

# manna



1991.8

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## *Editor's Preface*

We give thanks to our Lord that to date we have 46 church buildings and 19 prayer houses, a total of 65 places of worship in Sabah since the Truth was first preached there in 1927. The manner in which the Truth was preached to Sabah was indeed wonderful. Perhaps not many of our members are aware of how the Truth was preached to Sabah. The True Jesus Church in Sabah, in her 60th Evangelical Anniversary Commemorative issue, reports as follows :

"In early 1926, Dn John Voon of the Singapore Church (Dn Voon, now at 87, is still practicing dentistry in Ipoh, Malaysia) sent a copy of the 'Holy Spirit Times' to Mr Tsen En Fook of Jesselton, North Borneo. As Mr Tsen was preoccupied with his business he did not have time to study it but instead he sent it to a friend, Lee Siak Lin, in Sandakan with a note 'A True Church has arisen'. After reading the 'Holy Spirit Times', Lee Siak Lin was deeply moved. Because of a fervent desire to seek the Truth, he boarded a ship to Singapore on the first day of Chinese New Year and located the True Jesus Church there. After studying the Truth for some time, he received water baptism on 11 January 1927. Three days later he received the Holy Spirit. Then Elder Tan Chien Sing and Dn John Voon, together with a few others, travelled with him to Sandakan to preach the Truth there. Thus, the Church in North Borneo was first established in Sandakan. Before Elder Tan and Dn Voon left for Singapore, they ordained 3 deacons/deaconess - Dn Mark Chin, Dn Philemon Ho and Dns Phoebe Kong

to be responsible for the church affairs. Brother Lee Siak Lin was the Secretary."

The above report, aside from relating the propagation of the Truth to Sabah, also reveals to us the importance of literary evangelism. You may be surprised that the Truth preached to the Philippines and Ghana was also through our "Words of Life" booklets.

The Department of Literary Ministry, Singapore Coordination Office where the "Words of Life" and "Manna" are published, is launching a campaign to scout talents, ie to request those who are gifted in writing, to be our columnists or correspondent writers in our publication. In the past most of the articles published in the "Words of Life" and "Manna" were translated from articles written in Chinese in the 'Holy Spirit Monthly'. Where translation is concerned, the beauty of the original language is lost. It would be wonderful if we could have more writers to contribute articles to be included in our publication. As this will not only help us to relieve our heavy responsibility of translation, it will definitely enhance the pleasure in reading the two publications since the articles are written in the first language. Incidentally, it will help our publication to be more internationally represented. It is hoped that YOU who are gifted in writing to contribute your share of responsibility. By doing so you are not only helping us to uplift the standard of our publication, more importantly, you are rendering your effort in saving souls. "Knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain" as Paul said (1 Cor 15:58).

In this issue, the picture of the cover is taken by our photographer, Bro Edmond Ho. The setting sun is splendid to some. What about to you? We would like you to complete the sentence yourself. The lead article, "The Final Resurrection", will occur at the Second Advent of Christ. As Christians, we shall be changed to another form and substance. Like Jesus'. This form will be different from the physical form but perceptible to the power, and the substance will be spiritual. "Moses Contented Against Pharaoh" is an interesting dialogue of spiritual polemic. Pharaoh, prefiguring Satan, wanted the Israelites to worship God in Egypt, allegorically a place of fleeting pleasure. But Moses put

up a strong contention with the help of God and he won the contest with Pharaoh. "Turn Back Before God Strikes" is a good reminder to some who had gone astray. Real penitence should be done without the loss of time. "Guide To Bible Study", compiled by Elder John Yang, will be helpful for cell groups, campuses, as well as for family worships. "Love Is Not Easily Provoked" says that in this world there is no one who will not be angry when provoked. But one whose love is perfect will not be provoked easily, as remarked by Paul.

Singapore

August 1991

# The FINAL RESURRECTION

## I. Physical Resurrection

When Eutychus fell from the third storey, the multitude thought that he was dead. But Paul embracing him said, "Do not be alarmed, for his life (soul) is in him" (Ac 20:9-10). Thus, when the soul leaves the body, the person is dead. James said, "For as the body apart from the spirit is dead," (Jas 2:26). It follows therefore that when the soul rejoins the body, the person is resurrected physically. The Bible reveals that after Elijah had stretched himself upon the child, "the soul of the child came to him again and he lived". This is physical resurrection. There are many such incidents in the New Testament (Lk 7:12-15, 8:49-55; Jn 11:38-44; Ac 9:36-41) and the Old Testament (1 Kgs 17:17-23; 2 Kgs 4:32-37). However, these people eventually died as any other man because their resurrected body were still physically of flesh and blood.

## II. Spiritual Resurrection

The result of sin is spiritual death. God commanded Adam saying, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die" (Gen 2:17).

But after Adam had eaten the fruit he continued to live for 930 years (Gen 5:3-5). This does not mean that the word of God was not fulfilled. God was referring to spiritual death. In similar vein, Paul said that the gentiles were "alienated

from the life of God" (Eph 4:18).

Spiritual resurrection happens at baptism. Because spiritual death is brought about by sin, when sin is forgiven, spiritual life is resurrected (Ac 2:38, 22:16). Thus, baptism is "the washing of regeneration" (Tit 3:5). In baptism, one dies with the Lord, is buried and is resurrected with the Lord (Rom 6:3, 4). Paul in his epistle to the Colossians said, "You were buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." (Col 2:12).

## III. The Final Resurrection

The final resurrection will occur at the Second Advent of Christ. It is our greatest hope. All those who are part of this final resurrection will never die again but will live forever with the Lord (1 Thess 4:13-17).

### a. The Old Testament Concept of the Final Resurrection :

- i. "The dead shall live, their bodies shall rise. O dwellers in the dust, awake and sing for joy!" (Is 26:19).
- ii. "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Dan 12:2).

### b. The New Testament Concept of The Final Resurrection :

- i. "The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many." (Mt 27:52, 53).
- ii. "But when they went in they did not find the body. While they were perplexed about this, behold two men stood by them in dazzling apparel ... the men said to them,

'Why do you seek the living among the dead. He is not here, but has risen.'" (Lk 24:3-6).

"So she ran, and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved and said to them, 'They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they had laid him.'" (Jn 20:2).

"They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.'" (Jn 20:13).

iii. "Lo! I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishable nature must put on the imperishable, and this mortal nature must put on immortality." (1 Cor 15:53).

iv. "So that he may establish your hearts unblamable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints." (1 Thess 3:13).

v. "For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep." (1 Thess 4:14).

#### IV. The Form And Substance Of The Final Resurrection

##### a. Form of Christ after His resurrection:

"Saying this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? Whom do you seek?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her,

'Mary'. She turned and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabboni!' (which means teacher)." (Jn 20:14-16).

"Jesus said, 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some' ... The disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and sprang into the sea." (Jn 21:6-7).

The form of Christ after His resurrection was somewhat different from that before He died but perceptibly unique to Him.

##### b. Substance of Christ after His resurrection:

"On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them ..." (Jn 20:19).

"When he saw at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished out of their sight." (Lk 24:30-31).

Jesus after His resurrection could enter an enclosed room without opening the door. He could also suddenly vanish out of sight. Therefore, the resurrected Lord was not physical in substance. However, as God, he could materialize himself.

"As they were saying this, Jesus himself stood among them. But they were startled and frightened, and supposed that they saw a spirit. And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do questionings rise in your hearts? See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit has no flesh and bones as you see that I have.' And while they still disbelieved

for joy, and wondered, he said to them, 'Have you anything here to eat?' They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate before them." (Lk 24:36-43).

c. **Form and substance after the final resurrection:**

"So is it with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable. It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual body."

Thus, in the final resurrection, Christians will be changed to another form and substance. Like Jesus'. This form will be different from the physical form but perceptibly unique to the power; and the substance will be spiritual.

## ✠ *Be zealous and repent* ✠

The Spirit of God inspired the apostle John to write the apocalypse. In the letter addressed to the church in Laodicea John wrote, "Those whom I love, I reprove and chasten; so be zealous and repent" (Rev 3:19). He warned the church and said, "So, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew you out of my mouth" (Rev 3:16). John finally said, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

Presently, there are many churches striving for revival. Why? It is because these churches are cold. There are churches which conduct spiritual convocations. Why? Because they are too weak. There are churches who advocate more prayers. Why? Because they have no power. There are Christians who no longer find their Bible study interesting, their prayers effective, their attendance in services regular. Many Christians have slackened in their witnessing, reduced their offering and their fellowship. The church is gloomy, somewhat desolate; the members are not warm and there is no smile on them. But the church is not thoroughly cold - it still conducts services, and holds spiritual convocation.

But how can we be zealous? The Bible provides the solution. It is recorded, "For he who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption; but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life." Paul relied on the flesh. That was why he could not overcome the law of sin in him. He did evil things which he hated but the right things he wanted to do, he could not. He called himself a wretched man. Later he relied on the power of the Lord by submitting himself to the law of God. He then could do all things he wanted to do. Are we still relying on the flesh? Submit ourselves to the will of the Lord. Entrust everything to God since everything comes from Him and without Him we are helpless. Then God will surely listen to our prayer and bless us.

The Bible records, "For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing; not knowing that you are wretched, pitiable,

poor, blind, and naked" (Rev 3:17). But the Lord God who searches the heart said that they were wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked. God testified that the church in Laodicea had lost her humility. She had become proud. The Book of Proverbs says, "Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." The kingship of Nebuchadnezzar was removed from him because of his pride. Pride is sin. The Lord had this to say to His disciples, "So you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, "We are unworthy servants; we have done what is our duty" (Lk 17:10).

The church of Laodicea though neither cold nor hot was proud. This was why the Holy Spirit called the Laodicean church to repent. Repentance is not only the key to the gate of eternal life, it is also the key which can open the door of grace. Since it is so important to repent can Christian afford not to care?

## *Turn back* **before GOD strikes**

The Lord said in Exodus 32:8, "They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them." And Paul said in Galatians 1:6, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon ...!" The people of God through the ages, be it the Israelites in the Old Testament, the apostolic church in the New Testament or even the true church of the last days, seem quick to turn away from God's ways. They are also slow; or worse, unwilling to turn back. And for those who do turn back, they never do so until God strikes.

When the Israelites were led out of Egypt, God performed many great wonders before them so that they would have a chance to know Him and walk in His ways. However, the Israelites were quick to turn away from His ways. They had chosen to worship idols, to murmur against God and eventually to reject the promised land. The ways of God had been made clear to these people and yet they knowingly and wilfully turned away from God. They continued in their evil ways and refused to turn back --- until God struck. At the foot of Mount Sinai, these stiff necked people did not turn back from worshipping the golden calf until God sent plagues to them (Ex 32:1 - 33:4). At Kibroth Hattaavah, the Israelites were influenced by the mixed multitude to murmur against God as they craved for meat (Num 11:4-5). The Lord granted their wishes but struck them with a very great plague (Num 11:31-35). Many other similar incidents have been recorded about the Israelites, who turned back only after God had struck them. They could have turned back way before having to face the wrath of God.

Jonah, the prophet of God, was another who turned away from the commandment of God. When God commanded him to preach to the people of Nineveh, he arose and fled in the other

direction, towards Tarshish (Jon 1: 2, 3). Although he was a prophet, he was slow to turn back to the calling of God --- until God struck. God caused a big fish to swallow Jonah up when he was cast into the sea on the way to Tarshish and it was only in the belly of the big fish for three days and nights that he finally turned back to God (Jon 1:17 - 2:10). For three traumatic days and nights, Jonah did not know what lied ahead for him and it was only at this moment that he chose to turn back to God. Had Jonah not turned away from God or had he turned back before God struck, he would have escaped such an ordeal.

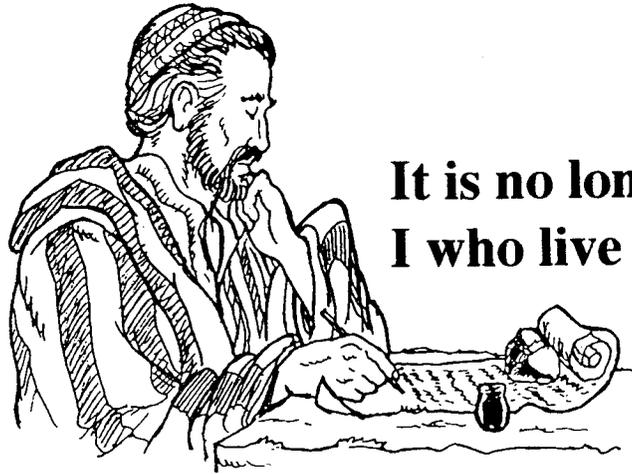
When Jesus Christ was on earth, He knew that He would be betrayed and who it was that would betray Him. For three years, Judas Iscariot had the opportunity to repent but he betrayed Christ. Even when Judas Iscariot had already chosen to betray Christ, Jesus still gave him chances to turn back. Jesus washed his feet (Jn 13:1-14). Jesus even hinted before Judas Iscariot that He knew who would betray Him (Jn 13:21-26) and yet Judas Iscariot chose not to turn back (Jn 13:27). Judas Iscariot only became remorseful and wanted to turn back when he realized that he had been condemned but it was already too late and he met with a tragic end (Mt 27:3-5). Had Judas Iscariot turned back earlier when Christ gave him all those chances or had he turned back before God struck by leaving him alone, would he not have escaped such a tragic end?

When Ananias and Sapphira kept a certain part of the proceeds of the land they sold for themselves, they knew that it was wrong. They had the opportunity to change their minds but they did not. Ananias was struck dead. Sapphira was given another chance when Peter questioned her. She did not turn back. God struck and she too fell dead.

As we read these incidents in the Bible, they remind us to turn back. Some of us may be continuing in sin; some may have backslided in faith or are no longer fervent in church; and some may not have responded to the call of God to serve Him. However, it is a sad thing if we know our own faults but are slow or even unwilling to turn back. Let us always remember that when God

strikes, we have to undergo great afflictions. If we were to turn back at the right time we are making a wise choice. However, if we still remain stubborn, then there may come a time when God will strike us like He did Judas Iscariot, Ananias and Sapphira. These people were slow or unwilling to turn back. May we learn to be quick to turn back, at least before God strikes.

By T K Shee

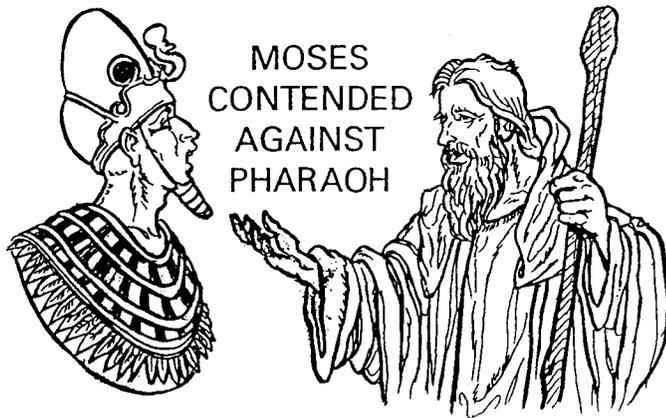


## **It is no longer I who live**

A Christian who truly believes in the Lord has two persons living in him. One is the 'old man' who existed before he believed in the Lord. The other is the 'new man' who exists after he has come to believe in the Lord. The 'old man' was the first Adam while the 'new man' belongs to the last Adam. The first Adam was from the earth, a man of dust; while the last Adam is from heaven, of the spirit. The bible says, "As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven" (1 Cor 15:43-49).

The old man was dead on account of his sins and the sin inherited from Adam (Rom 5:12). We are by nature children of wrath, condemned to die, without any hope in this world. There is but a fearful prospect of judgment waiting for us. But God shows his love towards us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. The righteous Father passes judgment and condemnation to those who are sinners but through His mercy He delivers those who believe in Him. Paul wrote in his epistle to the Ephesians saying, "As sin reigned in death, grace also might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 5:21). Our old selves died when we were baptized into His death. Therefore, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me" (Gal 2:20). Paul wrote, "And we all, with unveiled face, reflecting

the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3:18). Since the Spirit of the Lord has changed us to become a new people, the old man should not control us any more. There must be a distinction between ourselves and the worldly people in regard to our speech and conduct. We must put away our old nature and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore, we must rely on the Holy Spirit, putting to death the wickedness of our old selves so that it is no longer we who live but Christ living in us.



God commissioned Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. At first Moses was not willing. He said he was not eloquent. But God assured him that He would be his mouth-piece and teach him what to say and that his brother, Aaron, would also go with him. With this assurance Moses went up to Pharaoh and spoke to him. He said, "Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord, that I should heed his voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover I will not let Israel go" (Ex 5:1-2). Pharaoh would not allow two million Israelite slaves to go unconditionally.

But if God wants to do something who can stop Him? God then sent plagues to afflict the Egyptians. The first plague was the swarming of the water of the Nile into blood so that the Egyptians could not drink from it (Ex:20, 21). The second was the plague of frogs. The whole Nile was swarmed with frogs. The frogs went up into the houses of the Egyptians, into their bed - chambers, their ovens and their kneading bowls (Ex 8:1-6). The third plague was the plague of lice. There were lice on man and beast in all Egypt (Ex 8:16-18). The fourth plague was the plague of flies. There were great swarms of flies which flew into the house of Pharaoh and into the house of the servants (Ex 8:24). Pharaoh became afraid. He summoned Moses and said to him :

"Go, sacrifice to your God within the land" (Ex 8:25).

But Moses unreservedly said, "We must go three days' journey into the wilderness and sacrifice to the Lord our God as he will command us" (Ex 8:27).

Pharaoh was the king of Egypt and Egypt prefigures this wicked world (Rev 11:8, 9). Pharaoh prefigures the ruler of this world, Satan (Jn 14:30). Satan will never allow us to worship God. Satan wants us to worship God the way the people of the world do.

"Only you shall not go very far away" (Ex 8:28).

Further plagues from God compelled Pharaoh to make some concessions. He allowed the Israelites to worship God outside Egypt but not too far away. Pharaoh hoped that the Israelites would eventually return to Egypt to be his slaves. But Moses insisted that his people would leave far away from Egypt. He did not want to worship the Lord close to Egypt. The Bible records that the Israelites were a people dwelling alone and not reckoning itself among the nations. God wanted to make a distinction between the Egyptians and the Israelites.

Paul said, "What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ... Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you" (2 Cor 6:15-18). Therefore, we should not be mere believers but must actually separate ourselves from the world as far away as possible.

"Go, the men among you" (Ex 10:11).

Since Moses could not accept Pharaoh's proposal, Pharaoh did not allow the Israelites to go out of Egypt. Then God sent the fifth plague, the plague on the cattle. Pharaoh lost all his cattle, horses, asses, camels, herds and flocks but Pharaoh's heart remained hardened. So, God sent the sixth plague, the plague of boils (Ex 9:8-10). All the Egyptians and their beasts were afflicted with sores.

Then God sent the seventh plague, the plague of hail storm. The hail storm struck down everything that was in the fields throughout all the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and the hail storm struck down every plant and every tree of the field. Only in the land of Goshen, where the people of Israel were, there was no hail (Ex 9:22-25).

Once again Pharaoh summoned Moses and said to him, "Go, serve the Lord your God; but who are to go?" Moses replied, "We will go with our young and our old; we will go with our sons and daughters and with our flocks and herds for we must hold a feast to the Lord" (Ex 10:8, 9). But Pharaoh again refused to let them go. Only men were allowed to go (Ex 10:11). Pharaoh wanted the Israelite women and children to remain in Egypt so that the Israelite men would return to him. Satan adopts the same strategy today by restraining some members of our families from believing in Jesus. However, we must be firm like Moses who insisted on bringing the young and old out of Egypt. As Joshua has said, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Jos 24:15).

"Let your flocks and herds remain behind" (Ex 10:24).

Pharaoh's heart was hardened and he did not let the Israelites go. God sent the eighth plague, the plague of locusts. The locusts were so many that the land was darkened and they ate all the plants in the land and all the fruits of the trees which the hail had left; not a green thing remain, neither tree nor plant of the field through all the land of Egypt (Ex 10:15). Pharaoh's heart remained hardened so God sent the ninth plague, the plague of darkness, over the land of Egypt for three days. In this plague the Egyptians could not see one another for three days, but all the Israelites had light where they lived. Pharaoh became frightened and he sent for Moses and said to him, "Go, serve the Lord; your children may go with you; only let your flocks and your herds remain behind" (Ex 10:24). This is yet another deceit of Pharaoh. When he had failed to hold back the Israelite women and children he told Moses to leave behind their flocks and herds. But Moses persisted, saying, "You must also let us have sacrifices and burnt

offerings, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God. Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind, for we must take of them to serve the Lord our God" (Ex 10:24-26).

Pharaoh tried to entice the hearts of the Israelites to turn back to Egypt. The Lord Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21). Moses being fully aware of this told him unreservedly, "Our cattle also must go with us; not a hoof shall be left behind." When Satan is unable to restrain us and our households from worshipping the Lord he will try to make us worship God empty-handed. But the Bible has this to say, "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord your God which he has given you" (Deut 16:17). May the children of God have the determination of Moses who did not want to worship God in Egypt, and who did not want to worship God close to Egypt. We must bring our whole family to follow the Lord and to offer Him our possession given by God to serve the Lord (Lk 8:3).



## Parable of The Rich Man and Lazarus

Matthew 7:21 - 23 says, "Not every one who says to me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evil doers.'" Think about it. Isn't it sad if a Christian cannot enter the kingdom of heaven? The Lord told this parable: "There was a rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, full of sores, who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table; moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried; and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes, and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus in his bosom. And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in anguish in this flame'" (Lk 16:19-24).

The rich man, like Lazarus, was a believer of God. There is no indication that he has committed any serious sins. There is also no mention that Lazarus did any good works. Why the different destiny? The rich man went to the Hades suffering great torment whereas Lazarus was taken into the bosom of Abraham to enjoy in heavenly bliss.



The rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen. He was not just a wealthy person but also a man of power and influence, possibly a community leader (Lev 6:10). But he had no compassion for poor Lazarus. The Bible says, "If anyone has the world's goods and sees a brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" We in the Lord should love one another for it is the commandment of God (Jn 15:12). Although this rich man was a believer of the Lord, he had no pity for others at all. To such the Bible has this to say, "For yet mercy triumphs over judgement" (Jas 2:13).

### 1. Forbearance

Lazarus was a beggar afflicted with sores all over his body, one who saw him would keep a distance from him. In such a terrible state, he was probably going through more mental suffering than the physical. Despite all the odds against him he did not murmur a word but rather willingly gathered the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table for his meals. Though he was poor he was honest. He was a believer of the Lord. In order to preserve his purity he had determined to suffer from poverty rather than to design an ill intention to get rich. This is highly commendable. As we are living in this perilous period it is unavoidable that we meet with various kinds of hardships and it is during such periods that we are easily tempted by vicissitude of life. Therefore, when we are faced with such situation we should hold on to our faith and remember the sufferings that our Lord had undergone and we should also emulate the forbearance of Lazarus (2 Cor 4:17), then only shall we obtain blessing from the Lord.

### 2. Contentment

Lazarus had no relatives or friends. Afflicted by sores. Despised by many. But fortunately, he was a believer of the Lord. To some extent he had received love and concern from his fellow believers. His poverty and sickness had prompted him to deny the world, strengthened his hope in the kingdom of heaven, confirmed his faith in keeping the word, enabled

him to live a contented life. Because he had lived a contented life he did not sin and because he had kept the word of God there was joy and hope in his heart (Rom 14:7). Indeed, he was more blessed than most of the rich men who were without God and troubled by their wealth. As we are believers of the Lord and in anticipation of our blessings in future, we must emulate the character of Lazarus to live a contented and God-fearing life; lest we should become greedy and sin against God.

### 3. Humility

Though Lazarus was poverty-stricken, afflicted with sores, and helpless, yet he possessed the good virtues of humility and obedience, symbolical of selflessness. Lazarus was poor and ugly looking. To the world he looked contemptible. But he understood that God was merciful to him. He believed that God had a beautiful will to which he could not comprehend (Rom 11:33, 34).

God made Lazarus poor and afflicted with sickness with the purpose to train him and also to set an example of endurance for others to follow. Moreover God has absolute power to make man in whatever state He wants him to be. Man is but a created being. He cannot question God by saying, "Why have you made me thus?" (Rom 9:20, 21). As created beings we are, we need to be obedient and submissive to Him. Only then can we gain favour from Him and be blessed by Him. Lazarus had understood this truth so he was humble and obedient to God on all matters. Despite of his poverty he was able to conduct himself very well. Lazarus had manifested so well that it only concludes that he was man of high spirituality.

In conclusion, the cause of the rich man to have fallen in the Hades was that he was arrogant, egoistic, merciless; there was no God in his heart, he was a man without conscience, seeking only after his own pleasures (1 Tim 1:19). He was a hard hearted person. Outwardly he looked strong but inside him was a 'believer' for name sake only. His downfall can well serve as a warning to us.

On the contrary, Lazarus was a man of forbearance, humility and obedience and he was full of faith. He bore no grudges of his poverty and sufferings for he had lived a contented life. He took God as the centre of his life. Though he had no outward appearance yet inside him he was strong; worthy of emulation. Therefore, it is hoped that we who are desirous of entering into the kingdom of heaven should take note of the rich man as a warning and take Lazarus as an example for our emulation. May the Holy Spirit guide us so that we may be able to work our way to the heavenly kingdom.

him to live a contented life. Because he had lived a contented life he did not sin and because he had kept the word of God there was joy and hope in his heart (Rom 14:7). Indeed, he was more blessed than most of the rich men who were without God and troubled by their wealth. As we are believers of the Lord and in anticipation of our blessings in future, we must emulate the character of Lazarus to live a contented and God-fearing life; lest we should become greedy and sin against God.

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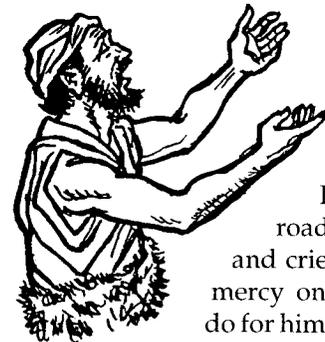
## POWER FROM ON HIGH

Power is strength. Power produces work.

There is physical power and there is spiritual power. Physical power has its limitations. But the power from God is unlimited and beyond. Man is nothing before God (Heb 2:6; Is 40:15, 17).

As believers, in whatever things we do we must rely on the power of God. Only then are we able to accomplish them for we are weak (1 Cor 4:13). But if we rely on the power from on high we shall be strong (Heb 11:34). David, a young child without battle experience, was courageous enough to confront the giant Philistine warrior because he trusted in the Lord. David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled" (1 Sam 17:45-54). Samson was a mighty warrior blessed by God with great power. He was able to tear the lion asunder with his two bare hands (Judg 14:6). When he fought the Philistines he had a fresh jawbone of an ass. With this jawbone he killed one thousand Philistines (Judg 15:15). David and Samson had such victories because they had the power from on high.

Therefore, let us pray earnestly to God. When we have the power of the Holy Spirit, we shall be able to overcome the evil one.

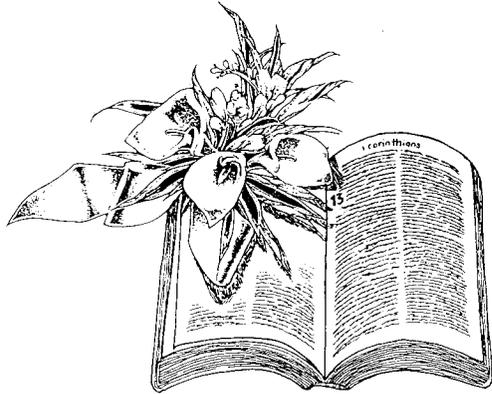


LORD,  
*Let me receive my sight*

In Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging. He heard Jesus passing by and cried out saying, "Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me!". The Lord asked what he could do for him. The begger replied, "Lord, let me receive my sight!". Thereupon the Lord Jesus healed him of his blindness.

The eye is one of the most important organs. The Lord in His sermon on the Mount said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!" (Mt 6:22-23). Satan has no delight in men's salvation. He will blind the minds of the people to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ so that they will not be able to accept the truth and to obtain eternal life (2 Cor 4:3-4). The Jews whose minds were blinded by the devil were no better than the blind person in Jericho. They were unable to accept the salvation of the Lord. They persecuted the Lord. Therefore the Lord said, "For judgement I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may become blind" (Jn 9:39). The Lord also upbraided the Jews for not believing John the Baptist, saying, "Why then did you go out? To see a man clothed in a soft raiment? Behold, those who wear soft raiment are in the kings' houses. Why then did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet" (Mt 11:8-9). What do you come to see when you go to church? Scholars? Philosophers? They are in the universities. So you come to church for truth and salvation? Yes, true tabernacle of God set up not by man but by God (Heb 8:2; Rev 21:3).

"Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy laws" (Lk 18:41; Ps 119:18).



## Love is not easily provoked

God asked Cain, "Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen?" (Gen 4:6).

In this world there is no one who will not get angry if provoked. This is a fact which no one can deny. Cain, the first born of Adam, became angry with his brother. When God asked him, "Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen?", he did not repent. Instead he became more angry and killed his brother, Abel, out of his great wrath.

Temper is inborn. Though we try very hard not to lose it, there will be times when we will flare up even on account of a trifle matter. Temper can be likened to that of gun powder buried in man. Some have more while others have less.

We lose our temper because we feel that an injustice has been done to us. We are provoked to retaliate. Sometimes we encounter some unscrupulous people or unhappy incidents which irritate us.

When we are in such a situation we need to pray to God to keep our temper under control. Allowing our temper to flare-up will not solve any problem.

The Bible says, "Be angry but do not sin" (Eph 4:26). We may ask: Is there such a thing as sinless anger? We can separate "anger" from "sin". Anger is an expression of hatred against injustice. If there is a good reason to be angry and our anger is under control, we do not sin. However, when we are angry we will often say that this is the last straw. We will not tolerate it any more. What follows are quarrel, abuse, fighting, killing, heart-ache, loss of friendship. Therefore, we must exercise tolerance particularly in the moment of anger. We must emulate our Lord Jesus who, "when he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly" (1 Pet 2:23).

"Do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26). "He who is slow to anger has great understanding, but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly" (Prov 14:29). The wise can foresee the consequences brought about by wrath and so he brings his temper under control. But if a person were to hold his temper for a long time, this will bring harm to him. The Bible teaches not to let the sun go down on your anger, for harbouring anger is unhealthy because when one is angry his stomach will produce excessive gastric juices leading to ulcers. The Bible mentions of malice (1 Cor 5:8; Eph 4:31; 1 Pet 2:1). Malice is anger which has been brewing for a long time. It is a cancer of the mind and difficult to heal. Therefore, the Bible teaches us not to prolong our anger till sunset. Why bring our temper to our bed which will disturb our sleep?

Emulate the gentleness and lowliness of the Lord (Mt 11:29).

The Lord said, "I am gentle and lowly in my heart." This should be the state of mind of a spiritual Christian. Vanity and pride often creep into the minds of men of wealth and position. Very often temper comes from a person's pride and vanity. One will not allow other's success to overshadow his own. He will not tolerate humiliation. King Saul was a classic example. He became very angry and he said, "They have ascribed to David ten thousands and to me they have ascribed thousands; and what more can he have but the kingdom?" Saul eyed David with anger from that day on.

Since we have been made anew in the Lord, we must control our bad temper by the renewal of the Holy Spirit and become partakers of the divine nature of God (2 Pet 1:4).

One who is angry with his brother without a cause shall be liable of judgment.

There are people who get angry with others without a cause. For example, A is angry with B and because B is very close to C, automatically A dislikes C as well. The Bible teaches that all those who get angry with others without cause shall be liable for judgment. May God have mercy on us to deliver us from our unintentional guilt.

If there is the kind of love which bears all things, the kind of love which is not resentful, the kind of love which is patient and kind, the kind of love which is not jealous or boastful, the kind of love which is not arrogant or rude, the kind of love which does not insist on its own way, then our hearts will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

We must crucify our old nature on the cross or else our temper can never be up-rooted.

"There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and he who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because he first love us" (1 Jn 4:18, 19).



## *Guide to Bible Study*

*By John Yang*

Bible reading and Bible study are two different things. In Bible study one searches the Bible in depths, takes notes, analyses, summarizes, compares and researches in order to understand the Bible better.

### **I. The Benefits Of Personal Bible Study**

1. Enables one to comprehend the will of God, to follow the correct path to the heavenly kingdom, to obtain spiritual teachings and to be equipped with spiritual armour (Eph 6:17).
2. Enables one to obtain spiritual insight, understand the mystery of God and also to "eat what is good and delight in fatness" (Is 55:1-2).
3. Enables one to compile useful materials for future use.
4. Enables one to be enlightened by the truth and to have a profound understanding of God's salvation.

## II. The Benefits Of Group Bible Study

1. Affords opportunity for participants to give their opinions.
2. Able to learn different viewpoints.
3. Encourage fellowship and enable participants to understand one another better.

## III. Group Bible Study

It can be held at any place. It may be held at night or after Sabbath service. No fixed number of participants is required but ideally the group should consist of more than ten people. When the number is big it can be divided into two or more groups. The ideal duration for one session is about 60 minutes.

The leader of a Bible study group should be rotated. This will enable more people to gain experience in leading a Bible study.

According to the findings of psychologists, one can only retain 10% of what he hears; 50% of what he sees; 75% of what he says and 90% of what he does. As such, Bible study is the most effective way of remembering the passage of the Bible.

### 1. The Participants

- a. Must thirst for the truth and must attend services (Lk 1:53).
- b. Must always read the Bible regularly (Deut 17:18-20).
- c. Must beseech the Holy Spirit for understanding (Eph 1:17-20).
- d. Must listen carefully to other opinions (1 Thess 5:19-22).

- e. Must mention only the main points when asked to speak and be objective, gentle and courteous when speaking (Ac 8:28-34).
- f. Must advance in spiritual knowledge, virtue and power. Must apply the teachings studied to every day life (Jas 1:22-25).

### 2. The Leader

- a. Must take the role seriously by praying constantly about it.
- b. Must be fully prepared and well versed. Topics for discussion and questions to be asked must be written beforehand.
- c. Must arrive at the place of meeting early. Arrange the place properly and receive the participants.
- d. Must be God-fearing, frank and thoughtful.
- e. Must not be too serious or too relaxed.
- f. Must be able to generate discussion and to conclude.
- g. Must keep to the time set for the study and to guide participants not to stretch the time (Col 4:6).

## IV. Methods Of Bible Study

### 1. Character Study

- a. Material :  
A passage from the Bible on a certain character.
- b. Method :
  - i. Study his good points. For example, the manifestations of his faith, purity and love.

- ii. Study his bad points. For example, his disbelief, wicked deeds, rebellion and treachery.
- iii. Study his typology. For example, Isaac is a type of Christ. However, since no one is perfect in this world, nobody can be a perfect type of Christ.
- iv. Summarize the teaching. Follow the good points and avoid the bad points. Understand Christ better through the study of types.

## 2. Incident Study

### a. Material :

A passage from the Bible on an incident.

### b. Method :

- i. Study the incident generally such as the beginning, the development and the end.
- ii. Find out the cause : direct, indirect, immediate or remote, single or complex.
- iii. Find out the effect : upon a person (physical, material and spiritual), upon his family, his people, his church and his country; and upon the glory of God.
- iv. Summarize the teachings. Follow the good and avoid the bad.

## 3. Passage Study

### a. Material :

- i. Passages with identical theme. For example, Prov 31:10-30, the theme is "Virtuous woman" and Ps 23:1-6, the theme is "The Lord is my shepherd".

- ii. Take one chapter at a time but if the chapter is too long then take two or more sessions to complete it. This method enables the group to go through the Bible book by book.

### b. Method :

Study the passage in detail, give its intended meanings and summarize the applicable teachings.

## 4. Topical Study

### b. Material :

For example, the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit; the hope of Christians; the filial-piety of Ruth; the manifestation of humanity; the requisites of salvation; the Second Advent of Christ. You can pick one of the above-mentioned topics for discussion.

The topic should not be too wide. Choose one which can be completed in one session.

## V. The Conduct Of A Bible Study

1. Begin by singing a hymn and followed by a prayer.
2. Read a chosen passage aloud by turn.
3. Summarize the important points.
4. Throw some questions ( prepared beforehand ) to the participants.
5. Interpret the passage. Participants may give their opinions. Do not quibble over trifle matters. If there are difficult verses, they may be reserved for further discussion or may be referred to the leaders of the Church.

6. Apply the teachings of the Bible to daily life (1 Cor 10:11; Rom 15:4).
7. The participants should share what they have learned from the passages. They may want to bring out the verse that inspired them most. Or they may want to give a brief account of an experience relevant to the passage. Conclude with a prayer.

#### VI. Interpreting The Bible

1. Interpret the Bible correctly as the wrong interpretation may bring destruction (2 Tim 2:15; 2 Pet 3:16).
2. Ask the speaker, to whom was he speaking, when and where was it spoken, what was spoken, and why was it spoken?
3. Pay attention to the main points. For example, the important point about the fight between David and Goliath is that faith is vital. So what the participants should take note of is David's faith and not the implications of the 5 stones (1 Sam 17).
4. Pay attention to the context. For example, In 8:11 applies to those who are not yet converted and not to Christians (Ac 8:3-11).
5. Discern whether a passage is to be interpreted literally or spiritually. For example, the washing of robes in Rev 22:14 should not be taken literally.
6. Miracles recorded in the Bible are true events. They should not be taken as mere allegories.
7. Not all the characters in the Bible are types. Even if they are, they cannot be complete types, since no one is perfect in this world. For instance, Moses prefigures Christ, but Moses had two wives.

8. Parables are designed to convey a truth. They are not true incidents. They cannot be taken literally.

#### VII. A Model Bible Study

##### 1. Character Study

Topic : Noah

Bible verses : Genesis 6-9

##### a. The good points of Noah :

- i. He was a righteous man (6:9, 7:1).
- ii. He was blameless (6:9).
- iii. He walked with God (6:9).
- iv. He did all that God commanded him (6:22, 7:5, 16).
- v. He obeyed the command of God by going out of the ark (8:15-19).
- vi. He built an altar after he came out from the ark (8:20).

##### b. The bad points of Noah :

- i. He became drunk. He lay himself in his tent naked (9:20-21).

##### c. Application to daily life :

- i. To be righteous, blameless, obedient, thankful and walk with God.
- ii. Do not follow his drinking habit.

##### d. Prefigurations :

- i. The ark prefigures the true church (cf Lk 17:26, 27).

Those who believed and entered into the ark were saved (Gen 6:17-20). This prefigures those who believe in Jesus, baptize and come to the true church shall be saved (Mk 16:16; 1 Pet 3:20-21; Eph 5:23).

- ii. The construction of the ark was according to the instructions of God (Gen 6:13-22). This prefigures the teachings preached by the true church are in accordance with the Bible (Eph 2:19-20; Gal 1:6-9).
- iii. There was only one door in the ark (Gen 6:14). This prefigures the only one door of salvation (Jn 10:9, 3:5).
- iv. There was only one ark (Gen 6:14). This prefigures the only one true church (Eph 1:23, 4:4, 5:30-32; 1 Cor 12:12, 20).

## 2. Incident Study

Topic : Judas betrayed the Lord.

Bible verses : Mt 26:14-16, 20-25, 47-50, 27:1-10

### a. The cause of betrayal :

- i. He was greedy for money and often stole money from the offering box (Jn 12:6).
- ii. Even though he was upbraided by the Lord, he would not correct himself and this led him to commit a grave mistake (Jn 13:21-27; Mt 26:25).

### b. The result of betrayal :

- i. He could not use the money he got (Mt 27:3-5).
- ii. He lost his apostleship (Ac 1:16, 17, 20).
- iii. He hanged himself and his bowels gushed when he fell (Ac 1:18).
- iv. He faced severe judgement (Mk 14:20-21).

### c. Application to daily life :

- i. Do not be greedy (Heb 13:5; 1 Tim 6:6-10).
- ii. Fault must be rectified or we will give in to Satan (Prov 18:13; Eph 4:27).

### 3. Passage Study

Topic : The widow of Zarephath received Elijah.

Bible verses : 1 Kings 17:8-24

### a. Questions to ask :

- i. Where did God want Elijah to go to and who did God ask to feed Elijah? (17:8, 9).
- ii. Upon arrival at the gate of the city what were the things Elijah asked from the widow? (17:10, 11).
- iii. How did the widow answer him? (17:12). What did Elijah say to her for the second time? (17:13,14).
- iv. What happened when the woman did according to the instructions of the prophet? (17:15, 16).
- vi. How did Elijah pray to God to revive the widow's son? (17:17, 19-22).

### b. Points to ponder :

- i. Why must God ask a poor widow to feed Elijah? To embarrass her? Or to shower the blessing on her?
- ii. What caused the widow to change her mind to receive Elijah willingly? (17:13-15). Out of love? Or by faith?
- c. Application to daily life :
- i. The Lord said, "He who receives a prophet because he is

a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Mt 10:41). We should seize the opportunity to receive God's servants and even to receive the least of the brethren (Mt 25:40).

ii. The widow later received Elijah because she believed the word of God. Faith breeds love. We must pray to the Lord to increase our faith so that we can serve others better and love God more (Heb 11:17-19).

iii. Elijah believed that life and death lie in the hands of God. He prayed very earnestly to God to bring back the life of a dead child. May God also grant us the faith so that we too, can be brave enough to pray for the sick and to revive the dead (Mt 21:21, 22).

d. Sharing.

e. Conclude with a prayer.

#### 4. **Topical Study**

a. Topic :

Evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit.

b. Example :

i. On the day of Pentecost those who received the Holy Spirit spoke in tongues (Ac 2:1-4).

ii. Cornelius spoke in tongues when he received the Holy Spirit (Ac 10:44-46).

iii. The believers in Ephesus acknowledged that the speaking of tongues was the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit (Ac 19:6-7).

c. Correction :

i. It is not true to say that when one believes in Christ he is filled with the Holy Spirit (Ac 19:1, 2).

ii. It is not true to say that when one is baptized he receives the Holy Spirit (Ac 8:15, 16).

iii. Those who have good deeds may not be filled with the Holy Spirit (Ac 10:2, 22, 44).

iv. Those who are fervent may not necessarily have the Holy Spirit (Mt 19:27; Ac 1:4, 5).

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