe belonged to God only. But due to the revengeful intervention of Satan in the affairs of God, man remained far away from God. Satan hatched a plan to take revenge against God through innocent man, and finally made man and God to remain as strangers. Even then God should be given glory, and honour, from the entire humanity because He was the creator of everything including man. Then coming to the 5<sup>th</sup> chapter, John saw a scroll sealed with seven seals, in heaven in the right hand side of the person who was sitting on the throne. That sealed scroll appeared like a deed concerned to the planet earth. Those seals had to be broken by a worthy man to reclaim the earth. In order to find out a worthy man a thorough search was conducted in heaven on earth and beneath the earth to uncover the events mentioned in that scroll. In spite of thorough search a suitable person was not found in the entire universe.

The beloved and aged apostle John confessed that he wept, a lot literally because no such worthy man was found to break the seals of the scroll and see what was written. Of all the disciples God loved John more than anybody. So, He called him beloved apostle. This apostle John correctly understood that if there was no one to open the scroll, then righteousness and justice would be mortally wounded and never to rise again and as a result everything is lost eternally. The next alternative for this remedy is not the second coming of Jesus Christ. It becomes His first coming. The secret here is the first coming of Jesus Christ into this world is incomplete without His second coming; because He has to open the scroll as it contained the deed of the earth only because of Jesus Christ all the believers are safe and secure. What we are today is due to the down payment of Jesus for our salvation.

During the second coming of Jesus as our Messiah and kinsman Redeemer. He will complete the remaining transactions. As John was weeping desperately for not finding a worthy man to open the seal of the scroll an angelic being suddenly came and commanded him not to weep. The angel further said, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, Jesus Christ had the authority and power to break the seal and open the scroll which contained the title

deed of the earth. Then John looked at the throne and saw something that he missed at the first time. He was a lamb, which had been slain standing near the throne. It was a strong lamb with seven horns indicating Omnipotent with seven eyes indication of Omniscience. Then we come across one of the most important events that happened. It was the Lamb (God the son) who took the scroll from the hand of God (the Father) that sat on the throne. In such auspicious occasion the believers would certainly feel like singing a beautiful song. “Thou art worthy to take the book and open the seal there of.” (Revelation 5.9). After that the reason was given “For thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred. The kinsman Redeemer paid the price that cost Him everything, that is infinite. He achieved something as king and priest. The result of His achievement is that the believers will rule with Him on the earth, for a thousand years”.

After this happy event, John saw another wonderful thing. It was the largest Choir and unimaginable and beyond comprehension. It was an assembly of ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands. “worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea and all that are in them heard I saying, Blessed and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever”. (Revelation 5.12 – 13) All of us as true believers must praise and glorify the Father who is sitting upon the throne why because He was the creator of everything in the universe we must also praise the Lamb, the son of God, because He redeemed what all His Father created and which was usurped by the evil Satan. The fact is that all the events and incidents the book of Revelation contained are indicated in those two chapters. There is still one more important thing the kinsman Redeemer had to do for the fulfillment of His achievements.

We come across now and then some squatters used to occupy the redeemed land illegally. In such conditions, it is the duty of the redeemer to drive away that kind of squatters from the land. In the same way, we find in the book of Revelation, Jesus breaks the seals and then blows the trumpets and pour out the bowls of their content. Those bowls contained the judgement by which Jesus wants to drive away the squatters; who are the Satan, the Anti – Christ, the false prophets, the false religion corrupt governments, paganism, atheism and all those who bluntly refused the grace of God and above all His love we know how the earth was defiled according to the Bible,

in the Garden of Eden, and how in intend it we also aware how Christ redeemed all of us by shedding His precious blood on the cross. As a result of all these events and their fulfillment, the believers along with Christ, will ruleth purified earth for a thousand years in the new heaven and the earth. (The heaven and earth are nearly purified qualitatively but not new in origin).

The earth is made new through purging. In the same way the believers are new creation in Christ. He is the same person who redeemed all of us from sin and so we became a new creation. The new earth will be like the Garden of Eden before sin entered into it. After the earth is purified and regenerated there will be no death, no disease, no famine, no calamities, no wars, no hatred and no sorrow. All these things are achieved by our beloved kinsman Redeemer Jesus Christ for the sake of His believers. This glorious redemption is shown to us through the wonderful love story of Ruth.

## **An extraordinary Prayer of Prophet Daniel**

Daniel was called the beloved prophet of God. And also, he was well disciplined in his prayers. If we go through chapter 7 and 8, from his book, we brood over for a while to understand the intensity of his prayer and the wonderful visions he used to get. To be frank, we need mental capabilities to comprehend them. In our reading, when we come to the first part of chapter 9 we find an extra – ordinary prayer of Daniel that we cannot come across anywhere in the scripture. The very first verse of the chapter indicates the exact time, when it was written.

“In the first year of Darius the son of Ahasuerus of the seed of the Medes which was made king over the realm of the Chaldeans.”

That was the Medo – Persian empire, and Darius was made king. The year was about 538 B.C. and by that time Daniel was in exile for about 68 years. He was taken as one of the captives in the year 606 B.C and now he was almost 82 or 83 years old. That is to say, Daniel was just 14 years when he was taken as captive to Babylon with others. Then in the 2 verse itself, we see under what circumstances the aged faithful prophet had to pray to God.

“In the first year of his reign, I Daniel Understood by books, the number of the years, where of the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolation of Jerusalem.”

For our better understanding, it is necessary to look into (Jeremiah 25.11 – 12). Let us see what Jeremiah had said exactly regarding the desolation of Jerusalem.

“And this whole land, shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years, And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished that I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation saith the Lord for their iniquity and the land of the Chaldeans and will make it perpetual desolation.” (Jerimiah 25.11– 12)

Prophet Daniel knew perfectly when the Israelites were exiled and when those seventy years would be completed. As the time was about to be over Daniel was deeply moved and full of convictions. So, with emotion and impassioned attitude he began to pray to God, and his prayer was unique. It was a prayer that came from the deepest soul. He prayed with fasting and



used “sack clothes” and “ashes”. In the verse 4 it is clearly pointed out the prayer was the prayer of confession. It was further certified that such prayer could be done only by a righteous man like Daniel. Following are the opening lines of the prayer of Daniel starting from 4<sup>th</sup> verse.

“O Lord, the great and dreadful God Keeping the covenant and mercy to that love him and to them that keep his commandments.”

What can we understand from the above lines? Daniel clearly exposed the true character of God. He said, God was the keeper of the covenants. This point is very important, with regards to Jeremiah’s prophecy. Why because he had already foretold about the banishment of Israelites for seventy years. This event took place because of the fulfillment of the word of God. It was also part and parcel of God’s plan to allow Israelites to return to their homeland after the completion of seventy years punishment. Then in the 5<sup>th</sup> verse Daniel justified the punishment that gave to them for their iniquity.

“We have sinned and committed iniquity and have done wickedly and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgements.

Prophet Daniel agreed and endorsed the judgement of God in punishing Israelites by saying that they observed it because they have been sinful, wicked rebellious and showed their deaf ear toward the holy commandments and precepts of God. The greatness of Daniel was that he used the word “we” instead of they, while he was telling about the evil deeds of Israelites. Though he was a perfect man, he included himself as one of them as a Jew. So, he said, “we have sinned”. Daniel was a Hebrew through and through and included himself as one of the Israelites in the humble confession of their wrong doings.”

Apart from this, Israelites also confused to listen to the frequent warnings and did not repent. So, God is always justifies in giving punishments to His people. First He would give them instructions, then warnings and finally punishments. His method of instructions, His method of warnings were found in His word in the days of antiquity. These things came to people, through His messengers called prophets. We understand religiousness belongs to God, only but confession would be seen in the faces of the people of Judah, and in the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Israel. And in the other nations, or wherever they remained their faces shall be full of confession, as they trespassed the word of God. The phrase “confession of face” is actually

another way of saying “we are covered the shame”. Daniel repeated the same point again and again, by saying the people of Israel sinned against God and reaped the consequences. Daniel continued his talk in the following verses of 8 and 9.

“O Lord to us belongeth confession of face to our king, to our princes and to our Fathers, because we have sinned against thee, To thee Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness though we have rebelled against him.”

We can understand how Daniel wrote these lines with agony about the guiltiness of his people including the great kings, princes and his ancestors. He presented Israelites as they had sinned and guilty, whereas the sovereign Lord is full of mercy and forgiveness. Here, Daniel pointed out the contrast between the sinful Israelites and their holy God a consuming fire. Then from verse 9 to 14, he enlightened us about the nature of transgression of Israelites and how they disobeyed God by not following the laws, and the commandments. They continued their inequity always. So, God was right in punishing His people. His method of punishment was so severe that nowhere on earth could be found except in Jerusalem. Now we see the end of Daniel’s confession which was part of his humble prayer in 15<sup>th</sup> verse.

“And now O Lord our God, that hast brought thy people, forth out of the land of Egypt with a mighty hand and hast gotten thee renown as at this day we have sinned we have done wickedly.” Daniel felt the guiltiness of his people very much. He strongly opposed it time and again. Though he confessed already he was not satisfied. In the 16<sup>th</sup> verse he was humbly pleading for God’s forgiveness toward the people of Jerusalem. So, his plea was:

“O Lord according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain because For our sins, and for the inequities of our Father, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us.”

In his prayer, Daniel asked God for forgiveness. On one hand, he was supporting God by saying that He was justified in pouring our His anger upon Israelites and it was done basing on the time mentioned by prophet Jeremiah (that is seventy years). After the completion of that specific time he requested God, to turn back from His anger. The way he prayed to God with all him humanity we can understand his character and personality. He was perfect and sincere in everything and even God called him beloved prophet.

He was simply a righteous man pouring out his soul to his God. Anybody could be moved by his honesty, sincerity, integrity and perfectness.

Daniel continued his humble request to God regarding his people in verse 17 and 18 too. He always gave first priority to God, in everything. He requested God to look at the desolate condition of the Temple and the city Jerusalem, which was done by the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. He pleaded for the restoration of both of them for the sake of Himself; why because the Temple was His residence and the city after His name. And finally Daniel ended his prayer in the 19<sup>th</sup> verse with passionate heart toward the Almighty God –

“O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken, and do defer not for thine own sake O my God for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.”

Daniel was calling God once again to save and restore Israel for His own sake. At that stage, we can presume as readers, the tears must have cascaded down the eyes of Daniel, when he brought his extra – ordinary prayer to a fitting conclusion. As a result of his humble prayer God was very much pleased and moved by it. He immediately sent on of His most prominent angel’s called Gabriel to personally respond to Daniel. According to the scholars of the Bible and theologians, Michael and Gabriel are called arch angels, but only specifically Michael is addressed as arch angel as mentioned in Jud 9. In the following lines angel Gabriel was telling the reason of his visiting Daniel:

And he informed me, and talked with me and said, “O Daniel I am now come forth to give thee, skill and understanding. (v.22)”

We do not know exactly whether Daniel asked God for insight. But one thing is clear, God gave it to Daniel and He would do the same to all of us. The Gabriel angel explained to him, what would happen to his people in near future and what is going to happen to them at the end of the age. We all know about Daniel that he was the most beloved prophet, of God. It is really wonderful and praiseworthy commentary on the prophet Daniel by the creator of heaven and earth. There is no greater compliment than this by God about any person in the Bible.

The back bone of the prophecy – This back bone of the prophecy is considered the most important of all Biblical prophesies of the Old Testament. It was felt

like that by all scholars of the Bible. Gabriel angel told the following lines to Daniel:

“Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sins and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal up the vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.” (v.24)

There is another way of reading “Seventy weeks” is seventy sevens or we can also say “seventy weeks of seven years”. The idea of being cutout, from history is to accomplish God’s purpose. That is to say, the Lord is cutting out seventy sevens of years. (490 years), with the view of accomplishing His purpose to Jerusalem the holy city and His people. The period of time of 490 years will take us to the end of history. By the end of 490 years, the people of Israel have to fulfill six important things –

- 1) To finish the transgression – Here the meaning of the word transgression is that if any one puts a board “keep off the grass” and you stop on the grass, such unmindful actions are called transgression.
- 2) Do not commit anymore sins – To sin is to miss the mark. Anything is done against the word of God is called missing the mark.
- 3) To make reconciliation with God for iniquity. Another word for reconciliation is “Atonement”. Israelites were warned to make atonement for their iniquity or for their wickedness.
- 4) To bring in everlasting righteousness – this is a reference to the Messianic or (1000 years) Millennial kingdom.
- 5) To seal up the vision and prophecy – It means to bring prophecy to its fulfillment.
- 6) To anoint the most holy – Here, one may get a genuine doubt; That is to whom the phrase, “the most holy” refers whether that phrase refers to the holy place in the Temple of Jerusalem, or concerned to a person the Messiah. If the most holy is a reference in our mind it must be the Millennial Temple or if the Messiah is in our mind to anoint Him means here accept Him who He is, what He has been doing to humanity and what He will do when He comes again. And so finally, the phrase, “the most holy”, we can take it for granted that it is a reference to the Messiah only especially for acceptance of Israelites and embracing of Jesus Christ. And ultimately that will be the fulfillment of the prophecy of the Minor

prophet (Zachariah's 12.10) and they shall look upon me whom they have purified and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.

According to verse 25, the time involved here was "Seven weeks and three score two weeks". We have to understand this phrase basing on the Biblical and Daniel reference. So, we have to remember here a "week" of seven days are equal to "seven years". The prophecy is not speaking of weeks or days, but only weeks of years. The word for weeks is a translation of the Hebrew word, "heptad" which means "seven". So, seven weeks are equal to 49 years. Then the next is three score and two weeks. A score means 20 years. Therefore, each week we can say seven years, period. Then regarding 62 weeks we must calculate as 434 years; and to that figure 49 years also to be added. The final total is 483 years or 69 weeks (or sevens of years). Now, we are able to understand the correct time period, then we have to understand also when this time period would begin? and end. So, along with calculation, the unusual event begins with the commandment to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem and ends just before the Messiah being "cut off" killed (v. 20). Let us look at the phrase, and find the inner meaning, "the street shall be built again, and the wall even in troubles times."

We have to take the meaning of the phrase in a different way. The street and wall of Jerusalem shall be rebuilt not after 62 weeks but after seven weeks, or 49 years. At this stage, let us concentrate our attention on the dates. What is the meaning of 49 years? Whether these 49 years are going to occur really. Jeremiah requested king Ahasuerus to grant him permission to go to the place of his forefathers Jerusalem and take up the repair work of the city. He also requested the king to give him a recommendation letter to the governor and to the keeper of king's forest in order to get some wood for repair purpose. The king provided everything to Nehemiah because God was with him. This remarkable repair took place on March 5, 444 B.C. Then after 49 years of time, that is in 396 B.C. the public square, the public moates of Jerusalem had been completed in their repair work. That was the fulfillment of seven weeks (49 years). Then we have to know about three score and two weeks, that is 62 weeks or otherwise known as 434 years, until the Messiah is to be "cut off" here "Killed". This reference is linked with the Jewish lunar calendar, which Daniel had in his mind. The Messiah's "cut off" occurred in April 32 A.D. that means on that year Jesus was crucified and killed.

As a matter of fact, the date of birth of Jesus Christ and His date of crucifixion have remained controversial, but we have been following the probable dates for both. The Biblical historians and scholars tried their best to find out the correct dates but in vain. If we look in to the verse 26, it is written, “shall Messiah be cut off” and also we see “not for himself” whatever may be the fact of the reference, Messiah has to come and die, not for Himself, but for the sake of sin of Jewish people and also for all humanity.

Impact of final seven years: The coming of Messiah to the earth for the first time and dying for the sake of sinners is not the end of the story. For the people of Daniel (Israelites) something more to happen because of their peculiar way of life. As said here, “and the people the prince that shall come and destroy the city and the sanctuary and the end shall be with a flood and unto the end of the war desolation and determined.” (v.26). Before we try to understand the details of v.26, let us go back to the verse 24 again, where we are told of “seven weeks” or 49 years. So, far we have covered 483 years out at 490 and there are still seven years to be covered. Basing on the verse 26, we know prior to that final seven years period, the city of Jerusalem and its sanctuary the Temple of God would be destroyed. Jesus Christ predicted this calamity 40 years before His death. And that destruction has to be done by the people of the prince that shall come. And who were those people according to the prophecy of Daniel. This is really a tuff question to answer. Technically speaking, the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, were done by the Romans in 70 A.D. The truth is that initiative was taken by the Romans, but the real people who fought and destroyed were, the modern day regions of Turkey Syria and Iraq.

Depending upon the calculations of the seven years followed the 69<sup>th</sup> week that occurred in 32 A.D., then the period of 490 years would have concluded in 39 A.D itself. With the said information, the reason can be guessed easily that something is going to happen between 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. And that something is nothing but the destruction of both Jerusalem and the Temple. But this action did not take place until 70 A.D so, the 70<sup>th</sup> week had not followed the 69<sup>th</sup> week in the chronology. Then how to explain this sensitive point to others? Simply by depending on biblical prophecy? For example, in Daniel chapter 2 the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream about a statue with the head of gold that represented Babylonian empire, the Chest and arms of silver Medo – Persian empire, belly and thighs of bronze signified Greek empire and legs of iron represented Roman empire. And then this followed by a serious discussion about the fact and toes of that image. It is

finally decided that these two parts of the image represented the confederation of the Nations, during the seven year period of this era, in human history.

We can take it for granted that this is the “far” aspect of the prophetic dream. According to this prophetic view, we have to as readers jump from the first century to the end of the age. If we look into the chapter 7 Daniel we find the same incident, how we jumped from the most wicked king Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria, who was the replica of Anti – Christ, who will rule for seven years at the end of the age. Here, the question remains unanswered, where do we find the gap between 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. Let us recollect the events that occurred from the beginning. The first incident was restoration of Jerusalem by Nehemiah and the time required for that was 49 years (seven weeks). The second event was the death of Messiah 434 years (62 weeks). The third event was the prophecy, regarding the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 A.D. But this event did not anyway indicate that 70<sup>th</sup> week followed by 69<sup>th</sup> week immediately as per the chronological order. So, in what way that particular time could be located.

After thorough investigation the gap between the two times are identified as “church Age”. And this “church Age” began at the time of Pentecost when God sent the holy – spirit to His disciples on the fiftieth day of His ascension to His Father. This church Age would end, after Jesus comes for the second time. This can be also called “Church Current Age” the age of grace. The Lord would extend His salvation to all men and women, through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. We cannot say when this church age would end; probably with His second coming, the rapture of the church then the pouring out the wrath of God in the trumpet and bowl judgement and the final battle of Armageddon. We can also say, about the church Age that it will last until the fulfilment of the Gentiles, rule (Romans 11.25). Then only Jesus will return and end this church Age of Grace, before establishing His Millennial kingdom.

In this context, Apostle Paul also referred to this church Age, as a mystery. “How that by revelation he made known unto me.... his promise in Christ, by the Gospel.” (Epiphanes 3.3 – 6). So, according to Paul the church Age was only a mystery something that was always in the mind and will of God and it would not be revealed till the correct time comes. The church Age was a mystery something hidden from Old Testament saints. The fact is that the church Age – the Age of Grace, which is separating the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks.

If we study about end times period we will certainly know there is a final seven year time. And during that time, comes the Anti – Christ and use his power to persecute the people of God, the Jews and Christians. Then the church will be raptured, and Christ punish all the wicked and bring salvation to all righteous people. This seven year period time is generally referred to the “Tribulation period” which has no basis in scripture. It is bitter and more appropriate if we refer this to the period “the seventieth week” mentioned in the book of Daniel. The correct times of this week is referred to the “Great Tribulation” based on (Matthew 24.21) or the time of “Jacob’s Trouble” (Jeremiah 30.7). It will last only for 3 ½ years, because the great Tribulation period is going to be shortened. Whatever may be the outcome of this reference it has nothing to do with the Old Testament prophets. There was no scope for them to know about the Church Age or the “gap” between 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. But Daniel perfectly explained about, seven weeks, sixty two weeks and a seventieth week.

The Old Testament prophets like Daniel did not know anything about the church Age as it was a mystery and God also never revealed to him and he never foresaw this far 2000 years gap between 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. This event has again taken us back to the “far and near” implications of the Old Testament prophets. When they were writing they looked down on the time and saw two mountain peaks. The first one or nearer mountain peak represented the first coming of Christ and the second or farther mountain was identified as the second coming of Christ. The prophecy of the first coming was concerned more about His virgin birth, as son of man, would be given the name Immanuel which means, “God with us”. He would be born in Bethlehem and then die for the sin of the world. Then His second coming was compared to the second mountain peak. And this time, there would be cosmic disturbances, the rapture of the church and the judgement of the wicked, humanity.

These two mountain peaks were the wonderful illustration of “near and far” implication of prophecy. They were fused as one, in the mind of the prophets, which found in (Isaiah 9.6). “For unto as a child is born unto us a son is given”. The first coming or the first mountain peak and the government shall be upon His shoulders and His name would be wonderful counsellors. He was also called the mighty God. The everlasting Father and the prince of peace, who is coming at the end of the Age and this is called the second mountain peak. If we look into this statement carefully, the first and second peaks, were the references of one prophecy with a gap of 2000 years



separation. Here, we have to keep in mind the period of times the gap between the two comings or mountain peaks, which was somehow hidden from the prophet. Practically speaking he had no idea of such a big division of time, between the first and the second coming of Christ (the Messiah). In this context, let us recollect the verses of apostle peter, “Receiving the end of your faith even the salvation of your souls of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched, diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow.” (1 peter 1.9 – 11)

All of us have to remember one top secret in this connection, “God gave amazing foresight to His special messengers, but He did not give them clear understanding of things they prophesied yet they did not understand them correctly. What they spoke about. They searched patiently to ascertain the exact meaning but in vain. They could never discover the full truth because God did not want to disclose to them the mystery of the church Age.

Now let us go back to the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of prophet Daniel where it is mentioned about a “prince that shall come” in verse 29, who is going to come? Out of the Roman empire, what is the time of the first mountain peak? Again if we go back to chapter 2 it is said about feet and toes, of a kind of Roman empire, which will clearly exist at the end of the Age, which we call the second coming or the second mountain peak. The prophets of all Old Testament like Daniel did not know anything about the length of time between those two mountain peaks. In His first coming we see the beast empire of Rome. In His second coming we have some kind of revived Rome that will be with ten horns, representing ten nations. (Daniel) from which a “little horn” (the Anti – Christ) is going to rule. In the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter of Daniel we have the reference of 69 weeks which would take us back to the first coming of Jesus Christ. But the seventieth week will not occur until the end of the age. With this bring information we could have a clue about the mystery of the “church Age” which caused the separation of 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. But Daniel could not have any clue about the mystery of the church Age in his time. And the readers, I believe would come to an understanding of the gap, when they come to verse 27 which is the concluding passage of Daniel’s vision. As far as we are concerned there is no problem of understanding because it is concerned to the final seven years of this era of human history. So let us look into the lines of Daniel from his book.

“And he will confirm the covenant with many (not all) for one week and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease and for the over spreading of abomination he shall make it desolate even until the consummation and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate.”

“He” (the prince who will come the Anti – Christ) will confirm a covenant then either strengthen which is already in existence or create a new one with Israel for one week which means seven years. We have to meditate upon this to know whether it was a peace covenant. Then at the middle of the seven years that is 3 ½ years later this Anti – Christ will break his covenant with Israelites and turn against them. He will put an end to the sacrifices in the Temple and set his own image in it. This remarkable situation, will cause an unimaginable desolation and even makes the Jews not to enter the Temple any more. The same thing was done to the Temple, some hundreds of years ago, by a pagan wicked king Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria. We have some advantages of the prophets who did not know about the details of the “church Age” gap between the 69<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> weeks. We have been living well the past 69<sup>th</sup> week. But when the 70<sup>th</sup> week is going to come we will be in darkness like the Old prophets. This must be the reason why A New Testament is teaching us to live with the expectation of the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is actually a same advice for all believers to live with the hope of the second coming of Christ in our life time.

Christ will return soon to this earth should be our greatest hope, for holy living, and we will struggle to any extent to live for Him every moment of our lives. If this is proved correct we shall try our level best to change our lifestyle in order to achieve salvation. Had the writers of the New Testament given any particular date of His coming then the believers would have lived an exemplary life in order to please Him and try for eternal life. If we believe that Jesus would come in our life time, then we don't feel any relaxation. We try our best to walk on the foot print of our Lord Jesus Christ. That is, if Jesus comes today that very news will revolutionize our life style for the sake of purity. It means to live with expectation, what must have made God to conceal the probable date of His returning is that we must live for Him always, expecting Him at any moment in our life time, just like the righteous and beloved prophet Daniel.

## The Story of the Calendar

There is a wonderful story and history behind the two calendars that are in existence today. They are called Biblical lunar Calendar and Gregorian solar calendar. The Biblical lunar calendar is in use by the Jewish people where as Gregorian solar calendar is used by all others. If we look into some of the beginning pages of the Old Testament we can find the wonderful plan of God in arranging day, nights and the timings. According to His plan, a day would start with sunset and ends with sunset. This one rotation of the earth is called by people as one day. And the time planned for one rotations 24 hours. By looking into this plan, we can understand the real intention of God. His plan was that man must work hard for six days and the seventh day he must take rest as God Himself took rest after He created everything in six days.

In this manner seven sunsets have become seven days and finally called week and a little more than four weeks 28.53 days became a month in Bible lunar calendar. So in each week the seventh day was called the day of rest unto the Lord. It must be a day without any hard work and it is clearly pointed out in the scripture also. The Jewish people used to recognize the day of rest with the presence of the Moon in the sky. So, the appearance of the Moon in the sky was symbolized as the day of Sabbath Jews used to deserve. But some problems had arisen when additional days were to be added into the calendar which are like holy, or somedays are set aside unto the Lord such as the days of feasts, to God Himself. God added seven feasts or festivals in addition to what Israelites had already. According to Biblical history, the logical system is based on the lunar calendar. This calendar system has changed dramatically over the last two Millennia and those changes directly affected any type of observance of the ancient Biblical holy days and the Biblical lunar calendar today.

In 45 B.C., the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar instituted a new improved calendar which was secular one. The new system of the New calendar introduced by the emperor was not based on the rotation of the earth; which determined day and night and lunar orbit around the earth which determined months and seasons, but upon the rotations of the earth, and the orbit of the earth around the sun precise secular years. The solar dating system was known as the Julian calendar. This new calendar also made some errors, as they themselves prepared calendars with 304 days,

355 days and with 366.25 days. Apart from this, they were calendars with 10 months only, odd number of days. This happened due to the superstitious living and using of the day.

Even Julius Caesar made a number of corrections in the previous calendars before he introduced his new calendar. In the corrections, he added another 80 days for his calendar, in the year 45 B.C. But due to some reason that year was called the year of confusion. The Julian calendar was the outcome of some of the previous one's which were modified. And in this calendar, there are 365.25 days and it was accepted by many as the most accurate one. Yet there was something to be corrected in that Julian calendar. So this was recognized by many with 12 months and 365.25 days. The modified calendar had only 10 months and the 2 months were added in its modification. The two months to the Julian calendar were added in the beginning but not at the end. Because of the change of order, the month September (septem which means seven) has become ninth month in the order of months. Likewise the month October (octo which means eight) became tenth month. Then November (novem which means ninth) was changed into eleventh month. Finally December (decem which means tenth) was changed to twelfth month.

In addition to these changes pagan names were given to the days of the week later. According to history while reading ancient history, we came across various pagan cultures, their religious way of life, and their worshipping of different gods and goddesses. In those olden days, the most worshipped one was the "Sun God" and the prominent worshipper was king Nimrod. We can study about him in the Bible in the book of Genesis 10<sup>th</sup> chapter. He even built a very big tower called the tower of "Babel" to reach the Sun to worship. It was believed by the heathens later that after his death, he merged himself with the sun. This blind belief and the process of worship continued for a long time and finally effected the Julian calendar. In 325 A.D Constantine became the emperor of the eastern part of Roman empire otherwise known as Byzantine empire with Constantinople as its capital. Though all the Roman rulers were pagans, Constantine alone with his mother Helena embraced Christianity and did a lot of things for the spreading of Christianity. As a ruler and Christian believer, he made some changes in the "Council of Nicaea". He separated some Biblical holidays celebrations from Biblical lunar calendar.

The Jewish people followed the same Biblical lunar calendar. Though the Biblical holidays were arranged on the basis of lunar calendar, some

changes had taken place from year to year in the Julian solar calendar. The Nicaea council also planned to set right the correct the date of resurrection of Jesus. Accordingly the day of resurrection was put on the first day of the week on the Julian solar calendar. And that day was called by the paganism as the “Day of the Sun” Constantine also agreed with the suggestion of the council and decreed the celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ on the “Day of the Sun”. And that day of the sun was further changed to “Easter Sunday”. This wonderful change was appealed and forwarded by the Nicaea council in the form of letter to the church in Alexandria with the following contents.

We further proclaim to you the good news of the agreement, concerning the holy Easter. (Easter is a pagan term) that crept into the churches which has caused a lot of understanding of the passover and the relationship with Christ’s crucifixion and resurrection) that this particular event has through your prayers been rightly settled so that all our brethren in the east (Christians in Asia Minor) who formerly followed the custom of the Jews (the lunar calendar timing and celebration of the passover) are hence forth, to celebrate the said most sacred feast of Easter at the same time, with the Romans (Christians in Europe and yourselves and all those who have observed Easter from the beginning.)

In the case of these people who have been already following the Julian solar calendar, this proclamation would certainly have immediate effect of permanent disconnection of God’s spring feasts. Actually, God had introduced seven feasts or festivals at the foot of mount Sinai when the Israelites were on their way from Egypt to their promised land Canaan. Among these seven feasts the first four feasts were called spring feasts. They were passover, unleavened bread, first fruit and Pentecost. They were further compared and called as the crucifixion of Jesus as passover, the body of Jesus in the grave for three days as the unleavened bread, the resurrection of Jesus as the first feast and Christ’s sending of the holy spirit to Pentecost. These four festivals were supposed to be celebrated during the first coming of Jesus Christ.

The other three feasts that God introduced to the Israelites were – the feast of Trumpets, the feast of you Kippur and the feast of Tabernacle. The fifth feast of Trumpets is supposed to be celebrated when Jesus comes on clouds for the second time. The sixth feast of Yon Kippur is to be celebrated for the atonement of the people through judgement and the seventh festival the feast of Tabernacle is to be celebrated in memory of their post wilderness wandering.

The first four festivals were called the spring feasts, but now-a-days they were completely ignored by Jews. The next three festivals would come during fall season, which are more concerned to our eternal life. Eventually, after about 1200 years of the declaration of the “Nicaea Council” and due to some minor errors, in the Julian calendar another new calendar with more accurate amendments, the lunar calendar was implemented in February 1582. It was introduced by a decree from Pope Gregory VIII. This revised new calendar was known as Gregorian solar calendar. And this calendar is used today by government officials, business people and the Media across the globe.

Now let us look into the origin of the names of the days of the week. The fact is each language group has its own set of names for each day of the week. If we refer history in this connection, we can understand how all these names came into existence. And it is possible only through referring to the origin and roots of the names of each day. For instance the names of the words we are using today in English had their origin in old English. The modern English had developed as a result of the ancient invasions in Britain. At that time the language spoken was Celtic formed by three Germanic groups, the Angels, Saxons and jutes during the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D. The Angels called their territory as Angle land, which eventually became England. By looking at the names of the days, of the week, today in English we can easily understand the influence of those invading tribes, their pagan gods and worship.

The word Sunday was from Summonday, which means Sun’s day. This is for the maintaining of pagan relationship and worship of the Sunna. Monday was from Monanday, means Moon’s day. This is personified in the goddess Mani. Tuesday is from Tiwes day, which is named in honor of Tiw the one handed war God of war. Wednesday, this is from wodens day, it means wodans day (it is also odens day for the Northern Germanic people). According to ancient history, “Oden” was considered to be a leader of souls. Thursday is from punor’s day. This day is dedicated to the God of “thunder” who was powerful in his ancient hammer, wielding Norse, God is known in the modern English as “Thor”. Friday is from “Frigeday” which means, Frige’s day, Frige was for the Norse, Venus was for the Romans the goddess of beauty, love and pleasure. The present venus was called “Frige” star by the Norse. Saturday is from “Seternes day” which means Saturn’s day. Surprisingly, this is the only day of the week that kept its Roman roots in the English name. So, in the olden days the people of the other nations followed

the same names of the days of the week of Greeks and Romans along with their culture. Their worship was dedicated to the Sun, Moon, Stars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn. We have to remember one important point, whether those names of the days of the week and similar to them appear in the Bible. They were really the invention of pagans. They put the names of their favourite gods and goddesses and other unique events were linked to those heavenly bodies. With a reference to the situation, let us look into the two calendars, the recently modified Gentile. Gregorian solar calendar, and the original Biblical lunar calendar which is like putting a square pig into a round hole. These two calendars can never be put together for a purpose. It is no doubt a complicated issue, to explain about both of them; but still it is necessary.

In order to explain this complicated issue, we must be aware, whether we are referring to solar or lunar calendar, while we are giving the details of that affairs we have to observe carefully whether the first day of the month in solar calendars, and the first new Moon on the lunar calendar both fall on the same day. This is another complicated question to answer. If you look at your Gregorian solar calendar, in your house, you find the number in the first block of the first row. In the same way, we have to give a name to each day of the week in the secular calendar. In that arrangement we can find the first day, of the week is known in English as Sunday, which begins at midnight of the previous month and each month will end at midnight with 28 days or 29 days or with 30 days or with 31 days.

When we think about Bible lunar calendar, the first day of the month begins not at midnight like in Gregorian solar calendar, but at the sunset of the previous day at the lightening of the silver of the New Moon. To explain this further, the Gregorian solar calendar, would point out, the first day of the month begins when the last day of the month ends at midnight. The end of the last day of the month is the beginning of the next month. For instance, if the previous month ends in Wednesday midnight, immediately Thursday begins in the Gregorian calendar with the new date also. But regarding Biblical lunar calendar, it is observed that the first day of the month always falls on the first day of the week. The reason, that the first day of the month is always determined by the sighting of the first silver of the New Moon. The remaining parts of the month is based upon that one sighting.

On whichever day the New Moon is sighted by the people that day automatically becomes the first day of the New Month. With one sincere observation people are able to understand that the New Moon, Sabbath and

the Gentile Sunday in the Gregorian calendar one would occur approximately on the same day. Let all of us understand this sensitive point and enlighten others on this topic. So, in both Gregorian solar calendar and Biblical lunar calendar, the Sabbath would start at sunset, the day prior to the Gentile Sunday which starts at midnight. Anyway the resetting of the lunar month with the appearance of the New Moon would occur on any day of the Gentile week. That is to say, if the New Moon would be seen, by the people on Thursday (For example) on the Gregorian calendar or Biblical calendar, would resist itself to return to the first row and first block on the solar calendar which is Sunday.

Another strange thing is the Biblical lunar calendar does not have the names to the days of the month (like Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday etc). So, in the place of the name of the day the people used numbers only in the month, therefore, resetting is not a problem to the lunar calendar. But to the Gregorian solar calendar, the names and numbers are assigned to the days,. This process for some people became a serious problem, why because we have to jump at the end of the month from Monday to Thursday like that and back to Sunday again and start the month over by losing the natural sequence of days in the seven day week.

The outcome of our thorough testing and understanding of the first lunar and the second solar calendars, the first day begins appropriately the same day. According to the Bible, the New Moon, Sabbath, observers do not work after Sunset and that Sunset must be the Sunset of Saturday night on the solar calendar and it would continue to sunset on Sunday. And also we see today many business shops remain open even on Sundays. The New Moon observers would not be in a position to close their business shops the night before (Sunday night) and also they would not be in a position to open their shops on Sundays mornings because they were not supposed to work.

If you happened to be a Gentile employ or employer, and observe regularly, the Biblical lunar calendar, it would go well before Saturday sunset night. The reason is people would not do any work once the New Moon, Sabbath officially begins at Sunset. In view of this, they have to prepare everything in advance and remain at home, before the Sabbath actually begins at Sunset. If they were to be Gentiles, planning to do some business with Jewish establishment on Saturday before their New Moon Sabbath begins, they should confirm themselves that they were there before two or three



O clock in the afternoon. If not, they have to close their business on that particular day.

Once again, according to Biblical lunar calendar, or Sabbath day of rest, would begin at sunset of the beginning of the seventh day of the week. On the Gregorian solar calendar, if the day happened to be Friday evening and for Gentiles that day could be full working day and for those people who observe the Biblical lunar calendar their day of work ends just a few hours before the Gentiles day of work ends. So, they would be at home when the sunset occurs. For majority of Gentiles, Saturday is the day of good business and Sunday is considered the day of rest. Apart from the day of rest, for some of the Gentiles, it is also a day of worship. For example, the Biblical lunar calendar is free to work on Sunday. Since, his day of rest ended the day before (Saturday) at sunset. As a matter of fact, many business people in Israel open their shops after sunset at the end of their Sabbath day (Saturday night) because there would be still good number of hours, to continue their business activities, until the people close their doors of the houses for sleep. For any close observer, before the sunset, the streets appear like ghost town, because of no movement of the people. But after the sunset, all the streets will be flooded to see such scene, he would come to a conclusion that some important celebration must be going on at centers of streets. The shops will be full of people.

The conflict between Biblical lunar calendar, and Gregorian solar calendar would continue forever, because each Friday night Sabbath and the Gentile, week collide at the end of each week. So, according to our continuous observation, collisions would take place each Friday at sunset on the sixth, thirteenth, twentieth and twenty seventh days of the lunar month; why because each seventh day starts at sunset and begins with new Sabbath. After examining the functioning of these two calendars, the Biblical lunar calendar and the Gregorian solar calendar can never function together. We have to remember that lunar month consists of 29.53 days. The New Moon begins as a Waning crescent and then crescent, becoming still larger in the sky. Finally, the Moon would become beyond half, full, no longer a crescent and that is known to be (wacing Gibbons). Eventually, the Moon is seen as a full orb or full Moon in the sky. Then the visible part of the Moon becomes smaller. it reverses the appearance and seen as “Waning Gibbons” and then waning crescent. And finally on the twenty eighth day the Moon becomes almost invisible.

With the assurance of the next New Moon can be visible at sunset, roughly two days in advance, that is 28 days ( $29.53 - 1.53 = 28$  days). For the observers of Gregorian calendar, the New Moon will be sighted on Monday evening the thirteenth day of the month. Just at that particular time, (that is Monday evening in the solar calendar) the Biblical lunar calendar would revert back to the beginning of the month because the New Moon has just been spotted. The month would reset to the New Moon Sabbath and also to the first day of the month. This information will give us an idea that the Sabbath (the twenty eighth day) is observed just two days back. Now the conflict between the two calendars can be set right. The Biblical lunar calendar observer takes the New Moon Sabbath day of rest, on is new first day of the month, but it falls on Monday Sunset. Then to the observer of Gregorian calendar Monday is regular working day. So, the observer of Gregorian solar calendar will take rest on Sunday and go to regular work on Monday. This would coincide with the lunar day Sabbath of lunar calendar for the observer. These observers take their seventh day Sabbath that begins on Saturday sunset (leaving the work eagerly Saturday afternoon) and return to work on Sunday at sunset or Monday morning according to Gregorian solar calendar, observers. This process would continue for four weeks and then the next New Moon Sabbath would come again. This is no doubt a complicated issue in every month when it begins.

The fact is God invented time. He being sovereign authority over all creation knew man would reject Him. This is the reason why He put the Ten Commandments for the humanity to follow strictly and remain obedient to Him. He foresaw men would invent new calendars with some modifications God also knew that man would not remember the correct timings of the spring season and fall feasts, which are not concerned to our eternal life. He knew men would not remember their Sabbath days. The main purpose of creating Sabbath rest and holidays was to keep Israelites to remember their creator and God always and something special to His chosen people (Israelites). But they could not do according to the plan of God especially the observation of Sabbath, because of pagan influence.

## Final Vision of Daniel

The chapters 10 to 12 from the book of Daniel contain his final vision. This is called the fourth and final and also the longest vision of Daniel. And this vision leads to the end of the prophetic book of Daniels. As a matter of fact, the 10<sup>th</sup> chapter points to the background of the vision. It makes us to understand how the real story of the vision is going to be in the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> chapters. As already pointed out, the verse 1 from 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, sets the readers and believers the time for understanding the vision as mentioned in the following lines. "In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia a thing was revealed unto Daniel whose name was called Belteshazzar, and the thing was true, but the time appointed was long and he understood the thing and had understanding of the vision."

The time and year mentioned in this context is 536 B.C. And at that time prophet Daniel was about 85 years old. That year was more important because king Cyrus of Persia had already conquered Babylon and granted freedom to exiled Israelites who were taken as captives 70 years ago. They were freed to return to their homeland Jerusalem (Israel). Actually the captivity began by king Nebuchadnezzar in 606 B.C. and it was prophesized by Jeremiah that the captives would remain in exile for seventy years in Babylon. What he said in his prophecy is quite clear in the following lines - "And this whole land shall be a desolation and an astonishment and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished that I will punish the King of Babylon and that nation saith the Lord, for their iniquity and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations." (Jeremiah 25.11 – 12)

Then in chapter 10 and verse 2 Daniel said "I Daniel was mourning three full weeks, what must have made him to mourn for weeks together? We can take it for granted that the vision he was going to have caused consternation. Then such pathetic situation was not happy news for this people Israelites Daniel was also much disheartened by the information. He could not eat or drink properly during those three weeks. The terrific vision that he was going to face must have perturbed his mind completely. And the prophet went three weeks back in time before the vision. Then in the four and twentieth day of the first month Daniel happened to go and stand by the side of the river, which was called "Hiddekel" which is another ancient name of the river "Tigris".

Another most interesting point at this time was that Daniel was still in Babylon though all his people returned to Jerusalem due to the mercy of King Cyrus. What made him so. There were two reasons for this. The first reason at that time Daniel was already made prime minister of Babylonian empire and in such conditions he must have thought it not possible to leave the place so early until some other arrangements were made.

The second reason must be he had already reached the age of 85 years. That old age must have prompted him not to travel such a long distance of 800 miles from Babylon to Jerusalem. So while Daniel was standing by the side of the river Tigris, he witnessed an amazing sight, which he explained in the following lines - "Then I lifted up mine eyes and looked, and behold a certain man clothed in linen whose loins were girded with fine gold of uphaz; His body also was like the beryl and his face as the appearance of lighting and his eyes as lamps of fire and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude." (Daniel 10.5 – 6)

The above mentioned passage, suggests that prophet Daniel witnessed an unusual appearance of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It seems versus 5 and 6 are reference to as a "theophany" a pre-incarnate (before He took on flesh and blood) appearance of Christ as the Old Testament. "Angel of the Lord". In spite of that the later part of 10<sup>th</sup> chapter, the angel is restrained for twenty one days by a fallen angel, and needed the help of an archangel Michael to come and protect him. This arch-angel Michael has special relationship with Israel. As a result of that relationship, he has to play a very crucial role in chapter 12 of Daniel. But there is not a grain of truth in this saying that this angelic being was no other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

Here, the verse 7 is really more fascinating Daniel spoke, "I Daniel alone saw, the vision for the men that were with me, saw not the vision, but a great quaking fell upon them, so that they all fled to hide themselves". The face is clear that Daniel saw the vision and the men with him did not. Yet they fled to hide themselves expecting some danger. We can also presume that some spiritual being must have entered into the lives of those mortal beings and caused them terribly afraid of the situation and finally made them to flee to hide themselves from such fascinating incident where as Daniel could not run from that scene perhaps he had no enough strength to run like others due to his age. Keeping this fact in mind, it is said in the 8 verse "Therefore, I was left alone and saw this great vision but there remained no

strength in me”. That is to say he lost all his strength and power at that moment to take any step further. And what he spoke in versus 9 and 10? “Yet heard I the voice, of his words and when I heard the voice of his words then was I in a deep sleep on my face and my face towards the ground. And behold an hand touched me which Act me up on my knees and upon the palms of my hands.”

It is said in these lines that Daniel’s face was on the ground. It means either he was fainted or in the condition of trance. We cannot come to a haste conclusion whether the angel who touched Daniel is the same Angelic being responsible for him to faint in the first place or it is some other being whoever might be responsible for that we are made to take it as the most spectacular scene. The key person for all this is prophet Daniel a man of 85 years of age, who did not have enough strength to stand confidentially. The best thing he was forced to do at that critical time was quiring on his hands and the knees.

According to verse 11 the angel that helped Daniel in keeping his feet in condition told him that he was most beloved he could understand the words the angel spoke to Daniel. And when the angel said these words Daniel stood upright trembling. Let us look into the wonderful phrase used in praise of Daniel’s 9.23, where Gabriel Angel addressed Daniel; thou art greatly “beloved”. It is really an extraordinary compliment about Daniel by the creator of heaven and earth. I believe no other person in the Bible received such a wonderful compliment from the Almighty God. And all of us also must believe that there is no such great commentary on the life of the believer like Daniel. The above said complimentary words appear to have strengthened Daniel to rise on his hands and knees and stand straight. Even then, he did that with great fear and humbleness in the savior.

The angel still continued his speech. He said unto Daniel, Fear not Daniel for from the first day thou didn’t set thine heart, to understand and to chastin thyself before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come for thy words. In other words, from the time Daniel began to pray his words were heard in heaven and God sent an angel immediately to earth to deliver a message to Daniel. Even there was a problem of delay in delivering the message of God by the angel. He explained the reason for his delay in the verse 13. “But the prince of the Kingdom of Persia, withstood me for one and twenty days, but no one of the chief princes Michael came to help me, and I remained there with the Kings of Persia”.

The phrase, “the prince of the Kingdom of Persia” refers to a fallen angelic who had influence in the kingdom of Persia. It was the same being who tried to prevent the angel from communicating the message to God to Daniel. This particular scene gives to all believers a great insight into the unseen spiritual world and brings to the minds of all the valuable words of Apostle Paul. “For we wrestling against flesh and blood, but against principalities against powers against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” (Ephesians 6.12) This passage is in the form of a letter addressed to Ephesians. It speaks about the spheres of angelic and demonic activity. It is fact that there are some angels and demons who assigned to control certain nations and governments. There has been a continuous conflict happening throughout history, and in this context we are giving a glance of it.

The angel who was prevented by some demonic powers in Persia to give the message of God to Daniel said that, a more powerful celestial being the arch angel Michael had to come to rescue him because he had no enough strength and power to defeat the demonic forces. The fact is that the demonic forces were unnecessarily interfering with his mission. And finally, after three weeks Michael and the messenger angel could have the advantage over “the prince of the Kingdom of Persia”. The messenger angel was freed at last to reach Daniel and communicate to him the message of vision. Then the angel told Daniel, “Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the latter days for yet the vision is for many days.” (Daniel 10.14)

As a matter of fact, the angel had come to deliver the message to Daniel in connection with the future of his people Israelites. Then what must be the contents of the message sent by the God? We can see about the “future” of Israelites in chapter 11 of Daniel. The message tells about the near future, the next few hundred years which include the control of Egypt, Syria and wicked ruler Antiochus Epiphanes and very far off and finally the implications of end times. At that time Daniel was writing about the gentile rulers. He started with the Babylonian empire which was mentioned in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter. That ancient Babylonian empire was now called modern Iraq. The entire rule was continued with the Medo-persian, which was called modern Iran. The next kingdom was Grecian empire, which was called later Syria, and the fourth one was Roman empire which was later called modern Turkey. Actually it was called the eastern part of Roman empire and Constantine was the emperor. He made Constantinople as his capital, which later became Istanbul, and finally called modern day Turkey. And according to history this

is the end of the beastly empire. In the view of Israel, these beastly empires reached their elimination in chapter 2 and verse 3, 4 as and when the kingdom of Antichrist will give way to stone cut out without hands (Jesus Christ) which smote the image upon its feet, which were made of iron and clay and broke into innumerable pieces. The gentile rule and times ultimately give way to the Millennial kingdom of Jesus Christ, which will be ruled by Him a thousand years.

Before the angel spoke, Daniel had spoken in the following way. He said, “And when he had spoken such words unto me, I set my face towards the ground and I became dumb (speechless).” (Daniel 10.15). This is really another terrifying incident, in the case of mortal beings, when they come across angelic beings. But Daniel with his gift of knowledge could succeed in learning about the spiritual battle that waged due to him. In this context let us study the below lines.”And behold one like the similitude of The sons of men touched my lips the I opened my mouth and spoke, and said unto him that stood before me, o my Lord, by the vision my sorrows are turned upon me, and I have retained no strength. For how can the servant of this my Lord, talk with this my Lord for as for me, straight away there remained no strength in me neither is there breath left in me.”

This time it was doubted whether the angelic being was the same or the most spectacular being that already appeared in versus 5 and 6. Any way the lips of Daniel were touched only enough to say that he had no strength to stand and talk with the angel that brought message from God. At this stage, we must remember the physical appearance of Daniel and his age. “Then there came again and touched me one like the appearance of a man and strengthened me.” (Daniel 10.15). This time the angelic being that appeared was no other than the angel of verse 5 and 6.

What is significance of the message?. The angel began his message by sharing with Daniels words of comfort. “O man, greatly beloved fear not, peace be unto thee, be strong yea, be strong. And when he had spoken unto me, I was strengthened and said Let my Lord speak for thou had strengthened me.” (Daniel 10.19). Daniel was reminded again how much he was loved by God and added not to be afraid. The angelic being though terrific in appearance esteemed Daniel greatly and told him that he had come on good purpose. These words of the angel comforted Daniel very much and he replied that he was ready to hear the message and the angel said – “Knowest thou wherefore, I came unto thee and now will I return to fight with the

prince of Persia, and when I am gone forth to the prince of Grecia shall come; But I will show thee, that which is noted in the scripture of truth and there is none, that holdeth with me in these things but Michael your prince.” (Daniel 10.20 – 21)

According to these words Michael seemed to have taken the responsibility of fighting with the prince of the kingdom of Persia. But he did not defeat the prince. The reason was he waited for the return of the angel of the message, who could come only after communicating the message to Daniel. With the return of the messenger angel only the battle would continue. The angel told Daniel that the Medo – Persian kingdom would be defeated and replaced by the Grecian empire, which was also the symbol of demonic power as “the prince of Grecia”. The angel also mentioned about the “Scripture of Truth” (Daniel 10.21). This can be conveniently translated as “The book of Truth”.

Then what is that book of Truth?. One theologian by name John F. Walvord in his commentary on Daniel; “The key to prophetic Revolution” called this book God’s record of Truth in general and the Bible is one expression of truth. In the meantime the angel returned to the Arch angel Michael and fought with the prince of the kingdom of Persia. The angel also referred to Michael as “your Prince”. The reference “Your” is nothing but Daniel was also an Israelite and Michael had special relationship with Israel. The story continued in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter and verse 1 that the messenger angel and Arch angel Michael supported each other at the time of spiritual warfare with the starting of Daniel’s chapter 11.1. It was called the intertestamental period. It was about 400 years between the books of Prophet Malachi and apostle Mathew and the two most important powers during that period were the Persian and Grecian empires.

And chapter 11 would give the full details of the conflict between the regions of Syria, and Egypt in the Grecian empire and its effect upon Israel. The 2<sup>nd</sup> verse indicated about three more kings in Persia and the fourth one would be richer than all others, and with his strength and riches he was able to stir others against the reign of Grecia. The four Persian kings mentioned in the authorized book of Daniel were, Cambyses the son of Cyrus, who reigned from 530 B.C. to 522 B.C. pseudo- Smerdis, who ruled just for one year, Darius 1 Hystospes, reigned between 521 and 485 B.C. and Xerxes (husband of Esther). He fought many wars against Greece, which was a ruling power during the time of the reign of Xerxes. As mentioned in the history the son of



Xerxes by name, Artaxerxes also ruled between 465 and 424 B.C; Daniel did not give much importance to him, but focused more on Grecian empire.

Daniel spoke about Alexander the Great, the mighty king with his great dominion and who conquered many countries. But due to his sudden death his Kingdom was broken into four parts. This king took about 11 years to conquer Persian empire. He died suddenly at the age of 32 or 33 only without any legitimate heir to his vast kingdom. Then the great empire was divided among four generals and it was further called North and South. Then all referenced to “the South” indicate Egypt and all references to North indicate Syria. And most of this chapter 11 dealt with the conflict between the Ptolemies of Egypt (the south) and Seleucids of Syria (the north). Ptolemies 1 Soies was the king of Egypt.

The king of Egypt died in 285 B.C. and his son Ptolemies 1 Pheladelphus ruled between 285 B.C and 246 B.C. In Syria, the first king Seleucids was murdered in 281 B.C and his son Antiochus 1 Soter succeeded him. He was succeeded by the grandson of Seleucids Antiochus 11 Those, who ruled until 246 B.C, As we see so far Ptolemy 11 and Antiochus 11 were dead enemies. Still they came into an alliance in 250 B.C. This alliance was confirmed when Ptolemy 11 gave his daughter, Berenice in marriage to Antiochus 11. But this marriage did not continue for a long time, because Laodice, wife of Antiochus 11 became ruthless and killed Berenice. She also poisoned Antiochus 11 and killed him. After his death, she made her son Seleucus Callinecus as king in 246 B.C. and he ruled until 227 B.C.

The power mongerism between the two countries (Egypt and Syria) caused some treacherous activities over Israel. The contents of the chapter 11 of the book of Daniel were really fascinating. But the liberal Bible critics did not accept the inspirational sayings of Daniel by feeling that he did not have such profound prophetic knowledge of what was to come in future. So they attributed the authorship of his book to someone during second century B.C. Even then the creator of heaven and earth, knew the future and He revealed some of it to His beloved prophet Daniel. Among the rulers of Syria, Antiochus Epiphanes was considered the most important. He ruled from 223 B.C to 187 B.C. Then his son seleucus II philopator reigned from 187 to 175. He raised more taxes and even demanded wealthy people to pay tributes to Rome. Surprisingly he was poisoned and killed by his treasurer Hellodorus.

The verses 21 and 22 clearly described Antiochus IV Epiphanes the son of Antiochus III the great. He ruled only twelve years, yet top priority was given to him among those who preceded him and also more “ink” was spent for him in scripture. It is said, Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne through flatteries, or intrigue. Another thing he did was he deposed the high priest omias III. It is said in the 23 verse that after the league was made with him, he worked deceitfully to establish himself strong. In verse 24 to 27 the attacks of Antiochus were clearly pointed out and by his attacks against Egypt he acquired more wealth and prophet Daniel said in this regard – “Yea they that feed of the portion of his meat shall destroy him and his army shall overflow and many shall fall down slain; And both these kings hearts shall be to do mischief and they speak lies at one table but it shall not prosper for yet, the end shall be at the time appointed.”

The two parties, the Victorious and the defeated sat together for peacemaking but unable to come to compromise. The two kings Antiochus and Ptolemy speak lies only at the table. Antiochus after his wonderful victory over Egypt turned back to Syria and happened to pass through Israel “Then shall he return into his land, with great riches and his heart shall be against the holy covenant and he shall do exploits and return to his own land (Daniel 11.28)”. This is what happened in the year 171 B.C. after Antiochus Epiphanes came to power in 175 B.C. He was actually very friendly with Israel but after four years of his rule he felt it necessary to break off his friendship with Israel. Though he got victory over Egypt, controlling of it was far from reality. He got more riches, but he had no political control over his rivals in the south.

In 168 B.C. Antiochus again declared war on Egypt and went through Israel. But he could not win the war this time because the ships of chittim entered the field against him. So to say, the Romans came to know the power of Antiochus that he would certainly become victorious over Egypt sent their army to Egypt against him. So for Antiochus it became impossible to win the war. He became frustrated and submitted himself to the demands of Rome and returned to his place through Israel. Perhaps on the way, it so happened that a pig was killed at the altar of the Temple of God in Jerusalem and paraded into the Temple with the statue of Zeus his heathen god which had the head of his own likeness. He put the Temple in desolation and abomination and defiled it. He further declared that no faithful Jew should enter the Temple.

So, the sacrificial system and the rituals of Mosaic law were ceased to continue and the Temple remained in desolation. Antiochus did this intentionally to keep Israel in his grip and secure the buffer as needed between Egypt and Syria. What kind of steps Antiochus had taken were really demonic and heinous. He cleverly sent his military general Apollonius with an army of 22,000 soldiers into Jerusalem under the guise of establishing peace. Then on the Sabbath day, the general launched an attack against the unsuspecting people of Jerusalem. They killed many men and took many women and children as slaves into Syria. In addition to that the soldiers plundered and burnt the city.

Anyway Antiochus followed this method by abominating the Holy Temple of God. And he also prevented Jews from following the religious practices. These religious practices included undergoing circumcision observing holidays and festivals. Then what is said in verse 32? “And such as do wickedly against the covenant, shall he corrupt by flattering but the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits”. The first part of the saying is about the Jews who were not particular about their religions but embrace Hellenistic philosophy and their life style would be totally heathen. Such people naturally support Antiochus and Greek way of life. But those people who knew their God is very strong were called observant Jews. They would certainly love their God and obey His word.

Then who were called exploits in this context. They were called the Maccabees, who did Guerilla type war against Syrians and fought courageously for three years between 168 and 165 B.C. They did not sleep until they pushed back Antiochus and his people from the holy land. They cleansed the land and the Temple from the heathen presence, and sanctified it. At last the Temple was rededicated to the observance of Mosaic Law. This function was commemorated in the holiday of Hanukkah, which is referred in the New Testament as the feast of Dedication. Then what we see in verse 33? “And they that understand among the people, shall instruct many yet they shall fall by the sword and by flame by captivity and by spoil many days”.

In spite of the heroism of the Maccabees many Jews, who sincerely stood against the abomination of Antiochus were mercilessly put to death. To kill the obedient Jewish people Antiochus followed various methods. Some of them were killed by sword. Some were by burning. Some more through captivity and many more lost everything they possessed as their own. The revenge, Antiochus took against the people of God was very swift and very

violent. Though the pagan Antiochus gave such barbaric treatment to the loyal Jews, they advised many to remain firm in their faith towards God. They were not perturbed by any amount of threat by Antiochus to their lives. Their devotion was continued with more vigour as an encouragement to many in the country. They made it a principle to worship their Yaheweh was far better than submitting themselves to heathen Antiochus. They decided even to die for the righteous cause.

Finally verses 34 and 35 gave us the information about the end of the vision of Daniel which was dealt with Antiochus Epiphanes. “Now when they shall fall, they shall beholpen (helped) with a little help but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall to try them and to purge and to make them while even to the time of the end because it is yet for a time appointed.”

It is said that those who “Cleave” to Flatteries are called unfaithful and unobservant Jews and the other were faithful and they would be martyred. Then those who survived would be made pure by testing their faith. They would be refined at the time of trial under the pressure of evil forces. This period had to be considered the time of persecution. No doubt it would be painful but short lived. It was like the overcome of Syrians by Maccabees. Finally Antiochus died all of a sudden with unexpected and incurable disease in 164 B.C.

Antiochus Epiphanes was clearly depicted as the fore runner of Anti-Christ. Just as Antiochus declared war against Jews in his time in the same way the Anti – Christ will wage war against Jewish people at the end of this age of human history. Just as Antiochus polluted the Temple with abomination and desolation in Jerusalem, in the same way the Anti – Christ will work in the foot prints of Antiochus and destroy the temple that is going to be built in Jerusalem at the end of the age. Just as Antiochus killed many Jews who did not accept the worship of the heathen gods and other service conditions, the Anti – Christ also follow them to implement. The Antiochus tried to glorify himself by comparing himself to the God of universe. So he called himself “Epiphanes” which means “the Manifestation of God”. In the same way the Anti – Christ will exalt himself and magnify himself about all gods and shall speak strange things about the God of gods. (Daniel 11.36)

## Heathen Kingdoms That Ruled Israel

It is true that the pastors, Evangelists, college and seminary professors, missionaries, and church elders used to spend their precious time in acquiring the knowledge of the Bible and church history. Some others take more interest to go through the Bible in different languages for further information. Such people would be pregnant with enormous knowledge of the Bible and good command about the subject and Godly references. The leaders or teachers, while teaching will have control over the students of theology because of their depth of knowledge. So the students that are trained under such efficient professors will have their own independent views regarding theology, as future guidance in preaching or teaching. The depth of knowledge the students require completely depends upon the quality of the institution they study. Such efficient theological students from standard institutions will certainly honor the following facts of the Bible.

1. The triune nature of God – Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are not three gods in one person, but there is one God in three Persons. This truth every believer must remember.
2. The Bible is a sacred document written by about 40 writers with the inspiration from God. It is everlasting and most powerful. If anyone says that he has no belief in the contents of the Bible, it works like a sharp sword and pierces into the heart of such nonbelievers.
3. In this material world, all people are born with sin nature. And due to that sin, there are separated from God, and no relationship with Him exists. In such circumstances, man needed a savior to save him from the clutches of sin. As a matter of fact, man has not committed any sin, but he is born with sin which he inherited with the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. We call them our first parents of the human race. In a word all of us are sinners, in Adam, because we are all in his loins.
4. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is called the undiminished deity because of His virgin birth, He became a perfect humanity. He is through and through a Godly man and also a complete man. In this matter let us not go deep into details because it is a clear Biblical fundamental doctrine.
5. On the cross of Calvary the Son of God paid our debts by shedding His blood as a compensation for our sin. So, through this means, he brought all of us salvation, with His precious blood on the Cross. As a result He made us heirs to eternal life. According to the Bible, His own people (the Jews) were responsible for the consequences of the Son of God. Our

father God sacrificed His beloved Son Jesus to die on the cross, and Jesus with all His majesty, climbed onto it. With this action, He saved all humanity and promised everlasting peace and eternal life. As it has become cruel necessity, He calmly walked toward the cross. God had some purpose when He sent His beloved son into this world. He has to fulfill three things – to heal the sick and suffering, to spread the word of God, and to die for the sin of humanity.

6. Jesus fulfilled these three things. He conquered death and came out of the grave successfully. As the son of God, and as a deity, He is capable of giving away His life and taking it back. He said the same to His disciples and did it successfully.
7. After resurrection, He spent forty days on Earth by appearing before different people in order to make them believe that He rose from the dead. He also met his disciples and confirmed His promise that he would rise on the third day. All the disciples and other followers believed in His resurrection except one disciple, namely Thomas. He was otherwise known as doubting Thomas. He believed only after putting his fingers into the wounds of Jesus Christ. Then after 40 days, Jesus went to His father in Heaven and sent the Holy Spirit to His disciples after ten days, as He promised. Basing on the fact that He shed His blood on the cross, He is functioning now as our Great High Priest. What He did for us on Calvary, He is going to do the same to all the believers if they are put into troubles by Stan anyway. When He comes again to the earth, as all believers are anticipating. He will turn to His father God and say that He shed His blood for the sin of all humanity and so, the sinners can confidently sing to the top of their voices that they have all security through Christ.
8. If we study the Bible carefully we can understand that “salvation” was planned by God and for that purpose He willingly sacrificed His Son. Salvation was purchased by His Son, Jesus Christ, with His blood on the cross, and this salvation was processed by the God the Holy Spirit. So to say salvation is a teamwork of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We also see in the Scripture how the prayer is always addressed to the Father only as – “Our Father who art in Heaven.....”
9. It is also said that salvation is not achieved by the works of righteousness but by the grace of God through faith, as the gift of God that leads to salvation. And this is not at all Calvenistic doctrine, but it is a Biblical truth.
10. Everybody is aware of the fact through prophecy that Jesus is coming again into this world before the end of the age not as a lamb as He came

first, but as a roaring lion of Judah to reign his millennial kingdom. When He comes the first thing He will do is to resurrect all the dead and the living shall be raptured. Then He will defeat all the evil and establish a literal and physical millennial (thousand years) kingdom upon the new Heaven and new earth. For instance, people who are called by God for His ministry or to teach theological students, or to preach in the churches, must be bold enough to defend God and gospels under all conditions. Then only they will be treated as true servants of God. They must be also in a position to defend the foundational doctrine of truth before the false teachers and false prophets.

The teachers who teach the Word of God must stick onto the truth always. They should not have second thoughts or decisions of their own on any point. For example, if anyone would like to speak about Jesus as a deity, such great topics must be confined to a particular place because it is a Holy matter. The word *deity* is Holy and eternal, and it belongs to infinite Savior Jesus Christ. We must be careful whenever we talk about such godly things. Jesus is the Son of God in the flesh. Apart from that, there are some doctrines considered less important as foundational doctrinals. Yet, they should not be ignored as unimportant to them. To illustrate this point more clearly, the second coming of Jesus Christ is treated as the foundational doctrinal because He is coming for the redemption of the earth. Let us look into the events according to chronological order. His second coming is primarily concerned to the living of the rapture of the church. So, this essential point is described by some scholars as pre-tribulational rapture, mid-tribulational rapture, partial rapture, and past-tribulational rapture. But majority of the scholars authentically declared pre-tribulational rapture of the church as the correct time of his Second Coming.

In order to solve this sensitive issue, some scholars confirmed the prophecy of Daniel in the second chapter of his book would be an authentic one to set right this problem. According to the prophecy, the most brilliant but wicked king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon had a terrible dream. He did not remember the contents of the dream, but only the dream as important, and such dreams could be interpreted by the beloved prophet Daniel, as he only got this gift from God. The dream was about an image (a statue), which was composed of five distinguished parts representing five powerful kingdoms of Heathen origin, and those five empires were found in the book of the Word of God due to some reason. What must be that reason, to keep the names of those empires in the pages of the Word of God? Not because they were powerful kingdoms, but because four of them had already ruled the nation of Israel and the capital city of Jerusalem as Heathen kings, and the

fifth kingdom rulers will rule at the end of times. And according to prophecy, this fifth kingdom will come to power shortly and rule Jerusalem.

What are the names of those four kingdoms that already ruled the nation of Israel? The first one was called Babylon, the world's oldest city and the birthplace of all kinds of idolatry. So in the image, Babylon was considered the head of gold. The second empire was the chest and arms of Silver that represented Medo-Persian kingdom. The third one was the thighs and belly of bronze that represented the kingdom of Greece. The fourth one was the legs of iron that represented the Roman Empire. The king of Babylon happened to launch three massive attacks on Jerusalem. The first one was in 606 BC, the second one in 598 BC, and the third one in 586 BC. In the third attack, the king commanded the generals to kill all the rebellious captives. Added to that, they destroyed the city as well as the walls of Jerusalem, and set the temple on fire. At that time, Zedekiah, a wicked man, was the king of the Judean Empire. In the series of Davidic Dynastic rulers, Zedekiah was the twentieth and last king, and he was responsible for the destruction of the empire. While the fierce battle was going on, he tried to escape secretly through the passageway of the city wall, which was already destroyed to its foundations. Then to his bad luck, he was caught with his family near the city of Jericho and they were taken as captives to Babylon. After that, he was forced to watch the cruel death of his sons, and then his eyes were removed. He was finally kept in prison till his death.

With the end of Davidic rulers, Israel became a doomed nation. The capture, blindness, and imprisonment of king Zedekiah made the nation worse than before. During the reign of King David and his son Solomon the nation was considered great and powerful. But after them, the other kings could not have the blessings of God and became slaves to paganism. So, God became furious at their attitude and planned to put Israelites and their kings into the hands of the Heathen kings with the hope they would repent. The fact is at the time of King David, God made a covenant with him by saying that his house and his kingdom shall be established forever, and also, his throne shall be established forever. Such a great promise was shattered when God saw some negative attitude among the later kings. God also told King David if his descendants commit any sin, at any time, they would be cursed and punished. And such a situation had come to God to punish the Kings and the people.

God made another promise to king David, that is only his lineage, the seed of a woman, a virgin birth, will become a legitimate heir to the throne of David, who is no other than Jesus Christ. So, when the pagan kingdoms complete their reign over Israel, Jesus in His Second coming will be a legitimate heir to the legitimate throne over the legitimate nation (Israel). For the



confirmation of this fact, let us read the first verse of the first book of the New Testament. The image described in the second chapter of Daniel was the clear indication of the times of different Gentile rulers that ruled Israel. This Gentile ruling was described as a period of times when there was no worthy descendant from the royal lineage of King David to rule like himself. By keeping all these points in view, God wanted to establish a special nation to bear His name and through whom the king of kings and the Lord of Lords would come to rule. Prior to His coming, Israel nation would be ruled by four idolatrous nations (Pagan rulers). The above mentioned details are true and certain, just as the morning follows night. The times of Gentile rulers, quoted above, were the master plan of Satan to defeat the plan of God. Because of the interference of Satan in the plan of God, He would redeem the world by sending His beloved son Jesus Christ to the earth.

God allowed Satan to implement his own plan to rule the nation of Israel by Pagan rulers, with some purpose. According to the plan of Satan, the first heathen nation that ruled Israel was Babylon. It began to rule Jerusalem from 606 B.C. The next nation was the Medo-Persian empire. This empire ruled Jerusalem from 536 B.C. That means, the Babylonians ruled just for seventy years as per the prophecy of Prophet Jeremiah. Then, Greece began to rule Jerusalem from 322 B.C. It means, the Greeks ruled Israel for about 214 years. The fourth Pagan ruler, the Romans, began to rule Jerusalem from 63 B.C. After about 600 years of King Zedekiah, it is said some divine influence was conspicuous in the history of Israelites' nation. The Roman emperor Augustus Caesar, at that time, proclaimed that all Jews shall return to their native towns for the purpose of census. In such a situation, Miriam (Mary), the mother of our Lord Jesus and also who was highly esteemed by the believers, had to come to Bethlehem from Nazareth because her original place was Bethlehem. She reached Bethlehem just at the time of her delivery of Jesus. Yet, she had to travel more than seventy miles with her husband Joseph. The route between Nazareth and Bethlehem was with mountain ranges, which became very difficult for a pregnant woman like Mary. According to genealogy, both Joseph and Mary were Judeans and descendants of King David. The real name of Mary was Miriam, but it was anglicized to Mary.

The birthplace of Christ was noticed by the shepherds, who were feeding their sheep near the mountains of Jericho, and they were guided by the angelic messengers and the star. They came and worshipped Christ. The next worshippers were three wise-men called Magi from the east. They travelled a long distance to reach the birthplace of Jesus. As located in the history, the Magi took more than one year to reach the birthplace of Jesus,

that is to say, Jesus was in His second year at the time of the visit of Magi. Jesus grew to manhood and, for about three years, He ministered to His nation though it was still in Roman domination. In this context, it is appropriate to mention His credentials, His lineage from which He came, the place of His birth, under what conditions He was born, what kind of things He taught to His disciples and others in various gatherings, the way of life He lived, and different types of miracles He performed. All these examples were like testimonies to endorse that He was a godly man. He was the seed of the woman, as mentioned in Genesis 3:15. We can add some more points to His credit like His virgin birth, the son of David, the promised king and long waited Messiah. In spite of all these wonderful credentials attributed to Jesus, the people of the nation from which He sprang, the corrupted religious leaders bluntly rejected Him. “He came unto His own (creation) and His own (nation) received Him not” (John 1:11). The result of the rejection by His own people caused Him great agony and He foretold about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. This foretelling was fulfilled in 70 A.D., forty years after the death of Jesus Christ. What He exactly said was, “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). Actually, the times of Gentile rule over Jerusalem would have ended if the Jewish people had accepted Jesus Christ wholeheartedly as their Messiah and king. Instead of that, they rejected Him openly and so the Lord Jesus foretold that they would continue under the influence of other heathen nations of the world. Fortunately, Israel became an independent nation on May 8, 1948. But Jerusalem, being the capital city, remained as a divided city because of the declaration of the United Nations. To their bad luck, Israelites had fought wars for their peaceful survival and to endure the countless attacks, since it became a free nation. The major problem here is the Temple Mount Moriah, which is the soul of Jerusalem, remained in the hands of Gentiles. Apart from this headache to Israelites, the enemy nations are demanding Israel to retreat the impossible borders of 1967. This became a perpetual nuisance and unsolvable problem, even to the United Nations.

Prophet Daniel, while interpreting the dream of King Nebuchadnezzar, spoke about the fifth part of the image. The first one is the head of gold, the second one is the chest and arms of silver, the third one is the belly and thighs of bronze, the fourth one is the legs of iron, and the fifth one is the feet and toes of iron and clay. Here, if we study carefully, the mixture of iron and clay indicate that the feet and toes were partly strong and partly weak. Many imminent scholars came to an understanding that the two feet were the representation of the revived Roman empire. According to that understanding, this revived Roman empire will come into existence at the end of the age. If we stick on to this information, then we have to take it for

granted the image represented only four empires that ruled Israel already, but not five. Since the time of Nebuchadnezzar till the time of Jesus Christ and after His death, the nation of Israel was ruled by different empires as if it was no man's land. This is what Jesus Christ predicted. He said with grief in His mind, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke 21:24).

Those scholars also suggested regarding the revived Roman empire will emerge and be ruled by Anti-Christ. Along with the ruling of Israel, this Anti-Christ will also become a supreme persecutor of Israel during the great tribulation period. This is what the theological students were taught in their seminaries by their professors. This persecution during the time of great tribulation may cause some believers to be dull, helpless, and desperate. In such conditions, a helping hand will come before them, and it is the hand of hope, confidence, and faith. In continuation of the story, we come across the next part. According to that part, a stone cut out of a mountain without hands appears on the stage (Daniel 2:34-45). The stone is nothing but the cutout image of Christ. He is the smitten stone (Isaiah 5:3-4). Christ is the stumbling stone (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:8). Christ is the chief cornerstone (Psalm 118:22). But in the description of Prophet Daniel, Christ is the smiting stone. He will smite the counterfeit world kingdom of Anti-Christ and his guide, Satan. We have to brood over the sensitive point regarding the stone cut out of the mountain without hands. In this case, there shall be no involvement of human beings. But the stone (the Lord Jesus Christ) alone will smash the image of Daniel's story on the feet. The story of the image ends with the smashing down of the whole thing to the ground immediately. In this context, some lines from the Book of Daniel should be quoted as more appropriate.

*"Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces, together, (at the same time) and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors and the wind carried them away that no place was found for them, and the stone that smote the image, became a great mountain (literally kingdom) and filled the whole earth" (Daniel 2:35).*

The above quoted lines and their importance are the four names represented in the image will all present at the end of times. It is not simply the final empire. The Roman empire is revived. The Medo-Persians defeated the Babylonians, then the Greeks defeated the Medo-Persians. That was not the end. Unfortunately, after the sudden death of Alexander the Great, the

Greek empire was divided into four nations. The separation made the powerful kingdom weak in the sight of other nations around. Among the four generals who made that division, Seliucus appeared to be more powerful with his capital Syria. In such circumstances, Romans came to limelight in 63 B.C. and remained as superpower of the world. But this kingdom also became weak during the fourth century A.D. Their strength and influence were totally diminished. Yet, it was not the end of Rome. At the end of times, it is believed that all the four kingdoms will join together for the final attack of Israel and try to prevent Christ from returning to the earth as the lion of the tribe of Judah.

The concealed meaning of the above said sentence is the feet of the image do not represent the only revived Roman empire, but it can be called fifth empire composed of four former kingdoms. The popular impression of the people is that the two feet and toes identify with Rome, Italy, Western Europe, and the Papacy. If not, this reference has no biblical evidence. The prophecy about the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by Roman rulers is often thought over by many educated elite as the evidence of the Roman empire as the kingdom of anti-Christ at the end of days. The cream of the society applauded the statement of Prophet Daniel. What he said was, "The people of the prince that shall come and destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:26). Many believers are able to understand about the prince that he is no other than the anti-Christ. Then, the city he will destroy is Jerusalem and the Temple on the Mount Moriah. In this context, we have some important facts expressed by both ancient and modern historians. Let us look into some of the details concerned to the attack of Jerusalem city and the Holy Temple.

- 1) General Titus, son of Vespasian, emperor of Rome, led an attack on Jerusalem.
- 2) The Roman soldiers, selected for this purpose, were divided into six legions. The fifth, tenth, and fifteenth legions were already with their spears, who broke the city walls and completely destroyed the Temple. They also looted the gold and silver of the Temple. Apart from the appointed soldiers, there were also some emergency soldiers. It was finally estimated the total number of invading soldiers was 50,000 or 55,000 men.
- 3) It was the people (but not the nation) of the prince, the anti-Christ, that will come to destroy the city and the sanctuary.

The soldiers, recreated for the purpose of invading Jerusalem, were mostly from Syria, Asia Minor, Egypt, and Arabia. In addition to that, a very

small number was taken from Europe. It is historically proved as “the people of the prince that shall come.” Those people were from Asia Minor. They were the ancestors of Muslims, who dominate the Middle East today. And those people were identified as iron and clay of the feet and toes, in the image of Daniel. So, it is concluded after looking into all details till now people took it for granted that the anti-Christ will not emerge from Europe, or from revived Roman empire, as it is believed today. The second chapter from the Book of Daniel depicted the story of the wicked pagan king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar. The image he saw in his dream was most terrifying, dazzling, and with the appearance of fear. Daniel, the beloved prophet of God, while interpreting the dream, did not exhibit any distress over the meaning of the dream as it had not indicated any immediate danger to his people, the Israelites. This wonderful interpretation of the dream prompted the king to promote Daniel to the highest position in his government. Added to that, Daniel received many valuable gifts also from the king.

Then, in the year about 553 B.C., after the dream of the king, Daniel also dreamed a dream. It is said there is some similarity between these two dreams. They seemed to have painted with a broad brush a picture of human history during the time of Gentiles’ rule that began in 606 B.C. and will continue until the coming of the king of Jews (Jesus Christ), the son of David. He will come and judge the people of the world for their inequity and finally bring golden age upon the earth. The cut-out stone that is mentioned in the dream of Nebuchadnezzar will receive the final victory. In the dream of Daniel also, it is Christ who will become victorious as the son of man. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar was explained to the believers with the presence of an awesome, unimpressive image, whereas the dream story of Prophet Daniel was explained through the presentation of four beast empires. But for the mind of Daniel, it was more significant and frightening; and at the same time, it was appropriate to the situation. The dream of the king reflected a sweeping and general scope of world history, whereas the dream of Daniel focused more in a negative way on Israel. So, Daniel further said, “I Daniel grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body and the visions of my head troubled me” (Daniel 7:15).

The four of Daniel’s beasts were located in the biblical history. As traced, the first beast was like a lion with eagle wings. That beast embodied power and royalty, and it represented Babylon. The second beast was a bear, raised upon one side and devouring much flesh. This beast was identified as Medo-Persian empire. This empire appeared to be very weak in the beginning, but later picked up strength and power and conquered many countries. It remained stronger, like a lumbering, powerful bear. The third

kingdom was compared to a leopard, which had four wings like a bird and four heads. These four wings and heads indicated a powerful Grecian empire, which was divided among four military generals after the death of Alexander the Great. He was the most powerful emperor of Greece. He wanted to become the world conqueror. He conquered a major part of the eastern world through his brilliant tactics. Yet, due to his sudden demise at the age of 32, his kingdom was divided among four military generals. In course of time, they too became weak but could survive for more centuries because of their ethical and cultural values. In course of time, the Greek nations became so weak and the neighboring countries ignored even their presence as rulers. But at the right time of history, they would rise again to become enemies to the Jews. And the Jews also at present do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Messiah and trust Him. To say in nutshell, ancient Babylon is modern-day Iraq, and we can see the location of it in the map. Ancient Persia is modern-day Iran. The kingdom of Persia happened to change its name from Persia to Iran in 1935. The ancient Greece is modern Syria. We studied already about the Grecian empire, how it was divided into four due to the sudden death of Alexander the Great. Then, among those four nations, Syria became more powerful. For this nation, the most notorious and wicked man, Antiochus Epiphanes, the descendant of Seliucus, became the king, only to take revenge against Jews. This Antiochus did many abominable things in the Temple of God in Jerusalem and polluted it. He was otherwise known as the progeny of Satan. Antiochus became more powerful and used that power to suppress the Jews, and finally called himself the main persecutor of Jews.

The ancient persecutors of Israel have been planning to join together with the fourth beast empire. This fourth beastly empire is clearly identified and that will be in the control of the anti-Christ, who is also the progeny of Satan. For all this, the current events are the witness for fulfilling the prophecy before our eyes. And also, these happenings are indicating the time of the coming of the lion of Judah (Jesus Christ) to solve all the problems. It is clearly referred that this empire is no other than the revived Roman empire. It is said the final empire would be like some form of “rebirth” or revival of the original Roman empire. But one thing is clear. The final form of the empire will be completely a new form. It will be totally different from what we studied. I think it is correct time for all of us to have a second thought at the “Revival Roman Empire,” and look at it with a fresh biblical perspective. We are expecting more about the fourth beast with ten horns and the anti-Christ, if possible in future. This subject is, as a matter of fact, very complicated. Yet, it is very, very important, particularly at this hour of history.

## Prophet Jonah

During the reign of King Solomon the kingdom of Israel was divided as two nations, the Southern kingdom of Judah, and the Northern kingdom of Israel, because of the sins committed by King Solomon. Though God blessed him abundantly as the richest man and the wisest man in his time, he became ungrateful to God. He got too many heathen wives, and to please them he even built heathen temples. His way of life displeased God, and cursed him by saying that his kingdom would be divided into two. Accordingly, in 922 BC, it was divided after his death. The first one was called Northern kingdom of Israel with ten tribes of the sons of Jacob, and the second one was called the Southern kingdom of Judah with two tribes of the sons of Judah and Benjamin. The capital city for the northern kingdom was Samaria and the king was Jeroboam. The capital city for the southern kingdom was Jerusalem and the king was Rehoboam, son of King Solomon. King Jeroboam made his country a heathen nation and introduced idol worship.

From the beginning of the separation of those two countries, there were continuous wars between them. Then prior to the reign of Jeroboam II, the northern kingdom was attacked and oppressed by the Assyrians in 722 BC. They launched a series of devastating methods against Syria, otherwise known as (the Arameans) and completely ravaged it. As Syria was consuming the time and energy of the Syrians, the northern kingdom of Israel began to rebuild the nation. But the most unfortunate thing is that the attack of the Assyrians had made them slaves and they even lost their identity as Israel, and in course of time they too, became idol worshippers and forgot their real God Yavah. After a few decades Jeroboam II became the king of Israel kingdom and the Prophet Jonah presented himself with fulfilled prophecy regarding that nation. The Bible readers must have seen in (2 Kings, 14:25) how Jeroboam II restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of plain.

Accordingly, the Word of the Lord God that spoke by the hand of His servant, Prophet Jonah, regarding the prosperity of Israel and the outcome of his prophecy was that, the time of abundance was not seen in Israel since the day of King Solomon. Jonah gave a wonderful prophecy, for which he deserved to be honored and respected. Let us look into some of the references of Prophet Jonah.

- 1) “But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.—” (Jonah 1:3)
- 2) “..... For I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness and repentist thee of the evil.” (Jonah 4:2)

3) “And, should not I spare Nineveh that great city wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and left hand, and also much cattle.” (Jonah 4:11)

We are immediately introduced to the story that God commanded Jonah to “Arise, go to Nineveh that great city and cry against it for their wickedness is coming before me.” (Jonah 1:2). To the command of God, the answer is one of the most surprising in the entire Scripture. The answer is that Jonah arose up to flee to Tarshish from the presence of God, but not to go to Nineveh. It is really a stunning incident in the character of Jonah which clearly showed his disobedience towards God’s command. Anyway, he boarded a ship which was bound to Tarshish. It was about 2,500 miles in Spain. After the ship started moving, the Lord sent a tempest over the waters of the Sea, which caused utter confusion in the crew of the ship. They tried their best to control it, but in vain.

Jonah understood the unfavorable situation and went down the deck to sleep. The captain of the ship, who observed the movements of Jonah, asked him why he was behaving like that, when all the crew and the ship were in trouble. The captain actually wanted to ask him, “How can you sleep at a time of this?” In the meantime, each crew member began to call upon his heathen deity to save them from that calamity. When all the crew members failed in their attempt, they at last decided to cast lots to find out the real culprit. In their lot, Jonah was identified as the real person responsible for all the unhappy situation. Then the crew asked Jonah what they should do to him to pacify and calm the tempest on the sea. He asked the crew to take him up and throw him into the Sea. He confessed that the tempest was only because of him, as he disobeyed the command of God Almighty. So, even in that critical condition, Jonah, instead of repenting and praying to God, he preferred to die willingly. But the crew unwillingly accepted the obligation of throwing him into the sea. And finally the Mediterranean Sea remained calm.

The next incident in connection with the story of Jonah was that he remained in the belly of a large fish which had swallowed him alive. By remaining in the belly, Jonah said “I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and He heard me.” (Jonah 2:1). What was the affliction Jonah spoke about? The affliction here was that God threw Jonah into the deep sea and it is God that controls everything. So, this unusual event took Jonah to the bottom of the sea that is, he actually drowned. Jonah understood the critical situation of his life, and then prayed to God, as a last desperate attempt to live. God understood Jonah was repenting for his grave mistake, and sent a “fish” to swallow and keep him alive. But, we don’t have further details about the fish. Jesus also said in Matthew 12:20 that Jonah remained in the belly of a whale for three days and three nights.



Let us not be dogmatic in one critical point. It is believed by some eminent scholars, and it is quite possible, that Jonah had actually died prior to being swallowed by the whale. A careful study of Jonah's description in the sea would certainly indicate his death. This event appears to be supported by the reference of the Lord to the book of Jonah. Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees and teachers of law, for a sign to prove His divine and Messianic claims. For that, the reply of Jesus was "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonah, for as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a whale, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the Earth." (Matthew 12:39-40).

Here we can see clearly how Jesus was referring to His own death, burial, and resurrection. He seemed to have chosen the example of Jonah because Jonah also actually died as he sunk to the bottom of the sea before being revived by God. Anyway, the mercy of God was granted to Jonah and he got his life back. Now, Jonah had changed his mind, and God asked him again to go to Nineveh and preach. We see according to the story, Jonah became completely a changed man, and remained more obedient to God. So as per the Word of God, Jonah rose and went unto Nineveh to preach about the coming calamity if they would not change their way of life. The fact is that Jonah was prompted to obey God's instructions. He received the message from God regarding the doom. "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." (Jonah 3:4). In other words, God granted only forty days to the people of Nineveh to repent for their sin and wicked life. If they repent, God would spare them, if not, they have to be destroyed.

The most wonderful and unexpected thing is that the people of Nineveh became obedient listeners to the preaching of Jonah and repented wholeheartedly. What must be the reason for those hard-hearted people of Nineveh to repent so easily? It must be God's providence. God must have planned human affairs for repentance easily. There are three main reasons for their change.

- 1) A few years ago, Nineveh was miserably hit by two plagues (during 765 and 759 B.C.) which ravaged the citizens in the midst of this calamity, and another event was that a total eclipse of the sun occurred in 763 B.C. These two plagues and the eclipse of the sun have been treated as the work of divine punishment.
- 2) The story of Jonah's adventure on the ship must have been circulated among people, even in Nineveh. So, the people of Nineveh saw Jonah the Hebrew prophet, who had been thrown into the sea, now entered the city. In addition to that, the people of Nineveh were terribly afraid of the God of Israel and the first entry of the Hebrew prophet Jonah.

3) The people of Nineveh were thoroughly disgusted with the ruthless Northern foes. It was the kingdom of “Urantee,” that controlled the South. If the fierce forces of Urantee attacked in any way, they would have totally destroyed the city. The people of Nineveh were well aware that their destruction was near at any time and so, they welcomed any promise of deliverance. They did not mind even to humble themselves and appear before the God of Hebrews. If we consider the above said words, we can certainly believe that notoriously wicked people of Nineveh would heed to the words of Jonah and repent. And in such circumstances, God would no doubt spare them from destruction. Even then, the story was not ended. Jonah again objected to God’s plan.

It is really unfortunate that the sparing of Nineveh by God displeased Jonah, and he was very angry. As a matter of fact, the Israelite (Jonah) was so irritated and requested the Lord, “Take I beseech thee my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:3) We see here the willingness of Jonah to die for the second time in view of his rebellion against God’s plan. What made him to be upset? He preached to the people of Nineveh and they positively responded. What must have happened to the gratefulness and renewed obedience that resulted from his miraculous rescue?

1) There are two possibilities in this connection. The distance between ‘Gathhepher’ and Nineveh is about 550 miles, and a healthy man can travel only 15 miles a day. Then, to travel such a long distance, it requires at least 36 days. Once the borders of Israel were crossed, one might have to go through cities, villages, temples, marketplaces, etc. Most of the temples in those days were identified by idolatry and cult prostitution. It is said that in some temples, there was child sacrifice also. The marketplaces were full of paganism. There was the sale of ‘unclean’ food and small household idols. In such a strange atmosphere, the soul of Jonah must have pained a lot. And the defilement of such an atmosphere must have changed his mind also.

So to say, Jonah was no doubt associated by ‘heathens’ of the surroundings; all the bitter experiences must have prompted him to develop a kind of aversion toward religion. He witnessed more than enough by the time he reached Nineveh city. Then, he came to a conclusion that the people of Nineveh would not deserve the mercy of God for their salvation.

2) Jonah was under the impression that though Nineveh was in the control of some powers, one day it would rise and become more powerful than any other place. If his words would become true, then that heathen country certainly create problems to Israel in future. In such expectations, he did not want to preach them for their repentance within forty days as a deadline. Basing on the impression, he had in his mind about the city and its people; he would have gone home safely. But he was not willing to accept the mercy of God on that city. With this idea in his mind, he set up a shelter (booth) at the eastern part of the city and waited for the destruction of heathens.

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In the Scripture, it is said “The Lord God prepared a ground and made it to come up for Jonah to provide him with shady comfort.” Again, what must have been the intention of God? He made the life of Jonah unbearable. The main purpose of warming the place was only to destroy the shelter of Jonah, to see how far he could bear the heat of the blazing sun. But Jonah went to the extent of asking God to exterminate his life for the third time. At the end of the book, God, with His love, patiently communicated a moral to him. God wanted Jonah to understand that He spared the city of Nineveh, which had more than sixscore thousand persons who could not distinguish between their right hand and their left hand and with cattle. Perhaps God wanted to point out their innocence. The central idea of the whole story of Jonah was that God’s mercy and grace were not only for Israelites, but also for innocent people like the people of Nineveh, irrespective of their faith or belief.

The Assyrians were the second heathen kings that took revenge against Israelites, though they were the descendants of Abraham. The first heathen kings were Egyptians. The Assyrians became the rod of God’s anger (Isaiah 10:5). They attacked Samaria, the capital of Israel, in 722 B.C. and sent most of them into exile. The Assyrians, in their ruthless reign, marched their captives off to exile in chains and hooks in their noses and jaws. They also skinned many of them alive. According to history, there are many more examples of the brutal reign of Assyrians. Though the people of Nineveh were repented by the preaching of Jonah, it did not remain for a long time because it had to be destroyed by the giant forces of Medes, Babylonians, and Scytheans. We have studied that the Northern kingdom of Israel was in the control of Assyrians. Some years later, they tried to destroy the Southern kingdom of Judah also, during the reign of King Hezekiah. This kingdom of Judah was ruled by twenty kings, who were called Davidic dynastic rulers. So, for the sake of David, God protected the Southern kingdom of Judah by killing at least 1,80,000 Assyrian soldiers (Isaiah 37:36).

Prophet Jonah was called one of the ‘Minor Prophets.’ He prophesized in the same period of Amos and Hosea. Among the Minor Prophets, it was only Jonah who was commanded by God to leave the boundaries of Israel and preach to heathens like the innocent people of Nineveh. The city of Nineveh was located at the east bank of the Tigris River. Among the Minor Prophets and their books, it is only the book of Jonah that remained as a story-book but not a book of a series of prophetic sayings. Jonah was the only prophet from Galilee, which was also the basis for the ministry of Jesus Christ. Gathhepher was probably the native place of Jonah, only a few miles northeast of Nazareth. In the book of Jonah, God used some living and inanimate objects to accomplish His purpose in the story. They are a storm, a scorching wind, a sea creature, a plant, and a warm. God gave a good moral to the believers through this story.

## Women of the same Mind with the Lord

Much of the information we know about Christology ( the study about Christ based on the Bible)and Christmas (the incarnation or birth and humanity of Christ) are really strange and wonderful. The most important issue we are going to study about was the result of the two feuding women from the church of phillippi, according to paul. These two women were true believers with strong will power and regular church goers at phillippi. If we look into the church history it appeared women played a crucial role and became more powerful force in the church activities and also for the peaceful running of the church affairs. In addition to that women took the leadership frequently in Missionary work by calling Almighty God through their prayers. They provided financial support also to the deserving ministries. Some women with strong will power cannot live peacefully in harmony with others. Such women with independent views naturally cause some problems in the churches or in the society.

Now we are going to know something about such two women namely Euodias and Syntyche. These two were the regular church members of phillippi established by apostle Paul. At that time paul was imprisoned in Rome, which was about 800 miles from phillippi. Even then, the distance could not stop paul from hearing about those two women Elodeas and Syntyche some unfavourable news. He received the message through a different method. The philippean church authorities sent a man by name Epophrodites to help paul during his two year imprisonment. (Phillippians 2.25). It is not clearly mentioned how the church member was able to reach paul from such a long distance, still, we have to believe he brought the message about those two feuding women of the church. It is said paul knew those two women by name, personally because it was he who founded the church, in phillippi during his second missionary journey. (Acts 16.7 – 12) He recollected those two women who helped in his ministry. It is believed by some that paul must have written the book of phillippians, partly to help those two godly women in order to settle their dispute in the church mattes with the tact of a godly pastor paul addressed the problem with curing warning through the following lines –

“I beseech Euodias and beseech Syntyche that they be of the same mind in the Lord. And I entreat thee also true yoke fellow, help those women while labored with me in the gospel with element also and with other my fellow laborous whose names are in the book of life”. (phillippians 4.2 – 3). The two women Elodeas and Syntyche were gently warned to be with the same mind with the Lord. Then what is the meaning of the same mind in the Lord?. As a matter of fact, paul answered this question earlier in his epistle.

While doing so, the purpose was not only to instruct the feuding women but also to instruct other women of future generations who will have the same bent of mind. Paul wanted to extend this idea but took the example of Jesus Christ of what the same mind with the Lord. It means Paul shared the doctrinal truth in all epistles and then based on the doctrine gave duty. According to his principle duty was always based on doctrine. Here the letters of apostle Paul to the phillippians were practical, but not doctrinal except one paragraph of doctrine that appeared suddenly out of context, and answered for the women, the real meaning of the mind of the Lord. At the same time, Paul gave to all believers of all times, the most important chronological text and complete meaning of Christmas that is written in the Bible.

The one paragraph of Paul on doctrine is found in (Phillippians chapter 2 verse 5 – 11). The Bible readers used to call this context as “Kenosis” and it was taken from the phrase in verse 7. “But made himself no reputation” which can be understood as “he emptied Himself”. Indeed there has been a debate on this point by some scholars on what “he emptied Himself”. In this connection a closer look at (Phillippians 2.5 – 11) is necessary and of great help.

- 1) Apostle Paul gave a wonderful statement on this topic. He said let his mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus. He encouraged the two women earlier to have the same mind in Christ. Now he will reveal to them what does it mean to have the same mind in Christ.
- 2) It is a fact Paul spoke about the condition of the eternal life of Christ. He wrote, “While being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. We all know Jesus was in the form of His father in essence and attributes. That is, Jesus is “Deity” and equal to God in everything. So it can never be called robbery or seized or embraced to be equal to God. To speak the truth Jesus is equal to the Father throughout eternity in the past at present and in future.
- 3) Apostle Paul explained the incarnation of Jesus Christ in details in the following lines. “Jesus made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men” (Phillippians 2.7). Incarnation comes from the root word, for “flesh”. That is a “Carnivorous animal” – coming from the same root word is a flesh eater. It is a fact that Jesus was born with human flesh (which was called his incarnation) but without sin still in His incarnation He made Himself of no reputation”, that is “He emptied Himself”. His emptiness was not of His “Deity” as some people misunderstood and taught wrongly. He emptied Himself of His independent use of some of His attributes. For example, He called upon His father in heaven while praying, on certain occasions, even though He could have done everything by Himself. But He gave due

importance to His Father; Paul explained clearly for what purpose Christ came to this world He successfully and wonderfully achieved in His stay in this world. So he wrote –

“And being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even to death on the cross.” (Phillippians 2.8) In His appearance (fashion) as a man Jesus Christ was perfect humanity (without man’s sinful nature). He remained as undiminished Deity and no less than the infinite God. Jesus never turned back from His path. He went all the way toward the cross as He was destined. Yet His mind was always in His control at all movements. Nobody could do anything to Him or against His will on earth. So what He had in His mind about Himself was “No man taketh it, from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it, down and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my father (John 10.18)”. The outcome of what all He said about Himself was God became a man, He became a servant and died miserably on the cross as a criminal. His death on the cross was miserable and His suffering was beyond comprehension. This cross punishment was practiced only on non – Romans. The main purpose of this punishment was long suffering which the Romans used to enjoy.

Actually, we are studying here about two women of the church of phillippi, which was described by apostle paul. He esteemed those two women Euodias and Syntyche, for having the perfect mind of Christ and with their example, paul wished all the believers to have the same mind of Christ for achieving eternity. The correct outcome of this statement is that all of us must possess the noble quality of respecting others more than ourselves. Jesus as the embodiment of “God” became a “man” became a “servant” and died as a “criminal”. The more pathetic thing in this regard is that His own people (the Jews) killed Him on the cross. What must be the reason for Him to die like that?. The only reason is He esteemed others about Himself. Actually to esteem others about ourselves is like a long bridge to cross. Then how God must have estimated the action of His son Jesus?

Paul explained the unique creation of Father God, about His son in the following lines, “wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name, which is about every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God, the father” (phillippians 2.9 – 11). As Jesus achieved something through His incarnation and death, God the Father highly esteemed His son and gave Him the name, which is about all other names. He was called at the time of His birth as the son of God (“Jesus which means “saviour”. Through His death, and resurrection salvation was achieved to the entire humanity. He was also given the name “Lord” by His Father God. So our

saviour is Jesus Christ the Lord. Then with the designation of Lord, He will rule over all things and over all beings in heaven on earth and under the earth. Finally He will rule over the entire universe.

This Baby boy Jesus at Bethlehem and also the sovereign Lord is coming soon for the second time with power and glory to rule His kingdom called Millennial kingdom for thousand years from His capital Jerusalem. The fact is our heavenly Father planned for our salvation even before the beginning of time. Our salvation was purchased by His son (Jesus) through His death and resurrection then our salvation is processed by the Holy spirit. So, every person has to accept Jesus, as his God and saviour He must be Baptized and then become a member of some church.

Importance of Grace – “For the grace of God that bringth salvation that appeared to all men. Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world. Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our salvation Jesus Christ”(Titus 2.11 – 13).

To apostle Paul two most favourite words are , “Grace and Glory”. And to confirm his interest in these two words he used the word “Grace” about 94 times and the word “Glory” about 70 times in his epistles we can see Gods glory and His grace, at the birth of the Lord and saviour Jesus Christ. Paul while writing to his son Titus, who was more faithful and trustworthy in his ministry instructed him by saying “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” we can define grace in this way. It is shown by God toward people, whom He likes most without any expectation in return from them. It is really difficult to grasp the true implications of divine grace because it is totally a strange and controversial to our natural inclinations. But according to Bible grace is an absolute free expression of the living kindness of God Almighty to the humanity. And this continuous out pouring of God’s loving kindness is really wonderful God simply extends His loyal love without expecting anything in return.

Therefore, grace is commonly and correctly referred to “unearned” and “unmerited” favour. To explain more clearly this unearned and unmerited favour was embodied in the “manger” in Bethlehem; When Christ came into this world as a child. Then mankind because of its sinful nature correctly earned for itself divine judgement. And God through His son Jesus Christ offered His loyal love to all who would like to receive it. This offer is God’s unmerited favour of His grace. Then faith is personified as a vehicle through which the soul responds to God’s offer of grace and law is the antithesis of grace. But law requires hard work whereas grace requires faith in God. The final outcome of this wonderful statement is that law leads to bondage, but grace leads everyone to everlasting peace.

All the above said complicated problems forced Paul to write the following lines – For by grace are ye saved, through faith and that not of yourselves. Grace is the gift of God; but not of works lest any man should boast”. If anybody rejects this gift of Grace it is nothing but the final demonstration of foolishness and pride. If the grace is properly understood, it will take away all pride and arrogance from the person. Once the reality of God’s grace grips the soul of anyone it can never be the same. The grace of God is not a new one. It has a long history. It did not begin with the birth of Christ on the day of first Christmas that we celebrate. The truth is God had been offering this grace to humanity since the time of the creation of man.

If we further look into the Bible it was the grace which brought the first patriarch Father Abraham from our of the land of Chaldeans to the promised land. It sustained him and gave him the promise that in his seed all the nations of the world would be abundantly blessed. The same grace preserved the baby Moses and brought him to manhood in the royal palace of pharaoh of Egypt. Then this same grace appeared to Moses in the burning bush, to use him for some noble cause. Especially like liberating the Israelites from the bondage of Egyptian rulers. God also gave His law to Moses on the Sinai mount, for His people Israelites. It was the same grace that raised the shepherd boy David who was caring for the sheep of his father and finally he was made the king of Israel after Saul. It was this grace, that saved prophet Daniel in the lions den, and permitted him to write about certain things yet to happen prophetically.

It was this grace, that gave opportunity to Nehemiah to encourage Jews to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and accordingly the walls were rebuilt. It is the same grace, that made God to send especial messengers called prophets time and again to the children of Israelites to mend them from their ungodly life. God actually wanted to check their disobedience toward Him for centuries. But all those events that are mentioned above would fade away when they are compared to the manifestation of God’s grace which is evidenced today in the lonely life of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. During His earthly travel Paul went on telling more about the greatness of the grace of God. Accordingly understood that God’s grace has always been present and its final manifestation occurred in connection with the incarnation of Lord Jesus Christ. He as the pre – incarnate, son of God who is from everlasting to everlasting come out of eternity in order to die for the sake of the sin of all humanity.

Jesus came to this world to pay a heavy debt which He did not owe. Actually, we made that debt by our sin, which we could not pay. So as to pay our debt the son of God became the son of man. So that the sons of men and women could become the sons and daughters of God. For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation hath appeared, (manifested itself in the birth



and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) to all mankind. If there is the grace, there can be no obligation where there is grace, there can be no guilt. However, in view of God's grace, we need the presence of God to set right our way of life. Here also, Paul spoke a few words in favour of grace.

For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. (The first coming of Christ). Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should love soberly righteously and godly in this present world". (Titus 2.11 – 12) We can find these salient points as a result of the manifestation of God's grace.

The purpose of God's grace is to train His believers as how they should live. Grace teaches us of humanity's helpless condition. Grace teaches us the greatness of God's love even though we don't deserve it. God's grace teaches us the impact of the heinous character of our sin how that sin expected high payment like the life of Jesus Christ. So to say the death of Jesus on the cross was the final compensation for our sin.

- 2) The manifestation of God's grace, teaches us that there are many things we should not do. If Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins in order to satisfy the holy character of His Father then the believers naturally develop a kind of hatred to commit sin anymore. So God's grace teaches us that we should always reject the ungodly way of life and also wrong thinking. God's grace calls all the believers to be attentive and commands them to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts.
- 3) The manifestation of God's grace instructs us that there are certain things we should do. God wished the believers to live soberly life to live righteously and godly in this natural world. To live soberly here means to live with undisturbed mind, to possess self-controlled temper. He must be free from the influence of ungodliness. One must possess the quality of self-control (self-resistant) that controls everything including worldly desires. This self-control keeps the believers to concentrate more on Jesus. He will try to live righteously and maintain certain character that pleases God.

In the Old Testament books, this righteousness was measured by the revealed will of God as evidenced in the law. But in the New Testament the same righteousness was measured by the character of God and revealed in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact is to love the life of God the believers have to exhibit the grace of God to all. Apart from that the godly man and woman have to allow the Holy Spirit to mend their lives around Jesus and live. Finally the true life of a believer is to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, and do good things to others as true believer basing on the commandment "Love every neighbour as thy self".

The Glory of God – On the eve of the birth of Christ in Bethlehem, the heavenly host proclaimed Glory to God in the highest and on earth, peace, goodwill towards men” (Luke 2.14). The fact here is the birth of Christ is closely associated with the glory of God. Then what is that glory? So, far we have studied about the “Grace” of God and became familiar with many new points that are to be observed in our day to day life. But here, we have to learn about the glory of God and its uniqueness. For this purpose, we have to refer some passages of (Titus 2.11 – 13). According to this reference both grace and glory clearly show the excitement of apostle Paul over the birth of Jesus. As Paul was thrilled at the birth of Jesus we must also as believers join our hands with him, and share his excitement during Christmas times.

We have seen already how Paul was thrilled at the manifestation of God’s grace. As we see he was equally excited at the certainty of the future manifestation of the glory of God. Therefore, he wrote, Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and saviour Jesus Christ. It may look improper to think about the glorious birth of Jesus along with His death. But the fact we all know is He was born to die only. Another thing we have to keep in mind is that His death ultimately referred to His resurrection. He rose from His grave and conquered death and made all believers happy. We have to remember His resurrection is also closely associated in this connection, His resurrection is also closely associated with His return in glory, at the end of the age. The fact is Jesus made a promise to His disciples that after His crucifixion He would raise from the grave to life on the third day. (Matthew 10.21). And then before going to heaven to sit at the right hand side of His Father, God. He made another promise to His disciples and the humanity. That promise was He would return in glory what Christ had done at His birth in Bethlehem? As a deity he became flesh to take away the sin of the world.

Then in His second coming according to the prophecy, He will defeat the anti-christ and establish His Millennial kingdom. Let us recollect a while the birth of Jesus the Christmas festival, and how people visit the houses of other church members by singing Hymns like “joy to the world” in Christmas carol’s. You may be surprised to know this English hymn was composed by Isaac Watts. The wonderful words, of the Hymn would thrill the heart of every Christian believer not as a Christmas carol song, but as a Hymn about the return of Christ, gloriously and triumphantly and continue His Philatenean reign at the end of the age. The lyrics of Isaac Watts, are based on the text of Psalm 98 and are blended with wonderful music composed by “George Fredric Handel”.

Apostle Paul clearly stated about the first coming of the son of God as a “grace” appearing (Titus 2.11) and His second coming as a “glorious” appearing (Titus 2.13). “The inner meaning of his expression seemed to be

that Jesus in his first coming was like an innocent Lamb, But His second coming is like a roaring lion of the tribe of Judah. When Jesus came first, as a lamb, he remained silent. He did not open His mouth before the accusers who finally put Him on the cross. But when He comes for the second time as the lion of Judah, He was not remain silent. He will roar against all those who were responsible for His miserable death. In His first coming the wicked people judged the son of God whereas in His second coming the son of God will judge the wicked mankind. The first coming is a grace coming and the second coming will be glorious coming. The grace of God has been present always and reached its ultimate manifestation at the birth of Christ. In the same way, God's glory has been present always preceding His death.

What is the impact of glory – Moses saw the glory of God, at the burning bush. It was the glory of God that guided Israelites and protected them from the Egyptians bondage in a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night. It was the glory that filled the Temple of King Solomon at the precious time of the dedication. It was the glory Israelites saw when he cried out, “woe is me” for I am undone because I am a man of unclean lips for mine eyes have seen the king the Lord of hosts. It was this glory the shepherds saw in the fields of Bethlehem in connection with the birth of Jesus during that holy night. It was the same glory that appeared at Pentecost as cloven tongues of fire. It was this glory of God that Peter James and John saw on the mount of transfiguration as Christ glory shone out of His humanity.

According to some prophetic sayings the glory will reach its Zenith at the second coming of the son of God. The full manifestation of the glory of God, is so desirable that the believers are advised to look for the blessed hope and also for the glorious appearing of our Lord, and saviour Jesus Christ. If the grace of God is an offering to man and woman at unmerited favour, the glory of God is the manifestation of His intrinsic and eternal perfection. So He said “My glory will I not give to another” (Isaiah 42.8). If we say the glory of God is eternal it means there was never in the past nor in future the universe is without the glory of God. It has been there in the past in the present time and in future too. The Hebrew word for “glory” is “Kabod” and in greek it is called “doxa”. The meaning of these two words is “weight”. To give weight to a man is his glory. For our correct understanding wealth, fields, flocks, Herds, children etc all these things comprise of the glory of man.

Then what are the particular things that give weight to God? They are – His nature, His character, His attributes and works, what His is Like, and what He does are the manifestation of God –

- 1) The Devine Existence – God is. This does not mean God was or God will be He is God alone and forever He is the perpetual contemporary. He simply “Is”. This is part of His glory.

- 2) The Devine Essense or substance – God is spirit. That does not mean He is spiritual, but He would possess substance and that substance is called spirit substance. Man’s substance is physical corporal, (in human form) corruptible and mortal. In contrast, the substance of God, is spirit mon corporal (not in human form) incorruptible and immortal. Infinitely superior to man’s substance. This is part of His glory.
- 3) The Devine personality – God is the embodiment of spirit. He is possessing intelligence, emotion and good will. He created man in His own image “God is a being who can understand our thoughts, feelings and actions. This is part of His glory.
- 4) The Devine Decree – God is spirit with the abou said qualifications God wants to plan for history. His plan includes the redemption of lost sinners also. He wants to suppress the power of Satan and evil because they have been creating problems to His believers and see the enthronement of righteousness. This is part of His glory.
- 5) The Devine sovereignty– God is spirit as a sovereign God, He allows everything to pass without any hindrance. He does everything with perfect confirmity to His holiness, Justice, love, truth, mercy etc.

Who were Magi - At the time of the birth of Jesus, the heavenly host came down and adored Him by singing beautiful song Glory, Glory, Glory. Then a team of shepherds guided by the star came and worshipped Him. Finally three wise men who were called “Magi” came from east a long distance, also worshipped Him with some gifts. When this magi paid a visit to the humble abode (the actual birth plea) in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary must have amazed at their presence because they came from a long distance and took more than a year to go to that place. To say more accurately they were stunned at the presence of the Magi, who paid their homage in a most humble way.

Then who were these Magi? They were it is said, the members of a priestly caste of ancient Persia. They studied about stars in order to obtain insight into the affairs and functioning of the world. Most of these men used to leave their persian homes and other things. By living at different places they formed their own communities in different parts of the world. Some such wandering priests settled in Egypt and Babylon. These men played a crucial role in the political matters of King Nebuchadnezzar and became his advisors even in suffering faithfulness and goodness. God does all these things with the instrumentation of His infinite power, flowless wisdom and universal presence. All these things reveal His true personality and works. These things are some of the facts of His glory.

The first coming of our Lord and His birth in Bethlehem were only His grace, which revealed to humanity where as His second coming the whole universe will radiate with the brightness of His glory. The fact is we are living today, between two amazing events in human history. The final manifestation of the grace of God, occurred 2000 years ago at the first coming of Jesus as a born child. And his second coming will be the divinity appointed time for the manifestation of His glory. He redeemed all those believers who accepted Him and His glory. The manifestation of the glory of God will be explained in the simplest way and they will be sinners in the hands of angry God. Then we have to think seriously of how we should love our mighty God Jesus Christ and keep our lives in perfect order.

The Magi in Babylon happened to settle in the area where the exiled Jews remained along with Daniel. This Daniel was made master of Magicians, astrologers, chaldeans and sooth sayers. (Daniel 5.11). In the kingdom of Babylon the influence of Daniel most likely had its own impact on the later interest in seeking out the new born King Jesus Christ became so important. By the time Jesus was born the wall of Jerusalem was already destroyed. Then there was a notion among the Jews and heathens that a Hebrew child would be born to bring “golden age” upon the earth and save men and women from the cruel activities of the evil satan upon the earth. We have to meditate upon this for a while, as how this idea came into existence.

This information was gathered through some reliable sources. According to that sources, the Jews when they were exiled to Babylon, they happened to migrate further to the east of Persia, and while going they took along with them the holy writings and important scrolls of the Old Testament. In those days, Israelites had become more sinful disobedient and idolatrons. Yet they were taught to be monotheistic people and worshippers of one God. All this they were taught in their exile. They also learned in exile to stick on to the scriptures that pointed out the promised “Golden Age”. In the book of Isaiah chapter 9 and 11 the prophet explained how that ruler will rule during that golden age. He will rule the kingdom with everlasting peace and to know more about that kingdom, let us look into the following lines – “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid and the calf and the young lion and the falling together and a little child shall lead them”. (Isaiah 14.6)

The Magi made Daniel their leader but he did not share the above said truths with them. The Magi were a Monotheistic group who had regular contact with the sixth century spiritual leader Zoroaster. They also believed in one God, whom he called “Ahura””Mazda”. We have to take it for granted that Daniel would have introduced to the Magi the one true God, and also taught them about the precious time. When that new king would come into this world. And in the book of Daniel 9.20 – 27), Some how a hint was given

about the time of the coming of the new king. This probable time continued for 500 years and it was handed down to their descendants till the exact time of Jesus Christ. And this time the prophecy was fulfilled only after 500 years.

After the birth of the real king of Jews the Magi were looking for this new born king. Then on one unforgettable night a “star” appeared in the sky. what is the impact of the star? It was according to Biblical history known as “Shekinah glory” of God; which first appeared to Israelites during their desert wanderings. When the Lords led the nation in a pillar of cloud, by day and a pillar of fire during night (Exodus 13.21). The Shekinah of God from the Hebrew phrase means “he caused to dwell” what signifies devine visit.

The star that was seen by the Magi was nothing but the Shekinah glory of God and it was made visible only to the Magi. Apart from that there was some devine prompting from the Lord; that made easy for the Magi to find out the new born king of Jews. When the Shekinah of God guided them, it seemed the contingent (the number of people) that left Persia to Israel (Bethlehem) was very huge. Let us keep those three kings aside for a while. Hearing the happy news the Magi party that travelled all the way, must be more than a year, and the people should have been in hundreds. Travelling such a long distance in those days was really very dangerous. They finally reached the destination and presented three most expensive gifts to Jesus. They bowed before Jesus who was about two years old when the Magi visited Him. How the readers could assess the correct age of Jesus at that time? King Herod asked the Magi when they had seen the star first. Basing on their reply, the king estimated the age and issued his satanic decree to kill all boys in Bethlehem who were two years and less. In addition to this we have another proof of His age, which can be found in the book of Matthew, where in Jesus was referred as a child but not as a babe.

The Magi while worshipping Jesus honoured Him, with three costly gifts. They were gold Frankincense and Myrth. According to history, the word Magi is associated with magic. Yet we should not think bad about those distinguished searchers. Added to that, they were a group of deeply religious men, who looked for the will of God and obeyed His command. Then with all their sincerity, they searched for the new born king. And after finding Him, they fell to their faces, to the ground to worship Him. Their true and humble worship, set an example to others after them. Though there was some controversy and misunderstanding about the Magi, history has correctly honoured them with what they deserved. They were among the first who saw the Messiah, and recognized Him and His duty, and the purpose from the beginning. If we look into their history, the Magi earned a most respective place in Christian history. What was exactly said about those sages, who lived more than 500 years ago, before the birth of Jesus is still true for us today.

## Testing of Faith With Fire

During the year 64 A.D, apostle Peter wrote his first “Epistle” probably while he was in Rome. But it is said in 1 Peter 5.13, the place of writing was Babylon because it was a symbolic name for Rome, which was frequently used by Christian writers to avoid troubles from the Roman authorities. Since Rome continued, false religious system which began in Babylon by king Nimrod Babylon became a most suitable pseudonym (Revelation 17.5). The epistle written by peter was addressed to believers in five provisions of Asia, Minor – Pontas, Galatia, Coppadolia, Asia and Bithyvia. All these provinces were located North and West of Israel, which were known as modern Turkey. (1 Peter 1.1)

Actually there is no authentic evidence regarding the visit of all these places by peter personally. But Apostle Paul, spent some time in Asia Minor in his ministry and Missionary journeys. Peter seemed to have encouraged the recipients of his epistle by informing them that he and his members were elected by God in His sovereignty. He had chosen them to be His blessed Christians. But the circumstances in which they lived did not permit them to say freely that they were the chosen people of God. They felt like strangers or exiled people of God, in a foreign land. It is further said, as exiled people they were undergoing horrible persecution because of their genuine faith toward Jesus Christ.

In spite of their strange way of life they were living with fear, expecting some untoward thing at any moment peter reminded the people, that they were chosen members of God as His own for some purpose in future. They were chosen by God Father (election), purchased by the son (redemption) and processed by the Holy – Spirit the sanctification. The Trium God (Father, Son and the Holy Spirit) had done great and wonderful things on behalf of them. So, if the people wished to live peacefully, they had to understand some important principles. Let us see what apostle peter expressed in the following lines. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. To an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (1 peter 1.3 – 5)

The word “blessed” literally means to be well spoken of a suitable Greek word, for blessed is used only in connection with God in the New Testament. It is really more suitable word for ordinary man and woman, to praise and honor, God. But it is concerned more blessing to God rather than first speaking well of God. When the word “curse” is used on any person it carries the meaning of “death and badness”. In the same way if the word

blessing is used on any person it amounts to the peaceful life and goodness. God also when He created Adam and Eve. He blessed them greatly He told them, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth." (Genesis 1.28). So, the main idea of God in using the word blessing on Adam and Eve. He whole – heartedly wished for their peaceful life and goodness. Apart from that God also wished them to procreate many Adams and Eves on the face of the earth. Again as we see in the Bible God blessed Noah also after the flood. He blessed him and said, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth" (Genesis 10.1) God destroyed the world with flood for the wickedness of the people at the time of Noah and saved his family only because Noah appeared righteous to Him. For his righteousness God not only saved him and his family but also abundantly blessed Noah.

Whenever God wanted to bless anyone, that blessing would be clubbed with peaceful life and goodness to the receiver. The father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is no doubt a loving God. He is the good God of whom all the believers must speak will of Him and love Him. As a loving God, He has begotten all of us again (rebirth) unto a living hope. This living hope or blessed hope that apostle Peter spoke about was nothing but the second coming of Christ. And at that time, people who died in the name of Jesus Christ, of all ages will be resurrected. Then the still living believers will be raptured. According to apostle Peter, all those people will meet Jesus in clouds. Apostle Paul also expressed the same opinion in the following lines –

For the Lord himself shall descend, from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall raise (be resurrected) first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up (raptured) together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and so shall we (those that are resurrected and those that are raptured) ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4.16 – 17) Paul pointed out the same idea to the church of Corinthians also. "Behold, I show you a mystery we shall not all sleep (die) but we shall all be changed (glorified). In a moment in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump or the trumpet shall signal and the dead shall be raised (resurrected) incorruptible and we (the living) shall be changed (raptured and glorified) (1 Corinthians 15.51 – 52)

Among the believers, there is wide spread belief that the blessed hope is related completely to the rapture of the church and those still live at the auspicious time of His second coming of the Lord, will be raptured, for participation in the blessed hope. This is a popular truth among the believers. This is a strange view for correct understanding of the scripture. The blessed is the embodiment of the fact that whatever may be the intensity of darkness or though the journey of our destination is very long, or whatever may be the troubles and turmoil's. One has to meet with all such things cannot hold the



believer not even death, can prevent him or her. The believer can never be stopped, under any circumstances from his or her final glorification and eternal presence with God.

So, the salient point in His second coming is all the dead will be resurrected. In such case all the mortal will become immortals. The corruptible will become incorruptible. The glorified bodies of the believers, will be reunited with their souls, which have been in unconscious stage in the presence of God since the time of their death as mortals physically. The believers who are still living will be raptured and glorified with immortality. Finally both the resurrected and the raptured will remain eternally with the Lord. According to Biblical history, the early Christian who denounced Christ were miserably swallowed by lions. Yet they did not lose the blessed hope. The so called reformers who denounced Christ and who were burnt alive at the stakes would not regard the blessed hope. But the faithful missionaries, who became martyrs in foreign lands, did not lose their blessed hope.

At the most the worst thing, the enemy of God like Satan or the Anti – Christ or even the world can do to the believers is killing him mortally. But Christ conquered death and raised from the grave by virtue of His resurrection. So, the blessed hope is “hope” not because there is any speculation clubbed with it, but because the realization of it is still in future. It is said the believers in Christ are more particular and interested in the coming of the Lord, rather than His resurrection and rapture. So to say the blessed hope includes the fact that the child of God is also a heir to an inheritance.

During the first century, the children used to inherit the property of their parents. In the same way the believers have the right to share the riches of their father God, like salvation and eternal life. Since, He has begotten us again (rebirth) we are the sons of God and so automatically we become heirs to His kingdom. Therefore, the believers should not feel as they are destitutes or beggars or anything about their future life. We have to feel proud of ourselves as we are rich enough beyond imagination in our eternal life. Peter wisely proposed three words to define the inheritance of the believers. They were translated from greek language incorruptible undefiled and unfading. These three words have prefix in front of them for the purpose of negation. So, the word, corruptible, with the negation prefix “a” becomes incorruptible. Then the word “defiled” with the negative prefix “a” becomes undefiled, and the third word, fading with the negative prefix “a” becomes unfading.

What apostle Peter inclined to say here was he wanted to contrast the heavenly inheritance of the believers with the wealth of this natural world. He wished to express emphatically regarding the inheritance of heaven as incorruptible. In contrast, the inheritance of this world is corruptible because

of the fall of Adam and Eve everything on earth became corrupted. The heavenly inheritance is undefiled, whereas on the consequences of humanity's committing sin continuously, everything on earth became defiled. The heavenly inheritance is unfading. But due to false laws on earth it is measurably fading. In conclusion, we can say the earth with all its wealth and prosperity winding down like a giant clock.

Peter stressed more on his saying about the heavenly inheritance which will not spoil nor will it tarnish nor will fade away prior to peter the Lord Jesus also expressed the same idea in the following lines, "Lay not up for yourselves, treasures upon earth where moth and dust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor dust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal" (Matthew 6.19 – 20). The word of God is crystal clear in this passage, whereas the riches of this world are purely temporary, whereas the riches of heaven are everlasting. Through these lines God is admonishing us to strive more for heavenly riches than earthly ones. So, heavenly riches are awaiting every believer. They have been set aside, and God is protecting them.

Peter also stated that the direct object of inheritance reserved in heaven is for you and for me. It is reserved for all of us and we are totally kept by the power of God. The word "kept" is military word, (term) which means guarding. So God is guarding all the believers Apostle Paul also expressed the same opinion in order to encourage philippians. He said, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep (guard or garrison) your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4.7). Since the word "kept" is used in Greek as present participle, grammatically the guarding of believers by God is said to be perpetual and ongoing reality. It will never be stopped.

The above said matter gives us a clear cut idea about the willingness of God to provide absolute security to His believers. It is stationed in the promised and in the infinite power of God Himself. According to peter, the inheritance is kept quite safe and secure and the heirs are also will guarded when the Lord comes for the second time. The inheritance which is kept safe and the heirs who are guarded properly well be united together forever and at that precious time, the believers can see Jesus face to face. It is really wonderful for the believers to contemplate more on their inheritance.

Peter wrote in this connection, where in ye greatly rejoice though now for a season, if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations. That the trail of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that pariseth, though it be tried with fire might be foured unto praise, honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, whom having not seen, ye love in whom though now ye see him not yet believing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable

and full of glory. “Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls” (1 Peter 1.6 – 9).

We can understand the wonderful saying of Peter, “Ye greatly rejoice” is nothing but a direct result of the great truth, he put before our eyes with sovereign power, God chose the believers as they possessed the hope of living. They had inherited through their faith and reserved in heaven, which will never spoil or tarnish or fade away. Why because God is taking care of it. So, they have every good reason to greatly rejoice themselves. The wonderful saying of Peter was undergoing a severe trial. Peter used the word “manifold” with some purposes as he was explaining the impact of temptations. They were different in kinds and many in number. Peter wished to explain to the believers, so that they would understand the purpose behind the trial. As they were the elected members of God, they would naturally become the heirs to the heavenly inheritance. If they were really the chosen people of God, then why should there be trials at the hands of ungodly men? For that genuine question Peter’s answer is,..... There are two main purposes of trials, the believers are destined to undergo. The first trial is to prove their perfection in their faith as gold used to be purified in fire. The second trial the believers have to go through is to prove and testify the genuineness of their faith. Here, what Peter wanted to say is clear. It is only through the process of trials one’s faith is justified and in the promises of God, is displayed. Since, the genuineness of the faithfulness of the believers is justified only through trials and testings the result of all this is that life would be in praise, honour and glory at the coming of Jesus Christ.

So far we have noticed in this matter –

- 1) Trials are conducted to purify faith.
- 2) Trials are used to demonstrate the genuineness of faith and
- 3) Faith is proved infinitely more precious than gold that perishes. (1 Peter 1.7)

Peter wholeheartedly praised the conspicuous evidence of the faith of believers and their love toward Christ, which is blended with inseparable joy. Peter was called the most faithful follower of Christ. He was with Him for three years. All the disciples treated Jesus as their Rabbi (master). Peter saw Jesus before His death and after resurrection. Then for whom he wrote all these things? His writings must be then for those people who had not seen Him and His raising from the dead. At this juncture, Peter must have recollected the words spoken by Jesus referring to Doubting Thomas, “Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen yet believed.” (John 20.29)

Some scholars defined “faith” by using different letters. “Those asking All I Trust Him”. Some other scholars explained it as “the resting of the soul in the suffering of evidence”. Faith is a genuine testimony to be put always in

the word of God. It is a well noted fact that faith carries with it a glorious reward always. So peter put this point in the following way, "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." (1 peter 1.9) we studied already that trials purify and prove faith. It is not strange to consider that it is not precious gold, which periseth in course of time. But faith will bring eternal salvation to all who believed in Jesus unfortunately, all the true believers at the time of peter, were scattered into different places in Asia Minor. The trials that are used for testing them for their faith brought them into the miserable situation and put them into severe griet. But in the later days they realized this suffering or trials would begin them glory. Peter again said, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory, by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect establish strength settle you" (1 peter 5.10). This is as a matter of fact, a brief information given by some of the prophets of the Old Testament as prophecy. These Old Testament prophets were inspired by God to write the scripture. They wrote the books in order to understand the grace of God, which would be proclaimed by the holy-spirit (the spirit of Christ) to the future generation.

The prophets also wrote something about the Messiah, regarding His suffering on the cross for the redemption of the sinners, but they could not understand the correct time between that "suffering" and the "glory". They could prophecise about the first coming of Christ, and the purpose of His suffering (for the sin of the world). They could write about His second coming also, which will bring glory, with the establishment of Messianic kingdom, and keep the world with new order.

Apostle peter pointed out here, that the Old Testament prophets looked for, "What or what manner of time, the spirit of Christ which was in them did simply (literally declare through successive generations) when it testified, beforehand, the suffering of Christ, and the glory that should follow." (1 peter 1.11). The Old prophets never imagined that 2000 years had to be elapsed between Christ first and second comings and also between His intense suffering and reaching the highest point of glory. The opinion of peter was that, as the Lord suffered much just for the sake of humanity. The believers must suffer for the sake of humanity, the believers also must suffer for the sake of righteousness. The old prophets never imagined this devine plan of salvation, the first coming of the Messiah, for suffering and the second coming to rule and to reach the penacle in grace and glory. All these things really amazed the old prophets and then they searched their writings to find out the truth but in vain. Even the angels tried to look into the matter. After thorough study of the matter, one point is conspicuous that is the Old Testament prophets and the angels could not understand all that during their life time. But today, we are in the age of church and the New Testament. We are actually in a better position to comprehend anything. During the Biblical

days men of the east used to wear long robes as their dress, whenever they were forced to run or on a point of physical exertion they would pull up their robes and tie them to their waists, so that they would not hinder their movements. "To give up the mind", means to think correctly, not to be hindered by right thinking to have mental toughness to discipline the mind.

Peter had in his mind the believers their blessed hope and the related truths that he shared with them. All the facts remained with them and disciplined their way of life. They were also admonished to be sober and with hope till the end. Apostle Paul also used the same expression, while he was writing to the Hebrews. The main purpose of his writings was to assure hope both Peter and Paul spoke, about was to be brought unto all believers at the revelation that is at the time of the second coming of Jesus Christ. It is not a surprise if we find some dramatic change in the life style of people who possess disciplined mind. Such people always remain and think soberly and hope for peaceful end.

Finally, Peter gave a warning to the believers, "As obedient children not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance (when they did not have a disciplined life and mind, a Biblical balance or a blessed hope" (1 Peter 1.14). The expression "not fashioning yourselves" can be found in the book of Romans 12 chapter, which is translated as, "And be not conformed" (Romans 12.2). In both the occasions, the central idea of this phrase is, "Be not shaped, or fashioned or molded by the world." This is no doubt a great advice of Paul to all believers. He did not want to allow the godless philosophy of this world system. Since, God is holy; he wanted all of us to live holy life. As we are the children of God, we must follow Him, and walk in His footprints. Then in what way we can remember our heavenly father. For this Peter gave a wonderful suggestion in the following passage. But as he which hath called you is holy. So be ye holy in all manner of conversation, Because it is written "Be ye holy, for I am holy."

Peter wanted all believers to possess the living hope, of the second coming of Jesus. Many believers underwent severe persecution at the time of apostle Peter, and scattered into different places, but they were purified and proved their faith. Our destiny is also the same to face some difficulties as we are living godly life in Christ. The Old Testament prophets also foretold about the grace of God and intense suffering before glory. Therefore, we have not only the advantages of the Old Testament prophecies but also the complete New Testament. Let us concentrate our attention on living hope of the second coming of Jesus and that is possible only for disciplined people. Keeping this great expectation in our mind, the trials and testings of our lives would refine us more and more each day and make us qualified to praise, honour and glorify the appearance of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1.7). So, the blessed hope of the believers is the second coming of Jesus Christ.

## What happens to us after we die

This is really a controversial topic for all of us because it is concerned to everybody's life in this world. Every one of us will become weak and desperate and even afraid of death the moment we hear about it. So, it is said the fear of death is more terrible than death itself. In such conditions, all of us naturally curious to know the secret of our life after death. Why people are scared of death? Why most people become desperate and hopeless the moment they hear of death? Because he does not remember he is mortal and made him like that. The secret is everything that is created by God has to perish one day or other. So, most of the people do not understand the purpose of life when they are alive. Above all, nobody knows when he is alive, what happens to his body and soul after his death.

This burning topic will plunge us into deep thinking and keep us beyond comprehension. When we are in this world, we try to build up and fulfill ourselves with all security, comfort, good relationship, money, values, dreams and desires. But all these material things will vanish away the moment we breath lost. This significant event that is death will remind us the naked truth "Man is mortal". So, this topic what happens to our body and soul after we die, has formulated some theories, with the hope we can understand them. These important theories will revolve always around the main topic. For this purpose we have to look into many cultures in the world and various types of explanations regarding this topic. For our satisfaction and understanding there are some salient points mentioned below. And these points may or may not make us understand the topic correctly.

As a matter of fact, this article may not give satisfactory answer regarding death or about the changes that come upon our body after death; but it provides a philosophical perspective on unexpected events. So let us go into the subject and see how far it can enlighten us about the topic. And also see how far it is necessary for anyone to go deep into the subject which no doubt controversial. Of course, man is intelligent enough to solve and settle things which are beyond his reach and discover new things Man with his own intellectual caliber may think it necessary to acquire more knowledge and may plan to set out his mission to find out the secret of death. I am repeating the question. What happens to us after we die we can see in man an unquenchable thirst to know more about the secret behind our death. Perhaps such persons must have come near to death experience with souls and that experience might have driven him to find out this abnormal thing. In this connection, there are some popular theories mentioned below.

**ABOUT HINDU BELIEF:** - The Hindus in India have strong belief in the theory of rebirth or transteguration of soul. Their faith is such that after the death of a man his body will perish and become dust. But his soul remains, and enters later in the body of another man or some animal based on the way of life he led before his death in this world. If a man did all good things maintained good character and loved others, the soul of such man would enter the body of another man who is going to take birth. If a person did all bad things, and lived as a wicked man, in the next life, his soul would enter the body of some animal. That is the belief in the Hinduism. And this process of the soul going from one body to another would continue till it is purified with noble acts and moral character. Then that soul will merge with God finally.

So, the burning topic here is the re incarnation or life after death; and the explanation of the concept of what happens to us after our death. According to the belief of Hindus, soul is more important than body. Their faith is that, the soul will emerge from God and enters into the body of a person and it is supposed to go back to God after his death. But this process will not continue in the case of some people due to some reasons. The soul must be pure and perfect to join itself with God. The purity of soul depends upon the character of a person. As a human being, a man will become the victim of many evil things in this world and so after his death, his soul will enter another living being but not merge with God. So, the process of the soul entering from one body to another will continue any number of times until that soul is purified by doing good things and become divine in its quality. For this purpose, the soul must undergo all the negative forces that come in the way of the life of a man. The soul of any body needs to develop purity of thoughts, sacrifice and unconditional love toward other, human beings. Love, purity and forgiveness are the indications of the divine nature of the soul.

It is only when the soul becomes pure, the true sense of the word, it can be one with God. It is only for this quest and change the soul passes from one body to another with the confidence of becoming a better and refined one to reach God. In Hinduism, the word “karma” plays important role in the birth and life of any person. Whatever happens in one’s life whether good or bad and every step of one’s life based on his or her karma. So, the Hindus have strong belief in their “karma”. If a person becomes an evil one or meet with an accident, people say it is his karma. To understand this more clearly, we can say, “what we sow we reap”, that is, if we always do good things, love others, and help others, in times of needs then we become pure and perfect and our soul will go nearer to our eternity.

So, the cycle of life will continue till the soul is purified and merged with God. It is only through this process the final mission of a soul will be

fulfilled and the true meaning of death is understood and achieved. Hinduism is a major religion in India. The other religions like Buddhism, Jainism and Sikkism are the off springs of Hinduism. We can also say it is a religion of fanaticism with so many gods and goddesses. That is the reason why, Hinduism could not flourish or spread into the other countries like Buddhism.

**CHRISTIAN BELIEF:** - There are a good number of theories in Christianity also because there are several streams of schools of thoughts as far as Christian world is concerned. Actually, there were only two sets among Christians. They were Catholics and protestants. But later these protestants were divided into many sets called Lutheran, Baptist, Pentecost, Methodist, church of South India Canadian, Baptist Mission, American Baptist Mission, church of Christ, Seventh Day Adventists etc, In the Roman Catholic Church, the service conditions or Moss are quite different from other denominations. According to catholic belief, if a person dies, the fate of that soul shall be 3 possible outcomes. That is, if the soul of a person is close to God by virtue of his or her good conduct or behavior then the soul will be sent to heaven directly or if a person dies and his soul is imperfect, corrupt and involved in immoral activities, his soul will be sent to hell. The soul remains in hell permanently and put to all methods of torture.

Apart from heaven and hell Catholics have belief in the existence of “purgatory”. Their faith is that the souls of non – believers and other heathens will be sent to this purgatory. The souls will remain there till they are purified and cleaned. Then they too will be sent to heaven. In order to purify the soul various methods of torture will be followed in purgatory; and sometimes the method id unbearable which they never experienced in their life time. Sometimes this kind of torture is necessary for the purification of the soul. The belief of the Protestants is that, if a person follows the Ten Commandments loving others and helping others in times of need, and possess. The noble quality of forgiveness then such soul will go to eternity, with the second coming of Jesus Christ. And those people who do not know about Jesus will be judged and they will go to hell or to heaven. With this information, we can conclude that all denominations formed out of protestants have no belief in the existence of purgatory.

**JEWISH BELIEF:-** According to Judaism, Jews are the believers in one God. It is called Monotheism. The teachers also used to tell the children “O Israel, our Lord is God, our God is one”. Apart from “Pentateuch” and “Torah” the Jews had another sacred book called “Talmud” which contained all details of their lives. In addition to all this, to know more about their religious way of life, under what conditions one’s soul will go either to heaven or hell and for full details, one must look into the existence of “Naranchi” which is the main source of the spirituality as it provides all details of the spiritual account of a Jew. The Jews strongly believe that after life all the spiritual essence of a



particular person, will not leave and go back to his or her body as soon as the ritual formalities are done. It is said in, "Talmud" that after the death of a person, the body would be kept in a room with the hope, the spirit would come again and reenter the body. They would wait with that hope for three days; If nothing happened then they used to apply perfumes and scents before the body was decomposed and put it in the grave for 18 to 24 days. Then they would bring back the bones of that body and keep them in the house in a bone box.

When a person dies, he is judged whether he is spiritually good or not. The judgement regarding his spiritual involvement is based on the good things, he must have alone, clubbed with perfect character, he possessed before his death. Possessing the above said qualities either positively or negatively is called "Naranchi". Such a person has no problem to leave his mortal body to perish, as his soul will have eternity with God. But a person who has no belief in God or no good character when he was alive, his "Naranchi" will consider it very difficult to break his association with his body. He has to go through a painful process of having to break those physical ties. Once those physical ties are broken with this material world, the spirit or the spiritual soul or the Naranchi will be brought before the heavenly court and a judgement is given regarding his fate in future.

If the soul is judged good it will be taken for granted the man who possessed this kind of soul in this material world, should have perfect character and then that soul is taken to the realm of souls which the Naranchi will continue to grow spiritually. But in Judaism, the concept of hell or the existence of it is not believed where as they trust in the existence of purgatory. The bad soul that has done evil things in this world, will be sent to purgatory. The Jews also believe that there are certain situations in which the soul has to come back to this earth. For instance in the case of some souls the earthly problems remain incomplete or they must have done something wrong and wish to correct it somehow or other. And sometimes by oversight, the good soul returns to the earth, to guide others. So, the fundamental principle of Judaism is that the Jews believed only in the existence of heaven and purgatory and not hell. According to Biblical history Abraham was the Father of Judaism. He was also called the Father of three Monotheistic religions namely. Judaism Christianity and Islam, the two religions, Christianity and Islam are the children of Judaism.

MUSLIM BELIEF : - As mentioned in the Bible both the Jews and Muslims were the children of one Father. That is the patriarch Abraham. Muslims were the children of Abraham's first son Ishmael and Jews of the children of the second son Isaac. But it is really unfortunate today as they are living as dead enemies in the world. The name of the God of Muslims is "Allah". They used to worship their Allah by saying "Allah who Akbar" which means "God

is great". Regarding their faith, there are some similarities between Jews and Muslims. The name of their sacred book is "Koran". According to their religion the death of a person leads to two types of fate of the soul. Once a person dies, and put the body in the grave some lines from the koran will be recited for the peaceful departure of the soul.

Then if that person has done anything good in his lifetime, all those good things and his good character will work as an angel of good deeds. This particular angel will maintain a record regarding the good and bad of a particular person; which is necessary to decide upon the position of the soul of that person who died recently. If a person does all good things, before his death he will be judged by the number of positive characteristics. The positive deeds are whether one is true and loyal toward Allah and prayed regularly. In the same way all the bad qualities of a person will be taken into consideration. Then the soul of evil man will remain with the dead body in the grave until the angel of death comes down with judgement, whether the soul can be sent to heaven or hell.

The judgment of the angel of death is completely based on the accumulation of good and bad deeds of a person. By looking into the record evidence the souls of persons will be sent either to heaven or hell. As Muslims believed, there are 7 levels or stages of heaven. In such case, if the soul is purer and more perfect, the place of soul is higher. Regarding hell, there are several forms of torture to work on the soul. The Muslims believe apart from heaven and hell there is another place, meant for those souls who committed suicide. Instead of natural death, if a person takes away his own life due to some reason, it is considered to be most disrespect to their God Allah, and it is also taking away the gift of God. (gift of life) given to all mankind.

So, far we could know something about different cultures, and the people of different faith and also the details of souls after death. We also understand the position of soul after death, and it depends upon the way of life that a person lived before his death. If he has been a good person throughout his life, the good things will make him happy after his death. The truth is that, the fear of the mystery or what happens to the soul of anyone after his death can be understood correctly only after he dies and what is said must be true. A white light will appear at the end of a tunnel, and the soul will look down correctly to see its one final time, before it continues its journey after death. But who can tell the soul what culture it belongs to?

### **IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTMAS TREE**

For Christians, there are only two important festivals in the year. They are Christmas on the eve of the birth of Jesus Christ, on December 25th, and "Easter" in connection with the death and resurrection of Jesus, for Christians the Christmas used to keep a tree some original and some artificial with full

decoration on that day. Here, we have to understand the story of Christmas tree and the importance of decoration items on the tree. It is really an age old tradition which has been observed by Christians for many centuries. Christmas festival is about the birth of Christ, but not about Christmas tree. Jesus Christ, the son of God, travelled from heaven to earth, to be born as the son of man to redeem the sinners in this world. We must observe Christmas as the birth day of Jesus, who came to this world, to give mankind the gift of eternal life.

We can see everywhere in the month of December, all the houses of Christians with trees decorated with multi colours, to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ, the son of God. When Christmas season comes nearer, artificial or real coniferous evergreen trees will be exhibited in the houses and decorated with all kinds of Christmas tree ornaments and lights. In our life, we have witnessed many Christmas festivals and decorated many Christmas trees. One thing, we have to recollect in this context. Let us try to know the purpose and decoration of Christmas tree, with various colours. Actually, there is some controversy about the Christmas tree whether it was originated in pagan belief or not. As Christians whenever this kind of problems arise in our minds we turn the pages in the Bible for clarification and confirmation. So, what does the Bible say about Christmas and Christmas tree?

As far as we remember, there is no mention of these two in the Bible. And also there is no mention anywhere whether the disciples or churches, celebrated Christmas tree during the time of Jesus Christ. Same is the case of Easter festival after resurrection. It is finally understood that Christmas is not Biblical. And also there are some evidences to confirm that Christ was not born during the month of December especially on 25th. However, some scholars expressed their view point and said that some people wanted some day for the celebration of the birth of Jesus and they preferred 25th December and finally that date has been continued. Then people (the believers) were not only happy for the coming of Christ into this world, to save them from their sin, but also he came to Evangelize the word of God. Christmas time is an auspicious occasion for Gentiles to convert themselves into Christianity. The non – Christians would feel very happy to know more about the festival and decorations and meaning all those decorative things.

It is the most appropriate time to share and understand, what Christianity is all about. It is also the correct time to share. what the gospels teach to those around. All believers naturally feel happy in the Christmas programme distribution of tracts, and Bibles on that occasion. Now, we have another doubt when the Christmas is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible how the tradition of keeping Christmas tree came into existence. If we go back to the history, trees were commonly worshipped by both Egyptians and Romans. Because the pagans worshipped trees in ancient times should we

not feel guilty of keeping the same tree with decoration in our houses and churches on Christmas occasion?

And also, are we not acting like heathens by putting the tree with multi colours in our houses? As we find in the history, people for centuries have idolized many things in nature for worship people worshipped man made idols, jobs, fame, status, beauty, houses, cars and many other things. In India people worship even snakes apart from this. If some people idolized money that does not mean, the true believers, do not need money. Every human being whether religious or non – religions are types of people need money for their living. Money is everything in the life of man, for food, to build a house, a car, and so on.

It is really good of anyone who acquires more money, or possess a costly car or a beautiful house. But it is not wise to idolize material things, and worship and honour more than Jesus Christ, the God of eternity. In this context, let us look into what Jesus said in Matthew 15.11 “Not what goes into the mouth, this defiles a man but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man” we can understand from this example, what lies within the heart, is more important than following or not following the traditions. If you are doing anything good, just to show it to people, that you are holy, superior and God fearing, it is nothing but hypocrisy. Likewise, Christmas does not mean only trees decorations, feasts, new clothes, exchange of gifts etc.

Our heart and mind must be always Christ oriented, not only at the time of festival or season. Added to that, during Christmas time we must not allow Christmas trees and other festivities, to rob our precious time. It is the pagans who used to worship trees. But as Christians, we don't worship them. We have to use it only for the purpose of decoration on that particular day. Moreover, Christmas tree in our houses attract non – Christians, because of its uniqueness and quite different to their minds eye. As long as focus does not divert from Christ, to Christmas preparations and the tree our life can be absolutely fine and enjoy ourselves.

Is there any redeemed meaning for the Christmas tree? Either literally, or Biblically, this Christmas tree has no importance. It is redeemed only as a decorative piece on the eve of Christmas festival. Sometimes, some non – believers, or even heathens, may come to you, and ask you about the significance of the Christmas tree. We can come to a conclusion that Christmas tree does not have any Biblical significance, but only as a parable to be used to share the gospel. So, Christmas tree is evergreen coniferous tree, which stands for the ever burning fire of life. And also, this evergreen attributes importance to man's everlasting hope in Christ which has been given to mankind by his sacrifice, death and resurrection. The triangular shape of the tree indicates the holy Trinity, Father, son and the holy-spirit.

Then star is another decorative piece on Christmas occasion. God made a promise to all humanity that He would send a saviour to protect all from the sin and free them. So the star we put on that day, represents the fulfillment of God's promise; He made this promise long time ago, through the prophets. The tree is also a symbol of shining of mankind. This star happened to shine in Bethlehem to show the way to three wise man called Magi. The candles on the tree represent Christ who died on the cross to provide salvation to humanity. He came as light, into this world and made it dark and doomed. But the main purpose of His coming was to bind up the broken hearts and also to free those who are in bondage.

The purpose of candys, candy cane: – It represents crook (may be stick) which helps the shepherd to gather his lost and strayed sheep. As echoed in the Bible our heavenly Father is our shepherd; who amazingly waits for His sheep to come back to Him safely. If this candy cane is turned upside down; it becomes the letter "J" in Jesus. The red and white sugar colouring stands for the blood of Jesus and purity. The representation of blood and purity put together makes us holy, before the eyes of the Father.

What is the purpose of wreaths? The wreaths of Christmas we keep in the houses and the other places, represent the everlasting love of the Father. These wreaths show how God's mercies are new every morning. They also indicate how true love has no beginning nor ending, but permanent. The Christmas wreaths always remind us how much we are privileged, to have a Father whose love is never ending and unconditional. Regarding Christmas gifts hanging on the tree, these gifts remind us, how we have received the greatest gifts on earth, that represent the eternal life that Jesus provided us with His blood. The other gift God provided is peaceful living on earth.

The colours of red and green on the tree stands for fire of the spirit and green, nature and one's life on earth. Red clubbed with green symbolizes the holy spirits union with nature, to be incarnation of earth and save the world. Then keeping the Christmas tree in the houses depends upon one's interest. It is not a must for every believer. Actually it looks very beautiful, after decoration. If we wish anything good to please others, God will certainly give us intelligence on such things successfully. We have to look at with sympathy of those believers who are not in a position to keep the tree in their houses due to some reason, because God wants us to love even the enemy. We hear many stories, and indifferences among Christians in the churches and other meetings. We must forget all such things and love everyone as children of God and possessing the quality of forgiving others is the most requisite qualification of every Christian. So, Christmas time is important, because it remind us that God sent His only begotten son to the earth to be born as the son of man.

So, He travelled all the way from heaven to earth to fulfil the whole plan of His father. God selected “Melchizedec” among many men to fulfil His plans. In the same way God selected Mary among many women for the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. We should not forget the great price He paid to save us. We should not remain only as a shadow of Christmas tree. In nutshell, Christmas is all about Jesus Christ and not about trees, lights, gifts and feasts. All the believers with their own resources must celebrate the festival with all pomp and glory, because on one hand we can enjoy the pleasure of it, on the other. We can honour and glorify the birth of Christ, as He was born to die for our salvation. May God bless us all.

### **PAGANISM**

Paganism can be described as the earliest faith of the people. It is older than Judaism. Paganism means worshipping man made idols and certain things in nature, including heavenly bodies with the sun and the Moon. For this we have the reference of king Nimrod in the Bible who tried to build the Tower of Babel to worship the Sun God. The father of Abraham was the maker of idols and used to sell them for their livelihood. And king Nimrod was the main buyer of the idols of Terah Abraham’s Father. So, let us try to know more about the ins and out of this paganism. It has been a broad concept, even some research scholars developed more interest on this subject and the symbols the idol worshipper used in their faith.

Some of the Bible readers must have read, the popular book, “The Da Vinci Code” of the last symbol of Angels and Demons. It is really a wonderful book and the readers must have found more interest and loved it. Dan Brown who penned it must have taken more pains in depicting the characters. It is said Millions of copies of this book were sold in the market. “The word pagan” or “paganism” is derived from Latin term pagans which means “Country & dwellers”. I think there is no other word as a reference for this. But some commentators defined paganism as an involvement of anybody in any religious practice which is no way concerned to Jews or Muslims or Christians. In the same way, the religious practices of those three faiths have nothing to do with the practice of pagans. Some other scholars pointed out that paganism is a kind of religion, which is outside Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, etc. And group of scholars defined paganism as a kind of idol worship without religion.

But the historians defined paganism as the authentic religion of the ancient Greeks and Romans (Greece and Rome) and the surrounding places. The pagan believers are polytheistic, which means they worship more gods and goddesses. During the Middle Ages, Christianity became more powerful and attracted many. So, the people who did not accept Christianity were called pagans. There was time these pagans worshipped even Mother Nature

as a deity. They thought that, everything like air, fire, water, earth etc. were like gods and goddesses to them. That is called polytheism or religion of many gods and goddesses.

As time passes, civilization increased and along with that, the number of gods and goddesses also increased. The old gods and goddesses were modified, and in the life of the pagans all these gods and goddesses have been playing a very important role. Now – a – days some pagans worship only one God, and they called the worshippers of more than one God or goddess as atheistic. There are symbols of common paganism or Neo – paganism. These symbols used not only to perform magic but also, to comment on a deeper level of individual life. Paganism is a 5 pointed star with a circle and one of the most common Neo – paganism symbols. It represents four elements – air, fire, water, earth and along with it the spirit. The great Mathematician Pythagoras said the numbers was the sum of the male element 3 and female element 2. Therefore, the pentagram was the symbolic union of the male and female or masculine or feminine. The overlapping of the pentacle indicated that each part is inter connected with one another. Then the circle that surrounds the star represents unity, self and wholeness.

ANKH: - This is called another Neo – paganism symbol. It is an ancient Egyptian symbol, which represents eternal life. It is believed that this symbol has been taken from a small strap. Like other symbols this also represents gods and goddesses. This symbol contains three elements with a circle, representing the goddesses. The vertical line symbolizes God and the horizontal bar represents the “Scroll of knowledge”. And so these three elements makes the “ankh”.

TRIPLE MOON: - This is the goddess representing the maiden the mother and the crone. They are the waxing, full and waning Moon. This symbol is associated with feminine energy, mystery and psychic abilities. We find this symbol mainly on the crowns of high priestesses.

Hexagram: - It is a six pointed star. This star marks unity and balance. It mainly focuses balance between man and the divine.

Eye of the Horus: - This symbol is really putting us in confusion; regarding the correct eye of Horus. Generally, the left eye represents the Moon and the right eye the Sun. It is believed that Horus lost his left eye while he was fighting with his brother in connection with the murder of his father Osiris. The main purpose of paganism is to ward off any kind of evil spirit.

The inverted pentacle: - This paganism symbol is associated with Satanism. The pentacle is generally shown with the goat's head. It is believed that the Jews used to send the goats into the forest by keeping something on their heads as if it is a bundle of their sins or evil things.

Wheel of Hecate: - This is an ancient Greek symbol. It is an emblem of Moon goddess Diana Lucifer. According to Greek history, those who practice the Hellenic Recon or the Dianic traditions of Wicca use these symbol. So far we have seen some of the symbols of Greece and Rome.

There are some Germanic symbols also.

Iron cross: - This Iron cross symbol is also known as the “EisernasKreuz” and it was first adopted in Prussia. During the First World War, this symbol appeared for the first time, on the fighter planes of Germans. Later, it was adopted as the facists symbol in other countries like France and Portugal.

Peace symbol: - The broken upside down cross is known as Germanic paganism peace symbol. This mark denotes different things at different times. Some Bible scholars called it “Nerois Cross”. This upside down cross sign is linked to the most cruel and notorious Roman emperor, who killed many Christians by using different methods. This may be a reference to emperor Nero.

After sometime, this peace symbol was seen as an old “Norse Rune” by the Vikings. Then after second world war, this symbol was found engraved on the tombs of stones of “Adolf Hitler’s SS” troops and it was labelled as “The Dead Man’s Rune”. This Germanic paganism symbol was again revived by the hippies of the 60’s. They protested against the nuclear weapons, the western culture and Christian values. And after sometime, it became worldwide symbol for global peace, and earth centered unity.

Swastika: - This is also Germanic. It speaks about the four winds and their corresponding spirits. There will be a small cross in the center of the Swastika, which emphasizes the journey of the heaven and the earth and the perfect human being.

Celtic symbol: - The Triskelion – This is a Greek word which means “three legged”. This Celtic paganism represents man’s completion and progress.

Tri – quetra: - This is a Latin word, which means three cornered. It is a holy symbol, and it has various shades of meaning. It consists of number 3 which is sacred and also it contains three elements of nature, land, sea and sky. During early Christian period, this holy symbol was considered the holy Trinity.

## **EPIPHANY**

Epiphany means presentation of Jesus Christ, to the Magi (three wise men) on the 12 day of His birth. But this occasion is not important to most of the Christians like Christmas and Easter. And majority of Christians heard of the twelve days of Christmas and the impact behind them. Probably the song of Santa Claus at that time must be a reference to the birth of Jesus Christ’s twelve days and Epiphany. With the presentation of Jesus to the Magi on that twelfth day, Christians used to celebrate the Epiphany with massive pageants



and feasts. It falls on 6th of January, for majority of Christians. But Roman Catholics celebrate this only on Sunday, between 6th and 8th prior to mass, in the church, there will be a procession, then gifts are presented like Magi, gold, Frankincense and Myrth, before communion and finally pageants by children.

There are three types of symbols of references like Magi and their three gifts. The five pointed star signifies their celestial Navigator. Christians bless their homes traditionally on the day of Epiphany. This custom actually began during Middle Ages. At that time, the priest used to go from door to door and bless the families. Modern blessings are done by the families themselves, with incense, holy water and singing of hymn by the whole family. The blessings will be culminated with a writing on the door, "Anno Domine" with a piece of chalk and the year of the Lord CMB. This refers to the Magi, Casper, Melchior and Balthesar. This CMB also stands for "Christus, Mansionem, Benedicat". This is Latin saying for "Bless this house".

As Christmas festival does not complete without feasts, Epiphany celebration also incomplete without family parties, or children focused events or adults dinners. This Epiphany signifies the start of carnival in New Orleans and the king cake rules the day. This celebration is different in rocky mountain regions. They toss only fruit cake. So, it is the proposal of some believers to start our own Epiphany custom in our families. Let us try to observe at least some of the items that are mentioned above. In this connection, let us remember one thing. Jesus provided love and joy to the entire humanity. The same thing, the Magi also experienced by coming from such a long distance. We must try to enjoy the emotions of the day but not only solemn devotion. God wants all of us to feel joy, of love which is His gift to us. Let us be thankful to God, for giving another happy occasion for the celebration of Epiphany.

In spite of all the information about Epiphany so far, there is some controversy, regarding the date of the visiting of the Magi, the birth place of Jesus. I happened to read some books of historical background of the Bible I found in one of the books, the Magi were the descendants of priesthood families. They belonged to Persia. They used to spend their lives like wandering tribals. They were well versed in astronomy. As Persia is very far from Bethlehem, they took more than one year to reach the place in their roten wandering and came to the birth place of Jesus with the guidance of the light of star (Shekinah). It seems there is a grain of truth in the time, because when they met King Herod, they told him, when they started. Basing on the date and time of their journey the king calculated and ordered for killing of the boys in Bethlehem who were two years and less. The Magi had full knowledge of astronomy and could foretell future events also.

## SOME BIBLE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is the Bible?  
Bible is the inspired word of God. It is His revelation to all people about Himself and His plan of salvation.
2. What is the meaning of 'testament'?  
A 'testament' is a covenant (contract or agreement).
3. How many people have been inspired by God to write the Bible?  
About 40 people.
4. How many years different people took to write the Bible?  
About 1600 years.
5. What does Gospel mean?  
Good News.
6. What is the main subject of the four Gospels?  
The life and teachings, death and resurrection of Christ.
7. Who wrote more books in the Bible?  
Apostle Paul.
8. Which book of the Bible tells about the beginning of the church?  
The book of Acts.
9. Name the New Testament book that composed entirely the prophecies of future?  
The book of Revelation.
10. What is the meaning of epistle?  
A letter sent by an apostle.
11. Which is the largest book in the Bible?  
The book of Psalms.
12. How are people different from animals?  
God created people in his own image (Genesis 1:27)
13. How did people rebel against God after flood?  
By building the Tower of Babel to reach heaven (Genesis 11:4) and also to worship the sun god.
14. Why was it wrong for Lot to live in Sodom?  
Because the men of Sodom were very wicked sinners.
15. Who was Melchizedek?  
He was a shepherd boy. God first anointed him as high priest. Later he became the king of Salem, which is later known as Jerusalem. He is also called the king of righteousness.

16. By what miracle did Israel leave the land of Egypt?  
By the miracle of the partition of the Red Sea.
17. In which book can we find the ten commandments?  
In the book of Exodus, chapter 20.
18. What did Israel build to worship God in wilderness?  
The Tabernacle or the mobile temple.
19. What must have been the main purpose of Israel's sacrifices and offerings?  
To make atonement for their sins (Leviticus 5: 1-6).
20. How did God lead Israelites in wilderness?  
With the appearance of cloud by day and as a pillar of fire during the night (Numbers 9 : 15-23).
21. Why were the 12 spies sent by Moses to Canaan?  
To find out what type of land it was and to know what kind of people were living there (Numbers 13 : 16 -20)
22. How did Moses disobey God at the place of Meribah?  
God told Moses to speak with a rock for water but he struck hard at the rock with his rod (Numbers 20 : 7 -13).
23. From which mountain Moses could see the promised land?  
Mount Nebo
24. Who were the two men that left Egypt and reached Canaan?  
Joshua and Caleb.
25. By what miracle did the children of Israel enter the promised land?  
God stopped the flow of Jordan river when it was in flood.
26. How many times did Israelites march around the walls of Jerico ?  
13 times – one on each day of 6 days and 7 times on the seventh day (Joshua 6:3-4?).
27. What miracle was seen when Joshua fought at Gibeon?  
The sun and the moon stopped their movement and stood still.
28. Who was the baby boy that heard the voice of God speaking to him during night time?  
It was Samuel (1 Samuel 3 : 2-20).
29. Who was called stronger judge than all other judges?  
It was Samson.
30. What made the Israelites to prefer a king instead of a judge?  
Because they wanted to be like other nations.
31. Why did God remove Saul as king of Israel?  
For disobeying the command of God.

32. What happened to the kingdom of Solomon after his death?  
It was divided into two as the Southern kingdom of Judah with two tribes and Northern kingdom of Israel with 10 tribes.
33. Why did Elijah ask God to consume the sacrifice with fire on the mount of Carmel?  
To make heathens understand that Israel God is the only true God and there is no other.
34. Who were the wicked king and queen during the time of Elijah?  
They were Ahab and Jezebel (1 Kings 21 : 4-5).
35. Who was the Syrian officer healed of leprosy by taking bath in Jordan river at Elisha's command?  
Naaman (2 Kings 5:10 -14).
36. To whom God gave the sign of the sun moving backward to show him that he was healed?  
Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:8-10).
37. Who was the Jewish woman that became the wife of the king of Persia?  
Esther (Esther 2: 16,17)
38. Who was the man that lost all his possessions and health still remained loyal to God?  
Job (Job 1: 7-22).
39. Who was called the weeping prophet?  
Jeremiah.
40. What did Micah say about the birth of Messiah?  
The Messiah would be born at Bethlehem.
41. Who were the first two people that worshipped baby Jesus?  
Shepherds and three wise men.
42. How old was Jesus when he first started public meetings?  
About 30 years old.
43. Who was a tax collector among the disciples?  
Matthew (Matthew 10:3). Who was known as Levi.
44. Who were the first 4 apostles Jesus called to follow Him?  
Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Matthew 4: 18-22).
45. What do we call the first statement of the sermon on the mount which all begin with the word blessing?  
Beatitudes (Matthew 5: 2-11).
46. What revelation of himself did Jesus give to Peter, James, and John on a high mountain?

Jesus was transfigured (Showed his glory) and talked with Moses and Elijah (Matthew 17 : 1-8).

47. Who were the three Jesus' very closed disciples?  
They were Peter, James and John (Matthew 17: 1).
48. What does the word "Golgotha" mean?  
Place of the skull (Matthew 27:33).
49. When Jesus was crucified and what happened in nature?  
The sun became dark for three hours and there was an earthquake (Matthew 27 :40-51).
50. What gift was given to church on the day of Pentecost?  
The gift of the Holy Spirit(Acts 2:1-4).
51. Who saw Jesus first after resurrection?  
Mary Magdalene (John 20:1-18).
52. How could the women enter the tomb of Jesus?  
An angel had rolled way the stone of entrance.
53. How many people were there waited in the upper room to receive the Holy Spirit?  
About 120 people.
54. How many people were saved on the day of Pentecost by Peter's sermon?  
About 3000 people.
55. What was the sin committed by Ananias and Sapphire?  
They lied with the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3).
56. Why did God give the law?  
To show all people what sin is(Romans 3:20).
57. Why should we wear all the armour of God?  
In order to resist the attack of the devil (Ephesians 6:14).
58. The breast plate of Christian armour is?  
Righteousness (Ephesians 6:14).
59. What is the spirits sword?  
The Word of God.
60. Why should we love God?  
Because he loved us first (1 John 4:19).
61. What happened to John in the land of Patmos?  
God showed him what was going to happen in the last days (Revelation 4:1).
62. Who is an apostle?  
An apostle is a special messenger sent by God.

63. What is faith?  
Faith is belief and complete trust in God.
64. What is called sin?  
When we refuse to do God's will as revealed by His Word and His Spirit (1 John 3:4).
65. What is meant by redemption?  
Redemption is the price Jesus paid for our salvation.
66. What is death?  
Death is the separation of the body and soul (Luke 12:20).
67. Who is called prophet?  
A prophet is a person whom God has chosen to speak for Him in a special way with the power of the Holy Spirit (Judges 4:4).
68. Who are called angels?  
Angels are spiritual beings created by God (Hebrews 1:14).
69. What does prayer mean?  
Prayer means talking to God.
70. What does repentance mean?  
A changed mind, heart and direction.
71. What is the meaning of justification?  
The moment we accept Jesus as our savior God will also accept us as if we had not sinned (Romans 5: 1)
72. How did God give us the Bible?  
The Holy Spirit inspired the Holy men giving them both truth and words to write (2 Peter 1:21).
73. How long does the Bible survive?  
Heaven and earth may pass away but my word will never pass way (Matthew 24:35).
74. What chapter in the Bible is called "Love chapter"?  
1 Corinthians 13 chapter.
75. Who are called first four great prophets?  
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.
76. What is a parable?  
It is a story about familiar things which helps us understand the truth behind it.
77. What are the four important divisions of the Old testament?  
They are law, history, poetry, and prophecy.
78. Which are the two books that tell about Jews?

After they returned from the captivity of Babylon, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah revealed about them.

79. What according to the Bible is the beginning of wisdom?  
The fear of the Lord (In respect).
80. What kind of worship does God like?  
God wants us to worship Him in spirit and in truth.
81. What are the titles of Jesus of divinity and of humanity?  
Divine son of God and as human son.
82. How many of the Old testament prophecies were fulfilled by Jesus in His lifetime?  
About 300 prophecies.
83. What was the first promise of God to the savior?  
God told the serpent that one of Eve's descendants would defeat him (Genesis 3:15).
84. What was the promise God made to Abraham?  
God promised to Abraham that through his seed (descendants) all the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:3).
85. What is the doctrine of incarnation of Jesus?  
God, the son, became flesh and lived among us.
86. What is the importance of the doctrine of Jesus' virgin birth?  
Jesus did not have an earthly father but he had supernatural birth. Jesus was both fully God and fully human (Matthew 1: 20).
87. Why did God instruct to call Mary's son Jesus?  
By his natural birth Jesus could save his people from their sins (Matthew 1: 21).
88. What is the meaning of Jesus?  
The Lord is our savior (Matthew 1: 21).
89. What is the meaning of Christ?  
The anointed one of God (Acts 4:26).
90. What is the Hebrew word for the great word Christ?  
Messiah (John 1:41).
91. What was proved by Jesus' resurrection?  
He proved Himself the son of God Savior and Lord (Romans 12:4).
92. What were the duties of the Old Testament priests?  
To intercede with God for the people and offer sacrifices to atone for their sins (Hebrews 5:1).
93. What is the definition of "sin" according to 1 John?

According to John sin is disobedience (Transgression) to God's command.

94. What advice did Paul give to Christians regarding their behavior towards others?  
Christians must live in harmony with others. They should not feel proud of themselves. They must associate themselves with the people of low positions. They should not be conceited (Romans 12:16).
95. What is meant by vicarious atonement?  
Jesus Christ bore the punishment for our sins. As he died on the cross and if we accept him as our savior we do not get any punishment from God (1Peter 2: 24).
96. What is the meaning of intercession?  
To pray to God for someone else (1 Timothy 2: 1).
97. Who will intercede for Christians?  
The Holy Spirit and Jesus (Romans 8: 26).
98. What are the three main sources of temptation?  
Satan, the world and our own evil desires (Matthew 4:1).
99. Whom does the Holy Spirit glorify?  
Jesus Christ.
100. When did first God baptiz the believers in the Holy Spirit?  
On the day of Pentecost.

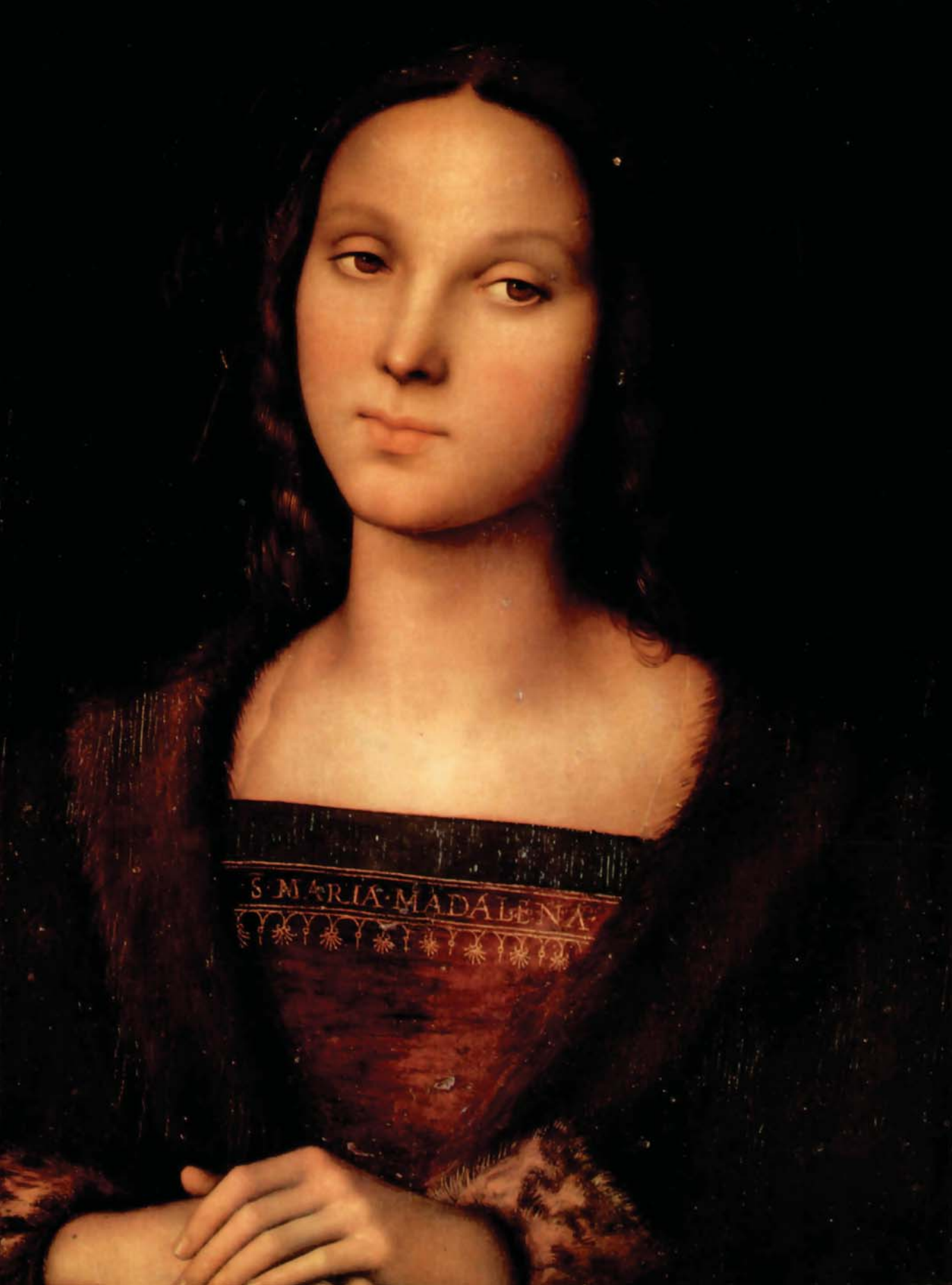
### **SOME MORE EVENTS OF THE BIBLE**

1. Apostle Paul pointed out that three things would make up God's Kingdom they are – righteousness peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).
2. Jesus is the foundation and head of the Church.
3. The main purposes of Baptism in the Holy Spirit are – It helps us to know about Jesus Christ better. It helps to understand God's word. It gives us power to witness.
4. According to scripture Abraham was the first man who paid tithes from his income. He paid that to the first high priest Melchezidic who was also called the king of Salem.
5. The two important ordinances of the church are water baptism and communion.
6. The baptism symbolizes two things – the death of old sinful nature and a new life in Christ.
7. The millennium is a future period of one thousand years when Jesus Christ will rule over the earth (Revelation 20:1-3).



8. Those people who accepted Jesus Christ as their savior and whose names are written in the book of lamb will have eternal life in heaven.
9. We do not find five things in heaven – they are tears (crying), death, sorrow, pain and sin (Revelation 21: 4-27).
10. The devil or satan was originally an arch angel created by God in heaven. His name was Lucifer. God happened to punish him because he tried to make himself greater than God (Isaiah 14: 12-15).
11. We have to accept at least four logical evidences from the following that the Bible is inspired. They are findings of archeology its unity, its endurance, its timelessness, its influence on people and nations many prophesies are fulfilled.
12. The first five books of the old testament were written by Moses. They are called Torah are Pentateuch.
13. There are 12 books in the old testament that speak about Biblical history. They are – Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel , 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther.
14. The five books of history in the new testament are – Mathew, Mark, Luke, John, and Acts.
15. The 13 epistles written by apostle Paul are – Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon.
16. The true characteristics of a Christian are – patience to be kind, not to feel Jealous, not to have grudge, not to demand anything, not to feel glad about injustice, rejoicing in truth, and endurance.
17. The Christians can live victoriously over sin by yielding to God blaming their identification with death and resurrection of Jesus and allowing the spirit to lead them.
18. It is said whoever conceals his sins does not prosper but whoever confesses his sins and renounces them will find the mercy of God.
19. The last command of Jesus to his disciples was that they should not leave Jerusalem until they receive the fullness of Holy Spirit.
20. There are four commandments out of 10 that keep our relationship with God
  - i) You shall have no other God before me.
  - ii) You shall not make for yourself an idol.
  - iii) You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
  - iv) Remember the Sabbath day (Exodus 20: 1-11).







Life is a function and thinking is functionary. People think or imagine so many things but they cannot put them into black and white, unless they are awarded with the gift of writing from the heavenly Father. God blessed me with that gift of writing and I started at the age of seventy. So far, I wrote seven books and “Shoots of Jerusalem” is the eighth one. The theme of all those books is historical background of the Bible, regarding the events and personalities.

I studied so many books on the Biblical History in America and excited to find new information. I wished to share what all I know with other Bible readers primarily with theological students. so that they too can make use of my books in future as the servants of God. In this connection, “I would like to say as Francis Bacon said,” Reading maketh a full man conference a ready man and writing an exact man.

May God bless all the readers.

Yours in Christ

Rev. **Dr. Sundara Rao Tsappidi** M.A., D.Litt

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