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# aim

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A Journey of Faith



“Know therefore that  
the Lord your God is God;  
he is the faithful God,  
keeping his covenant of love  
to a thousand generations of those who  
love him and keep his commandments.”

Deuteronomy 7:9

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Editorial



Rev. Vijayesh Lal

## Embracing Love's Resilient Hope Amid Persecution's Ashes

As Christians around the world began the solemn season of Lent on February 14th, a remarkable convergence took place. Ash Wednesday, the day when believers have ashes traced on their foreheads as a reminder of human frailty and mortality, coincided with Valentine's Day - a celebration of love. This juxtaposition seemed almost providential, as if the Lord was whispering a reminder that even in life's most trying moments, His love endures.

For our brothers and sisters in India, that message could not be more poignant or timely. Reports from states like Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Haryana paint a grim picture of escalating persecution against the Christian community. Horrific accounts of disrupted worship services, beatings, and even the

unconscionable prevention of Christian burials have flooded in daily. As the nation gears up for elections, the spike in these attacks seems inextricably linked to the noxious forces of communal polarization and majoritarian politics.

To add insult to injury, numerous Christian, and civil society organizations, including the Evangelical Fellowship of India, have had their FCRA registrations revoked. This harsh measure not only threatens the charitable, religious, and humanitarian work carried out by these organizations but also chips away at the fundamental rights enshrined in India's secular constitution.

In the face of such adversity, it would be all too easy to surrender to fear and hopelessness. The



path of the Cross has never been an easy one, and the trials we face today are a sober reminder of the challenges confronted by the early Church, which were far greater than these. Yet, as we journey through this Lenten season, we must cling to the promise that just as Christ's passion culminated in the glory of the Resurrection, our present sufferings will give way to ultimate triumph.

The Scriptures remind us that "we are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed." (2 Corinthians 4:8-9). Our hope is an unshakable one, founded on the reality of an empty tomb and a risen Saviour who has conquered death itself.

Moreover, we can take heart in the assurance that our struggles are not in vain. "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," Christ Himself declared (Matthew 5:10). The very fact that we are being opposed is a testament to the uncompromising witness we bear as salt and light in a world that desperately needs the Gospel's transformative power.

During this season of repentance and renewal, let us hold fast to the greatest act of love the world has ever known - the self-sacrificial death of the Son of God on the Cross. It is this incomprehensible love that compels us to pour ourselves out for others, even when the cost seems unimaginably high. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters" (1 John 3:16).

As we embrace the way of the Cross, may we be emboldened by the truth that our present sufferings are "not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). The path may be strewn with thorns, but it leads inexorably to the vacant tomb and the triumph of resurrection life.

So let us press on, secure in the knowledge that the Love that defied the grave is the same Love that will sustain us through every trial. This Lenten journey begins with ashes but will culminate in a glorious celebration of Christ's victory over sin and death. Even as the world rages against us, may we be a people radiant with the hope, joy, and peace that flows from the empty tomb.

**Rev. Vijayesh Lal**



# The Covenant Keeping God

Mr. Chacko Thomas

*Summer and winter and  
springtime and harvest,  
Sun, moon, and stars in their  
courses above*

*Join with all nature in manifold  
witness*

*To Thy great faithfulness, mercy,  
and love."*

*Thomas O. Chisholm (1923)*

## A beautiful Title for God

The title "Covenant Keeping God" is one of a string of titles that Brother Bakht Singh used without fail when addressing God in prayer. It began something like this, *"Loving Heavenly Father, God of grace, mercy and peace, wonderworking God, covenant keeping God ... "*, and it could go on for a minute or two before he

started to present his praise and prayer items.

The word "covenant" comes 301 times in our Bibles. Whereas, the word covenant is repeated eight times by God to Noah, (Genesis 6:18, 9: 9-17), it is only implied when God made a covenant with Adam and David. (See: Genesis 1-3; 2 Samuel 7:1-29.).

Moses reminded the Israelites: "Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His faithfulness to a thousand generations for those who love Him and keep His commandments" (Deuteronomy 7:9).

And Jeremiah in Lamentations 3:22-23 says: "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

### **What is a covenant?**

Reading *The Christ of the Covenants* by O. Palmer Robertson over the past two weeks has been a treat. It is a great book. The author writes:

"Asking for a definition of 'covenant' is something like asking for a definition of 'mother'. A mother may be defined as the person who brought you into the world. That definition may be correct formally. But who would be satisfied with such a definition?

"God has entered repeatedly into covenantal relationships with particular men. Explicit references may be found to a divine covenant established with Noah (Gen.6:18), Abraham (Gen. 15:18), Israel (Ex. 24:8) and David (Ps. 89:3). Israel's prophets anticipated the coming

of the days of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31), and Christ himself spoke of the last supper in covenantal language (Luke 22:20).

"But what is a covenant? ... A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered."

Robertson goes on to break it into its parts: "A Covenant is a bond. A covenant is a bond in blood. A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered."

Richard P. Belcher Jr., in the introduction to Genesis, subtitled *The Beginning of God's Plan of Salvation*, writes:

"The book of Genesis was written to show that Israel's God is the sovereign Creator whose purpose to establish His covenant rule upon the earth will not be hindered by the sinfulness of humanity.

"... The Power of sin and its devastating effects are clearly laid out. One also sees, however, God's proactive response to sin in order to establish His purposes in fulfillment of His covenant promises."

Both are clearly shown in Genesis 1:1-11:9. Thus this portion of Genesis "sets forth foundational truths concerning the character and role of human beings within the world God has created."

### **A Royal Grant Covenant**

Commenting on God's covenant with man (distinct from man's covenant with man) and in particular with Noah, Belcher Jr. says:

"When Noah comes out of the ark he worships Yahweh .... God responds by making a promise never again to destroy the world and "every living creature" as He did with the flood, so that the regular seasons would continue as long as the earth remains (Gen 8:20-22)."

"God ensures the fulfillment of these promises by entering into a covenant with Noah, his offspring, and with all the living creatures. The particular type of covenant that God establishes with Noah is called a royal grant covenant where a superior grants a servant certain benefits and

secures those benefits with an oath."

### **Six Covenants**

After writing at length about the unity and diversity of the covenants, Robertson lists six covenants with this particular character. They are:

"Adam: the covenant of commencement

Noah: the covenant of preservation

Abraham: the covenant of promise

Moses: the covenant of law

David: the covenant of the kingdom

Christ: the covenant of consummation."

None of the covenants cancels out the previous ones. "Instead, each successive covenant expands on the previous administration. Each of the shadowy, prophetic administrations of the covenant of redemption finds its fulfillment in Christ, the personal embodiment of the New Covenant. In Him is found the fulfillment of all God's covenant purposes."



Redemption is the main focus of these covenants and it is fully realised in the New Covenant, promised by the prophets, especially Jeremiah and Ezekiel, and focused on in the redemption worked out through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Jeremiah 31:31ff; Ezekiel 37:26ff; cf. Luke 22:20, 2 Corinthians 3:6, Hebrews 8:8ff, 9:15; 10:15-18, 12:24).

### **The New Covenant**

All four Gospels recount the Lord celebrating the annual Passover Supper with the disciples. It turned out to be better than the usual Passover. At that Last Supper, Jesus inaugurated the long awaited New Covenant. Within 24 hours His body was broken, His blood shed. Remember the definition of the covenant: *"A covenant is a bond in blood sovereignly administered."*

The Apostle Paul writes:

"For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which

is for you; do this in remembrance of me." In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

The word "covenant" appears 15 times in the book of Hebrews, from 7:22 -13:20. "He [Jesus] is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises" (Hebrews 8:6.). The New Covenant is also "the eternal covenant" (Hebrews 13:20). We bow in worship.

Keep this in mind when you kneel for your next Holy Communion service; it is more than "in Remembrance" of our Lord's sacrifice, or more than "examine" ourselves, it is a symbol of a great covenant God made with us believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Holy Communion is partaking in the body and blood of Jesus, albeit symbolically. It is a Royal Grant Covenant.

Commenting on Hebrews 8:6,

mentioned above, Dr Campbell Morgan writes:

"The outstanding word here is the word 'covenant', for it includes everything which accrues to the believer through the priesthood of Jesus. ... A covenant is literally a testament, or disposition made by one, in the making of which the other is not consulted ... Our modern word 'Will' exactly conveys the idea. ... The better covenant is not one arrived at after bargaining with God. It is all of His grace." It is not a covenant of works.

Question: "What do we have in common with all the covenants mentioned above?"

Answer: A God who kept His word (to Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and His promise of a New Covenant.) In my late teens, I

struggled for months with the decision to believe or not to believe the Bible. I decided to read it for one last time. One of the few things that touched me was the fact that God kept His promises with men like -Noah and Abraham. Our God is a covenant-keeping God.



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*Gather my saints together unto me;  
those that have made a covenant with  
me by sacrifice.  
Psalm 50:5*



# Extravagant Devotion to Jesus

Rev. Dr. David Mende

## Introduction

In 2001, while I was doing my Master's in Computer Science, the Lord radically transformed my life and I was on fire for God! I would be very vocal about my faith and share the gospel with my non-Christian friends. However, some of my Christian friends would criticize me for my passion and devotion to Christ. They would ask me to calm down and be normal. If you show extravagant devotion to God, even fellow Christians will often criticize you. They'll say things like, "You don't have to be so holy. You don't have to act so godly. I know how you were earlier. You don't have to be so sacrificial." Even in Mark 14:1-11, a woman is reprimanded for demonstrating extravagant devotion to Christ. I've entitled this article as

## "Extravagant Devotion to Jesus."

In Mark 3:6; 11:18; and 12:12, we see that the religious leaders vehemently opposed Jesus. But in Mark 14, we see that they begin to execute their plans to kill Jesus. In Mark 14:1-11, we see that a woman demonstrates her devotion to Jesus, though the chief priests and the scribes seek to destroy him and Judas seeks to betray him. When you look at this passage, Mark has deliberately sandwiched the story of this unnamed woman's devotion between the conspiracy of the Pharisees and the scribes in 14:1-2 and Judas' plan to betray Jesus in 14:10-11.

In Mark's sandwiching method, the middle story provides the main point of the story. Mark

contrasts the devotion of an unnamed woman with the betrayal of one of the twelve disciples. The woman was willing to spend all her money to show her devotion to the Lord, while Judas was willing to betray Jesus to gain some money. Even as we enter into the Lent season on February 14th, let's see how this woman disciple demonstrated her devotion towards Christ, and let's learn a few lessons from her.

### **1. The Chief Priests and the Scribes Seek to Arrest and Kill Jesus (Mk 14:1-2).**

Beginning with Mark 14:1, Mark talks about the events that eventually led to the crucifixion of Christ.

#### **a. The Setting: Two days before the Passover and the Feast of the Unleavened Bread (14:1a).**

Now many people were keen to go to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover feast at least once in their lifetime, just like many Christians today long to go to Israel once in their lifetime. So, the diaspora Jews from different parts of the world came to Jerusalem to participate in the Passover feast. During Passover, lodging was free. Since Jerusalem would be full during the Passover, some people would stay in Bethphage and Bethany which were near to

Jerusalem. So, there were huge crowds in and around Jerusalem during the Passover.

"Two days before the Passover" must probably be understood as "the day before" according to the Jewish reckoning of a day. So, the religious leaders conspired to arrest Jesus and kill him on Wednesday, the day before the Passover.

#### **b. The Chief Priests and the Scribes were seeking to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him (14:1b-2).**

Since there were huge crowds in Jerusalem during the Passover, the chief priests and the scribes sought to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. But why? In order to avoid uproar from the people (v. 2). Many Jews believed that the Messiah would come and deliver them from Rome's rule during the Passover. So, the Romans were on guard during the Passover. They were on the edge of their seat as they expected trouble at any time. The chief priests and the scribes knew that arresting Jesus during this time could cause a riot in Jerusalem. So, they sought to arrest him secretly and kill him. Instead of fearing God, they feared people.

As the Jews went to Jerusalem to celebrate their deliverance from Egypt, God was preparing his



Son to die on the cross to deliver us from our sins. Though the religious leaders didn't plan to kill Jesus during Passover, they eventually ended up killing him during Passover. They probably changed their minds when Judas offered to betray Jesus.

## **2. A Woman Demonstrates Her Complete Devotion to Jesus (Mk 14:3-9).**

In this section, we read about an unnamed woman who demonstrates her devotion to Jesus.

### **a. A woman anoints Jesus' head with pure nard (14:3).**

Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper. He was probably healed by Jesus. Jesus had been staying at Bethany ever since he arrived in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. And a woman anoints Jesus at Simon's house. This woman's tenderness stands in striking contrast to the treachery of the Jewish leaders and Judas.

Mark tells us that this woman brought an "alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard" which was "very costly." Nard was an expensive aromatic oil extracted from the root of an Indian herb named "nard." In Jesus' time, such spices and ointments were used as investments (just as we invest in gold) as it was portable

and could be easily sold. Mary broke the flask and poured the nard over Jesus' head. John adds, "[she] anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume" (Jn 12:3).

### **b. Some became indignant at the woman's act (14:4-5).**

But why were they indignant?

*1) They became indignant because the woman was "wasting" the ointment (14:4).*

Mark says that "some" became indignant. Matthew 26:8 tells us that it was the disciples who were indignant, while John 12:4-5 mentions that Judas became indignant. Probably, Judas was more vocal than the rest of the disciples. They felt that this woman wasted the ointment. The disciples felt that this woman's costly devotion was a waste. In one sense, they don't regard Jesus as worthy of such extravagant devotion.

*2) They said that the ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor (14:5).*

They, especially the treasurer, Judas, estimated the ointment to be sold for more than three hundred denarii. A denarius was a day's wage in Israel. So, three hundred denarii were a year's

wages! I've seen some Christians giving away a month's salary to the Lord, but I didn't hear anyone giving a year's salary. They scolded the woman for "wasting" the ointment. The Greek word for this phrase is *embrimaesthai*, which means "to flare the nostrils [in anger]."

During Jesus' time, when guests arrived at a house, the hosts would anoint the heads of the guests with a little bit of oil. But this woman poured out all the ointment from the jar. Mary didn't just pour out the ointment but broke the alabaster flask which meant that the flask couldn't be used again. This symbolizes the completeness of the gift offered to Christ. The woman pouring out of costly oil prefigures Christ pouring out his precious blood for our sins.

### **c. Jesus commends the woman's act (14:6-9).**

Jesus commends the woman for her costly act of devotion.

#### *1) She had done a beautiful thing to Jesus (14:6).*

Jesus defends the woman and says, "Leave her alone." In the disciples' evaluation, the woman had wasted the ointment. But in Jesus' assessment, "She has done a beautiful thing" to him.

#### *2) They would always have the*

#### *poor, but not Jesus (14:7).*

Jesus is not indifferent to the poor while alluding to Deuteronomy 15:11. On other occasions, he expresses his concern for the poor (Mt. 5:3; 6:2-4; 19:21; Lk. 6:20, 36-38; 21:1-4; Jn 13:29). Rather, Jesus explains how worthy he is! Jesus places himself above the poor. The value of a gift demonstrates the value of a person. This woman's gift demonstrates that Jesus is worthy! The disciples fail to understand Jesus' worth, but this woman understands that Jesus is worthy of costly devotion.

#### *3) The woman did what she could (14:8).*

This woman did "what she could." We too must do what we can. Even in Mark 12:44, Jesus affirms the poor widow who gave all she could (12:44). The poor widow gave very little compared to the woman in Mark 14, but Jesus commends both for their giving and devotion. Our motives matter to Jesus more than the material value of our gifts. When we demonstrate our devotion to Jesus, even two small copper coins are not insignificant and even a year's salary is not a waste. But we must be careful that we don't lower our standards so much that we claim that doing nothing is what we can do!

*4) She prepared Jesus' body beforehand for burial (14:8).*

On several occasions, Jesus told his disciples about his impending death (Mk 8:31-33; 9:31-32; 10:32-34). But they didn't respond to the prophecy about his death and none of them took pains to honor Jesus before he would die. But this woman honored Jesus by pouring out expensive oil over his head. By anointing Jesus' head, this woman unknowingly anointed his body beforehand for burial.

*5) Her actions would be told wherever the gospel is proclaimed (14:9).*

Jesus' words, "And truly, I say to you," match the indignant attitude of the disciples. Since this woman expressed her devotion to Christ and prepared his body for burial without being fully aware that she was doing so, Jesus says that "wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her." That's what we are doing today.

It is ironic that Jesus' disciples desired fame and popularity and didn't get it then. However, this unnamed disciple of Christ demonstrated her devotion to Jesus and her act of devotion receives recognition wherever the gospel is proclaimed. Our

faithful and loving actions toward Jesus will not be forgotten; the Lord records them. Here, we see that Jesus anticipated his resurrection and the subsequent preaching of the gospel to the whole world.

### **3. Judas Plans to Betray Jesus (Mk 14:10-11).**

Luke 22:3 and John 13:2, 27 say that Satan caused Judas to betray Jesus. But Mark focuses on the moral responsibility of Judas.

#### **a. Judas goes to the Chief Priests to betray him (14:10).**

The phrase "one of the twelve" highlights the treachery of Judas. There is a Judas within us. Just because you are intimate with Jesus today, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will be faithful tomorrow. We must be careful that we will not fall (1 Cor. 10:12).

#### **b. The Chief Priests were glad and promised to give him money (14:11).**

It's a sad commentary that the chief priests were glad that someone was ready to betray Jesus. John 12:6 and 13:29 say that Judas was the treasurer and a thief. This thief was ready to betray his Master for mere money.

#### **c. Judas sought an**

## **opportunity to betray Jesus (14:11).**

Judas was eagerly looking for an opportunity to betray his Master. Sometimes, we wonder how Judas betrayed Jesus even though he was one of the twelve. Now some scholars suggest that Judas probably acted as a spy for the Sanhedrin. Others suggest that he was disappointed that Jesus didn't overthrow the Roman government and thus handed over Jesus. We can't be sure about these things because the Bible is silent regarding his actual motives. Mark holds Judas fully responsible for his act of betrayal. The chief priests didn't come to him, but he went to them. However, God would use Judas' evil intent to fulfill his saving purposes.

Judas will be judged by God for his treachery.

## **Conclusion**

The main message of this article is: **Be completely devoted to Jesus because he is infinitely worthy.**

Jesus is infinitely worthy. He is the greatest treasure! My prayer is that all of us will dedicate ourselves to the Lord and be completely devoted to him. Our Lord is infinitely worthy. Let's be completely devoted to Jesus!

**P.S.** This article is adapted from Dr. David Mende's book, *Powerful Sermons for Special Occasions*. You may contact him for copies of this book.



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# THE HITHERTO MOMENT

Rev. Kuruvilla Chandy

When I was 8, for my birthday, on request my parents got me my first Bible. It was a *King James Version* Bible. At that time, the KJV was the only version that was sold by Bible societies and Christian book shops. I started to read my Bible as though I was reading a storybook. Every spare moment between school and homework I would read from my Bible. By year-end, I had read through the entire Bible. All the stories of the Old and New Testaments were stored in my memory from that reading. In succeeding years, I read the daily portions assigned by Bible-reading programmes from the KJV Bible, growing more and

more familiar with its wording. It was only when I got to Middle School that we studied the gospels in the Revised Version, which was quite close to the KJV. So, when I am trying to remember a verse or a line from the Bible, it is always the KJV version that comes to my mind. That's how I happened to recall the line, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us" (1 Sam. 7:12).

The prophet Samuel said those words when he laid a landmark to signify that the Lord God alone was Israel's guide and guardian. Israel had suffered military losses in their wars with the Philistines. They had even lost the Ark of the

Covenant (4:10-21). When the Philistines returned the Ark because God struck them for their sacrilegious acts (5:1-6:12), the people who received the Ark back didn't follow the rules God had given Israel about treating it as an object of holiness representing God and so they suffered divine punishment for that (6:19-20). The people were therefore in mourning before the Lord (7:2). Then Samuel called them back to the Lord from all their idolatrous unfaithfulness (vv.3-4). Samuel summoned a sacred assembly to confess their sins and the people came together to observe a national fast. Thinking that they had gathered for war the Philistines got ready to attack the Israelites. When asked to pray for them as Samuel offered a sacrifice on their behalf, the Lord frightened the Philistines by thundering against them. While they were in a state of confusion, the Israelites struck and routed them completely. To mark the occasion and the spot, Samuel placed a boulder and called it Ebenezer – the stone of help, saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

The plain meaning of the word "hitherto" is "until now" or "thus far". If I had read that line as "Until now/thus far the Lord has helped us", it is unlikely that I would have remembered the line. It doesn't sound dramatic. It isn't memorable.

### **Looking Back**

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." As I look back on my life, I am compelled to admit that hitherto the Lord has been there in my life – and that too, mightily. I have gone against His revealed will time and again, yet hitherto the Lord has been there, even rescuing me from the devastating consequences of my foolish misconduct. I tremble when I think of what could have happened had the Lord not been there for me. What if He had not intervened? What if He had not intercepted/plucked me out of those situations and planted me firmly in safety? My entire life would have taken a different path at each turning point and my life would have been messed up – a complete wreck. Without exaggeration, I could have become a delinquent.

Approximately 300 years after Samuel, speaking on behalf of God, Isaiah told Israel, 'Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob, all the remnant of the people of Israel, you whom I have upheld since your birth, and have carried since you were born. Even to your old age and grey hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you' (Isa. 46:3-4)

I agree. From my birth, the Lord chose my life's path. I was placed in the care of godly parents. Because of them, I got a good education. Because of them, I was introduced to church and Sunday School. Because of them, I learnt to love the Bible. Yes indeed, the Lord chose me to live the life I have lived and I am still living the life chosen by my Lord God.

Remarkably, what God said through Isaiah was to those who were rebellious:  
Remember this, keep it in mind, take it to heart, you rebels.

Remember the former things, those of long ago;  
I am God, and there is no other;  
I am God, and there is none like me...  
I say, "My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please"...  
Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted, you who are now far from my righteousness.  
I am bringing my righteousness near,  
it is not far away;  
and my salvation will not be delayed.  
I will grant salvation to Zion, my splendour to Israel (vv.8-13).

What the Lord said to His people of long ago, He says now to me/us.

Yes, it's hitherto for me. I have arrived at my hitherto moment and I see that the Lord was always there in my life, and He has brought me to this point in my life. Don't you see it in your life? You haven't achieved it all on your own. Where would you be if God wasn't/isn't there for you?

### **Forget Not**

How should I/we respond to this hitherto moment?  
What shall I render to the Lord  
For all His benefits toward me?

I will take up the cup of salvation,  
And call upon the name of the Lord.  
I will pay my vows to the Lord  
Now in the presence of all His people  
(Ps. 116:12-14).

Have we accepted God's offered benefits? Have we accepted the cup of salvation from Him? I have indeed accepted the cup of salvation and drunk from it. But that isn't enough. There is a need to keep on calling on the Lord and responding gratefully publicly in the fellowship of people.

David counselled himself to "forget not the benefits" received from the Lord. Could it be because while he was busy ruling his kingdom and feeling very important, he lost sight of how much God had given him?

Praise the Lord, my soul;  
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.

Praise the Lord, my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits –  
who forgives all your sins  
and heals all your diseases,  
who redeems your life from the pit  
and crowns you with love and  
compassion,  
who satisfies your desires with  
good things  
so that your youth is renewed like  
the eagle's (103:1-5).

Living gratefully does not come easily to people. Our Lord was subjected to ingratitude. With a word, He had healed ten men suffering from leprosy. Only one of them turned back immediately to thank the Lord. The other nine went on merrily to enjoy their blessing, forgetting Jesus to whom they owed their healing (Lk. 17:11-19).

I think it was because they felt they were entitled to enjoyment. They had been outcasts for a long time. When they were discovered to have leprosy their own families and friends shunned them, and they were stoned and chased out of town. Didn't they have a right to celebrate without any delay? I had an uncle who used to say that he had had so many troubles and misery in his life, that for that reason alone God couldn't rightly keep him out of heaven. Indeed, some people believe they are entitled to a sort of heavenly compensation from God Himself for all their earthly troubles.

On the other hand, others have a head-on sense of entitlement about their lives. They feel that



they deserve everything that they have because they have worked hard to get where they are. Jesus told the story of a man who felt that way about himself. He compared himself to others and thought that he was pretty good. "God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get" (18:9-14). That man was a Pharisee.

There was another Pharisee. When he considered his life's achievements, he said, "...I myself have reasons for such confidence. If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless. But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ" (Phil. 3:4-7). This once-proud Pharisee had a very simple logic: "What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did

receive it, why do you boast as though you did not?" (1 Cor. 4:7).

### **An Old Hymn**

There is an old hymn about the hitherto moment. Robert Robinson (1735-1790) was the original hymnwriter. According to [Hymnary.org](http://Hymnary.org) what Robinson wrote was

Here I raise my Ebenezer,  
Hither by thine help I've come;  
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Hallelujah! O Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! I love the Lord.  
Hallelujah! O Hallelujah!  
Hallelujah! We are on our journey  
home.

According to Hymnary.org that is what Robinson wrote in 1758, but it was altered by Martin Madan (1726-1790) in 1760. However, even the so-called altered version is attributed to Robinson.

He was from a poor family. His father died when he was eight, and his mother sent him to London to be an apprentice to a barber. Typically leaving the safety of the countryside for the large city led him to bad company and a life of debauchery. One day he and his friends harassed a

drunken gypsy. They demanded she tell their fortunes for free. She pointed her finger at Robinson and told him that he would live to see his children and grandchildren. This jolted him. He thought to himself, "If I'm going to live to see my children and grandchildren, I need to change. I can't keep on living like I am now."

Soon after, Robinson attended the Methodist preacher George Whitefield's Tabernacle with his friends. To avoid being ridiculed for turning religious, he had asked them to go along to heckle the preacher. Whitefield's message was on the text: "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" (Matt. 3:7). Robinson left in dread.

After three years of spiritual turmoil, he put his faith in Christ Jesus. He went on to become a minister. Two years into the ministry, he wrote the hymn "Come, thou Fount of every blessing" to express his joyful gratitude that he was saved by grace.

Come, thou Fount of every

blessing;  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.  
Teach me some melodious sonnet,  
Sung by flaming tongues above;  
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,  
Mount of God's unchanging love!

In the first verse, God is described as the "Fount of every blessing". Grace and never-ceasing "streams of mercy" call for loud praise.

Here I raise my Ebenezer;  
Hither by thy help I'm come;  
And I hope, by thy good pleasure,  
Safely to arrive at home.  
Jesus sought me when a stranger,  
Wandering from the fold of God;  
He, to rescue me from danger,  
Interposed His precious blood.

The last four lines of the second verse are autobiographical – not just of Robinson, but of every believer. We were indeed strangers to God. We were wandering far from the fold of God. But we were saved when Jesus "interposed His precious blood"

O to grace how great a debtor  
Daily I'm constrained to be!  
Let that grace now, like a fetter,

Bind my wandering heart to thee.  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love;  
Here's my heart; O take and seal it;  
Seal it for thy courts above.

The third verse opens with the line about being a great debtor to grace. Indeed we are in debt to the grace of God. Some may say that where there is grace, there's no debt. However, Romans 8:12-15 talks of us being debtors to live, not according to the flesh, but by the Spirit. While many modern English versions use the word "obligation", the KJV (and even the modern versions *New Revised Standard Version* and *English Standard Version*) talk of us being "debtors". God, of course, is no debt collector. We just can't pay Him for grace, but that doesn't mean we are not in debt.

### **Where Are You?**

Once again we come to autobiographical lines:

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,  
Prone to leave the God I love

This is indeed the story of my life.  
Hither by thy help I'm come...  
Yet  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,

Prone to leave the God I love

Yes, I love the Lord, but I still wander from the Lord God. As Paul wrote,

But I am weak and human. I am like a slave that has sin as my master. I do not understand the things that I do. I do not do the good things that I want to do. Instead, I do the things that I hate to do. But I do not want to do those wrong things...sin has power in my life. It is sin that causes me to do wrong things.

I know that there is nothing good in me. I am weak and human. I want to do what is good. But I am unable to do it. I do not do the good things that I want to do. Instead, I continue to do the bad things that I do not want to do. So, when I do bad things that I do not want to do, it is not really I myself who do them. It is sin that causes me to do wrong things, because it has power in my life.

So I understand what is happening in me. Whenever I want to do something good, I can only choose something bad. Deep inside myself, I really love God's laws. So my mind tells me to obey God's laws. But my body wants to make me do something else. Every part of me fights against what my mind tells me to do. Sin has power over my body so that I am like a prisoner. This makes

me very sad! My body is leading me to death. I need someone to make me free from the power of sin over my body. I thank God! He has made me free, because of what Jesus Christ has done. So with my mind I want to obey God's laws. But, at the same time, I serve sin as my master, because I am weak and human (Rom. 7:14-25, Easy English Bible).

There's a stanza missing from our modern hymnbooks:

O that Day when freed from sinning,  
I shall see thy lovely Face;  
Clothed then in blood-washed linen  
How I'll sing thy sovereign grace;  
Come, my Lord, no longer tarry,  
Take my ransom'd soul away;  
Send thine angels now to carry  
Me to realms of endless day.

Robert Robinson completed this autobiographical hymn on a

triumphant note assured of salvation by grace.

Like me, you have reached this point in your life. This is your hitherto moment. Look back at your life from your birth to hitherto. Hasn't the Lord been there at every turning point? Aren't you where you are because of Him?



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*He declared to you his covenant,  
the Ten Commandments,  
which he commanded you to follow and  
then wrote them on two stone tablets.  
Deuteronomy 4:13*



*"O God, please let this be just a horrible nightmare", he said under his breath. "Lord, I am distraught. Lord, I am very, very angry. Please help me before my feelings kill me or I hurt myself or someone else", he continued his conversation with his God.*

Emotionally, he, 'J', was compromised. With tears on the brink, he hung his face in shame. His face had turned pale. His mind was in turmoil and confused. He felt so broken. And in his brokenness, he did not know which way to turn, or for that matter, to whom to turn for help and counsel. His anguish was in that he was caught between his love and honour for his father and for his best friend and brother, who was more precious than his

own life, whom his father wanted removed. Permanently. He could not allow that to happen. To keep his friend safe from his father's murderous plot, he had staked his very life without a moment's hesitation.

The dining table event hurt his being to the core.

"I just can't believe", he kept muttering to himself. "Can my own father try and murder me – me, his eldest? "Why are you so filled with rage, Dad? He wondered. Don't you see what your anger is doing to you, to all of us? Isn't there anyone who can speak sense to my Dad? How could Dad have driven himself to the point where he made himself unreachable or incommunicado?



Can't I ask my own father the reason for his rage against my friend when my friend had been so good to him? For every responsibility his father had entrusted to his friend 'D', his friend had accomplished par excellence. In fact, his friend had saved his father's honour before the whole community when an open challenge to his leadership and status was at stake. So, why this violence-filled rage and murderous conniving? To raise a question on my father's rage and impulsive decision-making to kill my friend, was it wrong? Worse, how could Dad think that he could force me to help him carry out his plot to murder my own best friend? It was all very wrong. I will NEVER be a part of this, at any cost", he resolved in his heart and soul.

The whole episode was nothing short of insanity and evil.

As these thoughts twirled around his head and were verbalised, 'J' had been walking away from the security of his home. He had to find 'D'. And he knew precisely where 'D' would be waiting for him. Even before 'J' realised, he had reached the place. Sure enough, his friend was waiting,

watching and picking up his friend's mutterings under his breath and the loud beating of his heart. 'J's heartbeat was more audible than the drums of Beating Retreat. His friend stood very still, watching and listening in dead silence. At the dawn of realisation of his friend's presence and his friend watching him closely with growing increasingly disquiet, he put his palms to his face as if to hide the shame he felt. Just the act of raising his palms to his face exploded in a loud wail accompanied by a torrent of tears. Tears flowed freely. His heart and his soul had burst wide open.

His best and most confident buddy, 'D', couldn't move an inch. In shock and dismay at the sight of his shattered friend before him made 'D' feel as if the earth below him had cemented him to the ground. He just could not move no matter how much his mind willed and told him to go to his friend. The sight of his broken friend in pain, he too felt, although vicariously, his own soul crying out for his friend. He knew from experience what it meant to despair and be in pain. What made it worse was being misunderstood and held

responsible for a wrong that he had nothing to do with.

Isn't it true that most often the worst form of pain is inflicted by the member/s of one's own family? They scar us for life. 'D' felt that deep scar surface that had cut deeply into the very core - his soul.

Breaking from this brief reverie, he determined that he would not, no, he could not let that happen to 'J'. 'J' was more than a friend to him - a brother dearer to him than his own life. Yes, he loved 'J' more than his own soul.

Please don't misunderstand. 'J' and 'D's' friendship was not a sexually-oriented or initiated feeling. Nor 'D' or 'J' were in denial. And neither am I. It was the purest form of friendship that anyone could wish to find. It was precisely this: "There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother" [Proverb 18:24].

Here, there was no prejudice nor some wrongly understood and tagged 'religious' bigotry. It was, as it has always been, true that there are friends whose friendships are pure, honourable, trusted, sacrificial, forgiving,

empowering, honest, transparent, confrontational, and much more.

Here, 'J' and 'D' display the best of a limitless form of the human relationship between two men whose love crossed every boundary often held and defined as being a platonic friendship but never indulged in sex or condescending behaviour.

Snapping out of the moment's paralysis, 'D' approached his brother and friend with a calm and determined spirit. Catching 'J' by the shoulders, he wrapped his own arms around him and held him tight. That act of loving grace, care, and preciousness poured without limit was enough. They, together, burst into tears. They wept. They wailed. And they wept some more until all their strength was gone, and their tear duct had exhausted. But a quiet miracle had taken place. It was a miracle of healing and hope. Together, they remained slumped to the ground, side by side. Exhausted but broken no more.

Recovering from the ordeal, 'J' looked deep into his brother and friend 'D's' eyes and spoke

saying, *"I want you to make a covenant with me 'D'. And right now. You, my friend, and my brother, make a covenant".*

Without waiting for any acknowledgement, he went on, saying, *"I know now for certain where and how my future will pan out. When I am gone, promise me that you will remember me and my children. Promise me that you will protect and care for them as me. I know for certain that God has chosen you to succeed my father and that with you, God will raise a leadership that our people so desperately need. Swear to me, 'D', with your life God bearing us witness, this covenant with me."*

Hearing these words that 'J' had spoken, 'J' who had staked his very life for him, 'D' broke down once again and fell to his knees. It was now his friend 'J's turn to console him. Catching him by the shoulders, 'J' forced 'D' to his feet. Looked him in the eyes and smiled. 'J' knew their covenant was cemented. Nothing and no one on this God-created Earth would be able to destroy it.

To cut the long story short, the two men made a covenant,

holding God as their sole witness. As 'J' had prophesied, he did not live too long after this meet. In fact, it turned out to be their last meeting. 'J' was murdered, and out of all his children and family, the youngest had lived, thanks to the housemaid who had sensed danger and run away with him and hid him. Unfortunately for the wee lad, the maid had tripped heavily, landing on the little boy she was attempting to carry to safety. That fall crippled, otherwise, a perfectly healthy lad.

Realising the terrible tragedy, the maid, instead of leaving the young lad to his fate, picked him and raced away to safety. She guarded, fed, and raised him as if her own. At her death bed, she swore her relatives to care for the crippled boy, now a young man. Her family had responded with tenderness of heart and firmness of commitment to her command and instructions. They continued to care and cater for him without compromising his safety. Never once did 'J's only son ever feel that he wasn't a part of the maid's family.

A few years later, when 'D' had achieved prominence and political power, he remembered

his covenant to 'J', his now-dead friend. He tasked his chief investigator to search for anyone, even remotely, related to his dead friend 'J' and his late father 'S's relatives who were alive and to report to him immediately.

Sure enough, the search proved successful. The lame boy, now a young man, was found. The report was reported to 'D', now a very popular and powerful political head of the government.

His report would bring unbelievable excitement and frenzy, the chief of investigators could hardly believe his eyes. Of course, the officer knew nothing of the covenant so how could he understand the unbounded joy that 'D' displayed?

D' immediately ordered that the young man be brought to meet him, even if he was a paralytic. Further, 'D' ordered that all the movable and immovable properties that belonged to the young man's parents and grandparents be restored to him and documented and registered with the government notary in the lad's name. He also ordered that since the youngman was a paralytic, and personally

incapable of managing himself and his property (restored to him), a trustworthy and loyal person and his family be appointed at royal cost be given charge. They were to make certain that the young man's dues were reported to the young man and that these were to be passed on to young man's children and family after him. He, 'D', too was to be given a regular update on this matter.

Covenant is sacred and not to be demeaned. 'D', has set the bar when he demonstrated his personal 'Covenant' to his late friend 'J'. 'D', both as an ordinary person and now as the most powerful political leader, demonstrated faithfulness, loyalty, and commitment to honour, love, acceptance, and justice at all costs to every person, irrespective of their ground status. He had personally kept his covenant commitment to his now-dead friend! (1 Samuel 20).

Truth be told, it was 'J' who had lived his covenanted life in 'D'. And 'D', what a friend, brother and father, and leader of people he proved to be. And, it was not just for 'J's son but for

generations that followed.

Reflecting on life and relationship between 'J' and 'D', it appears that their ['J' & 'D's] relationship smack as is parallel with the relationship between Jesus and his disciples (friend and brother, as Jesus called them - John 15:14,15).

As disciples, they covenant to rescue, restore, and re-establish lives and homes with and for those who are lost and ignored. The content of our covenant is explicit: *"Who and what you are or what don't believe you are (capable or incapable), you are precious, and we are here to communicate to you that Christ through us demonstrates that He cares for you. He will restore you to God if only you would accept that you need Him, are willing to depend on Him and submit and live in covenant with Him without condition or prejudice."*

O, just how awesome is that responsibility entrusted to us disciples [Church]: to go, suss out the needy - the broken, the

seekers after peace, hope, love, acceptance, worth, trust, happiness, and grace [and more], and offer them that opportunity for restoration and hope allowing them to make their choice to choose or reject this offer from 'J' = Jesus, and then to establish their own covenant with God the Father through and in the name of Jesus, the Christ who lives and reigns forever!

Our covenant is incredible because it embodies both - our contemporary and eternal life within it, Thanks to 'J' = Jesus, the Christ.

Blessings of this LENT be upon you!



**Mr. Hansraj Jain**  
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*The Lord confides in those who fear him;  
he makes his covenant known to them. Psalm 25:14*



# Israel— A people of prophecy

Dr. Babu John Vettamala

Fredrick 5th, the Prussian president of 17th century, asked philosopher Heidegger a one-word evidence to prove the existence of God. Without much delay, the philosopher answered: "My Lord, the Jew".

As long as the nation Israel exist, it proves without many words that the holy Bible and the God it presents, are true. One may wonder what conundrum it is!

Well, the entire Bible is the matrix in which this nation now named Israel has been formed. Looking at the axis role it plays standing at the very centre of the planet Earth, controlling the geopolitics of today, one must come to the conclusion that they are a people moving forward, knowingly or unknowingly, towards fulfilling a

pack of prophecies designed as their destiny.

No mention of international politics is now possible without a reference to the war in Israel.

With the outbreak of an unexpected attack of Hamas into the territory of Israel on the 7th of October last year, there triggered the present warfare rising to its spiral with untold carnage every minute. Eggheads in international affairs have burned a lot of midnight oil so far, though source of solution remain far from the sight.

Having been expatriated from their habitat of 1500 years, the nation Israel has been dispersed the world all over since AD 70. And their once homeland has



been occupied by outsiders ever since.

However, much to the chagrin of everyone concerned, the establishing of the nation Israel was declared in 1948. With that started the fulfilling of a series of 6 incidents towards the end of which, our planet Earth is prophesied to be different from what it is now.

In this article, I am trying to give the briefest ever possible account of those six incidents which, if properly understood, will help us resolve many complications it would otherwise lead us into. Viewing in a chronological order, we can say that the first is the:

[1] The repatriation of Israel: Centuries before the forfeiture of Israel, from their homeland, it had been foretold that their God will repatriate them in their homeland. Though, centuries of wandering the world all over made it hard for the people of Israel to believe that that prophecy would ever be fulfilled or not. The fulfilment process is their first victory in 1948. Today, it has been 120 years since the plan of Israel's repatriation started. Nevertheless, only 50% of Israeli population spread across the world has come back

to Israel. And that process is progressing.

[2] Israel attacked: Ever since, the first settlers who came to Israel in 1875, they have been undergoing unpremeditated attacks in their promise land. Racial violence has nowhere else been executed with so much ferocity as in the combined attack of Israel's enemies on them. To the world at large, this ongoing attack may be a mirage, though it is nothing but the prophetic fulfilment of the holy Bible.

[3] Israel settled: It's only a few decades since the new nation Israel came into existence, though their settlement is tantamount to that of any other civilised people in the world. That's another example of the uniqueness of Israel which is supposed to be the hallmark of that nation ever since its beginning. A nation deep rooted in its agriculture endeavours, they supply a disproportionate slice of the world with fruits and vegetables to the highest possible quality that nobody else could attain.

[4] Israel will be protected: Israel forms only 0.1% of the world's population. Their enemies far outnumber them. That gives their

enemies the confidence that ultimate victory in a combat with Israel will be on their side. However, much to the dismay of the enemies of Israel, no combined attack against them has ever seen victory. That again tells us that factors not mundane always work for Israel's victory.

[5] Israel will be deceived: While being burnt in the furnace of battles, this nation holds on a hope that someday their promised Messiah will come down from heaven, and undoing all their enemies, the throne of David will be reestablished, and thus, they will be victorious. He is the star of David, the carrier of peace and the rebuilder of the once demolished temple of Jerusalem. As this hope of theirs is scaling heights, there will appear the arch villain, the Biblical Anti-Christ who will deceive them into thinking that he, the anti-Christ is the real Christ. Thus deceived, they will embrace him, and offer him the reign of their nation. But the peace treaty that he offers them will be soon broken and anti-Christ will amass all his strength to annihilate Israel. At this helpless moment of alienation, Israel as a nation will turn to the God of their fathers.

[6] Israel will be saved: At this crucial moment, the real Messiah will appear, subdue the world, pick out every Israeli from all the nooks and corners of the world, bring them back to their original land, establish them forever, and thus they will be saved forever.

If we trace the development of the present warfare against this prophetic fulfilment, we will be able to build a better understanding of what is happening in the world today.



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# LENTEN PROVERBS

Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj



Here are some Proverbs with Lenten Theme which the Lord gave me as I meditated on the Cross, Day by Day during Lent 2023. I called these Proverbs, "Lent Scent".

## LENTEN PROVERB #1

Leviticus 7:26-27 tells us that we must not eat blood; the New Testament repeats this Old Testament command as found in Acts 15:20. Why? Perhaps this ritualistic choice will re-enforce this key object lesson that we drink only one blood, and that too spiritually speaking. Whose blood do we drink? We are called to drink the blood of Jesus (John 6:53-55). In other words, we become more and more intimate

with Jesus! When the Book of Song of Songs talked about the married couple there eating each other, it was talking about the physical intimacy between. And when the New Testament talks about eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking Jesus' blood, it is talking about ever increasing spiritual intimacy between Jesus and us, believers.

## LENTEN PROVERB #2

The 'wrath of God' is upon us, sinners. That means we would land in hell and burn there. But thanks to the blood Jesus shed for us on the Cross, we now have an escape from the wrath of God. Yes, we now don't have to go to Hell! Only if we jump over the

Cross, will we land in Hell (Rom. 5:9; I Thess. 5:9-10).

### **LENTEN PROVERB #3**

'They pierced my hands and feet' (Psa. 22:16). 'He was pierced for our transgressions' (Isa. 53:5). The Old Testament predicts the mode of Jesus' death: it would be piercing. The nails should have pierced us our hands, for it was perhaps our fingers that typed the porn-website on our browsers and watched! But the punishment went to the hands of sinless Jesus!

### **LENTEN PROVERB #4**

The first Adam **PLUCKED** from the tree ('the trespass' – Rom. 5:15-16) and we were condemned as we too followed suit obeying the passions of the flesh. The second Adam, Jesus was **PIERCED** onto the tree ('the gift' – Rom. 5:15-16). And we have an opportunity to be justified, if only we repented, and believed.

### **LENTEN PROVERB #5**

Both the Mom Donkey and Child Donkey was needed by Jesus (Matt. 21:2-3). Oh! for parents

who would encourage their kids to serve Jesus! Jesus used a "colt on whom none had sat" (Mark 11:2). Oh! for youth who would not even give even a foothold for the Devil (Eph. 4:27) and make Jesus as the number 1 in their lives!

### **LENTEN PROVERB #6**

Enroute to Golgotha, Jesus told the women, "Don't weep for me! But weep for yourself and your children!" Why? Jesus went to the Cross not so that you would feel sorry for him, but so that we would feel sorry for our sins and repent! Judgement and Tears awaits those who would not repent!

### **LENTEN PROVERB #6**

Are you 'scared to death', because of death? You don't have to be! By his death on the Cross, Jesus experienced the most human of experiences. This way he foiled Satan's plan to keep you forever 'scared to death' about death (Heb. 2:14-15)! This does not mean that believers will not die, as Hebrews itself records about the death of godly people (Heb. 11:37) and calls us for

possible death while serving Jesus (Heb. 12:4).

### **LENTEN PROVERB #7**

The dead bodies of the two witnesses will lie in the Street of the Great City where their Lord was crucified (Rev. 13:8). The message: if you are witness to Jesus, your fate could be that of Jesus – you too could get killed! But you got to do it anyway (Heb. 13:12-13).

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #8**

We ate to our heart's content in the Hotel of Sinful Pleasure. The bill was presented, and we could not pay. A life in hell was the punishment! It was too high a price for any one of us to pay (Psa. 49:8). We were now being led to hell. But Jesus said, "I will pay the bill (ransom)". And did so with his blood (Mark 10:45; Rev. 5:10).

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #9**

Beating is for the backs of fools. The book of Proverbs tells us this, twice (Prov. 19:29; 26:3). Instead of enjoying the eternal pleasures at his right hand, (Psa. 16:11) we

foolishly seek to enjoy the 'fleeting pleasures of sin' (Heb. 11:25). We ought to be beaten on our backs! But Jesus, our substitute, took those beatings on our behalf!

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #10**

On the Tuesday of the week, he was going to be crucified, Jesus answered the question with regard to the question on what the greatest command was. It was to love God with all our multiple-faculties in action (Matt. 22:34-40). Implication: when we grow in our love for God by the second, obeying the Biblical "thou shall nots" becomes super easy!

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #11**

The Cross of Christ is offensive (Gal. 5:11). Why? Paul explains in this letter. If he preached that Cross of Christ along with circumcision would save, the congregations with many Jewish believers would have loved it. But then he preached, "Christ Crucified" as the only way to be saved and that offended the Jewish people. It still offends those who believe in the

philosophy of Pluralism: all religions are one and the same and will take us to heaven!

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #12**

How can Jesus' blood cleanse the sins of those who were even born before his death on the Cross and save them now? How can this blood cleanse the sins of those born post the Cross of Jesus and save them now? This is why: the efficacy and the saving power of his blood, called the 'blood of the eternal covenant' (Heb. 13:20) covers the past, present, and future of everyone. But the forgiveness available through his ever-effective blood is made available only to those who come to the Cross here and now in repentance and with faith (Rom. 2:4; 10:9).

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #13**

As the King whose Scepter would not ever depart (Gen. 49:10), Jesus could have had the luxury of eating the "blood of grapes" forever (Gen. 49:11). But this King decided that he leave all that and be treated as a naked criminal who would be bloodied on the Cross! And that blood from

His Cross washes the sins of real criminals – you and me!

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #14**

Do we get distracted and pick up our phones and browse or take the remote and watch TV when in the middle of important tasks such as Bible Devotion and Personal Prayer? Jesus who 'sat down' only after finishing the key work of purification through his death on the Cross inspires us to stay focused (Heb. 1:3).

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #15**

When we return to sin, we are crucifying the Son of God again (Heb. 6:6). When we sin with our hands, fondle the person who is not your spouse, type the porn site and hit enter in the Google browser, hold, and smoke that cigar, etc. – it is like we are crucifying Jesus' hands; reliving this has a sanctifying effect on us (Heb. 9:14).

### **LENTEN PROVERBS #16**

'Many' walk as the enemies of the Cross, Apostle Paul wrote (Phil. 3:18). 'Narrow is the way to life and those who find it are few,'



Jesus said (Matt. 7:14). The Gospel message, the way of the Cross, will not ever be a popular message! 'Majority approval' and 'Cross' will not ever go together! So, don't get too cross when people get cross with you for preaching about the Cross of Christ!

### LENTEN PROVERBS #17

During the week leading up to his crucifixion, Jesus cursed the fig tree (Mark 11:12-14, 20) even though it was not "the season for figs". It was a symbolic act! An object lesson! National Israel is called fig tree in the Old Testament (Hos. 9:10). And we church believers, the New Israel (Matt. 21:43), must bear fruit of evangelism, "in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 2:2).

### LENTEN PROVERBS #18

The miracle you are expecting will happen at the "right time" – this very second, sometime later or even on the other side of eternity! After all, the most

important miracle of all, Jesus dying for a wretched sinner like me, also happened at the "right time" (Rom. 5:6; John 17:1)!

*(to be continued)*



### Rev. Dr. Duke Jeyaraj

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*When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.  
Psalms 56:3*



# Preparation of God's Servant: Reflections from the Life of Elijah

Rev. Vinod Kishor Moudekar

## *Unveiling the Essence of God*

What is Theology? The simplest definition of Theology is the understanding of God. Although, we cannot fully grasp the essence of God, it is God alone who enables us to gain knowledge about Him. In Christian Theology, God's revelation occurs through Jesus Christ, offering us insights into the nature of God. The process of preparing for God's overarching plan becomes a simultaneous journey of understanding Him better. "Knowing more about God" and "preparing ourselves for His plans" are intricately connected aspects, akin to two sides of the same coin. While we ready ourselves to serve Him, our

understanding of God deepens, and conversely, as we gain more insight into His nature, our preparation for His greater plans continues. This article, focusing on Elijah's life, contributes to our ongoing exploration of understanding God.

1 Kings 17:1-9 describes the manner in which God was preparing Elijah, who was to be His servant. The plan that God had in mind for Elijah was already in place; He called him and guided him through a variety of circumstances. Elijah makes his appearance before Ahab, the King of the Northern Kingdom, which is Israel, in verse 1. One of the things that we learn about here is that King Ahab and the

prophet Elijah are engaged in warfare. Nevertheless, it is not the story of two individuals fighting against one other; rather, it is the story of God fighting against the gods of the pagan societies. Israel and Judah were split apart as a result of the division of the kingdom that took place. Canaanites and Israelites from ten different tribes settled in the area that is now known as Israel. There was a period of time during which the Canaanites introduced their gods to Israel. The fact that King Ahab was already worshiping the pagan god Baal is something that we will learn if we read the preceding chapter, which is 16:31 through 32. Baal was a god who was recognized for his presence in the dew and rain, as well as his role as a god who was associated with storms and fertility. However, Yahweh directly opposes Baal. To make the proclamation that there will be neither dew nor rain until God says so, God sent his servant Elijah, whose name means "Yahweh is my God." An announcement of this nature would be equivalent to launching an attack against Baal, the deity of rain and fertility, and his ability

to uphold the fertility of the land. Elijah had a difficult time pronouncing such a thing to King because it was not an easy assignment. Elijah, however, was being prepared by God for days such as these. God prepared him to deal with any kind of situation that might arise.

### **Tough Situations**

It has been observed that the setting in which an individual was born has a significant impact on both their identification and their personality. It is from Gilead that the Tishbite Elijah comes. The word Tishbe means "Captivity." It is likely that Elijah was brought up in captivity in an area that was an unpleasant region. "Gilead" is also a synonym for "Rocky Region." Both of these places have names that give the impression that Elijah had a hard and difficult beginning. Perhaps, he had to fight through some challenging moments. Just like Elijah, many of us have been through difficult times. There is a possibility that we have struggled up until this moment, or that we are still struggling. We could not have performed any better. It is possible that failure has occurred

in a variety of facets of life. There is a possibility that we have encountered anger, fury, bias, and difficulty. There is a possibility that our identification was determined by our location. In addition, we might be struggling in our personal lives, such as having disagreements with other people and with God, attempting to cultivate healthy habits and friendships, and working to improve our intellectual, social, and spiritual lives. A few of us have entertained the idea of giving up. However, in accordance with the Word of God, we are becoming ready to serve Him for whatever may come.

The preparation of Elijah to stand in the presence of God was now taking place in this passage. In the first verse, it is said, "...As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve..." Elijah calls Israel's God as Lord. He says "whom I serve." Some translate as "Before whom I stand, or in whose presence I stand." The Hebrew word that is being used here is 'aamad,' and the same word is used in Deuteronomy 10:8 when God separates the

Levi tribe and assigns them to serve Him. It is necessary for a person to be ready to serve God. Being able to stand before God and minister to him is not an easy task. To live a holy life, one must first undergo the appropriate cleaning. It requires a significant amount of effort. Before the potter chooses a particular clay to form into a utensil, he first determines whether or not the clay is sufficiently bendable to be formed into the desired shape. Therefore, in order for clay to be ready to be used as a tool, it must first be crushed, then molded, and last refined. In a similar manner, God prepares us before we become His servants to serve Him, just like when a potter prepares clay.

### ***Provider in Scarcity:***

God told Elijah to proceed to the Kerith Ravine on the eastern bank of the Jordan River in verses 2-6. God provided resources for his servant even in the midst of severe drought. The creek supplied him with water, while crows brought him food every day. In spite of the famine, God assures His servant that He would provide for them.

During the time of need, where do we run? God wants us to remember that He is the only provider. Where the people of the land might be struggling and fighting for their provision, it was God alone who provided food and water to his servant. This reminds us of our life experiences. There might be such incidence in our life where we became helpless, especially during the time of Covid-19. But it was God who provided help. And today, we are alive and preparing ourselves to serve in His presence.

God was preparing Elijah at Kerith. It is very interesting to know the meaning of Kerith in this context. The word Kerith means "cutting," it comes from the root word *Kaarath* means "to cut." In Hebrew, this expression is used for making a covenant. While making a covenant, the sacrificial animal is cut into half and the two covenant making parties will pass through the pieces. It shows that the two parties are in agreement with each other. *"If you do this, I will do this."* If one party fails to meet the agreements of the covenant,

then the other party also is not supposed to fulfil the agreement. In the case of Elijah, the covenant might be that if you are ready to risk your life for me, then I, the God of Israel, will also preserve your life. Elijah is learning about the covenant God who does not fail to meet the agreement. God provides for Elijah in miraculous way. Now, Elijah needs to stand firm on his part of agreement. And Kerith is the place, which prepares Elijah for keeping the covenant with God.

We also start our Christian journey with much enthusiasm. But our commitment towards that agreement doesn't seem to be so strong. In due course of time, it gets dim. Sometimes, we are not able to give our personal time to God and we still expect that God should listen to our prayers. When difficult situation comes, we pray to God to remove the situation away from us. At times, we even question God for bringing such situations in our lives. But Elijah didn't question God about his provision or the way God asked him to live alone. He learned that circumstances will keep on changing, but I will

have to mold myself and always strive to keep the covenant to continue His ministry.

### ***Keeping Promise***

Once, a gardener was selling some plants and a girl - passing by - got attracted to his shop. She wanted to buy a plant and keep it near the window of her bedroom. Gardner said, "If you are not planting it in the ground but in a pot, then you need to take proper care of it. Daily, you'll have to give one glass water and at least 2 hours of sunlight." Girl agreed to it and bought the plant. After few months, she forgot to give water and sunlight for few days. And by the time she remembered, she was too late. Similarly, keeping the covenant is a daily task without any excuse. If we forget to keep it, we'll have to face the consequences.

Elijah was running for his life, running from the king Ahab. He was all alone. No one was there to talk to him and to communicate with him. It was just like a jail situation. Still, he did not grumble. He kept the covenant with God. Let us learn from him, how to keep our commitments with God

and also with people around us. Let us allow God to prepare us in such segregated places amidst scarcity. Firstly, God prepares his servants in difficult places amidst challenges. Secondly, God prepares his servant in segregated places amidst scarcity.

### ***Dependency on God: Refining in Zeraphath***

In vs. 9, God asked Elijah to go to Zeraphath which is in Sidon. Now, Sidon was one of the important place for Baalists. It was well known for Baal worship. God, knowingly, asked Elijah to go to this region. Now Elijah, who has challenged Baal worshipers and has brought this drought, himself is supposed to enter in that region. Till now, he was hiding himself near Kerith, but now he has been asked to move out of his hiding place and face the reality in the outside world. God doesn't want him to hide anymore. God wants him to face his fear. It was another challenge for him.

Now, Zeraphath means "refinery." Refinery is a place where metal is refined by



smelting and removing all the impurities. Elijah was asked to go to such a place where he will be smelted and be made purer. Metal is not useful until it goes through the process of purification. None of the metal can be used in its raw form. But after refining it, it gets its strength, shape, and value. Only after going through a refinery, metal can be used for a particular purpose. Similarly, when God wants to use His servant, He takes him/her through the process of refining.

The process of preparing God's servant for His service was not yet completed. He was about to face more challenges in Zeraphath. God asked him to go there, and a widow will continue to provide him. It is interesting to know "how a widow will provide?" We know that widows used to be poor, lonely, in search of help and support. Same was the condition of this widow of Zeraphath. A great drought is still going on. People don't have anything for themselves, how will they provide for this widow's need? She didn't have much to survive, moreover, God sent another person to her

and asked her to feed him. This widow was supposed to get provision from people, but she was being asked to be the provider for someone else. And Elijah has been asked to be dependable on such a widow!

With all such challenges and thoughts in mind, Elijah still obeys God and gets ready for delivering God's plan. And we know the whole story, how God provides for all of them until the drought gets over. In between, Elijah has to face another challenge when the widow's son dies. But Elijah was prepared to face all the circumstances. God had taken him through different phases of life, teaching him through different ways, and showing him that God, himself is with him.

When God wants to prepare us, He will take us through such kind of circumstances. Each day will demand for a step of faith and hope. If we endure in it then only, we will be able to testify God's provision. We should not lose our hope or give up. But should always be ready to face new challenges. Our body will say no,

our friends might discourage us, our family might need us, but on such ground always see that God is preparing us. If we give up now, then there will be no meaning for our life.

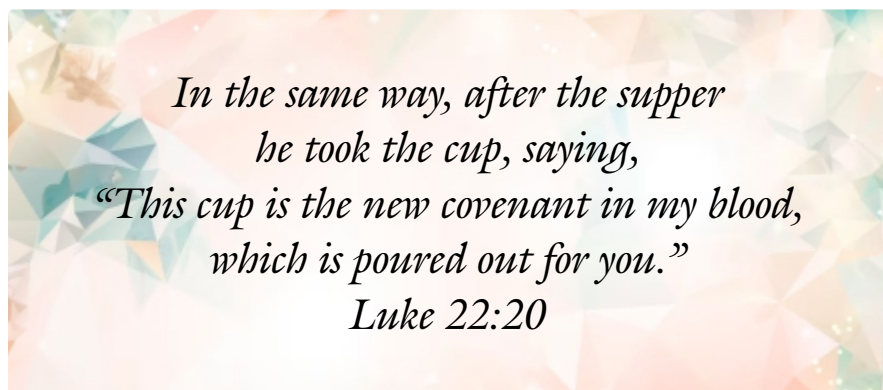
### ***Jesus Christ our Hope***

Our God is a Covenant keeping God. In keeping the covenant, he has reached to the extent of sacrificing His only Son for us. Jesus Christ died for our sins and have renewed the covenant that whoever believes on Him will be saved. Elijah persevered to keep the covenant; Jesus also came to fulfil the law and not to abolish it (Matt. 5:17). Similarly, when we have submitted ourselves in the hands of God, then let us persevere to keep the covenant from our side. Let us follow the example of Elijah and, moreover, Jesus Christ. Let us take efforts to

change our habits. Let us give ourselves in the hands of God. Let Him mold us and make us into a better person. Let Him take us through refinery. And with such process, we will be able to know God through personal experiences. It is necessary for us to be prepared in places like Tishbe, Kerith, and Zeraphath. It is necessary for us to be prepared in difficult places amidst challenges, in segregated places amidst scarcity, and in refineries amidst dependability. Only then we will be ready to be used for the greater plan of God. Are you ready to be prepared to serve Him? May God help us in our preparation to be His servant. Amen.

**Rev. Vinod Kishor Moudekar**

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# Tears in Heaven

Jesus, were there tears in Heaven, when You died?  
For The Father had given His Only Son to the whims of sinful  
man, to be crucified?  
To do with Him as they pleased...  
And ... they left no stone unturned,  
As they gave full vent to their fury, born of envy.

Legions of angels were Yours for the asking,  
But alone, You chose to die, at the hands of sinful men...  
For Jesus had you and me on His Mind,  
'Cos it was for this He had come.

So Father, were there tears in Heaven?  
Just that once...in Heaven?  
For You gave up your Only Son to die for all mankind...  
Tho Your Word tells us,  
There is no sorrow, no pain, no tears in Heaven?  
But just that once, ...  
Were there tears in Heaven?

Or, on the other hand, Sweet Son of God,  
Was all Heaven holding You up with their prayers and  
intercession,  
Encouraging You on, to complete the work, The Father had  
given You?  
Angels had ministered to You as you fasted in the wilderness,  
And in Gethsemane too;  
as Alone you prayed?  
So they were Yours for the asking, even now!

But, only in Eternity, will I truly know...

When I too reach that home prepared for me,  
Only then will I know, even as I am known.  
Had Heaven wept or rejoiced that day?  
When your Glory You laid aside,  
To die for sinful man, in obedience to The Father's will.  
He laid down His life, only to take it back again...  
For none could have taken it from Him!

And today, seated at the Father's Right Hand,  
You wait, You pray, You intercede,  
For sinners like you and me - chief among them all!

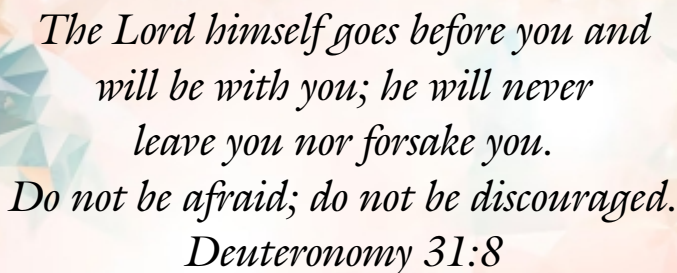
And I conclude...  
Maybe just that once,  
There were tears in Heaven.

Or then again...

There never were,  
Nor will there ever be...  
Tears in Heaven!  
Eternity alone will tell!

**Mrs. Shirley Thomas**

*Wife of Late Bishop Dr. Samuel R. Thomas*



*The Lord himself goes before you and  
will be with you; he will never  
leave you nor forsake you.  
Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.  
Deuteronomy 31:8*



# Seven Golden Rules

**Emeritus Prof. Henry Shepherd**

Now all have been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter:

Fear God and keep his commandments  
for this is the whole duty of man.

Ecc 12:13

The above wisdom statement is from the wisest man-ever and a summary of all do's and don'ts commanded by God. In the beginning, God gave only one commandment to Adam and Eve. But when they disobeyed the sin took birth in humans, and with time, its invasive effect has aggressively travelled from generation to generation. Eventually, the Lord God gave Ten commandments to man through Moses to identify sin. But the Scripture has testified time and again that God had to warn repeatedly before taking punitive measures so that humans do not suffer the eternal death. (Ps 50:17, Jer 6:10, Zec 7:12). Jewish kings defied the law and killed the prophets who conveyed God's admonitions, and burned

the scrolls (Jer 36:23). They were punished and many died every time, but merciful God forgave them when people cried out to him in repentance. Again and again, they rebuild and faced the wrath of God. Then, Jesus came and explicitly declared that he had not come to abolish the law but to teach them obedience.

Jesus summarized the law in just one word: 'Love'. So, in grace period again there is just one commandment, which demands to love God and fellowmen sincerely as the Lord loves us. The one who loves fulfils all the righteousness prescribed for humans. In this writeup, seven golden rules have been picked from Jesus' teachings which are not new but variance of the

commandments God has given, are forms of expressions of Love. These rules not only teach how to love but also tell the repudiatory punishments; the seven rules have been printed herein bold letters:

**In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you. (Mt 7:12)**

This rule is an eye opener for us, because in unpleasant situations, we always blame the so called offenders and seldom fail in finding the fault only in them. It is due to self-righteousness attitude, we point fingers at others. To such persons Jesus said, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" This rule should be applied in interpersonal relationship with God and man. We expect God to hear our prayers for it gives joy, so in the same way, God also expects us to obey, for it pleases him. We know what we expect in others: goodness, love, kindness, helpfulness, trustworthiness, truthfulness, and sincerity etc, therefore, we should practise them first. Surely, no one can say, "I do not know what others expect of me". Loving others

wholeheartedly testifies our love for Christ and God the Father. His Love does no harm to neighbours, therefore, love is fulfilment of the laws (Rom 13:10). The Scripture says, "if anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it, sins" (Jas 4:17). A good tree is recognized by its fruits. At the time of judgement, the Lord will tell the goats on his left side, how they did not show love to their brothers. Whatever we did not do for one of the least of these, we did not do for Lord, So, all of us will be judged accordingly: either eternal rest or eternal damnation (Mt 25:31-46). They who are strong ought to bear with failings of the weak and not to condemn them. Each one of us should praise his neighbour for his good, to build him up. Paul told the Church in Galatia, "If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out, or you will be destroyed by each other" (Gal 5:15). So, wisdom is in obeying the commandments of God, for by doing so one turns from evil to do good and experiences peace and joy in life. Be kind whenever possible.

**Judgement without mercy will be shown to anyone who has**

**not been merciful (Jas 2:13, Mt5:7)**

Moses wanted to see the glory of God, so God caused all his goodness to pass in front of Moses proclamation, "I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (Ex 33:19). He is Sovereign Lord yet because of his love and mercy we have been reconciled to God as his children. God's mercy triumphs over judgement, yet his judgements are just and merciful. He has commanded men to be merciful in their conduct, if they want mercy of God as promised (Mt 5:7). Sick used to pray for mercy and Jesus in his mercy used to heal them. The Scripture testifies God extends mercy to those who fear him, from generation to generation. As, David has testified, "Praise be to the God for he has heard my cry for mercy" (Ps 28:6). Once David was given a chance to choose any one of the three punishments, he chose three days of plague saying, "Let me fall into the hands of the Lord for his mercy is great, but do not let me fall into the hands of men" (2 Sam 24:13-14). If one has genuine love for neighbours, mercy is a natural act of love. Micah has summed up what God

requires of man: 'To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with God' (Mic 6:8). Who can stand judgement devoid of mercy of God? Therefore, the Bible says, "Be merciful, just as your Father in heaven is merciful" for children are expected to carry the goodness of parents, (Jn 8:39) so be merciful. But love and mercy should be expressed cheerfully without hypocrisy. God, in his great mercy, has given us new birth and a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Humans cannot imagine eternal life without God's mercy and grace. All of us at one time used to gratify the craving of our sinful bodies and were objects of wrath. But God, out of love, being rich in mercy, gave us eternal life in Christ Jesus, and "God's mercy endures forever and ever". One should remember that only due to our sincere repentance and God's mercy, we have received forgiveness of sins, redemption, and experienced the new birth and now, our prayers are heard by the merciful God. Jesus said: "God desires mercy, not sacrifice" (Mt 9:13). We need to be merciful in order to receive mercy of God without which no believer can be justified to be saved;



mercifulness is a believers trait. He that demands mercy and shows none ruins the bridge over which he himself will pass.

### **Do not judge, or you too will be judged (Mt 7:1)**

A common human weakness is to judge others, thus, they probably want to show themselves a better person that is known as- 'Holier than thou' attitude. But the golden rule forbids judging others and warns such people, for we do not like to be judged by others, particularly in terms of criticism. James says, doing so is slanderous and tantamount to speaking against law (Jas 4:11-12). Jesus who will judge the world said: "I have not come to judge". Since no one is perfect and cannot know the intention of others, therefore our judgement is likely to be biased and condemn those whom we do not like. As a Christian our duty is to help others who are weak in faith rather than looking down on them. Often by passing judgement on weak brothers we put stumbling blocks on their way; surely this is not an act of Love. Also, by condemning, we unintentionally hurt others and expose ourselves to God judgement. So, Paul admonishes

believers "Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time" (1Cor 4:5). Once David judged and, pronounced judgement but the same judgement fell on him and his four sons died (2 Sam 12:6). Let the Spirit of the Lord judge, as David prayed, "let the Lord judge the peoples, Judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, according to my integrity, O Most High. righteous God who searches minds and hearts, (Ps 7:8-9). God does not judge by seeing or by hearing from others like humans do. He knows all that is hidden from the eyes of men for he is omniscient and omnipresent. God does not judge by external appearance. The best thing for a man is to judge himself, not others, as the Lord has commanded. When we are judged by the Lord in our day to day lives it is to, discipline, so that we will not be condemned with the world (1 Cor 11: 31-32). The Lord God says, "Maintain justice and do what is right, for my salvation is close at hand and my righteousness will soon be revealed"( Is 36:1). When judging other, we become blind towards our own wickedness and weaknesses. And this is the forbidden fruit, called self-

righteousness. Never judge anyone because every saint has a past, and sinner will face judgement accordingly.

**For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly father will also forgive.... (Mt 6:14-15).**

The importance of this well-known rule is obvious, for Jesus has included this as a part of the Lord's prayer; Don't we seek God's forgiveness in lieu of our forgiving others? Also, there is a well know parable on the subject taught from Sunday school days. When Jesus was teaching forgiveness Peter asked him, a probing question, "Lord how many times shall I forgive my brother? Up to seven times?" He replied, "Not seven times but seventy times seven." Jews knew that only God can forgive our sins, so when Jesus intentionally told the paralytic man, 'Go your sins are forgiven', they resisted it., but Jesus told them that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins. Jesus taught, "If you hold anything against anyone forgive him, so that your father in heaven may forgive you your sins." God is merciful and forgives our sins if we repent but there is one sin of

man that will never be forgiven – blasphemy against the Holy Spirit (Mt 12:31) Jesus forgave the crowd who were abusing, accusing, spitting on him, mocking, and tempting Jesus when he was on the cross Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing." The blood of the new covenant he shed for many for the forgiveness of sins (Mt 26:28). In him, we have redemption i.e., forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. So, the command is: "Forgive each other just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ep 1:7, 4:32). Paul adds further for the Church in Colossia, "Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another" (Col 3:13), Redemption is essentially related to repentance that results in forgiveness of sins. God said to Israel, "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like morning mist. Return to me I have redeemed you" (Is 44:22). There are many promises of God where he assures forgiveness. For the last two thousand years, forgiveness of sin is being preached all over the world, and

whoever has forgiven others has been receiving the forgiveness of sins in the name of Jesus. Forgive others, not because they deserve, but because your forgiveness is related to it.

**Give and it will be given to you. A good measure pressed down.....(Lk 6:38).**

Charity, a godly virtue, is indicative of thankfulness to God and kindness toward fellowmen, Cheerfully sharing good things with others please God (Heb 13:16). The Scripture teaches men, to take part in charity within their means toward the poor and needy. Charity is associated with blessings in return. The story of Elijah who stayed with a widow of Zarephath during famine teaches a lesson on charity. She offered the prophet a piece of bread out of the last bread she and her son were going to eat before they die. The reward in return was: 'The jar of flour which did not get used-up and the jug of oil that did not run-dry, in keeping with the word of God'(1Kg 17:7-16). Later, when her son died, he was raised to life. So, the measure God uses to return back is larger than the measure we use for others.

A poor lady gave just one penny

in charity but Jesus counted it to be the biggest offering of the day. Jesus used to warn people not to publicise the charity in order to receive appreciation from people; for there cannot be two reward, for one act. (Mt 6:1,3). Also we should give cheerfully and according to ability every week (2 Cor 9:7, 8:12, 1Cor16:1-3, Act11:29). Charity may be for poor, needy, contribution for specific service, or for leadership and preachers, one should take part cheerfully. A rich man came to Jesus and wanted eternal life but when told to sell his possessions and give it to poor he shrunk and left, though he was promised treasure in heaven (Mt 19:21-22). The Bible says, " If a man shuts his ears, to the cry of the poor, he too will cry out and not be answered" (Pr 21:13); Another proverb says, He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and he will reward him for what he has done" (Pr 19:17), Lord Jesus said, " Freely you have received freely you give" (Mt 10:8). Remember, no one has ever become poor by giving or helping others.

**Anyone who receives you receives me, and anyone. ....(Mt 10:40-42)**

Hospitality is practised in every country and culture. In Christian etiquette, it is a reflex action of love towards every visitor, where one does his best for them in terms of a welcome gesture, comfort, help, food or listening and resolving problems pragmatically. Jesus gave this rule particularly about messengers of Christ who may visit you with the Good News or to share a testimony or to prophecy and offer prayer for sick, etc. We should treat them as ambassadors of Christ. Accepting and welcoming a messenger is showing honour towards his master but rejecting them tantamount to rejecting his master. So, if we claim to love Jesus then receiving or rejecting them is directly related to God. Jesus performed his first miracle to defuse the hospitality crisis, by providing wine for the family guests invited for the wedding feast. Both Mary and Martha were good hosts and Jesus used to visit them to offer the word of wisdom to see them grow in faith. The women who poured the costly perfume at the feet of Jesus was to honour the chief guest as a part of hospitality, for the host has failed to give Jesus water to wash feet, which used to

be a common practice. Zacchaeus, the tax collector, welcomed Jesus to his house and it pleased Jesus when the host committed to give half of his possessions to the poor, and payback four times the money earned by cheating. Zacchaeus was rewarded immediately. Jesus said, "If anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose his reward" (Mt 10:42). Paul says, "Share with God's people who are in need. Practise hospitality" (Rom 12:13). Peter says, "Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling" (1Pet 4:9). Jesus also said "Here I am! I stand at the door and knock". It is for you to welcome; and receive him or keep the door closed. The reward is according to the way one receives him, may it be as a prophet, righteous man, for miraculous power or as Lord and Saviour. Receive him and you will be received in heaven, but if one denies him, he will deny that person before Father. The secret weapon for gospel advancement is hospitality for God's servants.


**Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's (Mt 22:21)**

Scripture teaches men to insulate while living in the world from worldliness but not to isolate from the world (1Cor 5:9-11). In the Christian way of life, there is no concept of renunciation (Sanyas), but believers are expected to be good husbands and father and to remain devoted to parents and family, sharing responsibilities, pains and happiness together. Excepting sin, there is nothing visible or invisible that does not belong to God (Hagg 2:8, Ps50:10-12). God wants us to give him the most beloved thing we possess, for he desires and deserves our first love and the first place in life. He judges our intentions not the worth of gold. People offered out of fear do offer gold and silver, but God wants our commitment to live a holy life. We are merely custodians of his garden (Gen 2:15), for some time. People often claim it is my house, my office, my land, my wealth etc.....but leave them all behind in world, for these were not our personal belongings. Whatever God gives man is to use and share with the needy, hungry, naked and helpless people (Mt 25:34-36). He has also commanded the fish, bird, animals and plants to obey

and they willingly share their best with man. Jesus wanted to teach Pharisees; Caesar's image on the coin claims his ownership, so, using them to pay tax is not idol worship. But the image of God is on every human being and we belong to God. He loves so Jesus died for us to save us from satan's hand, for man belongs to God and carries his image. Now, our bounded duty is to obey Gods golden rules, wholeheartedly and willingly, and be an honest custodian prayerfully. We who believe in His son Jesus Christ, belong to God. Talents are God given, so, use it in his service, Fame is man given, so, be humble and honest.



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# Worshipping our Covenant Keeping God

Dr. Shantanu Dutta

The term 'covenant' is infrequently used in daily discourse today. In my experience, it's primarily heard during sermons, and even then, it's not a common occurrence. However, the infrequent use of the word 'covenant' does not imply that covenants no longer exist. On the contrary, they play a crucial role in our lives, with most adults having entered into one or more covenants at various points in their lives.

So what exactly is a covenant? In its most basic sense, a covenant is a formal agreement or promise between two or more parties. This can be a legal contract, a marriage vow, or even a treaty between nations. The key element is that it's a binding agreement with clearly defined

obligations for each party. So, every time I accept a job offer and sign an appointment letter, I enter into a covenant with my employer and every time I sign a rent agreement, I enter into a covenant with my landlord.

Countries enter into covenants too. Many decades ago, after the creation of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan signed what came to be called the Simla Agreement which was to have governed future relationships between India and Pakistan. Similarly, in what has come to be known as the Good Friday Agreements, warring groups in Northern Ireland signed a pact to end violence in the province that had been going on for over three decades. There are also global covenants where all or most

countries sign up. The Geneva Convention outlines how wars will be declared, ended, and fought. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is another and there are numerous others.

Covenants of course have a long history. In the Bible, we remember Abraham, wandering in the desert, met by the promise of a vast and blessed lineage, etched in the covenant of circumcision. Moses, standing before the smoking mountain, receiving the Ten Commandments, a covenant of law and love that defined a relationship between God and the nascent nation. Noah, standing amid the wreckage of a flooded world, holding tight to the promise etched in a rainbow spanning the storm-racked sky. This covenant, not just with Noah, but with all living creatures, marked a turning point. It was a pledge of God's enduring love, a promise that never again would creation be utterly consumed by chaos. The rainbow, a vibrant arc against the dark clouds, became a symbol of hope, a reminder that even in the darkest times, God's faithfulness shines through. In the New Testament, we find the covenant with which we are most

familiar. Jesus, in the Upper Room, sharing the bread and the cup, a new covenant sealed in his blood.

Of course, in all these examples and various others, signing an agreement or a covenant and abiding by it is another thing. Some covenants hold better than others. The journey of the Israelites was fraught with moments of doubt and rebellion. They grumbled in the desert, worshipped false idols, and strayed from the path God had laid before them. But with each misstep, God's covenant proved its true strength. It wasn't a fragile contract, ready to crumble at the first sign of human fallibility. It was a woven tapestry, supple and strong, able to withstand the tears and tangles of our imperfections.

However, whether we humans keep our promises and covenants or not, God does and always has. The Bible is a testament to the unchanging character of God, and throughout its pages, we witness His faithfulness in keeping the covenant with His people. From the covenant with Adam in the garden to the covenant with Noah after the flood, and ultimately,



culminating in the new covenant through the blood of Jesus Christ, God has consistently shown Himself to be the Keeper of His promises. We have already talked about God's covenants with Abraham, Noah, and Moses.

As we progress through the Old Testament, we witness the covenant with David, where God promises an eternal kingdom through his lineage. In 2 Samuel 7:16, the Lord declares, "Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever." Despite the failures of the kings that followed, God remained faithful to His covenant, ultimately fulfilling it in the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of David. In the Davidic covenant, God promised an everlasting kingdom through the line of David. Jesus, often referred to as the Son of David, fulfils this promise by establishing an eternal kingdom, not of this world. In Revelation 22:16, Jesus declares, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David, the bright Morning Star." His reign transcends time and space, bringing about a kingdom that will endure for all eternity.

God's covenant-keeping nature is not limited to historical events

but extends to our lives today. In moments of doubt, despair, and uncertainty, we can find solace in the unchanging character of our Covenant Keeper. Hebrews 13:8 assures us that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." the person of Jesus Christ, the Covenant Keeper whose life, death, and resurrection embody the fulfillment of God's covenantal promises throughout history. In a world filled with uncertainties, we find solace in the unwavering commitment of Jesus to uphold the divine covenant between God and humanity.

Jesus' role as the Covenant Keeper is most evident in the establishment of the new covenant through His sacrificial death on the cross. In Luke 22:20, during the Last Supper, Jesus says, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you." Through His blood, Jesus inaugurated a covenant that offers forgiveness, redemption, and reconciliation with God to all who believe in Him. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to be people of our word, reflecting the character of our covenant-keeping God. How then should Christians keep covenants in their daily lives?

First and foremost, maintaining integrity is paramount in honouring covenants. Proverbs 10:9 tells us, "Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out." As Christians, our commitment to truthfulness and honesty is a direct reflection of the unchanging nature of our covenant-keeping God. Whether in personal relationships, business dealings, or commitments within the Church, let our words and actions align with the principles of truth.

Prayer plays a crucial role in covenant-keeping. By seeking God's guidance and strength, we acknowledge our dependence on Him to honour our commitments. Philippians 4:6-7 reminds us, "Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Through prayer, we invite God into our covenants, asking for His wisdom, grace, and perseverance.

Accountability within the Christian community is essential

for covenant-keeping. Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 emphasizes the strength found in unity, stating, "Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up." By surrounding ourselves with fellow believers who share our commitment to honouring covenants, we create a supportive environment that encourages accountability and growth.

Stewardship of time and resources is another aspect of covenant-keeping for Christians. Psalm 15:4 describes a righteous person as one "who keeps an oath even when it hurts and does not change their mind." This implies a sacrificial commitment to fulfil our promises, even when it requires personal sacrifice. By managing our time and resources wisely, we honour our commitments and demonstrate faithful stewardship.

Finally, an unwavering commitment to God's Word is foundational in keeping covenants. The Bible serves as our guide, providing principles and wisdom for navigating the complexities of life. Psalm

119:105 declares, "Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path." By aligning our actions with the teachings of Scripture, we ensure that our covenants are grounded in God's truth and righteousness.

Our God remains steadfast, faithful, and unwavering in His commitment to us. The notion of God as the covenant keeper is not merely a historical narrative, but a living reality that shapes individual lives and inspires communities to strive for love, justice, and hope. As Christians embrace this concept, they find strength, purpose, and direction

in their journey towards fulfilling the promises of the covenant and building a better world.



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# Covenant in Crimson: Spiritual Chemistry of Redemption

Rev. Dr. Samuel Richmond

In his book, "The New Covenant," Dr. Robert E. Coleman, my teacher at SAIACS, recounts a compelling story that he once heard about a boy who arrived at a mission hospital in Kenya with a gaping wound in his foot. The boy had been accidentally injured while cutting grass in the jungle. Part of his heel had been cut off. Without waiting to inform anyone about the mishap, the two boys embarked on a journey across the country to find the mission station where they had heard that medical help was available. Every time the boy's little foot touched the sandy ground, it left a faint trace of blood. The journey was long and difficult, but they eventually arrived at their destination. After some time, the boy's mother arrived as well. The

doctors were surprised that she had found her way, as there were no well-defined trails and she had never made the trip before. When asked how she did it, the dear woman, overjoyed to be with her child, replied, "Oh, it was easy. I just followed the blood!"

## ***Mystery of Blood***

Blood, the life-sustaining fluid that flows through the veins of humans and animals, serves as the essence of existence. Blood plays a crucial role in sustaining life within its complex network of vessels. It does more than just circulate nutrients and oxygen; it also performs various functions vital for maintaining the body's balance. One of the blood's primary roles is to transport vital

substances, such as nutrients and oxygen, to every cell and tissue in the body. Like a dynamic conveyor belt, blood ensures that essential elements reach their destinations, facilitating metabolic processes and cellular energy production.

In an average human being, blood circulates twice every minute. As the heart pumps blood through the network of arteries, capillaries, and veins, every cell in the body is continuously supplied and cleansed. No part of the body can survive without being in contact with this pulsating stream of life. Most adults have between five to seven quarts of blood, which is composed of plasma, corpuscles, and platelets. In every cubic millimeter of blood, about 5,500,000 living cells, which are the size of a pinhead, can be found. These cells have a lifespan of 110 to 120 days. To replace the cells that have completed their life cycle, the body produces approximately 2,000,000 new cells every second.

Lack of blood is a significant threat to life. I remember when my father's haemoglobin drastically

came down, his body became pale and we started looking for healthy donors so that nothing worse may happen. At last, by God's grace, he was healed. Hence, blood becomes an essential component in saving someone's life. Blood and life are often used interchangeably in the scripture, and for this reason, God commanded the Israelites not to use it for food. Life comes from God, so it is only natural that the blood be regarded with reverence. In Leviticus 19:26, God made clear to the people of Israel, saying, "Do not eat any meat with the blood still in it." The Council of Jerusalem maintained the prohibitions on consuming blood, meat containing blood, and meat of animals that were strangled, and from strangled animals, as well as engaging in fornication and idolatry (Acts 15:20, 29). Even today, orthodox Jews still will eat only Kosher meat, that is, meat which is without blood and has been slaughtered according to their custom.

### ***The Blood Covenant***

For Biblical writers, eternal life is much more important than life in this world. The scarlet thread is

beautifully seen running from Genesis to Revelation. In the book of Leviticus, once a year, the High Priest used to enter into the Most Holy Place with animal blood for the forgiveness of sins committed by the Israelites (Lev. 16:5ff.). Blood is used nine times in this chapter and thirteen times in chapter 17. Leviticus lays the groundwork for understanding blood covenant in the Old Testament sacrificial system. Leviticus emphasizes the role of the high priest in mediating between God and the people. The high priest is consecrated and performs rituals for the forgiveness of sins. The Old Testament sacrifices foreshadowed the perfect one to come – a setting forth before "the heavenly things." The animal blood after the sacrifice was used to sanctify those who were outwardly unclean, but had no power to cleanse their consciousness. In the Tabernacle's Holy of Holies, the light of God's glory was present between the cherubim, indicating that God was among the people of Israel. The mercy seat served as the designated place where God would meet once a year to accept the blood of the atonement sacrifice. The blood of

atonement was sprinkled there, not as a means of appeasement, for God does not require appeasement. He is merciful, compassionate, and full of lovingkindness. However, He does require an atonement to not hold mankind guilty. When the blood was sprinkled, it brought satisfaction. It covered sin and served as the offering for sin.

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ, our great High Priest, enters into the Most Holy Place with His sacrificial blood, once for all, to give eternal redemption to all humankind. In the Garden of Eden, God gave His breath [His life] to Adam but due to Adam's sin and the death resulting from sin, we all were alienated from God. We lost all our inheritance in the Garden of Eden, but to give us eternal life, God gave His precious blood [His life] on the cross of Calvary. Therefore, before Christ came to the earth, man suffered two great losses: first, he suffered because of Adam's sin, and second, he suffered because he could not keep God's law. Praise the Lord! The blood of Lord Jesus Christ has solved these two problems forever. The blood of the Lord Jesus not only reconciles us to

God (Colossians. 1:20), but also brings God Himself to us (Romans. 8:32) and "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22).

### ***The Redeeming Blood***

A convict suffering from a terrible disease in the Arizona State Prison at Florence received a New Testament from a prison worker during a visit. As he began to read it, he was overwhelmed with a sense of guilt and shame. In a fit of anger, he threw the book across his cell. To his surprise, the Book opened up to the First Epistle of John, and his eyes were immediately drawn to a verse highlighted in red. Bending down to read it, he discovered these powerful words: "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." This message touched him deeply, and he humbly fell to his knees, crying out to God for forgiveness, healing, and cleansing. From that moment on, he experienced a profound transformation as a new person in Christ Jesus. Inspired by his newfound faith, he established a Bible class within the prison to share the message of hope with his fellow convicts. Over time, his dedication and

changed life led to an unconditional pardon from the Governor of Arizona. While the governor's pardon granted him freedom from the physical prison, the pardon he received from the Lord brought him true purity of spirit, soul, and body. He also brought many others into the Kingdom through his testimony and ministry.

The blood of Christ is of infinite value; its power is sufficient to cleanse all the sins of all the people and also purify us from the guilt of sins. Of course, its power applies only to those who come to Him by faith. But its cleansing potential is unlimited. The Blood of Christ represents God's holy and sacrificial love for the whole world. When we drink it, we receive eternal life; when covered with it, we are protected; when we accept it by faith, we are cleansed and redeemed. The blood helps us to be part of the New Covenant, which is an everlasting one through which we are made perfect to do God's will. Jesus said in Matthew 26:28, "for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins." Christians should believe that we have overcome the world by the blood of the Lamb and this blood



gives the confidence to enter into the Most Holy Place. Andrew Murray says, 'where the holy blood of the Lamb is sprinkled, there God dwells, and Satan is put to flight.'

### ***Sundar Singh's Experience***

Several years ago, Sadhu Sundar Singh traveled to Bhutan in the Himalayas to speak to the people about Jesus Christ. He emphasized that salvation depended on Christ's death and the sacrifice He made for everyone. Many doubted the idea that one person's death could save many. However, there was one young man who stood out. He confidently declared, "No, it is both possible and true. I can say this because I have experienced it myself." Initially, Sundar Singh assumed that the young man was a Christian, but it turned out he knew nothing about Christ. Intrigued by his experience, Sundar Singh asked him to share his story.

"Three months ago, I was traveling in the mountains when suddenly I fell down the mountainside. I was severely injured and almost bled to death. My father carried me to a doctor

who, after a careful examination, declared that he could do nothing for me. The doctor said, 'If his bones were broken, I could help him. If he had an illness, I could give him medicine. But he has lost his blood. The life of the body is in the blood. If we lose our blood, we lose our life. I cannot give the patient any blood, so I cannot help him.' When my father asked if there was nothing that could be done, the doctor finally said, 'Yes, if there were someone who was willing to give his blood, or a portion of it, I could save him.' Without any hesitation, my father, who loved me deeply, offered to do this. A vein was opened, and my father's blood flowed into my body. However, because my father was old, the procedure proved too much for his strength, and he died. But I was saved. So,' said the young man, concluding his story, 'my father died for me. He loved me so immensely that he gave his life for me.' At this point, Sundar Singh explained to him the significance of Christ's death based on this experience:

*"Just as you fell from the mountain and lost your blood due to your injuries, we have fallen from communion with God because of our sins, losing our*

*true spiritual life. But Christ died for us on the Cross, pouring out His blood for us, whose souls, condemned and dying, were precious to Him. Those who believe in Him know from their own experience that Christ came into the world to save sinners."*

### ***The New Covenant***

A covenant is a powerful agreement that includes promises between individuals or groups and holds significant meaning in various cultural and religious contexts. The Hebrew origin of the term, meaning "betweenness," highlights its foundation in relationships. Human covenants, often seen as treaties, are agreements between equals or between a superior and an inferior. On the other hand, divine covenants, which are a prevalent theme in biblical theology, consistently take the latter form. This theological concept is vital in understanding the relationship between God and His people, as seen in the widely recognized divisions of Christian Scripture: the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, traditionally referred to as the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The New Covenant is a significant agreement between God and humanity, which originated from the transformative events of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection. It is a groundbreaking concept that stems from Jeremiah's prophetic insights, foreseeing a divine accomplishment that addresses the shortcomings of the old covenant (Jer. 31:31–34). In this new covenant, God intends to write His Law directly on human hearts instead of on stone tablets, bringing about a paradigm shift in obedience, knowledge of the Lord, and forgiveness of sins. The New Testament, appropriately named the "new covenant," interprets Jesus Christ's life-altering work as the fulfilment of the promised covenant (Luke 22:20). During the Last Supper, Jesus, while sharing bread with His disciples, refers to the symbolic cup as representing "the new covenant in My blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). The Epistle to the Hebrews extensively quotes Jeremiah's prophecy, emphasizing Jesus as the central figure and Mediator of this transformative covenant (Heb. 8:8–12; 9:15; 12:24).

Hebrews highlights the

unparalleled nature of the new covenant, calling it a "better covenant" grounded in superior promises (Heb. 8:6). The foundation of this covenant is directly built on the sacrificial work of Christ, as explained in the epistle. Unlike its predecessor, the new covenant accomplishes a profound removal of sin and cleansing of the conscience (Jer. 31:34; Heb. 10:2, 22). The crucifixion of Jesus, symbolized in the cup of the Last Supper, renders the old covenant "obsolete," fulfilling Jeremiah's prophetic promise in a way that surpasses the limitations of the former agreement (Heb. 8:13). The transformative impact of the new covenant stands as a testament to the redemptive power of Christ, offering humanity a pathway to reconciliation and everlasting grace.

### ***Spirit and Blood***

In the book "The Blood of Christ" by Andrew Murray, there is a passage from the First Epistle of John that states, "there are three that testify: the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and the three are in agreement." The mention of water represents baptism for

repentance and the abandonment of sin, while the blood symbolizes redemption in Christ. In this context, the Spirit is the empowering force behind both the water and the blood. This connection between the Spirit and the blood is also emphasized in Hebrews 9:14 in the same book, where it says, "How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!" The lasting value and effectiveness of Christ's blood are attributed to the eternal Spirit actively working in Him.

Consistently, it is through the Spirit that the blood obtains its vital potency, both in the heavenly realms and within individuals' hearts. The Spirit and the blood always bear witness together. Whenever faith or preaching emphasizes the significance of the blood, the Spirit is actively at work. Conversely, wherever the Spirit is at work, He guides souls to acknowledge the blood. It is important to note that the manifestation of the Holy Spirit awaited the shedding of the blood, highlighting the

inseparable connection between the Spirit and the blood. It is crucial to recognize that in order for the full power of the blood to manifest in our souls, we must submit ourselves to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Firm belief in His presence within us, actively working in our hearts, is necessary. By living in the awareness that the Spirit of God dwells within us as a seed of life, we can trust Him to bring forth the profound effects of the blood to completion. Allowing Him to lead, the blood, through the Spirit, will purify, sanctify, and unite us with God. When the apostle sought to inspire believers to heed God's call to holiness, citing "Be holy, for I am holy," he reminded them of their redemption through the precious blood of Christ.

### ***The Power of Blood***

Several years ago, devout Christian political leaders went for an evening walk. As they strolled, they began discussing religion and the current state of the world. Their conversation lacked enthusiasm as they were about to conclude that the entire world was in decline. However, their gloomy thoughts were interrupted when they happened

to pass by a small chapel. From within came the words of a familiar hymn:

*"There is a fountain filled with blood  
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;  
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains."*

As his face lighted up, one said to the others, "As long as people get together and sing that song, there is hope for the world, after all."

The blood of Christ carries profound significance for both the Church and God's mission. It symbolizes the fundamental principles of Christian theology, representing the sacrificial atonement for the sins of humanity. Through Christ's blood, believers are granted redemption, forgiveness, and reconciliation with God, forming the bedrock of their faith. Within the context of the Church, the blood of Christ serves as a unifying force, fostering a spiritual connection among believers. It signifies their shared identity as redeemed individuals and members of the body of Christ. The sacrament of communion, where Christians

partake in the symbolic representation of Christ's body and blood, strengthens this unity and serves as a reminder of the ultimate sacrifice. Encapsulated in the Great Commission, God's mission centers around spreading the message of salvation through Christ. The blood of Christ becomes the focal point of this mission, offering individuals a pathway to experience spiritual transformation. Empowered by the significance of Christ's blood, the Church becomes a vessel for sharing this life-changing message with the world. Dr. Robert G. Lee tells of an unforgettable experience he had the first time he visited Calvary on a tour of Israel. His excitement was such that he soon outdistanced his guide in climbing the hill. As he reached the summit and stood there at the very place where his Lord poured out His blood, the great preacher's emotions were so stirred that his body started to tremble. When the breathless guide finally caught up with him, he asked, "Sir, have you been here before?" For a moment, there was a throbbing silence. Then, in a whispered tone, Dr.

Lee replied, "Yes, I was here nearly two thousand years ago." Beloved, we were all there nearly two thousand years ago. Jesus died in our place. As our Representative, He suffered for us, "the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). To summarize, the blood of Christ not only acts as the source of salvation for believers but also serves as the driving force behind the Church's mission to proclaim the Gospel and bring others into a transformative relationship with God.



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**2 FRIDAY** Pray for Adonai Ministries in Karnataka. Pray that God would bless them and continue to use them.

**3 SATURDAY** Pray for the youth of our nation that God would give them wisdom and discernment to choose right path in life. May God reveal Himself to them and through them.

**4 SUNDAY** Continue to pray for persecuted believers. Pray that their suffering would produce Christlike characters that would glorify God. Pray for nearness of God and His guidance as they go through this difficult situation.

**5 MONDAY** Pray for religious freedom in our country. Pray that

every individual would be able to freely practice and propagate their choice of religion. Pray that minorities' rights would be protected and that every individual would have the opportunity to pursue and share their faith without fear.

**6 TUESDAY** Pray for students who are preparing for their board exams. Pray that the Lord would protect them, encourage them, and strengthen them as they prepare and write their exams.

**7 WEDNESDAY** Pray for Punjab Mobile Bible Training that is scheduled in different parts of Punjab this month. Pray for God's provision and protection.

**8 THURSDAY** Pray for God would enable you to accomplish much by His sustaining grace and mercies that are new every morning.

**9 FRIDAY** Pray for Nagaland Bible College in Mokokchung, Nagaland.



Pray that the Lord would provide all their needs and raise many servants of God to serve His kingdom.

**10 SATURDAY** Pray that our relationship with the Lord will grow deeper than ever. Also pray that we may love the Lord our God with all our hearts, minds, and strength.

**11 SUNDAY** Pray that all the churches in India would take measures to make the study of God's Word essential. Pray that God's word would enlighten and empower every believer.

**12 MONDAY** Pray for Berachah Prophetic Ministries in Tamil Nadu. Pray that God would use them to transform many lives.

**13 TUESDAY** Continue to pray for all the political leaders in our country to rule with truth and justice.

**14 WEDNESDAY** Pray for the unemployment problem in our country that the government would find means and ways to create job opportunities.

**15 THURSDAY** Pray for those who are in jail because of their faith in Christ. Pray for strength and endurance. Pray that the Lord would open a way for their release and that

they may courageously continue their work.

**16 FRIDAY** Pray for the people of India that they would respect, value, and pursue unity in diversity. Pray that people from different ethnic backgrounds would cohabitate peacefully and harmoniously.

**17 SATURDAY** Pray for Christian parents in your circle that they may pass on their Christian beliefs and values to their children.

**18 SUNDAY** Pray for strength, endurance, and healing for those going through various medical treatments. Pray that Jesus would touch them and heal them. Pray that their faith in Jesus would growth through this experience.

**19 MONDAY** Continue to pray for the ministry of EFI. Pray for all the staff in different parts of the country to be used by God as they carry out their responsibilities. Pray also for the finances of EFI that God's works may not be hindered.

**20 TUESDAY** Continue to pray for all the EFI group members, individual members, and life members today. Pray that their vibrant spiritual life would shine forth God's light to the world.

**21 WEDNESDAY** Pray for the CEEFI department. Pray that the biblical literatures produced by them would bless and impact many children and guide their path as they take their little steps of faith.

**22 THURSDAY** Pray for Stations of Generosity workshop which is starting today. Pray that God would move the participant's hearts to learn how to give generously for the extension of God's kingdom.

**23 FRIDAY** Pray for the Sunday School ministries in your church. Pray that children would receive Christ at a tender age and be faithful followers.

**24 SATURDAY** Pray for ministries who are spreading the Gospel through social media. Pray that God would give wisdom and fresh ideas to reach the unreached through them.

**25 SUNDAY** Pray for yourself that

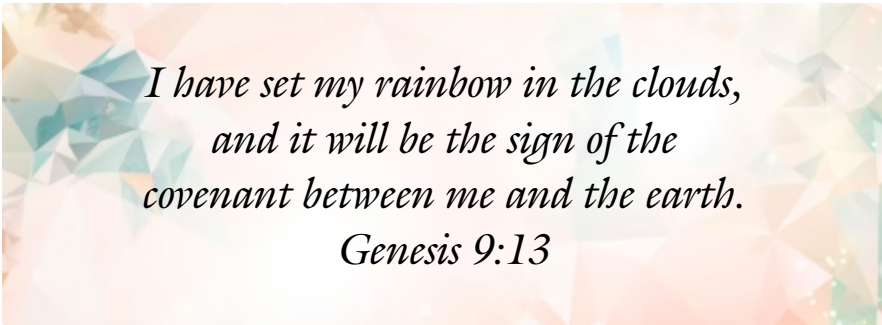
the Lord would place you in a position that you would offer God's gifts of love, hope, truth, unity, and grace to others.

**26 MONDAY** Pray for all the missionaries serving God in India and abroad. Pray that they may not be discouraged but be strengthened and rejuvenated daily by the power of God's Word.

**27 TUESDAY** Pray for women ministries in your church. Pray that women would draw strength and encouragement from one another and be a blessing to their families.

**28 WEDNESDAY** Pray for all the leaders and elders of the church that they would make wise decisions and lead the congregation by example.

**29 THURSDAY** Thank God for enabling you to see the last day of this month. Pray that the Lord would lead you as you enter the new month.



*I have set my rainbow in the clouds,  
and it will be the sign of the  
covenant between me and the earth.*

*Genesis 9:13*



# MOUNT CARMEL SCHOOLS

[www.mountcarmelschool.com](http://www.mountcarmelschool.com)

A-21, Anand Niketan, New Delhi-110021, Tel. 011-49340000

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Sector-115, Gurugram, Haryana-122017, Mob.9311663972

## We require the following trained staff for the session starting April, 2024:

- **VICE PRINCIPAL - Pastoral Care**

Candidate must be a born again Christian, M.A (any discipline) preferably a B.Ed, degree/diploma in Theology, tech savvy, proficient in Computer, Social media/multimedia, with good communication skills and command in spoken & written English, experienced in leading Church Worship and with a minimum of three years' experience in dealing with children.

- **TGT - English, Chemistry, Physics, Arts / Fine Arts**
- **ASSISTANT TEACHERS - English, Mathematics, Science**
- **PRIMARY TEACHER**
- **SPECIAL EDUCATOR (FEMALE)** with RCI Certification
- **VALUE EDUCATION TEACHER - Must be a Committed Christian**
- **FRENCH TEACHER (Part Time)**
- **DANCE TEACHER**
- **MUSIC TEACHER** with Specialization in Indian Solo Instrument
- **ATL LAB INSTRUCTOR**
- **NURSE (FEMALE)**

Apply to the Principal within a week, clearly stating the post and branch applying for on the above address or email:

[joinus@mountcarmelschool.com](mailto:joinus@mountcarmelschool.com)

[Must be proficient in English, IT savvy and with at least three years' experience]  
Dean

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## The Season of Lent



**PRAY**



**FAST**



**GIVE**

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