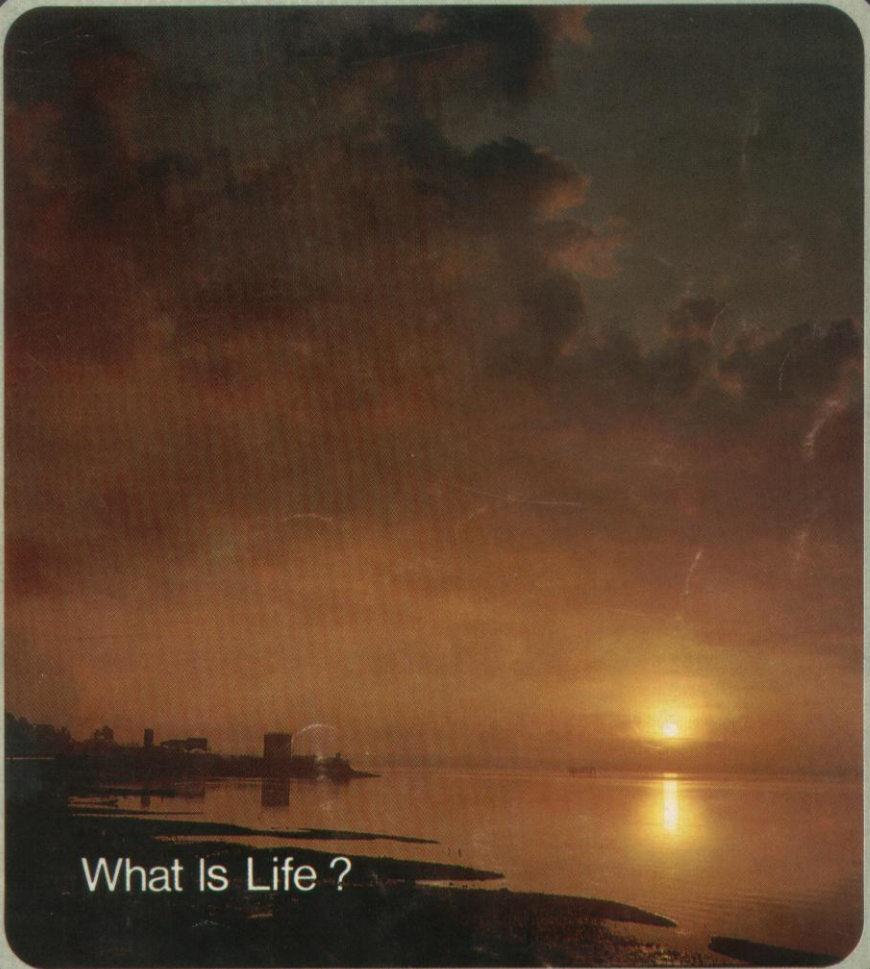


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What Is Life ?

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COVER PHOTO by STEVE TEO



# EDITORIAL

MAY praise and thanks be given to our Lord Jesus for His guidance and grace for seeing us through the 4th issue of MANNA.

WE realise that there is a need to change our presentation for your reading pleasure. So in this issue we have not only changed the cover but have also changed the presentation.

EVERYONE realises the shortness and the sorrows of life in this wicked world. To give you a better understanding of our life in this world we present you the article "What is life?"

Though we have made some changes to improve on this magazine, we still welcome your comments, criticisms and suggestions.

WE also invite you to send us any article which would edify men and glorify God.

Finally we thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you.



John Chui

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# WORLD EVANGELISM

Unknown to many, we have come to the closing chapter of man's history on earth where the living prophecies of the Bible burst into reality. We are fast approaching the grand finale of God's master-plan for the Universe.

The one sure *prophetic event* which was to mark the *beginning of the End has occurred!* That event — the second descent of the Holy Spirit in the East.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Holy Spirit descended, as predicted, and raised a small group of devout though simple men to complete the final task of restoring and bringing the full gospel to the whole world. These few men, imbued with the power of the Spirit, began to preach in China and the church which God re-established through them was later called the True Jesus Church.

Since then this gospel has reached many parts of Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and even Latin America. However, there are still vast regions where it has yet to penetrate. There are still countless thousands

who thirst for it but have not been satisfied because we do not have enough labourers in the field.

When God wanted to give the land of Canaan to Abraham, he was commanded to lift up his eyes and look from the place where he was, westward, southward, eastward and northward. He was commanded to rise and walk through the length and breadth of the land for in so far as he could go, it would be his. This typifies the scope of our evangelism. Our reach is the whole world.

With that in view, we might be required to take advantage of the modern means of mass communication, the printed word, the radio and the television, to reach a greater audience. Of course, efficient though they may be, they are expensive. And it is obvious that this noble duty of supporting the cause of World Evangelism rests squarely on every Christian. It is relevant to note at this point that the early christians contributed almost all they had for the common good and for the cause of spreading Christ.

Not only that, more trained evangelists





conversant in the diverse languages of the world are urgently required. There is a present shortage of such men to meet the worldwide demand for truth.

This sacred mission needs a large army of men. But the potency of an army depends on its morale. And the morale of the army depends largely on its unity. Without unity, the entire army is weak.

Satan knows this too!

It pays therefore to be at constant vigilance against the destructive ploys of his, to be mindful of the seeds of discord he tries to sow.

Furthermore, as history has proven, the gospel is not incorruptible. The pure gospel will lead us to salvation while a perverted one will lead us to destruction (1 Cor 15:1-2; Gal 1:6-9).

The gospel preached by the True Jesus Church is the same gospel as preached by the apostles. As before, so it is today, Satan is bent on perverting the full gospel of salvation.

Hold fast therefore to the pattern of sound

teaching, living by the faith and love which are ours in Christ Jesus. Guard the treasure put into our charge, with the help of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us (2 Tim 1:13-14).

One final word. Soul saving is a gigantic task.

Referring to the reconstruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the Lord God spoke to Zerubabel saying that it was done "not by might, nor by power but by my Spirit" (Zech 4:6). In the same way today, we accomplish this task by calling upon the Spirit of God.

It is through your loving and persevering prayers that the rest of mankind may escape the torments of eternal punishment.

You are in fact responsible.

It can never be over-emphasised that with each passing minute, the End draws nearer. Pray therefore that the Lord of harvest may send forth more labourers, that more may be inspired to support this cause, that we may be aware of the divisive influence of Satan and be guarded against his unrelenting attempts to corrupt the gospel.



# TEMPLE

*and the*

# CHURCH

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The temple of Jerusalem in the Old Testament is the prefiguration of the Christian Church in the New Testament (1 Cor 3:16). The history of the temple repeated itself in the history of the Christian Church.

It took King Solomon a total of seven years, involving more than 150,000 men, to build the magnificent temple. (1 Kgs 5:15; 6:38) The interior of the temple was overlaid with gold and all the vessels in it were of fine gold (2 Chron 3:8; 4:21).

When they began to offer sacrifices there, the glory of God filled the temple, indicating that God was well pleased with it (2 Chron 7:1).

But one night, the Lord God appeared to Solomon, saying “. . . if you walk before me, as David your father walked, doing according to all that I have commanded you and keeping my statutes and my ordinances, then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with David your father . . . . But if

you turn aside and forsake my statutes and my commandments . . . then I will pluck you up from the land which I have given you and this house, which I have consecrated for my name, I will cast out of my sight . . .” (2 Chron 7:12-22)

Unfortunately, most of the subsequent kings sinned against God and would not repent even after much warnings from the prophets.

As prophesied, the temple was finally burned down by the King of Babylon and the Israelites were taken captives for seventy years.

In the reign of King Cyrus, God moved him to allow the Israelites to return to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chron 36:11-23).

And so, as soon as they returned, they rebuilt the altar immediately on the former spot. (Ezra 3:3) And within twenty years the reconstruction of the temple was completed.

Later under Nehemiah, they rebuilt the city hall and Jerusalem was once again a complete city and God’s glory was restored. (Neh 6:15-16)

The Christian Church was born on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit first descended on the 120 disciples.

It was built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. The Holy Spirit was with the church and God confirmed the message by signs and miracles (Eph 1:23; Mk 16:20).

But the gospel of the Lord was soon distorted by man. At the close of the apostolic era, the church was already too worldly to be regarded as the church of God. By the 4th century the church merged religion with politics, thereby securing her dominance but only at the cost of falling further away from the truth.



For several centuries since then, the church rose to political prominence throughout Europe but spiritually she fell to an abysmal depth. The turning point however came in the year 1517. Martin Luther, repulsed by the heresies infesting the church, nailed his 95 theses to the church door at Wittenberg and challenged the whole Roman Catholic Church to defend the sale of indulgences. This sparked off the flame of the Reformation that razed across the whole of Europe and even unto this day. One by one, the heresies were scorched and the church was being purified.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, God sent the Holy Spirit of the Latter Rain to re-establish the true church in the east (Zech 10:1, Mt 24:27). The church is now purged of all heretical elements. The truth is restored.

She is to call the people of the world to come out of Babylon and the false churches.

Those who believe will be promised the Holy Spirit as the seal of salvation. So all who are baptised in the same Spirit must real-

ize the responsibility to bring the whole truth to the whole world. In order to fulfill God's plan of salvation, we must be self-sacrificing. Are we ready?



**MARTIN LUTHER - The First Reformer**



## COURAGE TO BE DIFFERENT

In the days of the apostles, there was a famous teacher of the law by the name of Gamaliel. Even the great apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, was once under his tutelage (Acts 22:3).

When the apostles were preaching in Jerusalem, they incurred the hatred of and faced opposition from the High Priest of the Jewish Council and the Pharisees. They caught hold of the apostles and wanted to kill them (Acts 5:33-41).

But for Gamaliel's intervention, the apostles would have been dead.

"Take care what you do with these men," he stood up and warned them. "If this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them."

His speech reflected his wisdom, courage, impartiality and reverence to God.

Although society has changed since then, the Bible remains the unchanging living Word. The fine qualities of Gamaliel stand as a model even for today's christian.

While all the people hated the apostles and plotted to kill them, he courageously declared that the apostles did not deserve to be killed. He said that though their teachings appeared revolutionary as compared to the traditional dogma of the Jews, they should not be put to death just on account of that. Amidst the angry mob, he was brave enough to speak out against injustice and religious bigotry.

He dared to be different!

This calls to mind the daily compromises with morality we make in today's world of business. Have we not given our approval to shady transactions when we should have spoken out against it? Have we not observed weaker men being trampled upon without lifting a finger to help?

Though a Pharisee himself, Gamaliel bore no hatred for the apostles. The others hated them because they preached Jesus and not traditions.

It is wrong to hate another on account of a different faith. A person who truly believes in



God has no hatred in his heart for it will tarnish his virtues and corrode his soul.

Hatred is likened to fire. It burns the one who hates and the one hated.

We should not bear such hatred in our hearts (Lk 9:53-55).

Gamaliel was a cautious man. He knew that the Council had power to do as they wanted and so he warned them to be careful lest they might bring harm to the innocent. Likewise, in whatever we do, we must neither act impulsively nor arbitrarily.

God has given us power but it is meant for the edification of others and not to destroy others. Those who hold responsible offices in

the church must be even more careful how they exercise their God-given power.

Gamaliel warned them not to jump to conclusions. The Lord Jesus said that a tree is known by its fruits. It is foolish if one chops down a tree without checking whether it bears fruits or not. If a tree is a good one planted by God which will bear fruits, indeed it will be a loss if it is axed.

Instead of immediately executing the apostles, he advised the Council to wait and see. That was a smart move. It is not seldom that we regret decisions made on the spur of the moment. Remember, it is easier to chop down a tree than to plant one.

# the curse of JERICHO



Jericho was the most powerful and heavily-protected city in the land of Canaan. The inhabitants there were great in stature and strong in physique. It had a strong king and many mighty warriors. From a strategic viewpoint, should the Israelites attack that city, they would have suffered a devastating defeat.

However, under Joshua's leadership, the Israelites did it without shedding a drop of blood. They merely followed God's instruction.

Seven priests were to carry seven horns of rams and blow the horns before the ark of the Lord. The army followed the priests who blew the horns as they walked.

Each day they circled the city once and returned back to their tents. This was repeated for six days.

On the seventh day, they walked round the city seven times. And when the priests made a long blast with the horns, the people shouted and suddenly the great wall of the city fell down flat.

God had given over the city of Jericho to the Israelites. The people went up into the city and took it. And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both men and women, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword.

And Joshua adjured them saying, "Cursed before the Lord be the man that rises up and rebuilds this city, Jericho. At the cost of his first-born shall he lay its foundation, and at the cost of his youngest son shall he set up its gates." (Josh 6:1-26)

Centuries later when Ahab became the king of Israel, Hiel the Bethelite rebuilt the city of Jericho which was utterly destroyed. He laid its foundation at the cost of Abiram his firstborn, and set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke by Joshua the son of Nun. (I Kgs 16:34)

What is that to us?

There were seven tribes in the land of Canaan who were fierce and evil, among whom some lived in Jericho. Like them, we



were once dead in sins and wickedness, following the evil ways of the world. We were under the commander of the spiritual powers of the air, the spirit at work among God's rebel subjects.

We all lived our lives in sensuality, and obeyed the promptings of our own instincts and notions. As the mighty wall of Jericho resisted numerous onslaughts, so have our sins made impossible for any religion to subdue our carnality and raise us up from depravity.

Although we may possess the will to do good and to forsake evil, in the words of Paul "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warning against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." (Rom 7:21-23)

Our body had become the habitat of the devil and the strong-hold of all kinds of wickedness which can never be overcome by any religion.

Remember, that we were once gentiles in the flesh, without God and without hope in this world.

But now, by the grace of Christ Jesus, our sinful nature has been destroyed, the evil one in us has been driven out and the lusts of the flesh were put to death in the way Jericho was destroyed. The Bible says, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Gal 5:24) and Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Gal 2:20)

In Romans 6:3-11 Paul said, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into

Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."

The Israelites possessed the land of Canaan and established the Kingdom of Israel, enjoying the blessings of God according to his promise to Abraham.

If they continued in obeying the commandments of God, his statutes and ordinances and served him faithfully, the Kingdom would surely grow stronger and remain longer.

"Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." (Rom 11:22)

Since we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb through water baptism, we are made holy. We are now the spiritual temple in which the Holy Spirit dwells. As such, there must be a separation from unrighteousness. If we serve God with reverence, He will accept us and give us blessings.

On the other hand, it is written in Hebrews 6:4-8: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by

whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God. But that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh to cursing; whose end is to be burned.”

Now we should depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit to put to death the things of the flesh, and walk by the Spirit; bearing fruits of righteousness and offering them to God.

To be carnally minded is death but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Peter's warning is in point: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to know the way of righteousness, than after they have known of it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to

its own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." (2 Pet 2:20-22)

In this regard we are compared to the Bethelite who rebuilt the city of Jericho after it had been flattened. Recalcitrant sinners will surely be cursed and may even lose their status as the children of God. On earth their lives will be miserable and in the future they have nothing for inheritance.

Those who are redeemed by Jesus Christ have been set free and they have become the children of God. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ had made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

"Therefore, we must deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. Let us look for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Tit 2:11-13)



# Personal Testimonies

HOW IS IT THAT YOU SOUGHT ME?

## I WAS DYING . . . . .

By Q. C. Chang

I was born in Yun-lin — a sugar producing village in Taiwan. My family and I are christians of the True Jesus Church.

One day I suddenly felt a severe pain in my chest. I was then still in junior high school and the mother of one of my classmates was a doctor. So I went to see her.

She examined me but found nothing wrong with me. Consoling me, she told me that it must have been just an ordinary muscular cramp.

I thought no more of it until some years later — and that also not voluntarily. By then we had moved to Kan-shin.

On one occasion as I was walking towards the church, the True Jesus Church at Kan-shin where we regularly worship, I felt the same chest pain again. This time it was so excruciating that I could hardly move a step. Tears were streaming down my cheeks. In extreme agony, I cried out to the Lord in my heart. I was too weak — too weak even to open my mouth to pray.

—By the mercy of the Lord the pain miraculously subsided. I managed to drag myself to church and after some time the pain was gone.

“It must be another of those muscular cramps,” I thought to myself. When it was gone, I did not bother about it.

I went on as if nothing had happened.

### *The pain again*

After completing my secondary education, I entered a university for further studies.

There I had the opportunity to meet Dr. S. F. Hong — a devout christian himself. Somehow in the course of our conversation I mentioned the chest pains I had. Immediately he referred me to one Professor Loo — a specialist physician at the university.

There were some preliminary examinations made. But there was no diagnosis.

However, one day in 1971, while I was attending a lecture, the pain came back again. I was coughing uncontrollably and frantically gasping for breath. My throat seemed choked and I was unable to utter a sound.

Feebly I scribbled on a slip of paper: ‘Send me to Prof. Loo’.

### *Ordeal at the hospital*

After a quick examination at his clinic, he promptly rushed me to the Emergency Ward.

I sensed something must be very wrong with me — something very bad.

At the Emergency Ward, the doctor at once sent me to the X-ray room.

Soon the X-ray film was ready.

On seeing the film, the doctor was shocked!!

Gently but firmly he broke the news to me: “You are dying”.

His words were clear. They were unmistakable.

*I was dying!!*

But I thank God that at that moment an unexplained calm descended upon me. I too was surprised at my unusual composure. It must have been that I had entrusted my life to God.

But I could see the anguish on the face of my relatives when they were subsequently informed. Some were weeping as though I

God. But that which beareth thorns and  
briers is rejected, and is high to cursing;  
was already dead.

“Are you a drug addict?”, the doctor  
inquired.

“No”

“Any knife wound in your chest before?”

“No”

He was puzzled. My lungs were shrinking!

My left lung had ceased functioning. My  
right was seriously impaired.

In their last desperate attempt to save my  
life, they cut two holes in my lungs and  
inserted a tube into each. One was to pump  
out carbon dioxide and the other was to draw  
out water.

I was given explicit instructions not to  
meddle with the tubes. Later I was left alone.

Not long afterwards, he hurried back and  
told me to get ready for another major opera-  
tion. They had found that my right lung had  
deteriorated.

Shaking my head, I said, “Doctor, you  
said that no amount of medicine or surgery  
can really help me. Why operate?”

He appeared irritated and stomped out of  
the door.

That night I began to search myself inside  
out. I thought of my past. My present pre-  
dicament. My future . . . .? My soul was  
rumbling and then the innermost of my being  
exploded and I cried out to the Lord.

“O Lord! I am not afraid to die but what  
of my spiritual life? I am not ready yet! Lord,  
if it is your will, have mercy on me. Save me  
please! **SAVE ME!!** I *shall* strive for per-  
fection for the rest of my life.”

With that I fell asleep. My face was bathed  
in tears.

*The miracle*

washed to her wallowing in the mire.” (2 Pet  
2:20-22)

The following morning, I woke up and  
found myself seized by intense pain, the  
worst that I have ever felt.

It was *unbearable!*

‘Hallelujah’ was all I could say.

Suddenly I pulled out the tubes that were  
plugged into my chest.

It was strange. I felt more relieved. Sur-  
prisingly, I could breathe easier.

But my mother who was by me was stunned.  
She panicked and rushed for the doctor. She  
didn’t realise that I felt better instead.

When the doctor came, he scolded me as if  
I was trying to commit suicide.

And through it all, I thank God that now,  
more than ever, I’ve experienced the love of  
God at work in me. The words of the Psal-  
mist resounded in my head:

“For his anger is but for a moment,  
and his favour is for a lifetime,  
Weeping may tarry for the night,  
but joy comes with the morning.” (Ps 30:5)

Without delay I was again pushed into the  
X-ray room where another chest X-ray was  
taken. My lungs punctured, my condition  
must have been worse.

“How many days more — or hours —  
before I die?”

When the film was ready, the doctor  
studied it again and again — and again.

He had another shock!!

It’s incredible! It’s amazing!!

My lungs were healed! Completely!!

“Wonderful and marvellous is the grace of  
the Lord for me for he has made me whole.  
My infirmed body is restored to perfection.”

All glory be to God. Amen.



## HOW IS IT THAT YOU SOUGHT ME?

When Jesus was twelve years old, his parents, Joseph and Mary, brought him to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover, according to the custom.

When the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey, and they sought him among the kinsfolk and acquaintances; and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking him.

After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions; and all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.

And when his parents saw him they were astonished; and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously."

And he said to them, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. (Lk 2:42-50)

### *Emotions*

Both Joseph and Mary were devout worshippers of God. Before the birth of Jesus the angel told each of them clearly on separate occasions that Jesus was the Christ, the Messiah of the nation of Israel and the Saviour of the world (Mt 1:18-25; Lk 1:26-38).

In the intervening years before his appearance at the temple their love for the child must have grown very strong. Perhaps their intense parental affection paled even the angelic revelation they had received twelve years ago. Understandably, they became very anxious when they could not find him and they returned to Jerusalem immediately.

When they had finally found him, his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been looking for you anxiously."

Had they actually forgotten who Jesus was?

They loved him as their very own son. Could they have allowed their emotions to overshadow their realization of God's will?

Let's apply this to a situation that is altogether common in our day, in our own life.

When our children fall sick or are otherwise afflicted, have we not questioned "O God, why have you treated us so?"?

Have we forgotten the soothing words of the Bible: That in everything God works for the good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28)?

Emotion is a dangerous guide.

Countless numbers of young men and women today live to regret the pleasurable moment of weakness when they lost out to their flaming passions. They have not lived according to the will of God. The clamour of their emotions have drowned the soft promptings of God within them. Christians everywhere should therefore pray that they be not overcome by their emotions and allow the will of God to be trampled underfoot.

## Duty

If we examine carefully the reply of Jesus, we can perceive that he was clearly conscious of his status as the Son of God. Aware of the divine task to accomplish the will of God, he replied, "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Had they also understood the will of God, they would have been exceedingly happy to see him sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

They would not have said, "Why have you treated us so?"

Although Jesus was born of Mary, brought up by Joseph, he had not forgotten that he was the Son of God and that he must stay in the house of God and that he had to complete his mission.

In the same way, Moses, who was adopted and brought up by the Pharaoh's daughter and received the best education in the royal court, had not forgotten his Hebrew origin and the commission that God had entrusted to him.

When he was forty, he wanted to see his brethren. He refused to be called the son of the Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin (Acts 7:20-23; Heb 11:24-25).

Clearly, to live our lives with purpose and to live victoriously, we must have before us a constant reminder of our duty: to live according to the will of God.

### *My Father's house*

We are the children of God. We should always be concerned with the affairs of God.

It is unreasonable for children not to be concerned for their parents. Similarly, it is not right for the children of God to have no concern over the house of God.

In the time of Prophet Haggai, the Israelites only cared for themselves. They had no concern whatsoever for the house of God. They stayed in panelled houses while the temple of the Lord was left in ruin.

Prophet Haggai rebuked them and told them to search themselves. He also told them to bring wood and rebuild the temple that the Lord might take pleasure in it and that the Lord might appear in it in glory (Hag 1:3-8).

Are we concerned for the house of God today?

We have been pursuing the betterment of our physical life and material gains but neglecting our spiritual advancement. We are so busy with worldly matters that we have no time left to pray or to attend church services. Much less is our interest to do church work. In short, we are living in a state of lukewarmness described in Revelation 3:15-16.

At this juncture, it is pertinent to remember the words of Jesus: "How is it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

Paul could say, "But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may accomplish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God." (Acts 20:24)

Therefore let the solemn words of Jesus be deeply imprinted in our hearts that we may strive forward with one accord for the faith of the gospel, for the prosperity of God's true church on earth and for the exaltation of God's holy name.



# What IS Life



You are living.

YES, you certainly will not disagree.

And so you have *life*.

YES again.

But *what is life?*

Now that's a difficult one. In spite of the tremendous achievements in science and unprecedented advances in technology, our understanding of life leaves much to be desired. Brilliant scientists, great philosophers and other men of the highest intellect have yet to provide a satisfactory answer.

The perennial riddle that eluded men through the centuries remains. The mystery of life appears inexplicable.

Or is it?

In our frantic search for answers, have we perhaps forgotten the only source of true knowledge, the very words of the Creator — the Holy Bible?

We are not doomed to continue our existence without knowing what life is, where it comes from or even how we may prolong it.

The Bible has the answers. Read on.

## *Where Does It Come From?*

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being (Gen 2:7). This is the origin of life.

What distinguishes man from animals is the presence of the 'breath of life'. The Bible declares, "Remember that my life is a breath" and "The spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life." (Job 7:7; 33:4)

It is a misconceived notion that life is passed from parents to their children. Our parents can only procreate the physical body; they are unable to give the breath of life. Otherwise, if a child is dead the mother needs only to breathe the breath of life into its nostrils and the child will be revived.

The day the Lord takes back the breath of life in a man, he will return to the earth and all his plans perish with him (Ps 146:4). The Bible says, "In him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28)

### *What Is It Like?*

Life is formless. You can't see it, you can't touch it and you can't smell it. But you know that it's there. It's real. But it passes like a wind and never returns, according to the Psalmist (Ps 78:39).

### *How Far Can You Control It?*

When the son of King David, born out of the sinful alliance with Bathsheba, was critically ill, he fasted and prayed but when his child died, he arose and ate. To some this is puzzling, shocking maybe. Surely the king was no heartless man. His servants too were baffled.

Unable to contain their bewilderment any longer, they asked the king, "What is this? While the boy lived you fasted and wept for him, but now he is dead you rise up and eat."

He replied, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept; for I say, 'Who knows the Lord will be gracious to me, that the child may live?' But now he is dead; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him but he will not return to me." (2 Sam 12:22-23)

He knew that however great a power he wielded on earth, he was powerless against death. In God's hand are the souls of all that live, the spirits of all humankind. (Job 12:10)

It is not in man's power to retain the breath of life, and no man has power over the day of death. (Eccl 8:8)

### *How Long Can It Last?*

Life is like a mist which appears for a short while and vanishes away. Life means excitement, adventure and beauty to the young. They are in the golden period of life.

## DEATH — A CHRIST

Life is but a short journey. Death seems to be the inevitable destiny.

No one has ever loved me more than my grandmother had. She always remembered my birthday. She always would bring me to church.

I can never erase the vivid memory of the day she suddenly collapsed and went into a coma.

A few days later she was called to be with the Lord.

It was then that I had my first faint realisation of what death is.

I have previously attended several funerals without any feelings of sorrow.

Time has certainly deepened my understanding of life — and DEATH.

When I touched the dead, it did not respond. Lying silently, it appeared as though everything had come to a mysterious standstill. It'll soon vanish from the face of the earth.

The person I loved and respected left me.

And then from the innermost of my being rolled out drops of tears.

When shall we meet again?

It is said that the world is a stage and all men actors. They are like the shooting stars, dazzling the eyes for a moment and are seen no more.

Some prefer to be the stage props, hoping to remain on the stage for a longer while.

There are different types of people, each trying to discover his own identity but the tragedy of it all is that many of them do not



## CHRISTIAN'S VIEWPOINT

know who they are!

A christian is fully aware of the fact that the actors on the stage will sooner or later leave the scene. And those who have left cannot return to tell of their experiences.

Yet a christian is not afraid.

Paul said, "For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens . . . . We are of good courage, and we would be rather away from the body and at home with the Lord." (2 Cor 5:1, 5)

Death promises better things to a christian. It is the door to a brand new world devoid of sufferings.

It is eternal felicity to a christian.

For this reason, Paul was confident enough to declare, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If it is to be life in the flesh, that means fruitful labour for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to part and be with Christ, for that is far better. But to remain in the flesh is more necessary on your account." (Phil 1:21-24)

While alive and able, we should do what is proper and in whatever our hands find to do, do it with all our might. Our utmost is for the Highest.

Live therefore for the good of others and for the eternal heritage. And so if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord.

There is wonderment in dreams, enchantment in fantasies.

But soon, very soon, the inevitable creeps in. Despite the persistent attempts of ancient alchemists up to modern scientists, the process of aging could not be reversed or stayed. The Bible says:

"As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more."

(Ps 103:15-16)

The life span of man is short. In it is packed toil and sorrow. The end is vanity. Moses, the great leader, prayed saying:

"The years of our life are threescore and ten,

or even by reason of strength fourscore;

Yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away . . . .

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom" (Ps 90:10)

If it can be numbered, life is certainly short.

The important question is how we can make the best out of what we have got. More importantly; "Where is the path to eternal life?" The Bible says, "Remember also your creator in the days of your youth, before the evil days come, and the years draw nigh, when you will say, 'I have no pleasure in them'" (Eccl 12:1)

### *What Can You Do?*

Life is treasured by one and all. The recent decades have witnessed an increased health consciousness. The average man pops in pills of one kind or other as part of his normal diet and has been imbibing in greater quantities nutritious food enriched with vitamins. This is one response to the brevity of life — to prolong it.

Others decide to live it up. To eat, drink and be merry, as if such momentary 'fun' can guarantee lasting peace and true happiness.

It is sad that they do not know how to live a fuller life.

It is to these people that Jesus spoke this parable: "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'" (Lk 12:16-20)

Suppose you are given this offer — to gain the whole world. The price — only your life. Would you take it?

I won't. The Bible says, "For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what small a man give in return for this life?" (Mt 16:26)

### How You Can Live Forever

Life is priceless! Unfortunately you can't

hold on to it for long. It'll soon slip from you.

But Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6)

He is LIFE!

And he gives life.

He promised us that "whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life". (Jn 3:16)

Here is your opportunity, your only chance to grab hold of your life. To live FOREVER!

It is not just living on and on. It's living with meaning and total joy.

And the price?

There is NO PRICE. You can't pay for it even if you want to.

It's FREE!!

Jesus himself, the Lord of the Universe, has paid the price — his own life, in exchange for yours.

He died just for you.

The offer was made on the cross. It is still open. It's yours for the taking. All you have to do is to begin by believing in him, to have faith in him that he is your saviour and Lord.

What do you say?



# What It Means To

# Be A Christian

# Wife



“... till death do us part. Amen”, I muttered. Then turning to me and fixing his tender gaze upon me — and I on my part was rather shy; staring down blankly most of the time — he gave me a warm, assuring smile. The same smile which caused my heart to flutter several months ago. On the same familiar visage which occupied my mind ever since, even in my sleep.

The next moment, the dulcet voice of the minister was heard again.

“In the mighty name of our Lord Jesus, I pronounce you man and wife.”

The organ soared into the majestic Mendelssohn's Wedding March. As we turned around, the congregation rose to their feet. My mother and some womenfolk were trying to hold back their tears, but vainly. The whole atmosphere in the church was charged with joy.

I slipped my hand under his arm as he gently led me down the aisle. It wasn't a particularly big church but the march seemed so long. It was as if I was walking on clouds.

I didn't know exactly what to think. But I knew that my cheeks and my ears were burning hot.

We were greeted with approving smiles and showers of confetti as we passed row after row of friends and relatives.

It was a beautiful wedding.

And as we stepped outside the portal, a certain strange elixir of feelings welled in me. It was not only the aftermath of the trepidation arising from the ceremony. It was not only the exciting fulfillment of my teenage fantasy. It was something that I have never felt before. An uncertain anticipation of a married life.

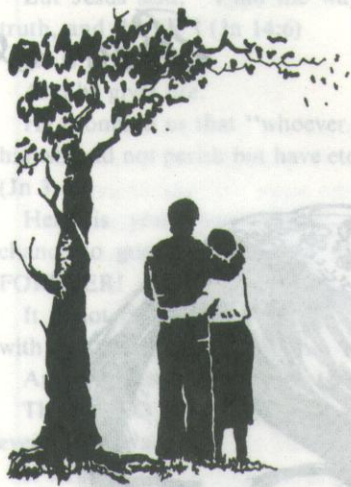
The man I've fallen in love with is now my husband, I his wife.

What does it mean?

At that moment, partly lost in the flurry of emotions and partly inexperienced, I was oblivious to the real meaning.

I believed in romance — and I still do. The world has so many things to offer. I was fortunate, compared to my forbears, that society had just taken a turn so that the doors of higher education opened also to women. Though romantic, I was not weak minded. I had learned enough to realise that there was greater fulfillment for women in the world outside the home. I viewed the traditional concept of marriage in many societies with disgust — as an institution made by men for men to enchain women with the fetters of domestic chores and to reduce women to mere objects of pleasure.

I believed I could excel in society. I had the opportunity and the capacity. And I wanted to do so.



On the other hand I was not prepared to throw the idea of marriage out of the window. I still needed to be loved, to feel the warmth of a loving embrace, a strong shoulder to cry on when I was sad and a man to share my dreams as well as my joys. However I was determined not to allow myself to fit into the 'traditional' role of a wife.

I believed that an ideal home is where the husband and the wife are equal partners; coming to decisions the same way my associates and I would have in business — with lots of bargains and compromises. I believed that household work should be 50-50, cut right down the middle. I believed I could be a successful career woman and at the same time be a great wife!

I was then in the time when a startling new book had just rolled out of the press. That book was destined to be a best-seller. That book — the *Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan published in 1963 was fated to change the course of history and the lives of



thousands of young men and women.

Friedan advocates that women must be liberated from the wife/mother roles today to find their own identity as persons and to engage in professions to be growing people. In ten years, her book sold over 2 million copies.

I was impressed. Her views were consonant with mine. I accepted them.

It was the time when women really did make some remarkable breakthroughs in society; in politics, in business, in education, in entertainment and in sports.

We were all caught up in the Women Liberation movement; fighting for equal rights and equality. What that was, none of us really knew.

In the barrage of activities I had not consulted the Bible, to see what God had to say about all this. I didn't bother to. It didn't matter then.

It was not until some time after my marriage that I began to have a sober thought on this issue.

I had to. What was to be the climax of my fantasies turned out to be a rude awakening to reality. I realised that those youthful idealisms I had couldn't work.

Time, a bitter teacher, has taught me that marriage meant more than I had imagined. But it had not taught me what.

Blessed with a christian foundation, I began to turn to the pages of the Bible for relief — for answers. Only then was the wonderful plan of God unfolded before my very eyes and for the first time I discovered the keys to a complete and happy marriage.

And from that moment, I began to experience personally the joys of marriage and the real meaning of being a wife.

The Almighty has a purpose for everything he created. Live according to that

purpose and there is abundant life.

I first had to grasp why God created women.

### *A fitting helper*

Turning to Genesis 2:18, 21–22, I read; “It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make him a *helper fit for him* . . . . So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh; and the rib which the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.”

(emphasis added)

Yes, I am to be a *helper fit for him*. The original Hebrew equivalent, *ezer kenegdo* (literally ‘a helper as in front of him’, i.e. ‘a helper corresponding to him’), indicates complementarity. A man is incomplete without a woman. A wife is life the missing part of a jigsaw puzzle — she supplies what her husband lacks and her husband gives her what she needs. And ‘fitted’ together they are not two but one whole being. They are not made to compete but to complement. I am to be what he is not.

I now see the futility of women trying to compete with men, the foolishness of the ‘Annie complex’ — ‘anything you can do I can do better, I can do anything better than you’.

I have seen through the cause of wrecked marriages. It is just not God's plan that women be like men. God has made us different in most respects and that is no accident. A wife is a fitting helper.

The moment I understood that my fulfillment in life lies in helping him to be success-

ful in what he is meant to be, was the moment I began to feel the thrill of being a wife.

We do not lose our identity in the process as some hardened feminists would have us think. We, in fact, enlarge our identity. His achievements are my achievements, his joys mine. And he knows that I am part and parcel of his success, whatever that may be, and without me his joy is incomplete. I had an interesting insight on reading 1 Cor 11:8-9. I learned that "man was not made from woman, but woman from man. Neither was man created for woman, but *woman for man*". The good Lord made me specially for him. To be his fitting helper.

It was when I had given up the idea of trying to prove my own worth and ability in society as an individual that I became a worthier and abler human being.

### *A lover*

Then moving through to Proverbs 5:18-19, I found it written:

"Let your fountain be blessed,  
and rejoice in the wife of your youth,  
a loving hind, a graceful doe.

*Let her affection fill you at all times with  
delight,  
be infatuated always with her love."*

(emphasis added)

A family is a cradle of love. Between a husband and a wife, there must be nothing but love. It is not seldom that we find many a romance started off with a sizzling effervescence but fizzling off with an empty dulness. More often than not they have taken each other for granted, neglecting the little deeds of love, the simple show of affection — like preparing his favourite dish and a gentle

caress when he is weary after a hard day's work.

Love is therefore a fire which has to be carefully tended. It can be dampened with a careless word, a thoughtless act, no matter how small.

There is also another important dimension in a happy marriage. Many wives are unaware of its significance especially among the Asians. It is the role of sex in marriage.

Though undeniable that sex leads to procreation, it is much more than that. It is not purely physical as it would be outside marriage. But inside marriage, it is the ultimate expression of pure love — physical, psychological and emotional; the closest any two persons can come together, the total mutual giving of one's being to the other. In the words of the Apostle Paul;

"The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights (biblical euphemism for sex), and likewise the wife to her husband.

*For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does. Do not refuse one another* (to deny the other of sex) except perhaps by agreement for a season, that you may devote yourselves to prayer, but then come together again (as in 'the two shall become one flesh' in Matt 19:5), lest Satan tempt you through lack of self-control." (1 Cor 7:3-5 *emphasis added*)

I then was able to see things from a correct angle. It is not true that in surrendering ourselves to our husbands we are reduced to mere objects of pleasure. In a true marriage we derive our greatest satisfaction in giving ourselves to each other. Sex is meant to be a



cohesive force in a complete marriage. A wife who tries to rule over her own body ends up destroying not only hers but the one she loves most, and maybe even that of her children. It pays to be a constant lover.

### *A homemaker*

After the fall of man, the Lord God cursed the woman saying;

“I will greatly multiply your pain in childbearing;

in pain you shall bring forth children, yet your desire shall be for your husband,

and he shall rule over you.” (Gen 3:16)

And to the man he said;

“Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten of the trees of which I commanded you, ‘You shall not eat of it’, cursed is the ground because of you, in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken; you are dust and to dust you shall return.”

(Gen 3:17-19)

From then on, man has to toil and suffer in order to provide for the family. Woman on the other hand has the primary duty of bearing and bringing up children. This is the clear biblical view. For those who disagree, I can only ask you to read the Genesis account again.

However, you may argue that the New Testament has changed all that. You may point to the Old Testament rite of circumcision and say that in the Old Testament women were subordinated because they were within the covenant through their husbands

as they themselves were not circumcised. But in the New Testament, salvation extends to both male and female and both are individually responsible for receiving Christ Jesus and his baptism in order to enter into the covenant of grace. Therefore the status of women is elevated to that of men. And, of course, with the change in position, there should be a change in responsibilities.

You are right in saying that each person whether male or female is personally accountable for his own sins and responsible for his own salvation by accepting Christ. In fact Paul said in Galatians 3:27-28 that “for as many of you as were baptised into Christ have put on Christ . . . there is neither male nor female”. But to interpret this to mean that there is no longer any distinction between the sexes is absurd. The correct reading of this verse must be that with respect to our *relationship with God*, God is no respecter of persons. So, with regard to one’s standing before God, male and female are alike — they are co-heirs of salvation and, indeed, in the future kingdom, “when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage . . . ” (Mk 12:25)

However, the basic relationship between the husband and wife has not changed. In baptism, we are liberated from the sins of Adam but not the responsibility assigned by God, else a christian mother would not have to suffer the pangs of childbirth.

What are our responsibilities?

The biblical text calls attention to the exclusive homemaking privilege of wives. (Gen 24:11, 13-16, 19, 20; 27:9; Prov 31:10-31; Gen 29:6; Ex 2:16; 35:26; 1 Sam 2:19; Gen 18:6; 2 Sam 13:8; Judg 4:18; 1 Sam 9:11; 24:18ff; 2 Kgs 4:8-10).

If by now you are thinking that I have passively resigned myself to the fate of being tied



slavishly to the kitchen, you are wrong. I regard my God-given duty as a pleasure. Who else can create an environment conducive for the total growth of my children? Who else can provide a haven for my loving husband?

It is not shame to be a homemaker.

On the other hand I am not saying that wives must not work outside. In some cases, they have no choice due to pressing financial circumstances. And in very exceptional cases, if they are specially gifted, God would call them to serve the nation directly (eg. Deborah).

But I am addressing myself to those women who do not really need to go out to slog for a living and who are not in the class of Deborah. I speak to you from my heart that if you take up a career only to give vent to your pride — to prove your capability to the world, or as an outlet for your boredom; or simply because you hate housework, you might as well rechannel your energies to building a better home for those whom you claim to love. With a change of attitude, you will begin to see your important role at home from a better perspective — a biblical standpoint.

You become what you think you are. I disliked housework because I thought that it was degrading to my intellect. I was overwhelmed by my pride — my educational achievements. But the Bible has this to say to me:

“ . . . that they (older women in the church) may encourage the *younger women* (that’s you and me) to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, *workers at home*, kind, being subject to their husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonoured.”

(Titus 2:4-5 NASB emphasis added)

I was surprised at the clarity of this verse. It struck right through me. Another of my youthful ideals had to be overturned. I thought that such were only Old Testament teachings.

But it appeared in Titus!

I thought this was an outmoded idea not relevant to my generation. But to hold that now means that I regard certain portions of the Bible to be obsolete. That I cannot do.

I have to accept my role as a ‘worker at home’ if I accept the Bible as the authentic word of God. There are no other alternatives. That verse is straightforward.

And I thank God that so soon as I had accepted it, along came the conjugal bliss that so many couples yearn for.

Later I found another verse to that effect. It is in 1 Tim 5:14:

“I will therefore that the *younger women* marry, bear children, *guide the house*, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.” (KJV emphasis added)

My struggles end here. I rest my case.

I accept my role, my duty at home — happily.

### *A submissive partner*

As I have said before, I believed that a wife was a co-partner in the family in the same manner as a co-partner in business. We were supposed to be joint-heads, I once thought.

What was the result?

Indecision.

Stalemate.

Cold war — at home!

I was not willing to submit to him — to accept his decisions contrary to mine wholeheartedly. And even if I did, I was not happy. After all why should I?

We are both human; just as qualified and capable and my education is no less than his. We were unrelenting.



Yes, we did make compromises at times.

But it was the other times that strained our relationship. And often the compromises were quite silly.

One thing was sure — there was no lasting peace at home. A family can never be run like a business!

Then some eye-opening verses hit me. It says in 1 Cor 11:8-9 that:

“But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, *the head of a woman is her husband . . .*”

(emphasis added)

And in 1 Peter 3:1, it is written;

“Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behaviour of their wives.”

And then there is the well known passage in Ephesians 5:22-23:

“Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church; . . . . As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands . . . . and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

I do not believe that this verse implies the inferiority of women. The words ‘as to the Lord’ are significant. The primary obedience of the wife is to the Lord and through the

husband. We are certainly not inferior to men. But rather the Bible commands that we obey Christ through our obedience to our husbands. The object is religious and the motive is spiritual.

This is our christian duty.

This is also the formula to a successful marriage.

It was difficult to swallow initially. It involved a total reversal of my attitude. It required a putting down of my pride.

Submission means that when we disagree, I must trust in God that He will guide my husband’s decision. Therefore it is not a unilateral giving up of one’s opinion but a mutual surrender to God who expresses His will through him. I believe this is the christian way.

And the result is rewarding. It always is when one is living according to God’s will.

### Joy

In a word, being a christian wife means JOY.

It also means to be a great mother and a faithful servant of God — but that is another matter; beyond the scope of our present purpose. Maybe we’ll have more of that in future. For now, God bless you and your family. Hallelujah.

On the other extreme are the Pentecostals. They maintain that in so far as one prays for the Holy Spirit, one is illumined from the evil spirit. As a result confusion reigns; demonisms

THE EVIL SPIRIT





# HOW TO DISTINGUISH THE HOLY SPIRIT FROM

Christendom has been plagued with confusion long enough. At the very root of its chaos is the failure or inability to comprehend and appreciate the nature of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and to distinguish it from Demonic possession.

Some churches outrightly oppose those who pray for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. They insist that when a person believes in Jesus, he is automatically filled with the Holy Spirit. They also deny that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the *speaking of tongues*. And some even go over-board and blasphemously equate the *speaking of tongues* with demonic possession.

On the other extreme are the Pentecostals. They maintain that in so far as one prays for the Holy Spirit, one is immuned from the evil spirit. As a result confusion reigns; demoniacs

are undelivered and the innocent are unwittingly lulled into a false sense of security.

Against the furious storm of religious tumult these days, it is vital to brace oneself with the knowledge to discern the spirits. With the Bible as our authority and the Holy Spirit our guide, we shall examine first the characteristics of one who has received the Holy Spirit and then of one who has received the evil spirit.

## The Characteristics Of One Who Has Received The Holy Spirit

*His prayer is frequently interjected with shouts of 'Hallelujah'*

Teleported into the future, John wrote, "Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of

## THE EVIL SPIRIT





a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunders crying, 'Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns'" (Rev 19:6). He heard the voices of praise during prayers in the True Jesus Church. There are loud cries of 'Hallelujah'.

'Hallelujah' in Hebrew means 'praise the Lord'.

to John, "No one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who had been redeemed from the earth" (Rev 5:9; 14:2-3).

On the contrary, the utterances of one possessed by the evil spirit are coarse, discordant and jarring.

*His prayer is joyous*

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***"Against the furious storm of religious tumult these days, it is vital to brace oneself with the knowledge to discern the spirits"***

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God, the creator of the Universe, is worthy of our praise. All his angels praise him and all his hosts praise him; for all things are created by him at his command. His name alone is exalted and his glory is above the heavens and the earth (cf Ps 148:1-14).

Naturally, one who is filled with the Holy Spirit will rapturously and frequently utter 'Hallelujah' in his prayers.

*The sound of his prayer is pleasant to the ears*

"I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also", said Paul (1 Cor 14:15).

To pray with the spirit is to pray in tongues; the sound of which is coherent, euphonious and soothing.

To sing with the spirit is to sing in tongues. In Ephesians it is written, "Addressing one another in Psalms and hymns and *spiritual songs*" (Eph 5:19; Col 3:16). '*Spiritual songs*' in Greek is 'odes pneumatic'. It is the equivalent of the '*new song*' recorded in the book of Revelation.

Its melody far surpasses the greatest masterpieces ever composed by mortals. According

In Acts 13:52 it is written: "And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit". The transliteration from the original Greek manuscript is "The disciples were filled with joy of the Holy Spirit". It is clear that the joy they had through the Holy Spirit had enabled them to overcome the persecutions they suffered in the flesh.

Elsewhere, the Holy Spirit has been described as the 'oil of gladness' (Heb 1:9).

Joy is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Gal 5:22). Prophet Isaiah had foretold that when Christ came he would bestow on God's elect 'the oil of gladness' instead of mourning (Is 61:3). Incidentally, there are instances of spiritual laughter during prayers in the *True Jesus Church*.

*He bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit*

The Lord Jesus said, "So, every sound tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears evil fruit. A sound tree cannot bear evil fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit . . . . . Thus, you will know them by their fruits." (Mt 7:17-20) And "The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (Gal 5:22-23).

Indeed the simplest way to discern the spirit in a man is to observe his fruit.

An impostor may deceive some of the people all the time, all the people some of the time but not all the people all the time.

The Holy Spirit is the 'power from on high' (Lk 24:49), and when he indwells a person He will set him free from the law of sin and death (Rom 8:2; 2 Cor 3:17). He

of Christ's miracles, resurrection and ascension and the veracity of the second advent.

The source of this deviant teaching was obvious to the apostle John who wrote, "Every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of antichrist . . . ." (1 Jn 4:2-3).

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*"Indeed the simplest way to discern the spirit in a man is to observe his fruit."*

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becomes a renewed person, to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Tit 3:5; 2 Cor 5:17; 2 Thess 2:13).

### **The Characteristics Of One Who Is Possessed By The Evil Spirit**

Elder John warns, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirit, to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 Jn 4:1) It is highly dangerous to believe, as some do, that every spirit comes from God. Such naivety gladdens the devil even more. It is tantamount to inviting the devil to wreak havoc and to deceive the weak christians.

*He will not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh*

In the first century, the Gnostics were steadily gaining prominence and even infiltrating into the primitive church. These heretics preached that 'matter' was inherently evil and that God (the Universal Soul) good. They thus conceived of God's entire separation from matter. The corollary was a denial of the reality of Christ's sufferings and the Incarnation. They also denied the historicity

*He speaks the things of the world*

They are of the world, therefore what they say is of the world, and the world listens to them (1 Jn 4:5). Satan is the god of this world! He has blinded the minds of the unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ. Thus those who are possessed by the evil spirit like to say things concerning the world (2 Tim 4:3-4).

*He will not obey the church of God*

We are of God. Whoever knows God listens to us, and he who is not of God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error (1 Jn 4:6). The apostolic church was of God because she had the presence of the Holy Spirit. She was founded on the truth and God confirmed her message by diverse signs and miracles (Eph 2:20-22; Mk 16:20; Heb 2:4). And so those who are of God will listen to the church while those who are not of God will not listen to her (1 Jn 2:18-19).

The True Jesus Church is built on the same foundation as the apostolic church. She has the Holy Spirit and God also confirms her



preaching by the signs, wonders and miracles that attend her. So all those who are led by the Spirit of truth will receive the message of truth preached by the True Jesus Church and those who are possessed by the spirit of error will not.

There is only *one body* and *one Spirit* (Eph 4:4). Christ is not divided. There must be only *one truth*. The same Spirit will not

mouth and convulsion to self-mutilation, hysteria and physical violence. Though clearly these are signs of the devil, it is perplexing — shocking, that some Pentecostals or Charismatics regard those with such grotesque actions as being '*slain by the Holy Spirit*'!!

*He loses control of his senses*

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***“Demonic possession is often marked by hysteria involving disturbances of the psychic and sensory functions.”***

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give conflicting beliefs. The Lord's sheep will hear his voice and there shall only be *one flock*.

*He chirps and mutters*

The prophet Isaiah asked, “And when they say to you, ‘consult the mediums and the wizards who *chirp and mutter*’, should a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead on behalf of the living?” (Is 8:19)

Various cases of demonic possessions were brought to the True Jesus Church and very often the possessed persons chirped and muttered uncontrollably. The strange sounds they produced were eerie and to a novice, terrifying.

*His actions are grotesque*

Here is Luke's account of a case of demonic possession: “And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him till he foams, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him . . . . While he was coming out, the demon tore him and convulsed him.” (Lk 9:39, 42)

The manifestations of demonic possession vary from paroxysms of cries, foaming in the

Demonic possession is often marked by hysteria involving disturbances of the psychic and sensory functions.

He is under the complete control of the evil spirit. He behaves in a way that is not normal for him, daring to do things he in his right senses would not.

Take for example the man who was possessed by an unclean spirit in Gerasenes. This possessed man had a home and yet he would not go back; instead he lived among the tombs! Day and night he would cry out with a loud voice without resting. He would cut himself with stones and he went about places naked. The foul spirit had taken control of his thoughts, speech and movements.

*He is proud*

The Lord God reproached Satan's rebellion saying, “How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God, I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High’. But you are

brought down to Sheol” (Is 14:12-15).

You were the signet of perfection,  
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

You were in Eden, the garden of God;  
every precious stone was your covering,

On the day that you were created they were  
prepared.

With an anointed guardian cherub I  
place you;

You were in the holy mountain of God;  
in the midst of the stones of fire you  
walked.

You were blameless in your ways from the  
day you were created,  
till iniquity was found in you.

In the abundance of your trade you were  
filled with violence and you sinned;

So I cast you as a profane thing from the  
mountain of God,

and the guardian cherub drove you out  
from the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was proud because of your  
beauty;

You corrupted your wisdom for the sake  
of your splendour.

I cast you to the ground;

I exposed you before kings, to feast  
their eyes on you. (Eze 28:12-17)

He may scold others severely for minor faults  
or he may judge others as he feels like it.

Sometimes he may even say that he is Jesus  
or a certain prophet or apostle.

Pride is the mark of Satan. A possessed  
person becomes very proud. He craves for  
attention, loves to be exalted and wishes to be  
praised and sometimes demands worship  
from others. He has no respect for anyone.  
He rejects the truth and refuses advice.

Sometimes he claims that he has received  
revelations from God and that the church  
must undergo reforms in order to prosper.

*He experiences excruciating pain and  
mental torment*

When the evil spirit entered King Saul, it  
tormented him and made him feel restless. (1  
Sam 16:14; 15, 23)

At times he may rave at others and launch  
physical attacks. (1 Sam 18:10-11) The  
possessed person produces labial utterances  
(sound made by the lips instead of the tongue).

He experiences excruciating pain and pants  
as though he is carrying a heavy load. He  
vomits, his face turns pale and his limbs  
become cold.

He is often filthy and licentious (Rev 18:2-3;  
2 Pet 2:18).

*He tries to confuse the church*

He has a tendency to create dissensions, to  
rob away peace and to provoke jealousies  
among the people (Rev 16:14; Jas 3:14-16).

Finally, he tries to pull away people from  
the truth (1 Tim 4:1; Rev 2:24; 2 Pet 2:1).

*He might not appear to be possessed at  
all*

The Bible says, “for even Satan disguises  
himself as an angel of light” (2 Cor 11:14; cf  
Acts 16:16-18). Unfortunately, what we have  
described here are the more common charac-  
teristics or symptoms of one possessed by the  
evil spirit. But Satan is *very* deceptive. Often  
the symptoms are not obvious and sometimes  
they may not arise at all. This is when the  
special gift of spirits-discernment is required  
to identify a demon-possessed person.



## CHOOSING A LIFE PARTNER?

ONE OF THE main reasons God caused the Great Flood during the days of Noah was the proliferation of immorality.

At that time not only were the ungodly indulging in lustful activities, the sons (believers) of God were taking the daughters of men as wives, whomever they chose (Gen 6:1-3). Nowadays, are the young brothers and sisters in our church committing the same transgression against God — neither conforming to the will of God nor respecting the views of their parents in choosing their life partners? They stick to their own opinions and look for physical beauty, education, capability, wealth, social status and so forth as their criteria without considering the religious beliefs and virtues of the opposite party.

### 1) Those who chose freely

#### *Esau*

Esau, according to his own will, took Judith and Basemath, the daughters of the Hittite tribe as wives. This caused him and his descendants to leave God, and also brought much bitterness to his parents (cf Gen 26:34-35; 27:46). As children, we must be filial to our parents. If, because of our marriage, we bring them sorrow, how then can we talk of filial piety? If we are obedient children, we will not dare to walk in the steps of Esau.

#### *Samson*

Samson was born for a special mission: “delivering the Israelites from their enemies” (Judg 13:5). That is why the Lord blessed him and endowed him with extraordinary

physical strength (Judg 13:24-25). Sadly he did not uphold his immaculacy but succumbed to his lustful passions (Judg 16:1). At last he was defeated by a Gentile woman. His eyes were gouged out and he was bound with bronze fetters and was made to grind grain in the prison (Judg 16:20-21). Finally Samson died together with the Philistines (Judg 16:29-30). In the past, and even today, great heroes and talented men like Samson lost their resolute faith and bright future because they listened to their wicked wives (cf Neh 13:26-27).

### 2) Those who honour their marriage

The Bible says “Let marriage be held in honour among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the immoral and adulterous.” (Heb 13:4). One who honours his marriage will not commit fornication — an abominable sin against God. It will also avoid any suspicions which the couple might have of one another’s chastity after their marriage. Such a person is one who will search the will of God and respect his parents opinion.

#### *Isaac*

Isaac not only obeyed the Lord and his parent’s will on the mountain of Moriah but also in the matter of his marriage. He honoured the Lord and the Lord honoured him (cf 1 Sam 2:30). Thus the Lord provided him with a wife who had strong faith, love, health, diligence and beauty. He was thus able to build a happy and God loving family (cf Gen 24:1-8, 11-27).

All Christians, who are the spiritual descen-





# NEWS in brief

**THE International Assembly held its 2nd plenary executive committee meeting from April 10 — 14, 1983 at the Administrative Centre, Church in Kota Kinabalu.**

Members from the Republic of China, Republic of Korea, United States, Singapore, Hongkong and East and West Malaysia attended the meeting.

Members of the executive committee were also invited to attend the dedication service of the administrative centre building on April 16.

A three day seminar was held for the elders, deacons and preachers from April 17 to 19 in the Church auditorium. Majority were from Sabah. Two deacons from the General assembly in Indonesia were among those present.

On the 19 evening members were entertained by the General Assembly in Sabah with a buffet dinner.

They also visited the churches on 20 and 21. All left for home on April 22.