

The Promises Given by God to Abraham and the Nation of Israel – 01

**I WILL BLESS
THOSE WHO BLESS YOU**



**WHOEVER CURSES YOU
I WILL CURSE**

Israel Study 01



The Promises Given by God to Abraham and the Nation of Israel - 01

Genesis 12 : 1-3

Introduction :- The close bond that God has established between us who bear the name “ Christian ” and the Nation of Israel, is one that can never be refuted or denied by anyone. However due to the ignorance of many Christians who have no clear understanding of this truth, most Christians fail to receive or experience many of the wonderful blessings that God is desirous of granting them so freely and generously.

Hence, I first want to place before you, certain truths which no one can ever change.

1. The God we Christians believe in is the Lord and God of Israel (Exodus 5:1)

Exodus 5 : 1 :- “ Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said, “ This is what the Lord, the God of Israel, says : ‘ Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the desert. ‘ ”

2. Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior was born into this world in an Israelite home, as a member of an Israelite family.

In fact, we who are “ **Children of God** ”, have become so, because Jesus Christ took on human flesh and was born into this world, and we have believed in him and received him (as our savior).

John 1 : 12, 13 :- “ ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-¹³ children born not of natural decent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. ”

- ❖ The first book of the New Testament, is the Gospel according to Matthew, and it commences with the genealogy of Jesus.

Let's look at **Matthew 1 : 1 and 1 : 16**

Matthew 1 : 1 :- “ The record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David, the son of Abraham : ”

Matthew 1 : 16 :- “ and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. ”

- 3. The Holy Bible or the “ Word of God ” has been written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit (2 Timothy 3 : 16 :- “ All scripture is God breathed ”) and other than Luke who was a Gentile, all who were used by God to write the books of the Bible are Israelites.**

Dear Brother and Sister in Christ Jesus, we who believe in the God of Israel, and have received our salvation through the Sacrifice of Jesus on a cross at Calvary, and are nourished by the Word of God, need to understand how we are to relate to the Jewish people. Let us convert this understanding to appropriate action, and receive more and more of his rich spiritual blessings.

It is our hope and prayer that this series of Bible Studies on “ **Israel** ” would enrich your lives greatly and help you to become a ‘ **true child and servant** ’ of Almighty God.

Teaching :- 1. The creation of man, the fall and the promise of a Savior / Redeemer

Genesis 1 : 26, 27 :-

“ ²⁶ Then God said, “ Let us make man in our image, in our likeness,²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him ; male and female he created them. ”

Man, who was thus created in the image and likeness of God, was however deceived by Satan to disobey God, as a consequence of which God cursed the serpent and the ground and also punished women.

Our God, the God of Israel who does not lie but keeps his every promise, thus punished man for his disobedience, but being a “ **Loving God** ” (our loving Heavenly Father) made a promise to send a Savior to save mankind simultaneously.

Genesis 3 : 15 :-

“ And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers ; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel. ”

In order that God’s promise/prophesy that ‘ **that he will crush your head** ’ would be fulfilled, God sent His only begotten son Jesus Christ into the world, and crushed Satan’s head at the cross on Calvary.

NOTE : In Genesis 3 : 15, Almighty God is declaring that the offspring of the woman (**Jesus Christ**) would defeat and destroy Satan, and this took place at Calvary.

Luke 1 : 35 :-

“ The angel answered, “ The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ”

Dear child of God, grasp this firmly. **Every Word of God is certain, unchangeable, permanent and everlasting.** Hence just as God promised in the Garden of Eden, **Jesus** (who is the Son of God) was born on earth as an ‘ offspring of woman ’, (through the womb of Mary) and crushed the head of Satan at Calvary.

2. The call of Abram and the Nation of Israel

In order to fulfil the promise mentioned in **Genesis 3 : 15**, God called a man named Abram and gave him a sevenfold promise which is mentioned in **Genesis 12 : 1-3**.

Genesis 12 : 1-3 :-

“¹ The Lord had said to Abram, “ Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. ²“ I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you ; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse ; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you. ”

In this blessing recorded in **Genesis 12 : 1-3** we can identify seven specific blessings given to Abraham as follows:

- I.** I will make you into a great nation.
- II.** I will bless you.
- III.** I will make your name great.
- IV.** You will be a blessing.
- V.** I will bless those who bless you.
- VI.** Whoever curses you I will curse.
- VII.** All people on earth will be blessed through you.

Out of these seven blessings, the one mentioned last can be received by every human being born on this earth, through the Sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

John 3 : 16 :-

“ For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ”

On taking a closer look at the above mentioned seven promises, one would possibly infer that the promise mentioned last would be the most difficult to fulfil. However, we know that our ' promise-keeping God ' most certainly kept this promise. **(John 3 : 16).**

Hence, we are absolutely certain, that He will fulfil the other six promises as well.

- ❖ When God made these promises to Abram, he was 75 years of age. **(Genesis 12 : 4)** Subsequently when Abram was 99 years old **(Genesis 17 : 1)**, God confirmed his covenant with Abram **and changed his name to Abraham (Genesis 17 : 5).**

Furthermore, God assured Abraham, that the promise that was given to him would be an everlasting covenant to Isaac and his descendants after him.

Genesis 17 : 19 :-

“ Then God said, “ Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac. I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. ”

According to the promise of God, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah when Abraham had reached the ripe old age of one hundred years **(Genesis 21 : 5)**. Subsequently, God appeared to Isaac and gave him the promise that was given to Abraham.

Genesis 26 : 3 :-

“ Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. ”

(Please read **Genesis 26 : 2-3**)

- ❖ When Isaac was old and his sight was poor, he blessed his son Jacob as follows :

Genesis 27 : 29 :- “ May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed. ”

After a period of time Jacob wrestled with God, and on this occasion, God changed Jacob’s name to Israel.

Genesis 32 : 27, 28 :- “ ²⁷ The man asked him, “ What is your name? ” “ Jacob ” he answered. ²⁸ Then the man said, “ Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome. ”

Genesis 35 : 10-12 :- “ ¹⁰ God said to him, “ Your name is Jacob, but you will no longer be called Jacob ; your name will be Israel. ” So he named him Israel. ¹¹ And God said to him, “ I am God Almighty ; be fruitful and increase in number. A nation and a community of nations will come from you, and kings will come from your body. The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac I also give to you, and I will give this land to your descendants after you. ”

Let us now look at what is written in **Psalm 105 : 8-10** regarding the covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (**Israel**).

Psalm 105 : 8-10 :- “ ⁸ He remembers his covenant forever, the word he commanded, for a thousand generations, ⁹ the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac. ¹⁰ He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant : ”

- ❖ We earlier focused our attention on the sevenfold promise given by God to Abraham, as mentioned in **Genesis 12 : 1-3**.

When we look at these seven promises, we can observe that the first four promises and the last promise have already been fulfilled.

In the Bible Study we will be focusing our attention on the fifth and sixth promises which are, ‘ **I will bless those who bless you** ’ and ‘ **whoever curses you I will curse.** ’

Dear Brother and Sister, not only did Almighty God commence fulfilling these promises in Abraham’s life time, **He is presently continuing to fulfil them and will continue to do so in the future as well.**

Today we will study the sixth promise given to Abraham which is ‘ **whoever curses you I will curse.** ’

3. God will curse whoever that curses Israel (Genesis 12 : 3)

I would not be surprised if many of you who read this subtitle are ‘ rather disturbed ’ by it. The main reason for this is the way we usually consider the word ‘ **curse** ’.

Our immediate reaction could be to ask the question, ‘ **How could a loving God curse ?** ’ This is frequently because of the way we have understood the word ‘ **curse** ’ from the Old Testament.

Hence let us first examine the ‘ **Hebrew Word** ’ that is mentioned (translated) as ‘ **curse** ’. When we do so we find that this Hebrew word has 2 meanings, which are,

- a) preventing or obstructing someone or forbidding someone, and
- b) belittling or looking down on someone.

Hence, the more correct/ accurate meaning of the word translated, ‘ **curse** ’ is,

to belittle or look down on someone, and obstruct / hinder his progress.

- ❖ The promise that, ‘**whoever curses you I will curse**’ was first given by God to Abraham who gave it to his son Isaac who in turn gave it to his son Jacob, (**Israel**) as we learnt earlier.

Furthermore, we learnt that this is an eternal covenant (**Genesis 27 : 29 ; 35 : 10-12, Psalm 105 : 8-10**)

In this section we are going to search for answers to the following questions.

- Did God fulfil these promises in the past ?
- Is he doing so today ?
- Will he be doing so in the future ? etc.

In order to do so, it is important for us to understand, how God looks at the Nation of Israel.

The way God looks at the Nation of Israel

Zechariah 2 : 8, 9 :-

“⁸ For this is what the Lord Almighty says : “ After he has honored me and has sent me against the nations that have plundered you – for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye - ⁹ I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them. Then you will know that the Lord Almighty has sent me. ”

The Word of God is telling us here, that ‘**God considers Israel as the apple of his eye.**’ Hence if anyone was to oppose them, God would rise up against them and deal harshly with them and punish them.

Let us also look at a few other Bible verses that indicate how God considers Israel.

- a. Like the apple of his eye (Zechariah 2 : 8; Deuteronomy 32 : 10; Psalm 17 : 8)
- b. Like a crown of splendor in His hand, a royal diadem (Isaiah 62 : 3)
- c. Like the firstfruits of his harvest (Jeremiah 2 : 3)
Jeremiah 2 : 3 :- “³ Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest ; all who devoured her were held guilty, and disaster overtook them, declares the Lord. ”
- d. As his son (Hosea 11 : 1)
Hosea 11 : 1 :- “ When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ”

Dear friends, I consider it extremely vital, especially for Christians to understand how the God of Israel who loves Israel so much **(as is evident from (a), (b), (c) and (d) above)**, would deal with people who ‘ **curse Israel** ’. This applies to those who have done so in the past, do so presently, and would do so in the future as well.

I propose to commence this section, by examining / studying a couple of examples of how God dealt with those who ‘ **cursed Israel** ’, whilst keeping in mind that in the ‘ **Hebrew idiom** ’, this means ‘ **to belittle or lookdown on someone and obstruct / hinder his progress** ’ even as I mentioned earlier.

❖ Four examples from the past

A) Abraham and Pharaoh – (Genesis 12 : 10 - 20)

We find here that, as there was a famine in the land Abram went down to Egypt (**Genesis 12 : 10**). On this occasion Abram instructed his wife Sarai to inform all concerned that she was his sister, since he was afraid that the Egyptians would kill him in order to get Sarai.

Consequently, in Egypt Abram and Sarai acted as brother and sister and not as husband and wife. This however was fraudulent and deceitful, and Pharaoh had no idea that this was so.

The result was that Pharaoh who did not know Sarai was Abram's wife took Sarai to his palace (**Genesis 12 : 14,15**).

The Bible records that God inflicted serious disease on Pharaoh and his household on account of this (**Genesis 12 : 17**).

Dear child of God, let us learn from this incident, what we can gather about God and His promises.

Pharaoh got Sarai to come to his palace (**cursed Abram**) ignorantly, not knowing that she was Abram's wife. Furthermore, Abram deceived Pharaoh intentionally to protect himself and this was absolutely fraudulent and selfish.

Hence it is evident that with regard to this incident, Abram was as guilty (or even more guilty) than Pharaoh.

However God who had promised '**to curse ' whoever that curses Abram (Genesis 12 : 3)** is the God of Israel who does not change and does not lie, and He was true to His promise, **and not only did he ' curse Pharaoh ' but also blessed Abram bountifully and generously.**

Genesis 12 : 16 :- " He treated Abram well for her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, menservants and maidservants, and camels. "

- ❖ The promise given by God to Abram in **Genesis 12 : 1-3** had only one specific condition which was to go to the country that God would show him (**Genesis 12 : 1**).

Abram obeyed God and did so, and God too fulfilled his promise to Abram, accordingly.

- ❖ Most promises given by God to men are conditional. Hence if you are desirous of inheriting promises of God given to you, **please satisfy the conditions stipulated by God fully, without delay, and wait in faith with Praise and Thanksgiving.**

When you do so, **God will grant you the said promise at the most appropriate time.**

B) Abraham and King Abimelech - (Genesis 20 : 1-18)

Subsequently, after a substantial period of time Abraham moved to Gerar whose king was named Abimelech. By this time Abram's name had been changed by God to Abraham, and God had renewed the covenant with him and also instituted circumcision.

Genesis 17 : 10 :- “ This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep : Every male among you shall be circumcised. ”

However Abraham who had deceived Pharaoh in Egypt, (for selfish reasons) repeated his earlier mistake once again, and pretended that **Sarai was his sister** (and not his wife). Consequently, king Abimelech too, just like Pharaoh took her to his palace.

The Bible confirms that God **cursed Abimelech too**, just as he had **cursed Pharaoh earlier**.

(Please read **Genesis 20 : 1-18** for more details of this)

C) Balak king of Moab, hiring Balaam to curse the Israelites (Numbers Chap. 22 to 24)

During the journey of the Israelites to the ' **Promised Land** ' Balak king of Moab hired Balaam to ' **curse** ' them. In order to do so Balak promised to give Balaam, great wealth and power.

However God changed the ‘ **curse** ’ into a blessing in Balaam’s mouth, by causing Balaam’s donkey to speak to him, thus using Balaam to **Bless the Israelites (Numbers 24 : 10)**.

Not only did God change the ‘ curse ’ into a blessing for the Israelites, he instead cursed the Moabites who attempted to curse them.

Nehemiah 13 : 1, 2 :- “¹..... no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God,² because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing). ”

D) The attempt of Haman to destroy the Israelites (Esther Chap. 3-7)

With the intention of destroying the Jews, Haman (an enemy of the Jews) got a seventy -five feet high, gallows to be built, **(Esther 5:14)** in order to hang Mordecai the Jew.

However, God made this curse into a blessing, and helped the Jews to destroy all their enemies instead. God not only Blessed Mordecai by greatly promoting him **(Esther 10:3)** but caused Haman to be hung on the very gallows that he had planned to hang Mordecai. **(Esther 7:9-10)**

Dear child of God, please study the four examples given above, whilst reading, studying and meditating the Bible. I am very certain that when you do so, you will be convinced that the promise given by God to Abraham in **Genesis 12:3**, has been fulfilled to the letter.

- ❖ Even we Christians who believe in the Word of God, sometimes due to our lack of knowledge / understanding, could become guilty of ‘ **cursing Israel** ’.

Hence I want to request you most humbly, and with lots of love to refrain from believing everything you get from the Media, and thereby become guilty of cursing, the Jewish people ignorantly.

In order not to get caught in a media trap, one of the wisest things that we could do would be decide to pray for the peace of Jerusalem on a regular basis.

**Psalm 122 : 6 :- “ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem :
“ May those who love you be secure. ”**

**May Almighty God, give you a heart
That desires to pray for the peace of Jerusalem –
Diligently !!!**

The Promises Given by God to Abraham and the Nation of Israel – 02

**I WILL BLESS
THOSE WHO BLESS YOU**



**WHOEVER CURSES YOU
I WILL CURSE**

Israel Study 02



The Promises Given by God to Abraham and the Nation of Israel - 02

Genesis 12 : 1-3

Introduction :- In this study, we are going to continue our teaching on the promises that God gave to Abram, as recorded in **Genesis 12 : 1-3**. In the last study we commenced looking at the promise ‘ **whoever curses you I will curse** ’ (**Genesis 12 : 3**), and intend to place before you, a few happenings recorded in world history as well, to help you to understand this promise more clearly.

Teaching :- As mentioned above we commenced looking at the promise, ‘ **whoever curses you I will curse** ’ (**Genesis 12 : 3**) in our previous study, and placed before you four examples of such occurrences from the Bible.

In order to grasp this teaching more clearly, it is important for us to understand the promises given to the Israelites **as well as the conditions that were applicable to them**.

- ❖ The Ten Commandments that God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai are mentioned in **Exodus 20 : 1-17**. We are now going to look at a few verses from **Exodus 19** in order to understand the manner in which God prepared the Israelites to receive it(them).

Exodus 19 : 3-6 :- “³ Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “ This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob⁴ ‘ You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt,⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine,⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation ”

It is very interesting to read **Deuteronomy 28 : 1 & 15**.

Deuteronomy 28 : 1 :- “ If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. ”

Deuteronomy 28 : 15 :- “ However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you : ”

God who warned the Israelites, that if they disobeyed God, (**Deuteronomy 28 : 15**) he would disperse them among the nations, but would gather them if they repented and turned back to him.

Deuteronomy 30 : 1-3 :- “¹ When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come upon you and you take them to heart wherever the Lord your God disperses you among the nations, ² and when you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, ³ then the Lord your God will restore your fortunes and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. ”

Due to the Israelites repeatedly failing to obey God, in order to punish them, God allowed the Northern kingdom of Israel to be subjugated to the Assyrian Kingdom in 721 BC and the Southern Kingdom to be defeated by the Babylonian Kingdom in 586 BC.

Thus although God used the Assyrians and Babylonians to punish the Israelites for their disobedience, due to both these nations treating the Israelites in a very cruel manner, (**‘ cursing Israel ’**) God subsequently punished the Assyrians and Babylonians as well.

We trust that the paragraph above would help you to understand the fall of these nations mentioned in the books of **Daniel** and **Revelation**.

1. **Kingdoms mentioned in the books of Daniel and Revelation and the Nation of Israel**

- a) During the period Daniel was in Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon was given a dream by God, showing him details of four Great Kingdoms that were to come.

Daniel 2 : 45 :- “ The great God has shown the king what will take place in the future. The dream is true and the interpretation is trustworthy. ”

King Nebuchadnezzar dreamt of an enormous dazzling statue, whose head was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay (**Daniel 2 : 32,33**).

God gave the interpretation of the dream to Daniel subsequently, and the Kingdoms represented by the statue are as follows :

Head of pure gold	- Babylonian kingdom	- 626 BC
Chest and arms of silver	- Mede / Persian Kingdom	- 538 BC
Belly and thighs of bronze	- Grecian Kingdom	- 330 BC
Legs of iron	- Roman kingdom	- 63 BC

(Please read **Daniel 2 : 31-45**)

- b) During the period that the Apostle John was exiled on the island of Patmos (**Revelation 1 : 9**), he was carried in the Spirit to a desert where he saw **a woman sitting on a scarlet beast...that had seven heads and ten horns (Revelation 17 : 1-3)**.

Furthermore, it is mentioned in **Revelation 17 : 9, 10** :- “⁹ **The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits.** ¹⁰ **They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come ; but when he does come, he must remain for a little while.**”

Bible scholars agree that the book of Revelations was written by John in 95 AD. Hence it is evident that the king who was ruling at that time, which is Rome is the king identified as **the Sixth King in Revelation 17 : 10.**

Hence it is easy to identify that the,

King of Greece is the 5th King

King of Persia is the 4th King

King of Babylon is the 3rd King

Another fact that we are well aware of is that the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman Empires have all ruled the land of Israel for a time. Furthermore, since the King of Babylon is the Third king, it is not difficult to infer that the Second king and the First king would also be kings that ruled Israel for some time. Hence we can safely and confidently identify that Egypt and Assyria are the first two kings.

Taking the above into consideration, we can list the kings (kingdoms) that are mentioned in **Daniel 2 : 31-45** and **Revelation 17 : 3,10** as follows :

<u>Kingdom</u>	<u>According to Daniel</u>	<u>According to Revelation</u>
Egypt	Not mentioned	1st King
Assyria	Not mentioned	2nd King
Babylonia	Head of Gold	3rd King
Persia	Chest and arms of Silver	4th King
Greece	Belly and thighs of Bronze	5th King
Rome	Legs of Iron	6th King

Dear child of God, understand this. The above mentioned six kings/kingdoms are all very clearly kingdoms that ‘ **belittled or looked down on Israel and treated (ruled) them cruelly and harshly** ’ (**cursed Israel**). Hence a question that we need to ask is, did Almighty God curse these Kingdoms ?

So let us briefly examine these kingdoms and check their present condition. (This was written by me in August 2013)

- i. **Egypt** – This country which can boast of having a Great History or past, deteriorated after taking the Israelites into slavery and even today remains as an unstable nation.
- ii. **Assyria (Syria)** – Syria which captured the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BC is even today one of the most devastated countries in the world, having millions of refugees.
- iii. **Babylonia (Iraq)** - Babylon where the ‘Hanging Garden of Babylon’ one of the seven wonders of the ancient world are located, even today is a country which is regularly struck by disastrous terrorist attacks.
- iv. **Persia (Iran)** - Persia which was a mighty nation in the past has become a nation that exports terrorism throughout their region, and is facing an extremely uncertain future.
- v. **Greece** – Greece has gone through massive economic challenges, and have had to seek economic support from the European Union.
- vi. **Rome (Italy)** – Rome is virtually the same as Greece.

My Dear Friend, what is your opinion regarding these countries / Kingdoms ? Is it simply a coincidence, that all these kingdoms that were “ World Powers ” during their heyday, have deteriorated to such low levels today ? Or does this strengthen the view that, ‘ **surely the word of God is true.** ’

Although the above cannot be considered as absolute evidence that the word of God is 100% true, I would say that it does give us a strong signal that it would be rather unwise to ‘ curse Israel ’.

Hence let us who believe in the God of Israel and His Word, not do so by word only, but rather let us believe and obey the Word of God.

Therefore let us all,

- **Never ‘ curse Israel ’** without knowing the actual facts
- **Remember to ‘ Bless Israel ’** consistently
- **Pray for their Peace** daily

2. God’s promise to bless those who bless Israel (Genesis 12 : 3)

Genesis 12 : 3 :- “ I will bless those who bless you. ”

In order to understand this promise clearly, it is essential that we comprehend the meaning of the word ‘ blessing ’.

In Hebrew, the word translated as blessing in the Old Testament is mentioned as **BAREKH**. This word Barekh comes from the Hebrew word **BARAKH**, which means, ‘ bending one’s knee. ’

Hence the word blessing we find in **Genesis 12 : 3** can be understood as meaning, ‘ **bending one’s knee in order to bless.** ’

The phrase ‘ **bending one’s knee** ’ does not necessarily mean, to fall down on your knees in order to worship. This phrase is not describing a **position taken by our bodies but rather the CONDITION of our hearts.**

When considering the above collectively, to bless means, ‘ to humble ourselves in order to bless. ’

Dear child of God, please reflect on this for a moment. Almighty God, the God of all creation humbled himself so much in order to bless us and took on a body of flesh in order to do so.

Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior who took on human flesh in order to bless us, **humbled himself to the extent of washing his disciples feet, in order to bless them.**

Please understand this. **God has chosen us and called us to bless other people, and in order to do so we must invariably humble ourselves.**

My beloved brother and sister, **let us all humble ourselves and become a blessing to all those around us.**

In order to show you, that God will Bless us abundantly when we do so, I want to place three examples before you, from God's Word.

❖ **Three examples from the Bible**

i) **Rahab the prostitute - (Joshua 2 : 1-21)**

In order to spy the Promised Land and specially Jericho, Joshua sent out two spies from Shittim (**Joshua 2 : 1**). These two spies arrived in Jericho and entered the house of a prostitute name Rahab, and the king of Jericho came to know of it (**Joshua 2 : 2**).

On this life threatening occasion, Rahab 'put her life on the line' and **blessed the Israelites**. She hid the two spies, and when the men who were in pursuit of them came to search her home, she deceived the pursuers and saved the spies from certain death.

The way the Almighty God blessed Rahab for blessing Israel is truly marvelous and wonderful. When Joshua moved to destroy Jericho, he not only saved Rahab, but saved her family and all who belonged to her.

Joshua 6 : 25 :- " But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho "

The Bible records that Rahab was not only a prostitute, she was a Gentile as well, and the incredible way that God blessed her is almost inexpressible.

GOD INCLUDED HER IN THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS !!!

Matthew 1 : 5, 6 :- “⁵ Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab, Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David ...”

Thus, Rahab became the grandmother of Obed who was the grandfather of King David .

Dear Brother and Sister in Christ Jesus, is it possible that God rewarded the Gentile prostitute Rahab so handsomely because she **Blessed Israel ?**

It is incredible but true, because our God, the God of Israel is a God who does not lie, but **always keeps his promises, however magnanimous they are.**

ii) Ruth the Moabite - (Ruth 1 - 4)

Due to a famine in the land of Israel, an Israelite, named Elimelech who dwelt in Bethlehem, took his wife Naomi and his two sons Mahlon and Kilion, and went to live for a while in the country of Moab. Whilst living in Moab Mahlon and Kilion got married to two Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth (**Ruth 1 : 1 - 4**).

Elimelech who was the head of his family died shortly after their arrival in Moab, and after about ten years both Mahlon and Kilion also died. Since Naomi was the only one left of the family that had left Bethlehem, she too decided to return to her country.

Her two daughters-in-law also wanted to join her in returning to Israel and set out on this journey along with her in spite of Naomi's protests. However out of the two of them only Ruth stuck firmly to her decision to go along with Naomi, whilst, Orpah returned home.

Let us now focus our attention on the words spoken by Ruth about her determination not to part with Naomi, whatever the circumstance.

Ruth 1 : 16 :- “ But Ruth replied, “ don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ”

Here we see, a Moabite woman (a Gentile), deciding to **ble**ss a **woman from Israel** and Almighty God responding in a truly remarkable manner to her Humility and love.

GOD INCLUDED RUTH TOO IN THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS !!!

Matthew 1 : 5, 6 :- “⁵ Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth, Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶ and Jesse the father of King David ”

Hence we see that Ruth was the great grandmother of King David.

iii) Cornelius the Centurion (a Gentile) – Acts 10 : 1 - 48

Cornelius was a centurion of the ‘ Italian Regiment ’ if the Roman army who was recognized as a righteous and God-fearing man by the Jewish people.

Acts 10 : 22 :- “ The men replied, “ We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people ”

There is no doubt that Cornelius was thus considered righteousness by the Jewish people and respected by them because ‘ **he blessed the Jewish people** ’ . The Bible also records that “ **He and all his family were devout and God-fearing ; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. ”** (Acts 10 : 2)

Let us now examine how God blessed Cornelius who was undoubtedly a man who was consistently a blessing to the Jewish people in various ways.

- a. God gave him a vision where he distinctly saw an angel who came to him and spoke with him **(Acts 10 : 3 - 6)**.
- b. As Cornelius believed the message given by the angel and sent messengers to Joppa to meet Peter. **God prepared Peter for their message by showing a vision to Peter as well (Acts 10 : 9 - 17)**.
- c. When Cornelius went to Peter's residence and commenced sharing God's Word, **God poured out the Holy Spirit on all who heard the message.**

Acts 10 : 44 – 46 :- “⁴⁴ While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”

Dear child of God, let us understand the importance and significance of this happening, Let us ponder why **the first Gentile mentioned by name as the one who spoke in other tongues** received this wonderful blessing. My personal opinion is that Cornelius was the recipient of this unique privilege **because he blessed the Jewish people.**

Please spend a few minutes thinking about this.

All three examples mentioned above show us clearly that God greatly blesses those who bless Israel. However the tragedy of the church today is that many who bear the name Christian are totally ignorant of this. Consequently, most Christians not only fail to bless Israel **but are guilty of belittling and opposing the Jewish people.**

Hence I urge you dear Children, to read the first two chapters of this series of studies on 'Israel' over and over again, referring to the Bible to clarify what has been taught here.

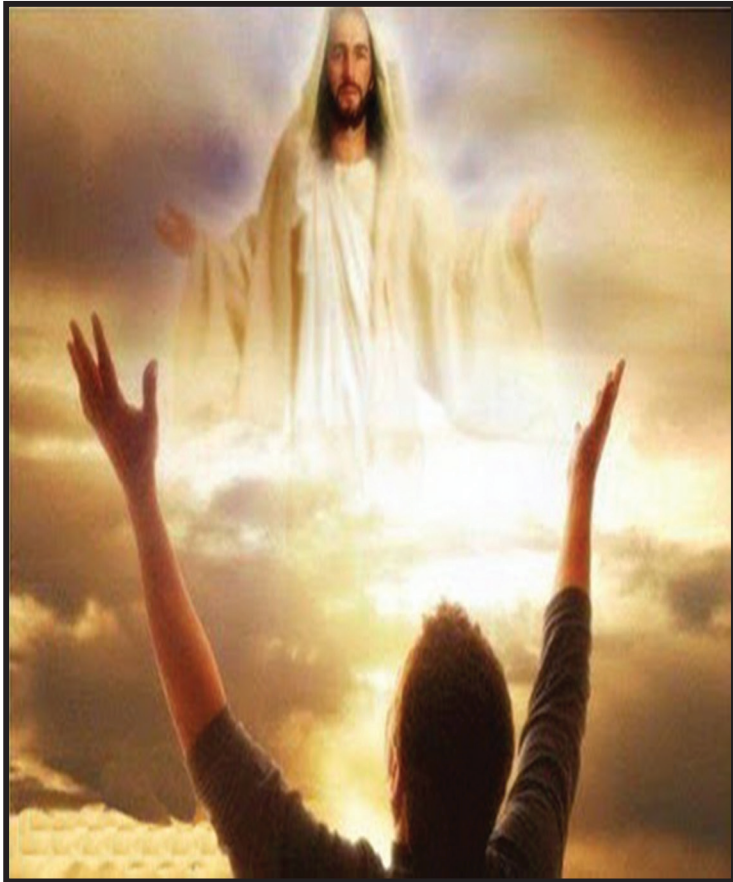
Please do not be misguided by the vast misinformation spread by the media and others. Please search the Scriptures with an open heart and an open mind, inviting the Holy Spirit who is the author of the Bible, to teach and guide you through its truths.

**May Almighty God, teach you His glorious Word
Through His Holy Spirit,**

**May you be a child of God, whose faith is founded on
The unchanging Word of God.**

**May the Almighty Bless you mightily,
Even as you Bless Israel Faithfully !!!**

Seeking the Blesser rather than His blessings



Israel Study 03



Seeking the Blessor rather than His blessings

Introduction :- In the first two Bible studies of this series, we focused our attention primarily on **Genesis 12 : 3** where Gods promises to Abraham, ‘ **I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse** ’ are recorded. I would not be surprised if out of these two promises you were more attracted to seeking more of God’s blessing by blessing Israel rather than the other. Hence I want to warn you of a cunning device / trap used by Satan to hinder your progress as a child of God. A method he uses most effectively, is to tempt God’s children to focus their attention on running after / seeking **the blessings rather than the Blessor**.

Dear brother and sister in Christ Jesus let us not fall into this dangerous trap of the enemy.

Let us endeavour to draw closer to God rather than focus on His blessings. Let us not chase blessings but rather commit ourselves to doing his will in every situation and at all times. Then God’s Blessings will chase after you !

Due to the above reason, it is my intention to teach you the importance for Christians to bless the nation of Israel, and avoid the trap of the enemy mentioned above.

Teaching :-

1. **Why should we bless the nation of Israel ?**
 - i) **Because God our loving Father loves them very much**

Let us look at a few Bible verses that declare God’s love of the Jewish people.

Zechariah 2 : 8 :- “ for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye. ”

Zechariah 9 : 16 :- “ They will sparkle in his land like jewels in a crown. ”

Isaiah 62 : 3 :- “ You will be a crown of splendor in the Lord’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. ”

Jeremiah 2 : 3 :- “ Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest ; ”

Hosea 11 : 1 :- “ When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ”

The Bible records that one of the teachers of the law asked Jesus the question “ **of all the commandments, which is the most important ?** ” (Mark 12 : 28) and Jesus replied him saying, “ **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.** ” (Mark 12 : 30)

Dear friend please understand this. If we who are Christians love God as mentioned here by Jesus, **we would certainly love the Jewish people who are Chosen and Loved by God and this would be evident in our lives.**

An Illustration

If we love somebody, we would be keen on doing things that please him/her and abstain from doing things that displease him/her.

In a similar manner **our lives should portray our love for God.** This love should become evident from the love we have for the Jewish people. **So let us love and bless the Jewish people who are greatly loved by Almighty God.**

When we do so God will bless us since we are blessing the Jewish people.

Furthermore, because our main purpose is to please God, when we act in this manner,

- We would be acting according to the will of God
- We would receive blessings from God
- Jesus will love us
- Jesus will show (**manifest - KJV**) myself in him (**Himself in us**)
(**John 14 : 21**)

❖ Let us look at a few promises God has given the nation Israel because of His infinite love for them.

a. **Isaiah 49 : 15, 16 :- “¹⁵ Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne ? Though she may forget, I will not forget you ! ¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands ; your walls are ever before me. ”**

b. **Isaiah 54 : 5 :- “ For your Maker is your husband – the Lord Almighty is his name – the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer ; ”**

c. **Isaiah 54 : 10 :- “ Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed, ” says the Lord, who has compassion on you. ”**

d. **Jeremiah 31 : 3 :- “ I have loved you with an everlasting love ; I have drawn you with loving kindness. ”**

❖ We are very much aware of the deep love, and compassion that Jesus had towards the nation of Israel and Jerusalem and mention herewith a couple of Bible verses which Jesus spoke that demonstrate this heartfelt love.

Matthew 23 : 37 :- “ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. ”

Luke 19 : 41, 42 :- “ ⁴¹ As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it ⁴² and said “ If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace - but now it is hidden from your eyes. ”

Luke 23 : 28 :- “ Jesus turned and said to them, “ Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me ; weep for yourselves and for your children. ”

The verses above display the deep desire and intense longing that Jesus had to see the nation of Israel experience the love of God more meaningfully.

Dear child of God, God has called us to follow in the steps of Jesus. So let us closely follow his example and pray for the nation of Israel.

ii) Because we who are Gentiles are tremendously indebted to the Jewish people

Some of you may raise the question " why do you say that we are indebted to the Jewish people ? " It is likely that one would do so because when we speak of debt, our minds always run to cash or money that we may owe someone.

However, if you would ponder for a moment you would realize that all of us are indeed deeply indebted to Almighty God, our parents, our teachers and a multitude of others in various ways.

In a similar manner we Gentiles owe many things to the Jewish people, and I want to bring three of them to your attention.

a) We are indebted to the Jewish people for bringing the Word of God to us.

Dear friend, if we had never heard the Word of God which feeds us Spiritually, and is the ‘ **Sword of the Spirit** ’, (**Ephesians 6 : 17**) we would all be heading towards eternal death.

In order to prevent this Almighty God entrusted the Jewish people with His Word.

Romans 3 : 2 :- “²..... First of all, they (the Jews) have been entrusted with the very words of God. ”

Almighty God entrusted His Word to man by inspiring them through the Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1 : 21 :- “ For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. ”

I guess that you are aware that all those who were used by God to write the books of the Bible except Luke happens to be Jewish.

Dear reader even as you read this book most of you would be doing so with a Bible in hand. This is essential because without the Word of God, no one can succeed in living a victorious Christian life.

We are thus indebted to the Jewish people for maintaining and ensuring its accuracy over a very long period of time.

- ❖ Many critics of the Christian faith frequently bring forward an argument against the accuracy of the Bible that since it was written around 3500 years ago in an age where printing was unknown and copies had to be made by hand, it would contain many errors and inaccuracies.

However it has been proved that the ' Jewish Scribes ' who were entrusted with the task of making accurate copies of the books of the Bible, have done so with great dedication and commitment. In fact with the discovery of the ' Dead Sea Scrolls ' in the Qumran' caves in 1947, where fragments of **every book of the Hebrew Bible except Esther** were found, it was confirmed that the hand made copies of the Bible made by ' **Jewish Scribes** ' were extremely reliable and accurate, and that whatever minor inaccuracies that were observed made no significant changes to the meaning of the original.

Hence as Gentiles we are truly indebted to the Jewish people, who took great pains to ensure the accuracy of the copies of the Bible and thus proving that the allegations of the critics were false.

b) We are indebted to the Jewish people for making known to us many Promises of God.

Since Promises of God are found in God's Word, you may wonder why we mention the Promises of God here as something special. We are doing so and are highlighting God's Promises here because of the strength, faith, perseverance and confidence they add to our lives.

In fact I accepted Jesus as my personal savior in 1969 and was ' born again ' , ' born of the Sprit ' . At the commencement itself of my ' Spiritual Journey ' with God he embedded the promise found in **Philippians 4 : 6, 7** deep in my heart.

Philippians 4 : 6, 7 :- " ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. "

I can sincerely testify that trusting in this promise alone and acting according to it has given me great victories in a multitude of situations, and also brought Divine Healing to me.

Furthermore, as a '**Teacher of God's Word**' God has used me to teach the truths / promises in these verses to hundreds of others, who have been blessed immensely by them.

Hence in order to help you in your spiritual journey, I want to ask you a question. The question is, what is your favorite Bible Promise ?

Some of your possible answers could be :

Psalm **1:2,3; 23:1; 37:4,5; 91: 4-10; 103: 4-6**

Isaiah **40:31; 41:10; 43:2**

Matthew **28:20b**

John **1:12; 3:16; 14:12; 14:15,16**

Hebrew **13:5,6 etc.**

These are all wonderful promises of God and experiencing them would certainly bring great happiness, joy, fulfilment and contentment to your lives.

So I want to humbly request you to prayerfully select one or more of the above promises or any other promise for yourself. Fulfil the conditions therein and receive / enjoy their fulfilment.

Please do not forget that virtually all Bible Promises have come to us through a Jewish person.

c) **We are indebted to the Jewish people for the salvation we have received.**

Jesus spoke the following words to a Samaritan Woman near Jacob's well.

John 4 : 22 :- “ You Samaritans worship what you do not know ; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ”

Let's look at **Romans 9 : 5**

Romans 9 : 5 :- “ Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised ! Amen. ”

The Lord Jesus Christ who sacrificed his life on a cross at Calvary in order that we may receive salvation was born into the world through a Jewish mother, was brought up in a Jewish home that followed Judaism and was consecrated to God, as required in the Law of the Lord.

Luke 2 : 22-23 :- “ ²² When the time of their purification according to the Law of Moses had been completed, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “ Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord ”).

Jesus was a Jewish Rabbi.

When Jesus was crucified, “ **Above his head they placed the written charge against him : THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. ” (Matthew 27 : 37)**

Dear child of God the most precious gift that we have ever received, is our salvation, and Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord Himself declared that, ‘ **Salvation is from the Jews ’ (John 4 : 22).**

iii) **Because God has chosen Jerusalem as the city to put his name**

- a) **1 Kings 11 : 36 :- “..... so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name.”**
- b) **2 Kings 21 : 7 :- “..... In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever.”**
- c) **2 Chronicles 7 : 16 :- “ I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.”**
- d) **2 Chronicles 33 : 4 :- “ He built altars in the temple of the Lord, of which the Lord had said, “ My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever.”**

It is important and essential, that we Christians have a firm and correct understanding of (at least) some of the attributes of God. One attribute I wish to emphasise here is that,

God is Eternal and Everlasting

Because God is eternal and everlasting his plans and intentions too are so. We just saw from His Word the affirmation that he gave that, ‘ **my Name may be there in Jerusalem forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.** ’ (2 Chronicles 7 : 16). God’s Word mentions that the only city chosen thus is Jerusalem. Because God is eternal and everlasting, **the choice of God too is eternal and everlasting. His Word is also absolutely dependable totally infallible and is unchangeable.**

Isaiah 40 : 8 :- “ The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. ”

❖ **The place where the temple of Jerusalem was consecrated**

Regarding the above I wish to draw your attention to 4 incidents from the Word of God.

- a) We are all aware that God instructed Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering in the region of Moriah.

Genesis 22 : 2 :- “ Then God said, “ Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about. ”

- b) The Bible also records that Moses whom God used to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, composed a song (‘ **the song of Moses** ’ - **Exodus 15 : 1**) which they sang to the Lord. The following words, are from this song.

Exodus 15 : 17, 18 :- “¹⁷ You will bring them in and plant them on the mountain of your inheritance- the place, O Lord, you made for your dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, your hands established.¹⁸ The Lord will reign for ever and ever. ”

- c) On the occasion when David disobeyed God ‘ and took a census of Israel and Judah ‘ (**2 Samuel 24 : 1**) ‘ **the Lord sent a plague on Israel and seventy thousand from Dan to Beersheba died.** ’ (**2 Samuel 24 : 15**) Gad the prophet, David’s seer, (**2 Samuel 24 : 11**) ‘ went to David and said to him, “ Go up and build an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite ” (**2 Samuel 24 : 18**). When David did so and made sacrifices on the altar, the plague subsided.

2 Samuel 24 : 25 :- “ David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the Lord answered prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped. ” (Please read **2 Samuel 24 : 18-25**)

This incident is also recorded in **1 Chronicles 21 : 18 – 22 : 1**. Let's look at two Bible verses from there.

1 Chronicles 21 : 26 :- “ David built an altar to the Lord there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him by fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering. ”

1 Chronicles 22 : 1 :- “ Then David said, “ The house of the Lord God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offerings for Israel. ”

d) Eventually King Solomon built the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem.

2 Chronicles 3 : 1 :- “ Then Solomon began to build the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, the place provided by David. ”

Dear child of God, it is evident from the above mentioned Bible verses that the place where

- Abraham prepared on Mount Moriah to sacrifice Isaac. **(Genesis 22 : 2)**
- Moses mentions as the Sanctuary God made for his dwelling. **(Exodus 15 : 17)**
- David built an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. **(2 Samuel 24 : 25)**
- Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem **(2 Chronicles 3 : 1)**.

Thus it is evident that the place our Eternal God, chose to place His name Eternally and reveled it to Abraham, David and Solomon is Jerusalem about which He mentions : “ **I have chosen and consecrated this temple so that my Name may be there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there.** ”

(2 Chronicles 7 : 16)

2. The most important attribute in the life of a Christians – is Obedience to God

It is extremely important for us who believe in the God of Israel to pray for the Nation of Israel and to bless them as much as possible.

However, the most important attribute that all Christians should consider as their highest priority is to **love God and to live in obedience to His Will.**

Dear family of God, let us always,

- Seek for Gods will for our lives and commit ourselves to live accordingly always
- When we do so sincerely and faithfully God will guide us through the Holy Spirit, to walk in the steps of Jesus.
- The Holy Spirit would give us power and the fruit of the Spirit would increase in our lives.

Almighty God would furthermore

- Pour out his love into our hearts by the Holy Sprit (**Romans 5:5**)
- And cause the peace of Christ to rule in our hearts (**Colossians 3:15**)

I want to conclude this Bible Study by reminding you of something very significant and special to all our lives. As we learnt through the study, Jerusalem is the only city where God chose to put his name. **(1 Kings 11 : 36, 2 Kings 21 : 7)** the plan and purpose that God has for Jerusalem is ' **eternal and everlasting.** '

The God who chose Jerusalem, **has similarly selected you and called you to be His child, and He has prepared a unique and wonderful plan for your life.**

Ephesians 2 : 10 :- “ For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. ”

So let us all decide to seek to live according to the plan God has prepared for us ‘ **in advance for us to do** ’ (Ephesians 2 : 10) we can be very certain that the plan that God has prepared for us includes ‘ **Blessing the nation of Israel** ’ (Genesis 12 : 3). Let us do so faithfully.

Always seek God and His Will for you.

**Do not seek the Blessings
But seek God who is your Blesser.**

**May Almighty God strengthen you
And help you to live accordingly !!!**

The Past and the Present of the Nation of Israel



Israel Study 04

The Past and the Present of the Nation of Israel

Introduction :- In order that we Christians understand the calling and responsibility we have towards the Nation of Israel, we need to have a good knowledge/understanding of what the Word of God says about their past history as well as their present condition. In this respect I believe that our first three Bible studies have already supplied us with quite of information. Furthermore, there is no doubt that a vast number of those who are reading this look have also acquired much knowledge about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, the slavery in Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the fall of Jericho etc. through their church and Sunday School.

Hence in this study one of our main intentions is to teach you what the Bible says about the present condition of the Nation of Israel.

Teaching :-

1. The past of the Nation of Israel

i.) The Jewish religious leaders planned the crucifixion of Jesus

The Nation of Israel that came into being through Israel (Jacob) who was Abraham's grandson, split into two kingdoms, referred to as the Northern Kingdom (also called Israel) and the Southern Kingdom (called Judah) after the reign of King Solomon.

Both these kingdoms on many occasions disobeyed God and as a consequence, even as God had warned them earlier, God allowed them to go through much adversity and persecution at the hand of hostile nations.

Mankind who had been created by God, disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden itself and **' was banished from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. '**
(Genesis 3 : 23)

On that very occasion God who is loving and compassionate, gave a promise to man that He would send a savior who will save man from his sin (from Satan - **Genesis 3 : 15**) God also who gave man many promises and prophecies through his prophets regarding the Savior, (Messiah) who was to come.

The Israelites who had to go through much persecution due to their disobedience, read the prophecies and thought that their Savior, (Messiah) would be a mighty king, who would defeat and destroy their enemies. They failed to understand that God was going to send a Savior, who would save them from the penalty of sin.

As a consequence of their misunderstanding when God sent Jesus Christ His Son to the world as an Israelite to offer his life as a “ Sin Offering ” – (**Isaiah 53 : 10 ; 2 Corinthians 5 : 21**) the Israelites refused to accept him as their Savior (Messiah) and caused his crucifixion.

ii.) They did not accept prophecies made by Jesus

During his public ministry, Jesus made significant prophecies, but there is little evidence that they were believed / accepted by the Israelites.

I herewith want to bring to your notice two such important prophecies.

a.) Regarding the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem

- **The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem**

Luke 21 : 5, 6 :- “⁵ Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, “⁶ As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another ; everyone of them will be thrown down.”

Jesus made this prophecy around AD 32, and this was fulfilled by the Roman army under the leadership of Titus in AD 70 when Jerusalem and the temple were completely destroyed and burnt.

b.) Regarding the fulfilment of the time of the Gentiles

- **The fulfilment of the times of the Gentiles**

Luke 21 : 24 :- “ They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. ”

This was fulfilled in June 1967 during the ‘ six day war ’ (from the 5th to the 10th). Thus Jerusalem which was captured by the Romans in AD 70 was liberated on 7th June 1967, bringing the times of the Gentiles to fulfilment.

2. The present situation in the Nation of Israel

i.) Their situation with respect to security

Our Lord Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem located in Israel had twelve disciples all of whom were Israelites. The first martyr, Stephen as well as Paul who was the greatest missionary were also Israelites.

However due to a vast majority of the Jewish people who were awaiting the arrival of a Messiah who would be a triumphant king, failing to accept Jesus as their Messiah, the number of Christians in Israel has always been almost insignificant.

In fact, the number of Christians in Israel is only about 2.0% of the population even today. Even of this number of Christians, a vast majority are Arabs, and there are only about 20,000 Jews who are Christians (Messianic Jews) live in Israel presently.

Although the Jews were scattered worldwide after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 7- God has promised in His Word to gather them back to Israel from all corners of the world.

Let us look at some of these promises of God,

Isaiah 11 : 12 :- “ He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel ; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. ”

Isaiah 41 : 8, 9 :- “ ⁸ But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, ⁹ I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘ You are my servant ; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. ”

Isaiah 43 : 5, 6 :- “ ⁵ Do not be afraid, for I am with you ; I will bring your children from the east and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, ‘ Give them up ! ’ and to the south, ‘ Do not hold them back. ’ Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from ends of the earth. ”

Ezekiel 39 : 25-28 :- “ ²⁵..... I will now bring Jacob back from captivity and will have compassion on all the people of Israel ²⁶ ²⁷ When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will show myself holy through them in the sight of many nations. ²⁸ Then they will know that I am the Lord their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. ”

Isaiah 66 : 8 :- “ Who has ever heard of such a thing ? Who has ever seen such things ? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment ? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children. ”

Fulfilling all the above mentioned promises and prophecies, on the 15th of May 1948, God gave birth to the Nation of Israel and the Jewish people who had been scattered among the nations of the world for about 2000 years commenced to return rapidly to Israel in considerable numbers.

Consequently, the number of Jewish people residing in Israel has swelled from about 650,000 in 1948 to around eight million presently.

- ❖ We mentioned earlier about the ‘ times of the Gentiles ’ (**Luke 21 : 24**) that Jesus prophesied about. This time that commenced in AD 70 continued till AD 1967 for a period of 1897 years. During this time Jerusalem was under the rule of the Gentiles, and we mention below the nations and groups that controlled Jerusalem from AD 70 to date.

AD 70 to AD 324	Romans
AD 325 to AD 639	BYZANTINE
AD 640 to AD 1090	Arabs
AD 1091 to AD 1291	CRUSADERS
AD 1292 to AD 1517	MAMLUKS (Egypt)
AD 1518 to AD 1918	Turks
AD 1919 to AD 1922	LEAGUE OF NATIONS
AD 1923 to AD 1948	British
AD 1948 to AD 1967	Jordanians
AD 1968 to the present	Jews

Thus Jerusalem which was ruled for 1897 years by Gentiles returned to Jewish control on the 7th of June 1967 fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus.

- ❖ Israel that was re-established as an Independent Nation is surrounded by hostile Arab countries which desire to vanquish them. Due to the commencement of the “ Arab Spring ” in several Arab countries in 2011 and other recent developments in many other countries hostile to Israel, the security concerns of Israel have come under great challenges and threats since of late.

Hence the ' World opinion ' regarding the security of Israel would possibly be that Israel is presently on the verge of total destruction and annihilation.

However the Bible verses that I quoted earlier show us that Almighty God who has gathered His chosen people to the land of Israel '**from the four corners of the earth**' (Isaiah 11 : 12), has committed himself to shield them and protect them.

Hence our considered opinion regarding the security of Israel is that (because Almighty God has promised them safety and security in the future) '**Israel will be able to face all threats, challenges, battles, wars and invasions in the future triumphantly, comprehensively and decisively.**'

ii.) Their current spiritual condition

In order to understand the current spiritual condition of the Jewish people we need to take a look at Israel's past history.

Although God chose the Jewish Nation, and gave them many promises through His Word that he would send them a savior (Messiah) who would ' save them ', '**there is no clear promise in the Old Testament that he would come twice.**'

We Christians are very well aware that, in order to save us from the penalty for our sins, Almighty God sent Jesus His Son as a baby boy born in a manger in Bethlehem. We also know that Jesus sacrificed his life on a cross at Calvary, as a ransom / payment for our sins.

We also know that on the third day Jesus rose from the dead and ascended to heaven and that -

' Jesus will come back again from Heaven ' (Read Acts 1 : 9 - 11)

Acts 1 : 11 :- “ Men of Galilee ”, they said, “ why do you stand here looking into the sky ? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven. ”

We are absolutely certain that Jesus will come a second time, because the New Testament pronounces it so clearly. However, we find no firm assurance in the Old Testament that the Messiah would come twice. Instead we come across two apparently conflicting descriptions (prophecies) on the Messiah therein.

- The Messiah portrayed as a victorious king
(**Psalm 2 : 6-8 ; Psalm 89 : 36 ; Isaiah 9 : 6, 7 ; Daniel 7 : 14**)
- The Messiah as a Suffering Servant (Sacrificial lamb)
(**Isaiah 53 : 5 -10 ; Psalm 22 : 14-16**)

Hence it does appear that the Jewish people, who were with great expectation awaiting the arrival of a Messiah who would be coming as a conquering king, and also had no idea that the Messiah would come twice, chose to disregard the prophecies portraying the Messiah as a Suffering servant.

The tragic consequences of their mis-judgment/mis-understanding of the Messiah was that Jews who had been eagerly waiting for the Messiah failed to recognize that Jesus who came to the world as a ‘ **Sacrificial Lamb** ’, was their Messiah and therefore rejected him.

Consequently, the Jewish people who failed to recognize that Jesus actually was/is their Messiah, are presently still waiting impatiently and eagerly for his coming. Hence today both Jews and Christians firmly believe that the arrival of the Messiah is imminent, and are thus looking forward to it expectantly.

However Christians are awaiting the second coming of Jesus whilst the Jews are waiting for the (first coming) of the Messiah !

- ❖ **Although the Jewish people failed to accept Jesus as their Messiah – God has not changed**

So let us try to see the Jewish people, as God sees them, and look at a couple of His attributes.

2 Peter 3 : 9 : “ He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ”

One may say that this does not apply to the Jews. So let’s look at related verses from the Bible, that most certainly applies to both Jews and Gentiles.

Romans 11 : 32 :- “ For God has bound all men over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all. ”

Romans 11 : 29 :- “ For God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ”

God’s call to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob (Israel) are also most certainly permanent and unchanging. Furthermore the love of God for Israel is everlasting (**Jeremiah 31 : 3**) “..... I have loved you with an everlasting love ; I have drawn you with loving kindness.”

Hence I want to describe the spiritual condition of Israel presently and in the future as follows :-

- a) ‘ **Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest.** ’
(Jeremiah 2 : 3)

As all of us would be aware, ‘ Holy ’ means separated unto God.

Furthermore, when ‘ **Firstfruits** ’ are mentioned ‘ **the upcoming harvest** ’ can never be forgotten.

According to **Jeremiah 2 : 3** Israel (belongs to God and is separated unto him) and most certainly will be included in the Harvest to come.

b) **God who has chosen the Nation of Israel will never reject them or forget them**

Romans 11 : 1, 2 :- “ ¹ I ask them : Did God reject his people ? By no means ! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. ² God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew ”

Isaiah 49 : 15 :- “ Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne ? Though she may forget, I will not forget you ! ”

The Word of God is very clear from the above Bible verses and as stated therein ‘ **God did not reject his people whom He foreknew** ’ and ‘ **I will never forget them.** ’

Hence we can be assured that presently God has not abandoned Israel, and that the God of Israel will continue to treat them lovingly, righteously and graciously in the future as well.

c) **Israel has experienced a hardening of their hearts to an extent, and their present spiritual condition is given below under B**

Romans 11 : 25 :- “ Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. ”

Let us now try to understand the deep truths that are mentioned in this verse.

A.) This verse contains, Special Revelation (**Mystery**) given by God to Paul.

B.) The Revelation is that ‘ **Israel experienced a hardening in part** ’ of their hearts.

Please note that,

- This hardening is partial. **Hence Israel has not been completely hardened, but are partially hardened.**
- This hardening is only until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. Hence **this hardening is temporary.**
- The present time is the time during which chosen Gentiles (we are also included here) come in, until their full number is completed. **Hence the present time is our time.**

3. The responsibilities we have with respect to Israel during the present time

Dear children of God, we are living in a time during which, God has given the responsibility of serving Him and His Kingdom, primarily to the Gentiles (this is to us).

Today the Christian church by far and large is of the opinion that this time is rapidly coming to an end and that the second coming of Christ is very near.

Therefore, I want to urge and encourage all of you to meditate on the following verses and suggestions I place before you in obedience to the Word of God.

- i.) **Romans 11 : 11 :- “ Again I ask : Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery ? Not at all ! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. ”**

Here God is revealing an amazing truth to us, that through the salvation of Gentiles, Israelites would become jealous of the Gentiles and would be drawn to God themselves.

- ii.) **Romans 11 : 14 :- “ In the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. ”**
- iii.) **Romans 10 : 19 :- “ Again I ask : Did Israel not understand ? First, Moses says, “ I will make you envious by those who are not a nation ; I will make you angry by a nation that has no understanding. ” (Deuteronomy 32 : 21)**

Almighty God has called us who are Gentiles and brought us to salvation. The Bible verse quoted above reveal to us that his intention is to use our lives and our example, to make the Jews envious of us and hereby bringing them to God.

Presently out of the approximately eight million Jews living in Israel, only about twenty thousand accepted Jesus as their savior. (Messiah) Out of the remaining, Jews I would presume that a vast majority ‘ **has been partially hardened** ’ (**Romans 11 : 25**), and that God is calling Christians to make them jealous of their faith in Jesus through their lives.

Hence the suggestion / request that I place before you is to ask yourself the question / meditate on the question, ‘ **what can I do to draw partially hardened Jews to Jesus ?** ’ In the context of Paul’s words in **Romans 10 : 12-15**.

Romans 10 : 12-15 :- “ ¹² For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, ¹³ for, “ Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. ” ¹⁴ How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in ? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard ? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them ? And how can they preach unless they are sent ? As it is written, “ How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news ! ”

I believe that **Romans 10 : 12-15** records the calling and responsibility that God has placed on our lives, for the purpose of drawing the Jewish people to Himself.

Dear Brother, Sister, what is your response to this calling ? May I suggest that you would sincerely seek gods will in prayer and respond to the calling of Almighty God.

Children of God arise !

Make use of this opportunity to seek God's will

**And His plan for your life, regarding the Jewish
people.**

**Seek for ways and means to support strengthen and
bless the Nation of Israel.**

Pray faithfully for the salvation of all Israel.

**May Almighty God bless you and help you to do so
effectively !!!**

The Future of the Nation of Israel



Israel Study 05



The Future of the Nation of Israel

Introduction :- It is extremely important for Christians to correctly understand the revelations given in the Word of God regarding the Nation of Israel.

In this context, being able to correctly answer the following two questions, I consider to be of paramount importance. The questions are :

- How does Almighty God view Israel today ? Or does He still love Israel, as He did before ?
- Has God removed His Chosen people from their early position and replaced them by the Christian church today ?

In seeking answers to these two questions, we can do so meaningfully **only through studying the Word of God and by revelations given by God**, and NOT BY HUMAN WISDOM.

Hence I wish to draw your attention to the revelation found in **Ephesians 3 : 1-12** given by God to Paul regarding, the Nation of Israel, the Gentiles and the Church. A few important facts that are revealed to Paul are as follows.

- i.) He received knowledge of the ‘ **mystery** ’ of the Gentiles through the ‘ revelation of God. ’

Ephesians 3 : 2, 3 :- “ ² Surely you have heard about the administration of God’s grace that was given to me for you (the Gentiles) ³ that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, ”

- ii.) The revelation was revealed to Paul now, (at the time this epistle was written) and was not known at the time the Old Testament was written.

Ephesians 3 : 5 :-

“ which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God’s holy apostles and prophets. ”

iii.) The revelation is that, “ through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and shares together in the promise in Christ Jesus. ” (Ephesians 3 : 6)

❖ When we ponder/meditate on the revelation found in **Ephesians 3 : 2-6** we are able to arrive at the following conclusions :

a) The church / the body of Christ is comprised of Gentiles who believe in Jesus, as well as Jews who believe in Him and presently the church has a vast majority of Gentiles in it in comparison with the Jews. Possibly the present time is referred to as ‘ **the time of the Gentiles** ’ for this reason.

b) Almighty God joined together / united the Gentiles and the Jews as ‘ **members of one body and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus** ’ (Ephesians 3 : 6) and in no way rejected the Jews.

Ephesians 2 : 14 – 16 :-

“ ¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. ”

When one considers the above Bible portion, written by Paul, it is unfathomable how certain people hold onto the opinion, that God has replaced Israel by the church.

Hence our intention is this Bible Study is to search the Word of God for some revelation found therein regarding the future of the Nation of Israel.

Teaching :-

1. Prophecies important to the Nation of Israel

i.) Prophecies about the birth and life of Jesus

Whilst there are a large number of prophecies regarding, the birth, ministry and death of ' Jesus in the Old Testament ' it is a historical fact that all these prophecies were fulfilled.

I would surmise that virtually all of you would be well aware of many of them out of which I will mention three just to serve as a reminder.

Prophecies that Jesus would,

- Be born in Bethlehem - **Micah 5 : 2**
- Ride to Jerusalem on a donkey - **Zechariah 9 : 9**
- Be born to a virgin - **Isaiah 7 : 14**

While we are all very familiar with the above prophecies and their fulfilment, in order to strengthen your faith I want to place before you an amazing prophecy from the book of Daniel of which most of you may not be aware.

ii.) A prophecy about the time of the death of Jesus

This prophecy was conveyed by the angel Gabriel to the prophet Daniel while he was in prayer.

Daniel 9 : 21, 22 :- “²¹ While I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. He instructed me and said to me, “ Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. ”

The revelation / prophecy given to Daniel by the angel Gabriel is written in **Daniel 9 : 24-27** and is frequently referred to as the ‘**Seventy Sevens**’ prophecy.

Let us now look at this prophecy in more detail.

Daniel 9 : 24 :- “ Seventy ‘ sevens ’ are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. ”

In this vision wherever ‘**week**’ is mentioned it does not refer to a week of seven days but rather to seven years as almost unanimously agreed by Bible scholars.

Daniel 9 : 25, 26 :- “²⁵ Know and understand this : From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘ sevens ’ and sixty-two ‘ sevens ’ ²⁶ After the sixty-two ‘ sevens ’ the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing”

The angel Gabriel is revealing here very clearly that, sixty two weeks (of years) after **the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem, the Anointed One (Jesus) will be cut off** (killed).

This prophecy was given by the angel Gabriel to Daniel in 538 BC.

❖ The fulfillment of the prophecy

In 444 BC King Artaxerxes issued a decree for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

(Please read **Nehemiah 2 : 1-8**)

This means that 14 years (538 - 444) after Daniel received this prophecy, the initial steps towards its fulfilment, started to happen.

Also according to the prophecy from in **Daniel 9 : 25**, we can see the cutting off of the Anointed One would take place (**62+7=69 weeks of years**), this is (**69 x 7= 483 years**) after 444 BC.

Note 1 :- When this prophecy was written, according to the Hebrew Calendar (used in Israel) a year comprises of twelve thirty days months that is three hundred and sixty days.

Note 2 :- Jesus commenced his public ministry. ' **in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar** ' (**Luke 2 : 1, 2**). Since Tiberius Caesar started his reign in AD 14, it is evident that Jesus commenced his public ministry in AD 29. Hence after his ministry of approximately three years Jesus would have been crucified in AD 32, as recorded in Roman history.

As we mentioned earlier, according to Daniel's prophecy Jesus would be cut off 483 years after 444 BC. Since the Hebrew calendar comprises of 360 days and the Gregorian calendar comprises 365.25 days, we need to calculate the number of years in the Solar calendar that is equivalent to 483 years in the Lunar (Hebrew) calendar.

The answer is :

$$\frac{483 \times 360}{365.25} = \underline{476.057}$$

Hence according to the revelation given by angel Gabriel to David, **Jesus was crucified 476 years after 444 BC, which is AD 32.**

Dear child of God, I am certain that you are truly amazed to discover that the Bible has a prophecy like this - a prophecy giving the actual year that Jesus was crucified, several centuries before he was born into the world.

However this should not amaze us because the Lord our God, is a God who is **all-knowing is not limited by time and is a God who reveals ' the end from the beginning ' (Isaiah 46 : 10) to his children / servants.**

In His Word, God has revealed many things concerning the future of the Nation of Israel. Let us read these prophecies from His Word and become aware of our calling and responsibility towards the Jewish people.

iii.) Prophecies about the future of the Nation of Israel

A) Regarding security concerns

In the Word of God, we come across many instances where prophecies regarding future wars against Israel by hostile nations are recorded. I wish to include one of these wars which is very significant and important in this Bible Study. This war is commonly referred to as the war of ' Gog and Magog. '

❖ The war of Gog and Magog – (Ezekiel 38, 39)

Ezekiel 38 : 1-6 :- " ¹ The word of the Lord came to me : ² ' Son of man, set your face against Gog, of the land of Magog, the chief prince of Meshech and Tubal ; prophesy against him ³ and say : ' This is what the Sovereign Lord says : I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal . ⁴ I will turn you around ⁵ Persia, Cush and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets, ⁶ also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops - the many nations with you. "

The Bible is mentioning here, that under the leadership of Gog, many countries will unite together to battle against Israel in the future.

Furthermore, **Ezekiel 39 : 1, 2** records that Gog will emerge from the far north.

Ezekiel 39 : 1, 2 :- “¹ Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say : ‘ This is what the Sovereign Lord says : I am against you, O Gog, chief prince of Meshech and Tubal. ² I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel. ”

The countries mentioned in **Ezekiel 38 : 1-6**, are identified as the following by a large number of Bible scholars :

i	<u>Gog</u> who comes form the far north - (Ezekiel 38 : 2) - possibly this could be Russia
ii	<u>Persia</u> - (Ezekiel 38 : 5) – Iran
iii	<u>Cush</u> – (Ezekiel 38 : 5) - countries from the upper Nile region- that is Ethiopia and other countries
iv	<u>Put</u> – (Ezekiel 38 : 5) Libya
v	<u>Gomer</u> – (Ezekiel 38 : 6) - Gomer is one of the sons of Japheth, a son of Noah (Genesis 10 : 2), however it is not clear what country is identified here.
vi	<u>Beth Togarmah</u> - (Ezekiel 38 : 6) Togarmah is a son of Gomer (1 Chronicles 1 : 8) Bible scholars are of the view that Togarmah is Turkey

As prophesied in (**Ezekiel 38 : 1-8**) many nations will unite together to invade Israel and will gather on the mountains of Israel. Then Almighty God, the Protector of Israel will rise up against these foreign armies and destroy them totally.

A brief summary of the ' Gog and Magog war ' and its outcome prophesied in the Bible is as follows :

❖ **Outcome of the war of Gog and Mgog - (Ezekiel 38, 39)**

- When Gog and his armies gather on the mountains of Israel, God will cause a great earthquake to take place . As a result of this ' **mountains will be overturned. The cliffs will crumble and every wall fall to the ground.** ' (Ezekiel 38 : 18-20)
- God will cause these armies to fight against one another, and will attack the armies with plagues, bloodshed, rain, hailstones, and burning sulfur (Ezekiel 38 : 21, 22)
- God will destroy all the troops and nations who are with Gog, and they will become food to all kinds of carrion birds and to wild animals (Ezekiel 39 : 2-5)
- The bodies of all those who belong to Gog and his supporting armies, will be buried in the Valley of Harmon Gog, and Israel will take seven months to bury the dead in-order to cleanse the land (Ezekiel 39 : 11, 12)

B) Regarding their Spiritual condition

In our previous Bible study we mentioned a mystery that God had revealed to Paul regarding Israel as found in **Romans 11 : 25.**

Romans 11 : 25 :- " Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. "

In order to understand this mystery more clearly let us look at **Romans 11 : 13-36.**

The ‘ parable ’ of the Olive Tree (Romans 11 : 13-29)

In this portion of Scripture Paul presents us with an illustration (parable) comparing Israel to a cultivated Olive tree, and the Gentiles to a wild Olive tree (**Romans 11 : 24**). Paul goes to explain in **Romans 11 : 17, 18** that ‘ **If some of the branches** ’ (individual Jews) ‘ **haven’t been broken off, and you being a wild Olive shoot** (Gentile Christians) **have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the Olive root,** ¹⁸ **do not boast over those branches** (Jews who have been broken off).

Paul also sates in **Romans 11 : 20b, 21** that ‘ **Do not be arrogant but be afraid.** ²¹ **For if God did not spare the natural branches (Jews who were broken off because of their unbelief (Romans 11 : 20a) he will not spare you** (Christians who backslide) **either.** ”

When we study **Romans 11 : 17-21** as a whole, it is evident that God is showing us that the present condition of both Jews and Gentiles is only temporary, and that God will not hesitate to engraft the branches of cultivated Olive trees if they return to the faith, or cut off the wild Olive branches if they do not persist in faith.

Romans 11 : 22, 23 :-

“ ²² **Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God : sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off.** ²³ **And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again.** ”

I trust that the above is self-explanatory and needs no clarification as such.

As we already learned in the previous Bible study we can infer from **Romans 11 : 25** that presently Israelites are experiencing :

- A partial hardening of their hearts
- This hardening is temporary
- It will continue only till the full number of Gentiles come in

Hence the present ‘ heart condition ’ of the Israelites, will definitely change in the not too distant future, and God’s Words declares , “ **And so all Israel will be saved** ” as it is written “ **The deliverer will come from Zion ; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob ” (Romans 11 : 26).** (Please read **Isaiah 45 : 17 and Jeremiah 31 : 34**) What is meant by ‘ all Israel ’ in this verse is debatable and has given rise to several different views. However our opinion is that it means that a vast majority of Israelites in this last generation would come to salvation.

Romans 11 : 28, 29 :- “²⁸ As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies on your account ; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs,²⁹ for God’s gifts and his call are irrevocable. ”

Dear children of God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel does not change. He will not forsake his people whom he has chosen and called unto himself.

When we consider all the above, we come to the conclusion that in the future there will come a time when a vast majority of the Jewish people would be saved. The main reasons why we believe that this would be so are as follows.

- In the Bible we find that ‘ **Firstfruits** ’ and ‘ **Harvest** ’ are invariably connected to one another, the Firstfruits always being a forerunner of the ‘ **Harvest** ’ to come.

Jeremiah 2 : 3 :- “ Israel was holy to the Lord, the firstfruits of his harvest. ”

Romans 8 : 23 :- “ we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, grown inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ”

1 Corinthians 15 : 20 :- “ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ”

- We are well aware, that God never removed the “good Olive tree : which is Israel, and that Jesus our Lord and Savior came into this world through this tree. ”

When the Christian church was born with great power of the day of Pentecost about three thousand Jews came to believe in Jesus and were baptized (**Acts 2 : 41**).

We believe that in a like manner, towards the end of this age, a massive number of Jews will be saved as prophesied in the Word of God.

Romans 11 : 26 :- “ And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written : The deliverer will come from Zion ; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ”

- Because of the great unchanging love, God has for the Jewish people (Please read **Romans 11 : 28** again).
- Because the call of God is eternal, everlasting and is irrevocable (**Romans 11 : 29**).

2. The responsibility that we Christians have regarding the future of the Nation of Israel

A question that every Christian should ask himself / herself is the question ; ‘ what can I do to enhance the future security and spiritual development of the Nation of Israel ? ’

Dear child of God, please understand that two essential and vital things have occurred in the past, in order for you to become a child of God. They are :

- i.) God sent his only begotten son Jesus to all mankind through the Nation of Israel, as a Savior to all mankind.
- ii.) Someone has prayed unto God, with deep commitment for your salvation.

Dear Brother / Sister as we all know i.) above has already been done by God, but **we have the responsibility of doing so for other people.**

We Christians should never forget the great calling Almighty God has placed on our lives He has called us. Apart from other things, to pray for the Salvation of others and to share the gospel with them whenever God gives us the opportunity.

We should not limit this to our close contacts and those who are near and dear to us, only. I would suggest that all of you would make a commitment to do so for the Nation of Israel as well.

Romans 10 : 1, 2 :- “¹ Brothers, my heart ’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ²For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ”

Let us all like Paul pray continually for the salvation of the Jewish people.

In order to help them increase their knowledge of the truth, let us also do all we can to take the gospel to them or to support / assist those who are already engaged in doing so.

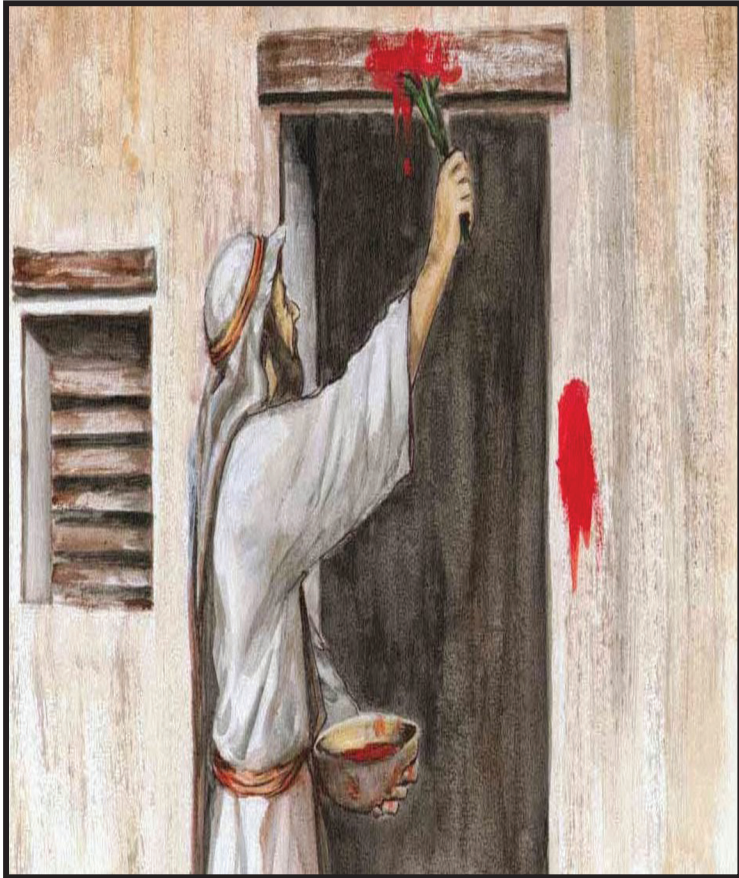
Dear Friend, just think about this. If as a result of your prayers, even one Jew were to be saved, can anyone estimate the value of that soul ? What reward would God grant you for this Wonderful Work ?

**Let us all pray earnestly for the salvation of the
Jewish people, with all our hearts.**

**May God grant you the strength
to do so faithfully !!!**

The Feasts given by God to Israel

01



Israel Study 06



The Feasts given by God to Israel – 01

Leviticus 23 : 1 - 44

Introduction :- Almighty God who had chosen the Israelites as His people appointed the Feasts which they were to hold, and instructed Moses to inform them accordingly.

Leviticus 23 : 1-2 :-

“¹ The Lord said to Moses, ‘ Speak to the Israelites and say to them : ‘ These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the Lord, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies. ”

The first ‘ **sacred assembly** ’ (mentioned in **Leviticus 23 : 3**) is the ‘ **Sabbath day** ’ during which the Israelites were to rest and do no work and hence was to be a ‘ weekly sacred assembly. ’

Leviticus 23 : 3 :-

“ There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work ; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord. ”

Hence we can see that the Sabbath day was to be a ‘ weekly sacred assembly ’, and that God apart from the Sabbath day appointed Seven Annual Feasts which are mentioned as ‘ **the Lord’s Appointed Feasts.** ’ (**Leviticus 23 : 4**)

Leviticus 23 : 4 :-

“ These are the Lord’s appointed feasts, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times : ”

From **Leviticus 23 : 4 - 44** we find recorded the following seven feasts which are celebrated annually by the Israelites and are referred to as the Lord’s appointed feasts.

- i. The Passover Feast
- ii. The Feast of Unleavened Bread
- iii. The Feast of Firstfruits
- iv. The Feast of Weeks (Pentecost, Harvest)
- v. The Feast of Trumpets
- vi. The Day of Atonement
- vii. The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths)

We can infer that one of the purposes of God in appointing the above feasts for the Israelites to celebrate annually was to keep them reminded of the Great and Mighty works of God, who saved them from slavery in Egypt and brought them to the Promised Land.

However, when we study the first four feasts mentioned above, we can't help but notice the remarkable connection between them and the ministry of Jesus as well as the day of Pentecost, when the Christian church was empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, one of the most important intentions of this Bible study is to help you to increase your understanding about the above **Seven appointed feasts of God and their prophetic significance**. We believe that thereby your knowledge and understanding of our **unchanging, everlasting God, whose love towards us is unlimited**, would be vastly strengthened and increased.

Teaching :-

1. The seven feasts of God, given to the Nation of Israel and the Christian Faith
 - i. The God of Israel is a God who reveals to us in advance, of things to come
 - a. Right at the beginning of the Old Testament prophecies of God have been written

Let us now look at such an instance recorded in the second chapter of the first book of the Bible.

Genesis 2 : 17 :- “ but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die. ”

We can see here, God informing / warning man of the repercussions that would follow if man were to do something that God had forbidden. In other words, God informing man, what would happen to him in the future if he disobeyed God.

We all know that although God warned man of this future happening, man failed to heed God’s warning and disobeyed God. As a consequence of this, just as God had warned, **man died (spiritually)** that very day. The relationship between God and man was broken the moment man disobeyed God (**sinned**), and this is referred to us as ‘ **Spiritual death.** ’

However, Almighty God who is a God of Love, responded to man’s sin (**disobedience**) by making a promise to send a savior from the offspring of the woman, on the very occasion man disobeyed him (**Genesis 3 : 15**). This revelation which is a promise of God was fulfilled by Jesus on the cross of Calvary.

b. The Bible itself is full of prophecies

While the New Testament has many prophecies, a vast number of them concern the second coming of Jesus. Almost all the books of the New Testament contain prophecies regarding this.

When we look at the Old Testament, we find that the last seventeen books of the Old Testament bear the names of the prophets who wrote them.

Furthermore, Moses who was used by God to write the first five books of the Bible is described as a prophet who had no equal, in the Word of God.

Deuteronomy 34 : 10 :- “ Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face. ”

According to this verse, undoubtedly Moses was a prophet, and even King David whom we do not consider as a ‘ prophet ’ wrote the book of **Psalms** that prophesy the coming of Jesus, the crucifixion etc.

All the facts mentioned above, confirm that the God of Israel is a God who reveals things of the future to mankind through His Word.

c. God Himself states that this is so in His Word

Isaiah 46 : 10 :- “ I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. ”

I say : My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please. ”

We need to understand that this is the nature of God. He is a God who wants to inform us about things to come, and does as He pleases.

Human beings like us are not able to tell ‘ **the end from the beginning.** ’ What man usually does is virtually the opposite of what God does.

Man observes and studies the end, and puts forward his own opinion and theories of how it all began.

Our Almighty God is the only God who is able to state the end from the beginning, and the Bible records that ‘ He has promised not to do anything without first revealing it to His prophets. ’

Amos 3 : 7 :- “ Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets. ”

When we take into consideration all the facts put forward thus far, we come to the conclusion, that the seven Feasts of God that God instructed the Israelites to hold annually, ‘**at their appointed time**’ (**Leviticus 23 : 4**) has definitely to align with what is written in (**Isaiah 46 : 10 ; Amos 3 : 7, etc.**)

Hence it is our considered opinion, that the seven Feasts of God has great prophetic significance, that they are actually ‘ **Symbolic Prophecies** ’ which would be fulfilled by God.

ii.) The Seven Feasts of God

a. The Feast of Passover (Pesach)

Leviticus 23 : 5 :- “ The Lord’s Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. ”

In order to understand the Feast of Passover more completely, it is important to read **Exodus 12 : 1-28** which records all the instructions and directions God gave to Moses and Aaron about how it was to be celebrated.

It is my intention to first focus your attention on **Exodus 12 : 21, 22.**

Exodus 12 : 21, 22 :-

“ 21 Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, “ Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22 Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. Not one of you shall go out the door of his house until morning. ”

My Dear children of God, in order for you to clearly understand the instructions given by God to the Israelites, fill a basin with water and take it to the front-door of your house. Take a small branch of a tree, dip it in the water in the basin, and sprinkle it on the top and the two sides of the doorframe.

If someone were to watch you doing this, that person would be able to observe your hand sprinkling water on your front door, **in the shape of a cross.**

Even as you probably not even realizing it, were sprinkling water on your front door in the shape of a cross, on the first Passover day, the Israelites who probably at that time had never known a cross, were instructed by God ‘ **to mark their front door doorframe in the shape of a cross with the blood of the lamb.** ’

Hence I am of the opinion, that the instructions given by God to the Israelites, to mark their doorframes with blood in this manner, **symbolically points to the cross of Jesus on Calvary.**

I therefore want to place before you a couple of Bible verses that clearly point in the same direction, thus supporting my view.

John 1 : 29 :-

“ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “ Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world ! ”

1 Corinthians 5 : 7 :-

“Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast - as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

We have no doubt that Paul is referring to our Lord Jesus Christ as ‘ **Christ - our Passover lamb** ’ in this verse, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

- ❖ Let us also look at the instructions recorded in **Exodus 12 : 1-8** regarding the Passover Feast.

A) Exodus 12 : 2 :- “ This month is to be for you the first month, the first month of your year. ”

God seems to be telling his people, the Israelites, ‘ your time of slavery is over, you are now stepping into a new life, you are to start afresh. ’

Dear Brother and Sister in Christ Jesus, by following the instructions given to them by God regarding the Passover feast the Israelites stepped into a New Life and a New Beginning. Thereafter they in faith took their first steps towards the Promised Land.

I would suggest to you that ‘ **now is the best time, the perfect moment** ’ for you to commence a New Life and a New Journey with the Lord Jesus Christ, by surrendering – your lives completely to Him in faith.

2 Corinthians 5 : 17 :-

“ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation ; the old has gone, the new has come ! ”

- B) Exodus 12 : 5 :- “ The animals you choose must be year-old males without defect, and you may take them from the sheep or the goats. ”**

It is no secret, that our Lord who sacrificed His life for us on the cross at Calvary was perfect and without defect, and is the only person who was sinless.

2 Corinthians 5 : 21 :- “ God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. ”

- C) Exodus 12 : 8 :- “ That same night they are to eat the meat roasted over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread made without yeast. ”**

God is instructing the Israelites here, to “ eat bread made without yeast. ”

1 Corinthians 5 : 8 :- “ Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth. ”

In the Word of God, yeast symbolises sin, and God is instructing the Israelites to reject and overcome the sins of malice and wickedness, and to live in sincerity and truth. Let us as Christians do likewise and always act sincerely and truthfully.

- D) Exodus 12 : 8 :- “ along with bitter herbs, ”**

Some of you may raise the question, ‘ why did God instruct the Israelites to eat bitter herbs ? ’ in this instance.

I believe that possibly the likely answer to this question is that God did not want the Israelites to easily forget their bitter past as slaves, their pain their sadness and suffering, so that they would not be drawn again to their past lives.

Dear child of God, who has embarked on a New Life with Jesus, Satan is very cunning and is always looking for ways and means to trap you, and draw you back to your old life. Always be wary of Satan's devices to draw you back, resist him always and draw closer to God.

James 4 : 7 :- “ Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ”

Dear Friends, you who have put on the ‘ New man ’, do not forget to put off the ‘ Old man. ’ Do not delay to do so. If you have still not done so, - **make a firm decision to do so today itself. “ Put off the things of old and resist the devil !! ”**

a(1) The Passover Feast and the Crucifixion of Jesus

Perhaps many of you are already aware of the similarities between the Passover Feast and the crucifixion of Jesus. However, I wish to point out to you, that Jesus Christ was crucified during the period of the Passover Feast, as clearly mentioned in the Bible.

Matthew 26 : 1, 2 :- “ ¹ When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ² ‘ As you know, the Passover is two days away - and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified. ”

b. The Feast of Unleavened Bread (Chag Ha Matzot)

Leviticus 23 : 6, 7 :- “ ⁶ On the fifteenth day of that month the Lord's Feast of Unleavened Bread begins ; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. ⁷ On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. ”

As we have mentioned earlier, yeast symbolizes sin, and here we find God instructing the Israelites, ‘ **for seven days you must eat bread without yeast.** ’

In the Word of God, the number seven represents completion / perfection. Hence we see here that God is instructing the Israelites to ‘ **completely refrain from sin.** ’

1 Peter 1 : 15, 16 :- “¹⁵ But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do ;¹⁶ for it is written : “ Be holy, because I am holy. ”

The Lord instructed the Israelites to celebrate the Passover Feast on the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days from the fifteenth day.

From **Exodus 12** we see that on the night of the “ Passover ” itself, Pharaoh released the Israelites (**Exodus 12 : 31-36**) from Egypt. Hence on the next day the Israelites entered the seven-day period of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

b(1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread and the importance for us Christians to live Holy lives.

Similarly, all of us who call ourselves Christians should clearly understand, that by ‘ knowing that Jesus died for us at Calvary ’ **does not make us children of God.**

If on the “ Passover night ” any Jewish family had failed to mark their front door doorframe with the blood of a lamb, as instructed by God, **the first born of that family would have received the same fate as that of the Egyptian families.**

The knowledge that we have would be of no avail. Anyone who desires to become a child of God must surrender his / her life to Christ Jesus and be saved from the punishment of sin.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread is calling us Christians, **to lead holy lives.**

Let us all therefore surrender our lives to Jesus and pledge to keep them holy.

c. The Feast of Firstfruits (Reshit Katzir)

Leviticus 23 : 10, 11 :-“¹⁰ Speak to the Israelites and say to them : ‘ When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. He is to wave the sheaf before the Lord so it will be accepted on your behalf ; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. ’ ”

c (1) The Feast of Firstfruits and the Resurrection of Jesus

When we look at the instructions given by God regarding the celebration of the Feast of Firstfruits, we see that Almighty God instructed the Israelites that the sheaf of the first grain brought to the priest by the people should be ‘ **waved by him before the Lord on the day after the Sabbath.** ’

Furthermore, we all know that the resurrection of Jesus took place on the first day of the week, which is the day after the Sabbath or Sunday and is celebrated by Christians who refer to it as Easter Sunday. Hence the Feast of Firstfruits shows us that just as Jesus was resurrected from the dead, all of us who are children of God will also be resurrected from death.

1 Corinthians 15 : 20 :- “ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. ”

1 Corinthians 15 : 42 :- “ So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is raised imperishable, ”

1 Corinthians 15 : 44 :- “ It is sown as a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. ”

d. The Feast of Weeks (Shavuot)

Leviticus 23 : 15, 16 :-

“¹⁵ From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. ¹⁶ Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the Lord. ”

We are able to gather more information about the feast which we usually refer to as ‘ **the Feast of Pentecost** ’ by reading **Exodus 34 : 22** and **Deuteronomy 16 : 10, 16**.

d (1) The Feast of Weeks and the Christian Church

All Christians would be aware that it was during the Feast of Weeks that the church was filled with the Holy Spirit and three thousand new believers were baptized (Please read **Acts 2 : 1-4, 41**).

Dear Child of God, Almighty God has called you and accepted you as His child, and appointed you to serve Him. Please, always remember that in order to serve him effectively and meaningfully it is essential to do so under the direction, guidance and filling of the Holy Spirit.

2. The first four Feasts of God and what they teach us about the Christian Life

We have already seen that the first three Feasts of God are symbolically pointing to the crucifixion, sinless life and resurrection of Jesus, whilst the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the church took place during the fourth Feast which is the **Feast of Weeks**.

i.) When we take a closer look at the above, we are able to identify two important attributes of God. They are :

a) **God is ' all-knowing ' and knows the end of everything at the beginning.**

Hence, he knows everything about your future, and has prepared a wonderful plan for your life, a plan which is **perfect and ideally suited for you.** (Read **Ephesians 2 : 10**) His love for us is infinite and therefore he reveals to us **future happenings that we need to know.**

He would therefore reveal those things to you, through His Word, through a prophetic word from an anointed man of God, a vision, a dream, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, etc. **Therefore, please do not be anxious and worry about your future, if you really need to know (not just want to know) God will do the needful.**

b) **Let us now look at what these four feasts, teach us about the Christian Life.**

There is only one way to receive Salvation.

The one and only way to receive salvation is to have Faith in God and receive Jesus into our lives (hearts) as our savior.

When we do so **God saves us through His grace.** This salvation is **a gift from God** and cannot be achieved by us living a virtuous life (good works).

(Please read **Ephesians 2 : 8, 9 ; John 1 : 12, 5 : 24**)

a) We who have thus been saved by faith, should get rid of all the sin (symbolized by yeast) in our lives, put off our old self, and commit ourselves to lead holy lives.

b) When God blesses our lives, we should always remember to praise and thank Him, and to worship Him ceaselessly.

The Feast of Firstfruits teaches us this and also teaches us that if we were to die before the second coming of Jesus we will be resurrected from the dead having a Spiritual body.

- c) God is calling us to live our lives full of the fruit of the Holy Spirit like Jesus did

In order to do so it is essential that we live our lives **in obedience to the Word of God and according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.**

**May God help you to live such lives
That bring Him Glory and Honor always !!!**

The Feasts given by God to Israel

02



Israel Study 07



The Feasts given by God to Israel – 02

Leviticus 23 : 1- 44

Introduction :- Today we are going to study about the last three feasts referred to as ‘ **The Lord’s appointed Feasts** ’, (**Leviticus 23 : 4**) given by God to Israel. These feasts are the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles all of which are celebrated during the Autumn season (Fall) in Israel and are usually referred to as the Fall Festivals.

In our previous Bible study, we learnt that the first feasts which are celebrated during the Spring Season can be identified as ‘ symbolic prophecies ’ all of which are symbolic of three of the most important things that occurred in the life of Jesus at his first coming.

Hence it would be logical to expect the last three feasts to similarly be symbolic of three important happenings in the life of Jesus at his second coming. Therefore, one of the important objectives of this Bible study is to delve into this possibility seriously and arrive at a plausible conclusion.

We therefore invite you to enter this study with a Bible in hand and a deep desire to learn about the amazing deeds of our loving ‘ Heavenly Father. ’

Teaching :-

1. The Feast of Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)

Leviticus 23 : 23, 24 :- “²³ The Lord said to Moses, “²⁴ Say to the Israelites : ‘ On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. ”

It is important for us to look at some occasions where the Jewish people use trumpet blasts, in order to understand the significance of this feast.

i.) God had instructed the Israelites to blow trumpets on various special occasions. For example,

a) **For calling the community together,**

Numbers 10 : 2 :- “ The Lord said to Moses : ² “ Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the camp set out. ”

b) **When they go out for battle,**

Numbers 10 : 9 :- “ ⁹ When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the Lord your God and rescued from your enemies. ”

ii.) When God manifested himself to the Israelites on mount Sinai to give them his commandments, and events connected to the end of times and the second coming of Jesus the blowing of trumpets, was heard.

Exodus 19 : 16 :- “ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ”

Exodus 19 : 19 :- “ and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. ”

a) In the book of **Revelation**, we read about future events regarding the ‘ **end times** ’ of our world, which are revealed with / by seven angels blowing seven trumpets.

(Please read **Revelation 8 : 1, 2, 6-13 ; 9 :1-5**)

- b) When the last of the seven angels blows his trumpets, a special revelation regarding Jesus our Lord, who will reign forever is revealed.

Revelation 11 : 15 :- “ The seventh angel sounded his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, which said : “ The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever. ”

- iii.) The Bible reveals that at a certain time prior to the second coming of Jesus to reign our world, Jesus will come down from heaven and His children who are living at that time will be lifted to the clouds to meet Jesus in the air. This is called the ‘ Rapture.’

1 Thessalonians 4 : 15-17 :- “ ¹⁵ According to the Lord’s own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. ¹⁶ For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. ”

- iv.) Jesus Christ himself, prophesying about His second coming mentions a ‘ loud trumpet call ’ (Matthew 24 : 31).

Matthew 24 : 30, 31 :- “ ³⁰ At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. ³¹ And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. ”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, it is my opinion, that God appointed the day for the Israelites to celebrate the Feast of Trumpets to be, ‘ **On the first day of the seventh month** ’ (**Leviticus 23 : 24**) has a definite motive. I believe that this day was fixed by the Lord the God of Israel to indicate ‘ **the season of the second coming of Jesus.** ’

This opinion I hold is further strengthened when one reads the instructions God has given the Israelites in **Leviticus 23 : 26-32** regarding the ‘ **Day of Atonement** ’ which we will study next.

1(a) The Feast of Trumpets and the second coming of Jesus

By appointing / establishing the Feast of Trumpets, God is giving the Jewish people a symbolical prophecy regarding the second coming of Jesus.

The Christian church is well aware, that at His second coming, Jesus would be revealed as a Conquering King, who will be ‘ **coming on the clouds of the sky with power and great glory, and he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call.** ’ (**Matthew 24 : 30, 31**)

The Christian church as a whole is also of the firm opinion that the second coming of Jesus is very near at hand. Furthermore religious Jews believe that their Messiah would come (**for the first time**) to the world during the Feast of ‘ **Rosh Hashanah.** ’

Hence I consider the present to be an appropriate time to study what the Bible teaches us about being prepared for the second coming of Jesus. For this purpose I want to focus your attention to the passage of scripture found from **Matthew 24 : 1 to 25 : 13.**

The Bible records that, “ **As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “ Tell us ”, they said, “ when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age ? ”** (Matthew 24 : 3)

In response to their questions, Jesus gave them a list of signs regarding his second coming, **(Matthew 24 : 4-31)** and apart from other things, taught them three parables. The three parables are, ‘ the faithful and wicked servant ’, **(Matthew 24 : 45-51)** ‘ the Parable of the ten virgins ’ **(Matthew 25 : 1-13)** and ‘ the Parable of the Talents ’ **(Matthew 25 : 14-30)**.

Dear child of God, please read these three parables prayerfully and ask the Lord to speak to you through them. When you do so sincerely and truthfully, you can be assured that God will answer you clearly and show you what you need to correct in your life in order to be suitably prepared for the second coming of Jesus, **listen to his voice, his leading and his guidance**, and lead lives that are,

- ✓ **God fearing,**
- ✓ **Obedient to God,**
- ✓ **Always ready and prepared for the second coming of Jesus.**

2. The Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

Leviticus 23 : 26, 27 :- “²⁶ The Lord said to Moses,²⁷ “ The tenth day of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves, and present an offering made to the Lord by fire. ”

Leviticus 23 : 32 :- “ It is a sabbath of rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath. ”

Detailed information given by God to Moses regarding the observance of the Day of Atonement is found in **Leviticus 16**.

On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would enter the Most Holy Place of the temple and “ **will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been** ” (Leviticus 16 : 16)

Leviticus 16 : 3 :-

“ This is how Aaron (the High Priest) is to enter the sanctuary area : with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering. ” (Leviticus 16 : 5). Further instructions that were given to Aaron are recorded in the Bible as follows.

Leviticus 16 : 7-10 :-

“ ⁷ Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the Lord at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. ⁸ He is to cast lots for the two goats – one lot for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. ⁹ Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the Lord and sacrifice it for a sin offering. ¹⁰ But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to be used for making atonement by sending it into the desert as a scapegoat. ”

Leviticus 16 : 21, 22 :-

“ ²¹ He (Aaron) is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites - all their sins and put them on the goat’s head. He shall then send the goat away into the desert in the care of a man appointed for the task. ²² The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place ; and the man shall release it in the desert. ”

It is very difficult for us to understand the meanings of all the detailed instructions given by God to Moses, regarding the observance of the Day of Atonement. However, there are certain things which are quite evident to us and I want to share them with you.

They are as follows :

- i. No man has in himself the worthiness to draw near Almighty God.
- ii. Our God is totally, absolutely, perfectly and completely holy,
- iii. The price that Jesus paid for our salvation at Calvary is immeasurable and priceless.
- iv. The love that God has for us is also immeasurable.

2 (a) The Day of Atonement and the binding of Satan's power

Something that is rather difficult to comprehend about the instructions given by God regarding the observance of the Day of Atonement are those concerning the scapegoat (**Azazel in Hebrew and mentioned in Leviticus 16 : 8, 10, 26**) that is taken to a solitary place and released in the desert (**Leviticus 16 : 22**). So let us try to understand who / what is symbolized by the scapegoat.

The Bible very clearly indicates the Jesus at his second coming will come ' **as a victorious king riding on a white horse.** ' (**Revelation 19 : 11-16**) and that subsequently Satan will be bound for a thousand years (**Revelation 20 : 1-3**).

Hence the symbolism of the observance of the Day of Atonement nine days after the Feast of Trumpets which symbolizes the second coming of Jesus shows that after the second coming of Jesus, Satan (**symbolized by the scapegoat**) will be bound for a thousand years.

Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, paid the (**total price for our sins**) at Calvary. Hence we who are children of God are receivers of Eternal Life and not eternal death. However, until the second coming of Jesus, Satan, our enemy will oppose us and will attempt to draw us back to sin, and consequently we are presently engaged in a battle with the enemy.

Regarding the above, the good news is that the Day of Atonement confirms that our battle will be temporary, as Satan will be bound for a thousand years in the (not too distant) future. Hence let us engage in the battle with the enemy confidently and in faith, even as the Word of God advises us to ‘**Resist the devil and he will flee from you**’ (James 4 : 7).

3. The Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

Leviticus 23 : 33, 34 :- “³³ The Lord said to Moses, ³⁴ “ Say to the Israelites : ‘ On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the Lord’s Feast of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. ”

The Feast of Tabernacles (Booths) was appointed by God and is celebrated by the Israelites to commemorate their journey from slavery in Egypt to the Promised Land.

Leviticus 23 : 40 :- “ On the first day you are to take choice fruit from the trees, and palm fronds, leafy branches and poplars, and rejoice before the Lord your God for seven days. ”

Leviticus 23 : 42 :- “ Live in booths for seven days : All native-born Israelites are to live in booths. ”

The Feast of Tabernacles is also referred to as the ‘Feast of Harvest’ (**Exodus 23 : 16**) as the days appointed by God for it corresponded with the gathering of crops of the land.

Leviticus 23 : 39 :- “ So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the Lord for seven days ; the first day is a day of rest, and the eighth day also is a day of rest. ”

Therefore, we can see two future events, that the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Harvest symbolize.

The first one is that, just as the farmer gathers his harvest at harvest time, Jesus at His second coming will gather his children to himself. The book of **Revelation** states that subsequently Jesus will rule the world for a thousand years. However this rule of Jesus is temporary and will last only for a period of one thousand years, and we too shall be with him.

Revelation 20 : 6 :- “ Blessed and holy are those who have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years. ”

After the thousand years are over, God will take us to our ‘ Promised Land ’ forever and this is described in **Revelation 21 & 22**. Hence the record event that the Feast of Tabernacles symbolizes is that just as the time of living in booths was only temporary and lasted only until the Israelites entered the Promised Land, our thousand-year reign with Christ is also temporary and our final destination will be Heaven.

4. What the Three Fall Feasts tell us about the future

i. The Feast of Trumpets

The Feast of Trumpets reveals to us that Jesus will come again and will reign forever.

Revelation 11 : 15 :- “ and there were loud voices in heaven, which said : “ The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever and ever. ”

ii. The Day of Atonement

The day of Atonement shows that Satan will be bound for one thousand years in the future.

Revelation 20 : 2 :- “ He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ”

iii. The Feast of Tabernacles

The Feast of Tabernacles reveals that, Jesus will rule the world for one thousand years with his chosen children, and after that there will be a new heaven and a new earth and an eternal kingdom for God's children (**Revelation 21, 22**).

4(a) What the Fall Festivals teach us about the Christian life

While the Fall Feasts teach us about the second coming of Jesus and things to follow, it is essential that this knowledge should affect our lives as Christians. Hence I want to focus your attention on **Matthew 25 : 31-46** where Jesus is teaching about a 'judgment of the nations.' (See **Matthew 25 : 32**)

❖ **The Judgement of the Nations - Matthew 25 : 31-46**

- The judge / King on the throne is Jesus, and there are two widely accepted interpretations of the timing of this judgment. They are :
 - It will take place at the beginning of the earthly millennial kingdom (**Matthew 25 : 31, 34**)
 - It will take place at the ' **great white throne** ' at the end of the age (**Revelation 20 : 11-15**)
- The basis of His judgement, is how the nations treated the Jews during the ' **times of persecution** ' that would take place before the second coming of Jesus.
(From **Matthew 25 : 35-39, 42-44** we can infer this)
- The words used by Jesus in **Matthew 25 : 40**, ' **these brothers of mine** ' indicate that Jesus was referring to the Jewish people.

Dear children of God, we are all very well aware that we are saved **‘ by grace through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. ’**

(Ephesians 2 : 8, 9)

However, in **Matthew 24** we find Jesus himself teaching that during the ‘ end times ’ the Jewish people would undergo great hardships and persecution.

Matthew 24 : 9 :- “ Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. ”

Matthew 24 : 21 :- “ For then there will be great distress, unequalled from the beginning of the world until now - and never to be equaled again. ”

Jesus goes on to teach that during these desperate times that the Jews would have to undergo, people who show compassion, love and kindness to the Jewish people, would inherit the kingdom of God.

Matthew 25 : 34 :- “ Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘ Come , you who are blessed by my Father ; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. ’ ”

In ‘ Israel Bible study 02 ’, we studied the promise that God gave Abraham saying ‘ I will bless those who bless you. ’ (**Genesis 12 : 3**) From **Matthew 25 : 34** we see God giving an absolute assurance that He will most certainly fulfil this promise without fail. In other words in this instance God is promising to ‘ **Bless those who Bless the Jews ’** during the persecution at the ‘ end times ’, with the **wonderful blessing of granting them the inheritance in the kingdom of God.** The promises of God are eternal and will always be fulfilled by Him.

2 Corinthians 1 : 20 :- “ For no matter how many promises God has made, they are ‘ Yes ’ in Christ ”

My Dear Children in Christ Jesus, even as the second coming of Jesus has drawn very near, many countries in the world are opposing (‘ cursing ’) the Nation of Israel.

Even as many nations are opposing the Jewish people at this time, LET US ALL BLESS ISRAEL.

When we do so, our promise-keeping God will undoubtedly lift us up and bless us bountifully.

**May Almighty God Bless you,
And Help you to be a Blessing
To the Nation of Israel !!!**

The Second Coming of Jesus – 01



Israel Study 08



The Second Coming of Jesus - 01

Introduction :- On the occasion when Jesus Christ who had risen from the dead, ascended to heaven, two men dressed in white appeared and proclaimed to the Apostles who were present “ **Men of Galilee,**” they said, “ **why do you stand here looking into the sky ? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.** ” (Acts 1 : 11)

Jesus himself prophesied that He (**the Son of man**) would come again with power and great glory, (**Matthew 24 : 30**) but that the day and the hour was known only to the Father.

Matthew 24 : 36 :-

“ No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. ”

Although no one would be aware of the day and the hour of the second coming of Jesus, Jesus taught that it would be possible to identify the season during which it will occur.

Matthew 24 : 32, 33 :-

“ ³² Now learn this lesson from the fig tree : As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. ³³ Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it is near, right at the door. ”

Dear children of God, as we study the Bible, we are able to see very clearly, that we have already entered the season of the second coming of Jesus, but that absolutely no man would know the date or timing, Hence it is our intention to place before you certain signs which would help you to see that you have entered the season of the second coming of Jesus, through this Bible Study.

Teaching :- 1. Signs prophesied by Jesus

The following questions were asked by the disciples of Jesus while he was sitting on the Mount of Olives.

Matthew 24 : 3 :- “ As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately. “ Tell us ” they said, “ when will this happen, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age ? ”

The reply that Jesus gave the disciples is recorded from **Matthew 24 : 4 to 25 : 46** and the following are the signs given by Jesus on this occasion.

i. The prevalence of deceivers, false prophets and false Christs (Matthew 24 : 4, 5, 11, 24)

Matthew 24 : 4, 5 :- “ ⁴ Jesus answered : “ Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming ‘ I am the Christ ’ and will deceive many. ”

(Please read **1 Timothy 4 : 1**)

From the above mentioned Bible verses, we can see that in the last days, false Christs (**Matthew 24 : 24**), false prophets (**Matthew 24 : 11, 24**), miracles performed by deceiving evil spirits (**Revelation 13 : 13**), etc. will increase.

Dear child of God, since there will be many evil deceiving works of the Devil that will be manifested in the last days, it is of paramount importance that our faith is strengthened through the Word of God, and is not dependent on miracles, signs and wonders only.

Matthew 24 : 24 :- “ For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect - if that were possible. ”

ii. **There will be many wars (Matthew 24 : 6)**

Matthew 24 : 6 :- “ You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. ”

In the world today, anyone listening to / watching the media, would hear / see that wars are definitely on the increase currently.

Regarding this sign of war prophesied by Jesus, let us look at **Revelation 6 : 4** as well.

Revelation 6 : 4 :- “ Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make men slay each other. To him was given a large sword. ”

In this vision given to John it is not difficult to understand that the ‘ **red horse and its rider** ’ are symbolic of wars, bloodshed and the non-existence of peace of earth.

iii. **Nations and kingdoms rising against each other (Matthew 24 : 7)**

Matthew 24 : 7 :- “ Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom ”

This prophecy of Jesus is being fulfilled before our eyes, all over the world.

iv. **There will be famines in many places (Matthew 24 : 7)**

Matthew 24 : 7 :- “ There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. ”

In the continent of Africa, due to the prevalence of famines, many countries are facing major problems due to the acute shortage of food. Whilst Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia are countries that we frequently hear about in this respect, many other countries of the world are also facing acute food shortages, malnutrition and even starvation today.

Regarding this sign prophesied by Jesus, let us focus our attention on **Revelation 6 : 5, 6** as well.

Revelation 6 : 5, 6 :-

“ ⁵ I looked, and there before me was a black horse ! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. ⁶ Then I heard what sounded like among the four living creatures saying, “ A quart of wheat for a day’s wages, and three quarts of barley for a day’s wages, and do not damage the oil and the wine. ”

In this vision given to John, it is not difficult to understand that the ‘ **black horse and the rider** ’ are symbolic of famines and food shortages, and that consequently the food prices would increase, making it difficult for people to earn enough money even to feed their families.

v. **The occurrence of Earthquakes in various places (Matthew 24 : 7)**

This is a sign that the world has experienced very frequently and needs no comment.

vi. **The spreading of Pestilences (Luke 21 : 11)**

This sign of the second coming of Jesus appears to have been missed out by Matthew and is included in **Luke 21 : 11**.

Luke 21 : 11 :- “ There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. ”

Even as I am translating this book into English, now (August 2021), Covid 19 has changed our world so much that we can hardly believe what is going on. The current situation in the world is so chaotic, unstable and unpredictable that no man can forecast where the world would be during even the rest of 2021, accurately.

Hence let us look as what is prophesied in **Revelation** regarding this sign.

Revelation 6 : 8 :- “ I looked, and there before me was a pale horse ! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth. ”

Dear reader, I am not in the process of writing a discourse on the book of **Revelation** but am in the process of translating a book I wrote in Sinhalese way back in 2008.

Therefore I will not attempt to expound on **Revelation 6 : 8** and thereby deviate from my primary purpose at this time. However I feel compelled to write a few words about the current pandemic and the nearness of the second coming of Jesus.

The order in which the signs of the end are recorded in **Matthew and Revelation** are almost identical.

Sign	Matthew	Revelation
First sign	False Christs	White horse symbolizing the antichrist
Second sign	War	Red horse symbolizing wars and bloodshed
Third sign	Famines	Black horse, the rider holding a pair of scales, symbolizing famines and food shortage
Fourth sign	Pestilences (Luke)	Pale horse with 2 riders names - Death and Hades symbolizing death and grave (Hell ?) for many

Dear child of God, for me the above seems too ominous. We are going through a time during which many would lose their lives due to Covid 19, and would be going to a disastrous future, **unless they have received ' Salvation. '**

The second coming of Jesus appears to be much closer than many realize.

So let's wake up !! Let us spend much time in prayer for those who are suffering from this pandemic, especially for those who are **' not saved. '**

Let us use every opportunity we have to tell our friends, neighbours, associates and relatives the urgent need for everyone to come to know Jesus as their **' Savior. '**

vii. **The occurrence of fearful events and great signs from heaven (Luke 21 : 11)**

Luke 21 : 11 :- " and fearful events and great signs from heaven. "

Let's look at **Revelation 6 : 12, 13** regarding this.

Revelation 6 : 12, 13 :- " ¹² I watched as he opened the sixth seal. There was a great earthquake. The sun turned black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the whole moon turned blood red, ¹³ and the stars in the sky fell to earth, as late figs drop from a fig tree when shaken by a strong wind. "

- ❖ When we look at the seven signs given above, we can see that at least the first six which are Spiritual deceit, Wars, Famines, Nation uprising against each other, Earthquakes and Pestilences have occurred on earth from the beginning of the history of mankind. Therefore let us focus our attention on **Matthew 24 : 8** in order to get a better understanding of the signs given by Jesus.

Matthew 24 : 8 :- " All these are the beginning of birth pains. "

We are therefore of the view, that Jesus compared these signs to be similar to the occurrence of birth pains since birth pains increase in intensity and frequency as the time of birth draws near.

Therefore even as we can easily observe today that these six signs are similarly increasing in intensity and frequency progressively, we can infer that the second coming of Jesus has drawn very near.

2. **The rapid increase in the knowledge of mankind (Daniel 12 : 4)**
Daniel 12 : 4 :- “ But you, Daniel, close up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge. ”

Examples of rapid increase in knowledge

i. **Regarding Transport**

From the time of the Garden of Eden until about AD 1900 the mode of transport available to man was simply walking or riding on a domesticated animal. Therefore we read that King David and Julius Caesar rode on horseback whilst Balaam and Jesus are known to have travelled on the back of a donkey.

However, the knowledge of mankind regarding transport has increased so staggeringly that yesterday (16th September 2021) it was reported in the world media that four human beings who are no professional Astronauts left on a three day tour into space on a journey that was called ‘ **space tourism** ’ !!

ii. **Regarding Medical Science**

The incredible development of medical science over the past two hundred years or so is truly awesome and fascinating.

Prior to that time many babies died at childbirth and many families went through the painful experience of having to cope with the death of a child dying before the age of five years due to ill health.

However today medical science has improved so much that children who are still in their mother's womb can even undergo surgery, successfully.

iii. Regarding computer technology

When man entered the computer age not so long ago the initial computers were so large that a small room was required to house one of them.

However, the knowledge of computer science technology has improved so rapidly that miniature computers whose capacity is many times the capacity of the originals are freely available at a fraction of their price.

3. Dramatic improvements in the field of communication

Revelation 11 : 8, 9 :-

“⁸ Their bodies will lie in the street of the great city, which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt, where also their Lord was crucified. ⁹ For three and a half days men from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial.”

In these Bible verses written by John in AD 96, it is prophesied that in the end times God will send two witnesses to Jerusalem who will prophesy in Jerusalem for 1260 days (**Revelation 11 : 3**). When they have finished doing so, the beast that comes from the Abyss will attack them and overpower them and kill them (**Revelation 11 : 7**).

The two verses that I have quoted above, (**Revelation 11 : 8, 9**) state that, ‘**For three and a half days men from every people...will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial.**’

However from the time John wrote this prophecy until the twentieth century, there was absolutely no possibility for something that was going on ‘in a street of Jerusalem’ to be watched by the world at large.

This only became possible with the development of ‘ satellite technology ’ in recent times. This again shows us that this technology that has developed rapidly and is used widely today, is confirming that we are in the ‘ end times. ’

4. The occurrence of catastrophic wars

Zechariah 14 : 12 :-

“ This is the plague with which the Lord will strike all the nations that fought against Jerusalem : Their flesh will rot while they are still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their mouths. ”

(Please read **Zechariah 14 : 1-15**)

The prophet Zechariah is recording here a vision that was given to him by the Lord regarding ‘ **a day of the Lord that is coming,** ’ (**Zechariah 14 : 1**) and is describing it the only way he knew, which is to describe it using his knowledge. He is describing that men and animals (**Zechariah 14 : 15**) would die whilst they were still standing.

The description written by Zechariah, is easily understandable when one thinks of the effects of an Atom bomb. We are now informed that the explosion of an Atom bomb results in the surrounding area reaching a temperature of around 150 million degrees Fahrenheit within a time of 0.0001 seconds (and this is mind boggling).

If this is correct, as we are informed by those who know, the eyes, tongue, etc. of those around will vaporize even before they fall down dead !! The effects of a Nuclear or Neutron bomb would be even more disastrous. Hence the prophecy given above by the prophet Zechariah also indicates that we are living in the end times.

5. The prevalence of Godless behavior

2 Timothy 3 : 1-5 :-

**“¹ But mark this : There will be terrible times in the last days.
² People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, ⁴ treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God - ⁵ having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with them.”**

In this passage we find Paul describing the deterioration of the values of human society, ‘ **in the last days** ’ (2 Timothy 3 : 1). It would be evident to anyone, who would care to observe what is happening today in our society, that according to the words of Paul in this passage, we are in the ‘ **last days.** ’

- ❖ Let us focus our attention on the Signs of the end, that we have mentioned in this Bible study, thus far. They are :
 - i. Spiritual deceivers
 - ii. Wars and rumors of war
 - iii. Nations and kingdoms rising against each other
 - iv. Famines
 - v. Earthquakes
 - vi. Pestilences
 - vii. Great signs from heaven
 - viii. Rapid increase of knowledge
 - ix. Development in the field of communication
 - x. Catastrophic wars
 - xi. Deterioration of human society

Of these signs, those that are marked as numbers **i.** to **vi.** and number **xi.** have occurred in human history from virtually the beginning, and hence would be considered as inconsequential by some. Whilst this argument has some validity, all of us would doubtless agree that the signs that are marked as numbers **viii.** to **x.** are signs that are current and impressive.

Hence we consider the signs given above to be a good foundation for us to understand that we are in the end times, and will provide you with convincing compelling signs concerning the Nation of Israel in our next Bible study.

6. Things that should happen in our lives, when we genuinely believe that the second coming of Jesus is near

Dear child of God, if you really believe that the second coming of Jesus is very near, undoubtedly you will endeavour to change at least some of your actions, attitudes and aspirations in order to prepare yourself for it. Because of the importance of this, I am placing before you a few Bible verses to help you to do so meaningfully.

i. 2 Peter 3 : 11-14 :- “¹¹ Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be ? You ought to live holy and godly lives. ¹²..... ¹³¹⁴ So then, dear friends since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him.”

Dear friends, are you making a genuine effort to do so ? I urge you to examine your life sincerely, without delay, and be ready for his coming.

ii. Matthew 6 : 20, 21 :- “²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Dear friends, please realize that we are simply ‘ pilgrims ’ on this earth and that we are citizens of Heaven, which will be our permanent abode.

- iii. **Colossians 1 : 28, 29 :- “ 28 We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. 29 To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me. ”**

Dear friends, have you ever strived and struggled (along with Jesus who dwells in you) to win at least one person and bring him / her to salvation ?

If you have not done so, if we have failed to prayerfully share the gospel with at least one person, we need to really search our lives before God, TODAY !

- iv. **1 John 3 : 2, 3 :- “ 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. ”**

Dear friends, God’s will is that we would become more and more like Jesus daily.

Romans 8 : 29 :- “ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ”

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, let us who have been chosen by God to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, ‘ offer your (OUR) bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God - this in is your spiritual act of workshop. ’ (Romans 12 : 1)

**May Almighty God
Bless all of you abundantly and
Help you to become
Like those described in this section !!!**

The Second Coming of Jesus – 02



Israel Study 09



The Second Coming of Jesus - 02

Introduction :- As we mentioned in our last Bible study, many important prophecies concerning the Second coming of Jesus are directly linked to the dramatic changes that have taken place in the Nation of Israel, in the recent past. In this Bible study we intend to place before you eight such signs all of which prove the absolute veracity of the Word of God.

Teaching :- **Eight important signs that have been prophesied regarding the second coming of Jesus**

1. **The sign of the rebirth of the Nation Israel**

About 3500 years ago, God informed the Nation Israel through Moses, that they would be blessed abundantly if they were obedient to him, and be punished (cursed) if they were disobedient.

Deuteronomy 28 : 15 :-

“ However, if you do not obey the Lord your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you : ”

Deuteronomy 28 : 64 - 66 :-

“ ⁶⁴ Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other ⁶⁵ Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the Lord will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. ⁶⁶ You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. ”

(Please read **Deuteronomy 28 : 62 - 67**)

These Bible verses show us, that if the Israelites disobeyed God, they would be scattered all over the world, and would undergo much hardship suffering and pain. Furthermore, Jesus foretold that the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed and the dispersion of the Jewish people worldwide would take place during the generation that would reject him.

(Please read **Matthew 23 : 35, 36, 4 : 1, 2, Luke 19 : 41-44**)

Just as Jesus foretold, in AD 70, under the leadership of Titus, the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and burnt down the temple and the Jewish people were scattered all over the world. It is a historical fact that the Jewish people who were thus dispersed were constantly ill-treated, persecuted mercilessly and even had to face death in many of the countries that they went to for refuge.

However, the God of Israel (the God we believe in) is a loving Heavenly Father who keeps his promises always. In the Bible we find many promises that he gave the Jewish people, that he would re-gather them from all the countries to which they had been scattered and bring them back into their own country once again.

Isaiah 11 : 12 :- “ He will raise a banner for the nations and gather the exiles of Israel ; he will assemble the scattered people of Judah from the four quarters of the earth. ”

Jeremiah 16 : 15 :- “ but they will say, ‘ As surely as the Lord lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them. ’ For I will restore them to the land I gave their forefathers. ”

(Please read, **Isaiah 11 : 12, 43 : 5-7, Jeremiah 16 : 14, 15, 32 : 37, Ezekiel 11 : 17, 37 : 21, 22, Deuteronomy 30 : 1-5**)

From AD 70 until the beginning of the twentieth century, it appeared that there was absolutely no possibility of the above coming true. However, on the 15th of May 1948, the unchanging, Word of God came true, and the Nation of Israel, was accepted as an independent country once again, bewildering the whole world.

Almost immediately the surrounding Arab nations including Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and others declared war against the tiny Nation of Israel, but were defeated soundly, because Almighty God protected his people Israel, according to His Word.

This amazing occurrence of Israel being rebirthed in one day is found in the book of Isaiah and reads as follows.

Isaiah 66 : 8 :- “ Who has ever heard of such a thing ? Who has ever seen such things ? Can a country be born in a day or a nation be brought forth in a moment ? Yet no sooner is Zion in labor than she gives birth to her children. ”

The Nation of Israel, being ‘ re-born in one day ’, on the 15th of May 1948, after being scattered all over the world for well-nigh 2000 years without a country to call their own, is indeed a remarkable sign that shows that the second coming of Jesus is drawing near.

2. The sign of Israel regaining the City of Jerusalem

Bible scholars are of the view that Jerusalem was captured by King David from the Jebusites around 998 BC (**2 Samuel 5 : 7-9**). However due to the Israelites being disobedient to God, in 586 BC God permitted the Babylonians to capture Jerusalem.

At his first coming, Jesus foretold, that Jerusalem would once again come under the control of the Jewish people after the ‘ **times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.** ’

Luke 21 : 24 :- “ They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. ”

Although Israel was re-born in 1948, Jerusalem remained under Jordanian rule. However in the miracle ‘ six day war ’ that lasted from 5th to the 10th of June 1967, Israel recaptured Jerusalem on the 7th of June. Hence Jerusalem, which was under Gentile rule from 586 BC until AD 1967, which is a period exceeding 2500 years returned to Israel, and the ‘ **times of the Gentiles was fulfilled** ’ in 1967.

3. The sign of Israel becoming amazingly fertile once again

Almighty God who delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, promised to give them a ‘ **good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey** ’ (Exodus 3 : 8).

Exodus 3 : 17 :- “ And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites – a land flowing with milk and honey. ”

The exceptional fertility of this Promised Land can be understood from the reports of the spies who were sent there by Moses in order to spy out the land.

Numbers 13 : 23 :- “ When they reached the Valley of Eshcol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. ”

Numbers 13 : 27 :- “ They gave Moses this account : ‘ We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey ! Here is its fruit. ”

However, when the Jews were driven away and scattered all over the world, this fertile land deteriorated and became very arid and swampy in many places, resulting in the promised infertility. Nevertheless, the promise that God had given the Israelites was that He would make the land extremely fertile once again.

Isaiah 35 : 1 :- “ The desert and the parched land will be glad ; the wilderness will rejoice and blossom, like the crocus. ”

(Please read, **Isaiah 35 : 2, 55 : 13**)

Amos 9 : 13 :- “ The days are coming, declares the Lord, ‘ when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills. ”

(Please read, **Amos 9 : 14, 15**)

After the Israelites returned to the Promised Land in 1948, Israel has truly been transformed in an incredible manner, and has once again become a land flowing in milk and honey.

Example of the above

- a. Water from the **Sea of Galilee**, which is located six hundred and eighty feet below sea level, is pumped from northern to southern Israel through massive pipes, tunnels, etc. and large areas which were parched earlier, have been made fertile and very productive.
- b. Presently Israel produces almost one million tons of ‘ Citrus fruits ’ and this is being carried out by just 2% of the population.
- c. Although one may not expect to find huge plantations of fruits like Avocados, Mangoes, Bananas in Israel, Banana plantations that cover over twenty acres of land is a very common sight in Israel.
- d. Out of the two hundred plus countries in the world today only six countries are self-sufficient in food, and Israel is one of them.

Hence the transformation of the fertility and productivity of the land of Israel is ample evidence that the Word of God is true, and that we are living in the end times now.

4. The sign of the abundance of trees in Israel

When we read the Bible, specifically the Old Testament it becomes evident that there was no shortage of wild animals in Israel. Almost all who call themselves Christians would be familiar of the incident where Samson caught 300 foxes, tied their tails together in pairs and used them to burn down the grain of their enemies. **(Judges 15 : 4)**

The fact that a single man could capture 300 foxes certainly prove that foxes were very common. We also read how Samson killed a lion and David killed both a lion and a bear, in the Bible, and we all know that lions would not be able to survive unless there were significant forest areas.

Judges 15 : 4, 5 :- “⁴ So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, ⁵ lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.”

From the above we can see that during the time of Samson, there were grain fields, vineyards, olive groves as well as sufficient forest cover for lions, bears, foxes and other wild animals in Israel.

However, when the Nation of Israel was re-established in AD 1948 most of Israel had become an arid, parched desert land, along with marshy areas. The transformation in the land after 1948 is spectacular and extremely impressive.

Examples of the above :

- a. The Jewish people to whom the above-mentioned infertile land now belonged, checked the Old Testament to do research on the trees, grain and other crops mentioned therein and started to try out planting those trees in Israel once again. Their efforts were so fruitful that today we can observe that infertile and arid lands, re-captured by Israel in wars which occurred after 1948, from Jordan and Syria, have become fields of grain that produce bountiful harvests.
- b. Their plantations and methods of irrigation have developed so much that Israel today earns hundreds of millions of US dollars through the export of their produce.
- c. The Bible records that Abraham planted a ‘ **tamarisk tree** ’ in Beersheba.

Genesis 21 : 33 :- “ Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beersheba, and there he called upon the name of the Lord, the Eternal God. ”

The Jewish people who managed to identify the ‘ **tamarisk tree** ’ mentioned in the Bible, have succeeded in planting this very widely in Israel.

- d. God has given Israel many promises regarding the widespread growth of many types of trees.

Isaiah 41 : 19, 20 :- “ ¹⁹ I will put in the desert the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive. I will set pines in the wasteland, the fir and the cypress together, ²⁰ so that people may see and know, may consider and understand, that the hand of the Lord has done this, that the Holy One of Israel has created it. ”

The sign of the abundance of trees in Israel given by God, well over two thousand years ago started becoming true after 1948, and from 1948 up to, 2008, the Nation of Israel has planted over 240 million trees in their land successfully.

When we entered the twenty first century, out of all the countries in the world only two had succeeded in having a positive balance regarding the increase / decrease of trees in the land and Israel is one of them.

5. The sign of heavily populated cities and the rebuilding of ruined towns

Ezekiel 36 : 10 :- “ and I will multiply the number of people upon you, even the whole of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. ”

(Please also read, **Ezekiel 36 : 33 - 36 and Amos 9 : 14**)

The above prophecy has been happening in a miraculous way after 1948, and if you do travel to Israel today you would see that the construction of new buildings and new highways and new transport systems etc. appear to be ceaseless and endless.

Examples of the above :

I presume that most of you are familiar with the incident involving a vineyard, belonging to a Jezreelite named Naboth, located close to the palace of King Ahab of Samaria (**1 Kings 21 : 1**). If you read the next verse you will discover that the area concerned had plenty of good vineyards and vegetable gardens and would have been very fertile.

However, when this area came under Israel in 1948, it had become a swampy marsh where Malaria had become widespread, and hence only a few Arabs lived in the region.

Since 1948 this area has been developed extensively and is a modern city which is home to one hundred thousand residents. This again is evidence of the fulfilment of the prophecy in **Ezekiel 36 : 10, 33 - 36** and is a sign that the end is drawing near.

6. The sign of the Hebrew Language being resurrected

Above 4300 years ago, mortal man attempted to construct the ' **Tower of Babel** ' in a plain in Shinar, and until then all mankind used only one language (**Genesis 11 : 1-7**). Although we are unable to identify this language today, we Christians know, that the first five books of the Bible were written by Moses in Hebrew.

The Hebrew language remained unadulterated by other languages for a long period of time and was considered as a pure language. However due to the Israelites subsequently coming under the rule of the Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans etc., the Hebrew language became adulterated by other languages.

Hence we find that the notice above the cross of Jesus, stating " **This is the King of the Jews** " (**Luke 23 : 38**) was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek to enable everyone to read and understand the contents.

In AD 70 due to the scattering of the Jewish people all over the world, the Hebrew language deteriorated further. However, one of the very important promises given by God to the Israelites is that He would give them a pure language.

Zephaniah 3 : 9 :-

" For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. " - (KJV)

After 1948 Jews who had been living in many countries spread all over the world started migrating back to Israel, and they did not have a common language. Hence there came a period of time in Israel, that the daily newspapers had to be published in thirteen different languages.

However once again, as He always did in the past, the Almighty God of Israel made a great miracle happen and the ‘ **dead Hebrew language** ’ had been resurrected and a ‘ **pure language** ’ is used everywhere in the land.

7. **The sign of The Shekel becoming legal tender in Israel once again**

In the Bible the ‘ Shekel ’ is mentioned for the first time in **Genesis 23 : 15**.

It is also mentioned in the Bible that during the period of the second coming of Jesus someone referred to as ‘ **the prince in Israel** ’ (**Ezekiel 45 : 16 - KJV**) would be present.

Ezekiel 45 : 16 :- “ All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel. ” - (KJV)

Although Bible scholars find it difficult to specifically identify ‘ **the prince** ’, the Bible specifically mentions the ‘ **Shekel** ’ in this connection, thus confirming that the Shekel will be in use in Israel, before the second coming of Jesus. In fact, after 1948 the Shekel is used as legal tender in Israel, thus fulfilling this sign as well.

Ezekiel 45 : 12 :- “ The shekel is to consist of twenty gerahs. Twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus fifteen shekels equal one mina. ”

In 1948, although Israel was recognized as an independent country, Israel did not have a currency of their own. Hence initially the US Dollar and the British Pound were used widely in Israel.

However, confirming the prophetic words of the Bible, in 1980 the ' Shekel ' was recognized as the official currency in Israel, thus confirming that the world was already in the end times. Furthermore ' New Israel Shekel ' used widely in Israel today has been designed copying the original Shekel mentioned in the Bible.

8. The sign of the increase of flesh-eating birds in Israel today

In ancient times, wild beasts like lions, bears, wolves, foxes and other wild animals as well as flesh-eating birds like eagles dwelt in Israel, as can be seen from the Old Testament. However, after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, Israel gradually deteriorated into an arid, desolate desert land depleted of wild animals and birds which dwelt there in small numbers.

However, when we study the Word of God, we realize that the Bible forecasts, that Israel will once again become a land where plenty of flesh eating wild animals and birds will abound.

Ezekiel 39 : 17 :- “ Son of man, this is what the Sovereign Lord says : Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals : “ Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood. ”

Revelation 19 : 17, 18 :- “¹⁷And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, “ Come, gather together for the great supper of God,¹⁸ so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and mighty men, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, small and great. ”

In the land of Israel today, thousands of vultures can be seen at a place named '**Gamla, located at the bottom of the Golan Heights**' confirming that God has already prepared the foundation for the fulfilment of this prophecy at the appointed time in the future.

Dear child of God, although there are many more signs I can place before you, I will end this Bible study here, to prevent it from becoming too long.

However, I want to request you to read the last section in our previous study under the sub-title ‘ **Things that should happen in our lives, when we genuinely believe that the second coming of Jesus is near** ’ once again prayerfully and act accordingly.

**May Almighty God
Help you, to do so !!!**

Praying for the Nation of Israel



Israel Study 10



Praying for the Nation of Israel

Introduction :- This is our tenth Bible study about the Nation of Israel, and the title that Almighty God placed in my heart regarding it is, ' **Praying for the Nation of Israel.** ' Even as I prayerfully sought God's guidance to write this Bible study, He directed me to couple it with ' **Praying for the Nation of Sri Lanka** ' as well.

Consequently, one of the primary goals of this Bible study is to focus your attention on the importance of praying for ' our country ' as well as the Nation of Israel, and help you to understand the benefits it would accrue to us, our families, our churches and our own country, as we wholeheartedly pray for Israel and our country.

I hence want to place before you a couple of Bible verses which are important in this connection.

Psalm 122 : 6 :- " Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : " May those who love you be secure. "

1 Timothy 2 : 1, 2 :- " ¹ I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for everyone ² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. "

It is our hope and prayer, that all of you readers would identify and understand the promises found in the above Bible verses and would commence praying for both Sri Lanka and Israel, with deep commitment and faith.

James 5 : 16 :- " The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. "

Teachings :- Praying for the Nation Israel

1. The Power of Prayer

Dear Brother and Sister in Christ Jesus, please get hold of this dynamic truth - the most powerful weapon available to man is not the Neutron bomb or the Nuclear bomb – The most powerful weapon available to man is PRAYER.

We proclaim this confidently, because the God who created us is Almighty and is a God who answers prayer.

We do so because we can daily see His infinite power in all of creation.

If we who are His children firmly believe our God who never lies, never breaks any promises and place our faith in Him, without any doubt or fear, there is nothing that would be impossible for us.

Please read the following words, spoken by Jesus Christ.

Matthew 17 : 20, 21 :- “²⁰ He replied, “ Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘ Move from here to there ’ and it will move. ²¹ Nothing will be impossible for you. ”

Let us therefore, follow the guidance given by God in His Word, and pray for our country and for Israel earnestly and consistently and in great faith.

❖ An example that indicates the Power of Prayer

James 5 : 17, 18 :- “¹⁷ Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. ¹⁸ Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops. ”

The word of God is absolutely dependable. It does not change. When we place our faith firmly on the Word of God, live according to it and pray unto God, he has promised to definitely answer our prayers. However, most Christians have got used to take the position that, ' although God does perform miracles when **special people** pray, he does not respond similarly to the prayers of common people like us. '

Dear friend, please do not be misled by Satan and his servants, who are liars and deceivers. Please do not forget, that the Word of God states that, '**Elijah was a man just like us.**' (James 5 : 17)

Please do not believe the lies of the enemy, commence to pray earnestly and in unshakable faith and experience the mighty works of God through your prayers.

Mark 11 : 24 :- " Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. "

❖ **A promise concerning the Power of Prayer (James 5 : 16)**

We have already drawn your attention to **James 5 : 16** concerning the power of prayer, without pointing out the conditions that apply to this promise. Actually there are two important conditions mentioned therein. They are,

a. Living a Righteous Life

Those who have committed their lives to Almighty God, and have been sanctified through the blood of Jesus, and are in Christ Jesus who is our righteousness, are considered to have been made righteous according to God's Word. **(1 Corinthians 1 : 30)**

We who have been thus made righteous, should always endeavor to lead lives that are,

- **Obedient to Jesus Christ**
- **Guided by the Holy Spirit**

at all times and in all situations.

b. His prayers should be effectual and fervent

James 5 : 16 :- “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. ” (KJV)

The key word in this verse is ‘ **fervent** ’ which means ‘ **ardent** ’, ‘ **intense** ’ according to the Oxford dictionary.

In order to get a practical glimpse of this type of prayer, let us look at Hannah’s prayer described in **1 Samuel 1 : 10, 6**.

1 Samuel 1 : 16 :- “ Do not take your servant for a wicked woman ; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief. ”

The prayer request made by Hannah from God, asking for a son was one coming from a desperate and grieving heart and most certainly can be described as ‘ **fervent** ’, and we are all very familiar of the wonderful response of God.

My Dear Brother and Sister in Christ Jesus, let us live ‘ **righteous lives** ’ and pray ‘ **fervently** ’ for Sri Lanka and Israel and go on to experience wonderful blessings and mighty works of God in,

- **Our lives**
- **Our families**
- **Our churches**
- **Our countries**

2. Why should we Pray for Israel ?

a. Because God has promised to bless those who bless Israel

Genesis 12 : 3 :- “ I will bless those who bless you ”

This promise which God gave to Abraham, was passed on from Abraham to his son Isaac, and from Isaac to his younger son Jacob (Israel).

Hence when we bless the Jewish people or the Nation of Israel, God will bless us as He has promised.

An example of the above

The Centurion from Capernaum (Luke 7 : 1-10)

When Jesus was in Capernaum, a Centurion whose servant was sick sent some elders of the Jews to Jesus, requesting him to come and heal his servant. We are all very familiar with this incident, but what many of us fail to realise is that this Centurion who was a Gentile was someone who loved and blessed the Jewish people.

Luke 7 : 4, 5 :- “⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, “ This man deserves to have you do this, ⁵ because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue. ”

Here we see a Gentile who loved and blessed the Jewish being blessed by God. Let us also follow the example of this Gentile Centurion and receive God’s blessings.

b. Because God has chosen Jerusalem located in Israel to be the place to put his name

2 Chronicles 6 : 6 :- “ But now I have chosen Jerusalem for my Name to be there, and I have chosen David to rule my people Israel. ”

2 Kings 21 : 7 :- “ “ In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever. ”

c. **Because God has requested us to pray for the peace of Jerusalem which is located in Israel**

Psalm 122 : 6 :- “ Pray for the peace of Jerusalem : May those who love you be secure. ”

When we look at **Psalm 122 : 7, 8** we find God’s request for prayer includes prayers for the safety and security of all who dwell in Jerusalem as well.

Psalm 122 : 7, 8 :- “⁷ May there be peace within your walls and security within your citadels. For the sake of my brothers and friends, I will say, “ Peace be within you. ”

d. **Because Salvation has come to us from the Jews**

John 4 : 22 :- “ we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. ”

We Christians are indebted to the Jewish people for many of the blessings that we have received. In addition to salvation, we are indebted to them for the following important blessings that we have received through them. Which are,

- The Word of God
- The Messiah
- The Patriarchs
- The Prophets
- The Apostles, and many other blessings.

e. **Because it is the will of God to save everyone, (including the Jewish people)**

2 Peter 3 : 9 :- “ He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. ”

It is the will of God that everyone comes to repentance and receives salvation. Furthermore, the Word of God states that there will come a time when all of Israel will be saved.

Romans 11 : 25 :- “ Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written : “ The deliverer will come from Zion ; he will turn godlessness away from Jacob. ”

Let us, as people who know that the above will happen in the future as stated in the Word of God, pray earnestly for the salvation of the Jewish people.

Let us for a moment look at the desire in the heart of Paul, regarding the salvation of the Jews.

Romans 10 : 1 :- “ Brothers, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ”

Let us follow the example of Paul, and pray earnestly for the salvation of the Jews. When we do so, since our prayer is in agreement with the Word of God, Almighty God will listen to and answer our prayer, as is promised in the Bible as follows.

1 John 5 : 14, 15 :- “ ¹⁴ This is the confidence we have in approaching God : that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵ And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked on him. ”

f. **Because God loves the Nation of Israel, exceedingly**

Zechariah 2 : 8 :- “ for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye. ”

Hosea 11 : 1 :- “ When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ”

Dear child of God, we are well aware that Jesus himself stated that the most important commandment is to Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength **(Mark 12 : 30)**.

If we do love God in this manner, there is no doubt in my mind that we would also love the Jewish people, whom God loves so much, as clearly seen from **Zechariah 2 : 8 & Hosea 11 : 1** mentioned above.

If you truly are a lover of God, you would also love, help, support, bless and pray earnestly, for the Jewish people whom Jesus loved so much, as is evident from several incidents that we encounter in the New Testament.

Matthew 23 : 37 and Luke 13 : 34 :-

“ O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. ”

3. Why we should Pray for our country Sri Lanka

a. Because it is God’s will that every Sri Lankan repents and receives salvation (Please read 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 Timothy 2:3)

In Sri Lanka today, the Christian church has to go through all types of opposition. Whatever the cause may be, it would not be incorrect to infer that those who are responsible are not saved and would hence receive ‘ **eternal death.** ’

Dear child of God, please understand this. God’s will regarding all these people, is that they repent and receive salvation. (**‘ eternal life ’**)

Hence if the church is subject to the above mentioned treatment, we should take steps to protect ourselves and our human rights.

However, we as children of God **should forgive those who are concerned and pray for their salvation.**

Matthew 5 : 44, 45 :- “⁴⁴ But I tell you : Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,⁴⁵ that you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

- ❖ In our country, during the present and not too distant past, we regret to have to say, that we are unable to agree with certain decisions taken by our leaders.

However, regarding the leaders of our country, we have to agree with what is stated in the inerrant and unchanging Word of God, which tells us that unless Almighty God permitted it to be so, the leaders of our country would not be holding their positions.

Daniel 5 : 21 :- “ the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdom of men and sets over them anyone he wishes.”

Furthermore, the Word of God instructs us to pray for all those in authority.

1 Timothy 2 : 1, 2 :- “¹ I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone –² for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.”

I do not think that the stereotype prayers that we habitually pray during our church services adequately fulfil this requirement. I believe that the above mentioned ‘ requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving ’ should be heartfelt, sincere, earnest requests coming from the depths of our being. We Christians should pray in this manner for our country, our leaders and our citizens.

- ❖ During the tragic thirty year communal war we had in our country, many Christians prayed regularly for our country, and a Bible verse we frequently used at that time was **2 Chronicles 7 : 14**.

2 Chronicles 7 : 14 :- “ If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land. ”

This Bible verse teaches us, that the solutions to the problems that are there in our land, are in the hand of Christians !

The responsibility of praying for our country rests with us. It serves no purpose for us to judge and to criticize our government, our leaders, our society or those of other faiths. Instead of doing so let us first judge ourselves, and in repentance humbly confess our sins to God, correct our own lives and plead with God for our country.

When we do so, **God will revive the church, empower the church, Bless the church and bless our country.**

- ❖ **Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus, let us pray for our country, following the guidelines that we learn from the Word of God.**

I suggest that we do so as follows :

- Let us love our enemies (**Matthew 5 : 44**) and pray for their salvation (**1 Timothy 2 : 2-4**)
- Let us pray for our leaders (**1 Timothy 2 : 2**)
- Let us pray for all our citizens (**1 Timothy 2 : 1**)
- Let us examine ourselves and correct our faults and failures. Let us confess our sins to God and receive his forgiveness. Let us live lives that shine before men and are an example to others and pray for the church.
- Let us pray, requesting God to send a great Spiritual Revival in our country.

4. The Results we receive when we pray for our country and for Israel

a. When we pray for Israel

- God will bless us, our families, our church and our country. **(Genesis 12 : 3)**
- God will make us secure. **(Psalm 122 : 8)**
- When we pray for Israel and support the Jewish people in any way we can, God will bless us exceedingly and abundantly **(Matthew 25 : 34, 40)**

b. When we pray for our country

- God will heal our land **(2 Chronicles 7 : 14)**
- God will grant us peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness **(1 Timothy 2 : 2)**
- As a result of the above, an environment conducive for us to proclaim the gospel or to engage in evangelistic activities, would be created in our land **(1 Timothy 2 : 3,4).**

(Almighty God “ **who wants all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth** ” - **1 Timothy 2 : 4** will answer our prayers and help us to bring people to a knowledge of the truth)

**May Almighty God,
Our Father in Heaven, help us all to pray for Israel
And our land, according to His will !!!**

THE PRICELESS PRIZE AT ZERO PRICE



THE PRICELESS PRIZE AT ZERO PRICE

INTRODUCTION :-

Something that all human beings commonly accept as an indisputable fact of life is that, “ **In order to obtain or achieve anything of real value, invariably one has to make a great effort, commitment, sacrifice or pay a considerable sum of money.** ”

For example a student who desires to become a doctor, would certainly need to devote a big chunk of his time to study in order to achieve his goal. In fact anyone whose goal is to ' do well ' in any field of education would necessarily have to sacrifice or do away with many things that he would like to do otherwise, in order to reach his objective. Hence when we are informed that something of value is given free, our natural reaction is to view this information with doubt and suspicion.

My dear friend I am writing this tiny booklet in order to give you some news that is truly incredible. **A priceless gift can be received by you at no cost.**

Hence as a person who has received this incredible gift, I want to urge you to devote just 30 minutes of your precious time, to read this booklet to the end.

1. CERTAIN NEGATIVE TRAITS THAT ARE EVIDENT IN MODERN SOCIETY

(i) Increase in knowledge and decline in moral values

Today we live in a world, where knowledge is increasing at an unbelievably rapid rate. For example the technological knowledge is advancing so rapidly that, if you were to purchase the most modern mobile phone available in the market today, after a period of one year, doubtlessly you will be able to purchase a more advanced model at a cheaper price.

However in a world where knowledge is advancing at breakneck speed, what can be clearly observed is a rapid decline in moral values. Whilst it is natural to expect progress in human behaviour along with the progress of civilisation, what is evident in modern society is virtually diametrically opposite to this.

' **In our modern and developed society** ' what we see is an increase in injustice, fraud, theft, bribery and corruption, and not the converse. My dear friend, have you ever seriously tried to find out the root cause of this phenomenon? If you have given this question serious thought, you may possibly arrive at the conclusion, that the above is a result of the human nature springing from within our hearts - that is from within ourselves.

Dear friend, I am confident that this little booklet will not only help you to understand the cause of the above, but will also help you to discover the solution.

(ii) In the battle between good and evil, the tendency for evil to emerge victorious

In a rapidly developing society one problem that would be inherent is the battle between good and evil, justice and injustice etc. One of the primary causes of these conflicts is the desire of many to endeavour to reach the top echelons of society.

We would certainly agree that it is commendable for anyone to set himself high standards and goals in life. However, what we see today is a very unhealthy trend, where people resort to '**questionable methods**' that disregard the rights of others and act very selfishly and unfairly to achieve their goals and objectives. As a consequence of this we live in a society, where competition has replaced corporation and an increasing number of people value their own selfish development, '**far above justice and fair play.**'

Please find listed below some of the very unhealthy impacts this has had on modern society.

- (i) The 'haves' taking unfair advantage of the 'have-nots.'
- (ii) Many people resorting to giving bribes in order to reach their goals.
- (iii) In order to get job promotion employees stooping to despicable methods.
- (iv) People abusing their position, power and wealth to get unjust gain.

Due to the above mentioned reasons, in the battle between right and wrong, almost invariably, wrong emerges victorious.

My dear friends, in a society where wrong seems to be winning all the time, do you think that you are unable to make a difference ?

I certainly believe THAT YOU CAN !!

2. THE PRIMARY REASONS WHY THE ABOVE NEGATIVE TRAITS HAVE BECOME PREVALENT

When we focus our attention on the negative traits that are prevalent today, what we can observe is that the above mentioned traits along with many other similar and worse ones can be seen in every country. I would like to list some of them below.

- (i) Drug addiction.
- (ii) Murder being committed for even very minor reasons.
- (iii) Increase in rape.
- (iv) Increase in child abuse.
- (v) Increase in abortions.
- (vi) Increase in divorce.

- (vii) Homosexual relationships and marriages on the rise.
- (viii) Increase in theft, thuggery and fraud at every level in society.
- (ix) Emergence of all types of gangs.
- (x) A majority of citizens breaking the law of the land, when they believe they would not be detected.
- (xi) Society accepting ' **lying** ' as normal and a very minor wrong.

Dear friend, if you are able to study this global problem deeply, and find the cause of it, you would be doing a great service to society. However if you are able not only to identify the problem, but also find a solution to it, you would be doing a great service to humanity as a whole.

I hence want to invite you to join me in searching for the cause of the present global situation as described above. I want to commence my search with the assumption that the world that we live in did not come into being by chance, and that the world itself and mankind was created by an everlasting almighty being whom we call God. If you accept my assumption as correct, you may conjecture that the tragic situation that exists in the world today is possibly due to one of the following reasons.

- (i) The God, who created us, is a God who does not care how mankind conducts itself.
- (ii) The God, who created us, is a God who cares and wants to solve the tragic situation in the world, but is unable to find a solution.
- (iii) The God, who created us, is opposed by a power that seeks to mislead and destroy mankind, and our creator God is unable to overcome this opposing power.
- (iv) **The God who created us is ALMIGHTY and can overcome the opposer, however He is a God who always acts in a just and fair manner and has provided an INCREDIBLE SOLUTION to the above-defined problem.**

My Dear friends, I firmly believe, that (iv) above is the correct position. I hence define the correct position as follows : **The God who created us is a God who is Almighty and Righteous. He loves every one of us and wants to solve every problem of every human being, and is waiting to give all of us a PRICELESS GIFT AT ZERO PRICE.**

3. THE PRICELESS GIFT OUR LOVING GOD OFFERS US AT NO COST

(i) The biggest problem faced by mankind

The Bible tells us that in the beginning, our Almighty, Righteous and Loving God created man in His own image and likeness.

(Genesis 1 : 26) He then provided man with everything that he would need to live a happy, peaceful and contented life. God also provided a place for man to live in - a garden that was planted with trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food.

(Genesis 2 : 9) Consequently in the beginning man lived in a beautiful, pollution-free environment, having an abundance of tasty food.

Genesis 1 : 29, 30 :-

²⁹ Then God said, “ I give you every seed- bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food ³⁰ And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air and all the creatures that move on the ground - everything that has the breath of life in it - I give every green plant for food. ”

We see from the above verses that in the beginning God supplied the food required by all creation and **both humans and animals were vegetarians** and did not feed on the flesh of others. Consequently in the whole of creation fear was nonexistent and everyone lived in peace and harmony. There was peace and harmony between the creator God and mankind, mankind and the animal kingdom, mankind and nature.

The opposer of God to whom we refer to as Satan then made his move, in order to destroy the perfect and harmonious relationships that existed in the whole of creation. His motive was to **steal the blessings** given by God to man, **kill the relationship** between God and man, and **destroy the future** of mankind forever.

John 10: 10 :- “ The thief comes only to STEAL and KILL and DESTROY; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full . ”

The strategy of the opposer was use lies, deceit and cunning to mislead man and make man mistrust and disobey God. Satan succeeded in achieving his objective and the tragic outcome of man's disobedience was that the harmonious relationship between God and man was shattered, and ' eternal death ' became the lot of man, who was banished from his beautiful dwelling place by God.

The consequences of man's disobedience were far more outreaching and tragic. Let me explain it as follows :-

As we saw earlier man was created by God, ' **in His own image and likeness** '. (**Genesis 1 : 26**) Hence in the beginning **man had the very nature of God within him**. However when man chose to disobey God and obey Satan, **the nature of Satan was born within him** and started controlling him.

- As we pointed out to you earlier, in today's society we can see,
- **A rapid decline in moral values**
 - **In the battle between good and evil, evil generally emerging victorious**
 - **Breakdown in law and order becoming widespread worldwide.**

This, my dear friend is because, with man's disobedience to God, SATAN'S NATURE STARTED REIGNING WITHIN MAN !!!

The tragedy that befell man on account of his disobedience is that, **every human being born into this world thereafter is born with Satan's nature or a Sinful nature within him.**

Since everyone born into this world is born with this SINFUL NATURE, it is impossible for man to lead a sinless life. Furthermore it is not necessary for anyone to teach a man to do 'sinful things', since he is born with the tendency to sin, within him. Because of this, parents can easily observe that at a very tender age little infants have 'temper tantrums' etc. with no training or coaching whatsoever.

My Dear Friends, the **BIGGEST PROBLEM FACING ALL MANKIND** is to find an answer to the question,

HOW CAN MANKIND BE SAVED FROM THIS SINFUL NATURE THAT EVERYONE IS BORN WITH ?

(ii) The solution given by Almighty God - FREE

The God who created us is a God who does not lie. Our **God loves mankind**, and since He does not change, although mankind rebelled against Him and disobeyed Him, His love for you and me remains unchanged. **Hence it is God's desire to re-establish the close relationship He had with man before the fall.**

However, Love is not the only characteristic of God. Our God is a **Holy God**. Hence it is not possible for Him to enter into a relationship with sinful man and also retain His holiness. The net result of these two characteristics of God, LOVE and HOLINESS is that although He loves man and wants to renew His relationship, His holiness disables Him from doing so.

Furthermore, our God is a **Righteous God**. Hence His righteousness requires Him to judge and effect punishment on man for his rebellion - disobedience sin.

My very dear friends the solution that God provided for this ' unsolvable problem ' is way beyond our comprehension and understanding. He knows that no man can lead a sinless life and that **“ the wages of sin is death ” (Romans 6 : 23)**. He therefore sent His only son Jesus Christ into this world, to live a sinless life and then offer His life as a ransom for your sins and mine. The Lord Jesus Christ lived a sinless life and sacrificed His life on a cross at Calvary, to enable you and me to be clothed again in the image and likeness of God.

Romans 5 : 8 :- “ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this : While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. ”

The Bible tells us that every human being who believes that Jesus Christ paid the price for his sins, and accepts Jesus as his saviour, is empowered by God to become His sons.

John 1 : 12 :- “ Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ”

My dear friend, please focus your attention on this amazing promise given by Almighty God who does not lie. Here we find God promising that He will give you the right to become a child of God. This means that once again He will re-create His nature within us. In other words God is promising to change our ' evil or sinful nature ' and make us ' children of God ' with His nature reigning within us.

2 Corinthians 5 : 17 :- “ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation ; the old has gone, the new has come ! ”

I personally know without a shadow of doubt, that God will cast out the evil nature within us, and replace it with His nature, because 44 years ago as a 22 year old, I received Jesus as my personal saviour (**John 1 : 12**) and experienced God changing me from within. Hence my dear friend I want to request you with all my heart, to take the following steps yourself.

Step 1 :- Repent of all the sins which you may have committed knowingly or unknowingly, due to the sinful nature within you, and seek God's forgiveness.

Step 2 :- Commit your life to Jesus, and enter into God's sonship.

Step 3 :- As a child of God, **decide to live a life of faithfulness and obedience to God.**

When you sincerely take the above mentioned steps, God in His Infinite Love will not only accept you as a son, but will guide you like a shepherd leading his sheep.

I hence want to place before you the words of **Psalm 23.**

Psalm 23

- 1. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.**
- 2. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,**
- 3. He restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.**
- 4. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me, your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**
- 5. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.**
- 6. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.**

Dear friend, please take the steps mentioned above, and receive your priceless gift today. In order to help you to do this, may I humbly suggest that you sincerely offer the following prayer to God.

Loving Father, today I came to understand the sacrifice you made for me. I came to know today, how Jesus took my punishment on the cross at Calvary. I thank you Jesus for dying for my sins. I accept you as my Saviour and Lord. Accept my life Lord Jesus and mould it according to your will. Amen.

My dear friend, please share this wonderful news with others as well.

May God give you the strength

And the courage to do so !!

