

Hebron Messenger

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NO 1

A YEAR OF GRACE

This parable was spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ:

"A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down" (Luke 13:6-9) .

The tree in the above parable did not bring forth any fruit for three years. So the owner of the vineyard asked the gardener to cut it down. But the gardener pleaded with the owner to give it one more year; and if it did not bring forth fruit this year also, he would do as he said and cut it down.

In the Word of God men are compared to trees. God wants us to bring forth fruit, the fruit of repentance (Matthew 3:8). If a man repents, he will accept his faults and ask forgiveness, not only from God, but also from those whom he offended; he will have great sorrow for his sins which he has committed, and great longing to follow the Lord Jesus, and be like Him in every way, that is, holy, humble and loving as He is. But many people never want to look at themselves to examine themselves, so they do not feel the sorrow of repentance. The Lord Jesus says to all men, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3).

Have you repented of your sins? Perhaps God has given you many opportunities to think how many times you have disobeyed God, neglected the reading of His holy Word, and walked in ungodly ways; how many times you have uttered falsehood for monetary gain, or have been a partner in some shady affair for your personal satisfaction. Perhaps you were not willing to search your own heart and see how far away you have drifted from the holy path God has ordained for His children. This year, God is giving you one more chance to examine your heart, with true sincerity, so that you may truly repent.

A young lad appeared for his exams twice, and failed. Candidates for this exam were not allowed to appear more than three times. He knew this was his last chance, and he worked very hard. For you the issues are far greater. Eternal joy or eternal punishment is the choice before you. If this year is bringing you the last chance of salvation and everlasting blessedness, how particular you must be not to let it go carelessly.

The gardener said, "Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it" (Luke 13:8). He wanted to give special attention to the tree now, to help the tree to bring forth fruit at least this year. How great is the love of God! Before condemning a man or woman, God gives him or her every chance to consider and repent and come to Him for

salvation. So perhaps God is giving you special opportunities this year to humble yourself, to think of all your sins, and repent with true sorrow for them all. Will you not remember that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23)? This death is the second death of Rev. 21: 8, that is, punishment in the lake of fire. Will you not consider how the Savior suffered and bled and died for you? How great is His Calvary love, which made Him to leave His throne of glory and die a shameful death upon the cross! He died in your place; He endured your punishment; He became the sacrifice for your sins. May the Holy Spirit melt your heart and give you not only sorrow for your sins but also love and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The gardener asked for one more year. The Lord Jesus, the Son of God, is pleading one more year for you also, because He loves you, and is not willing that you should go into everlasting punishment. Having obtained one more year of grace for you, He is sending His messengers and His servants to plead with you to repent; He is speaking to you through the printed page and through radio Gospel messages. Will you allow all this to go in vain? Do not harden your heart. May God help you to repent right now.

God has given you anew year. It is possible this year brings you the last chance to repent. Many who lived last year, both young and old, have not entered into this year. Life is uncertain; death may come suddenly; do not play with your time. Is it true that one more harvest is past, and one more summer or winter is ended, and you are not yet saved (Jeremiah 8:20)? How long will you delay?

The Lord Jesus is willing to receive you right now. Come just as you are. Come with repentance and faith... He will forgive and cleanse you.

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1: 7).

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1: 18).

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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December 22, 2005

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

May His Name, even the Name of our exalted Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, be continued to be praised and adored by His own, purchased by His precious blood from every nation, tongue and kindred. As His flock, having been shepherded and sustained by Him safe and sound to the closing days of the year 2005, let us render glory and honor and praise unto Him, Who is the same yesterday, to day and forever, King eternal, immortal and invisible. As seeing Him Who is invisible, and Who abideth faithful, may we be granted grace to endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory (Acts 20:28; Heb.13:8; 2 Tim. 2:9,10).

As year succeeds year in the path of our pilgrimage, it is good to fasten our eyes upon Him Who is the Eternal One, Whose years have no end. He is the God of all grace Who

hath called us unto His eternal glory as we read in 1 Pet. 5: 10. "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you". With this earnest desire and longing for afresh glimpse of 'Eternal Glory', we may humbly pray like Moses, "I beseech thee... shew me thy glory" (Exo.33:18) from the beginning of the New Year. Hence we may profitably consider the vision, revelation and communication, Apostle John recorded while in exile in the isle of Patmos. Incidentally the first Motto Text for the New Year is taken from Rev. 1: 18, "... Behold, I am alive for evermore".

The Apostle John had been banished to Patmos, "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ". It seemed that his work for the Master was ended. But in the plan of the Omnipotent Sovereign Lord, it turned out to be a greater and wider service than he had ever dreamed of, and more far reaching in its effects than any previous part of his life. On the lonely isle, cut off from all intercourse with other children of God, the Lord appeared to him as the Glorified One, enthroned on the right hand of the Majesty on High, choosing him to be the channel for transmitting to His people, a direct revelation of His heart and will concerning them. He gave him a wondrous unveiling of history, the destiny of the Church of the redeemed, including the concluding scenes, which should wind up the dealing of God with this planet earth and usher in the glorious reign of the Son of God upon it.

It is written that the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) is the Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His servants the things which must shortly come to pass (Rev. 1: 1). But He must find a human channel to convey it unto His people. So it was for this purpose that the Lord transferred His chosen vessel to the lonely isle, as a result of the persecution He Himself had permitted the devil to arouse. He would be free there to receive the message from on high, away from the claims and demands of active service. Untoward circumstances can only come to the redeemed of the Lord so far as they are necessary for the fulfillment of His plans.

The Apostle is "in the Spirit on the Lord's day" and suddenly hears a great voice saying, "What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches". He turns to see who it is that speaks to him. Then and there breaks upon His spiritual vision a wonderful revelation of Him Whom he had known on the earth as the Man Christ Jesus. He was the very One he had seen hanging upon a cross of shame, despised and rejected of men; the One with Whom he had talked after His resurrection; even the very same Jesus he had seen passed into the clouds of heaven. John sees Him "in the midst of the lamp stands" which are explained later on to be the seven churches. (Rev. 1: 20). He is seen to be walking in the midst, walking as He walked in the temple at Jerusalem, first a silent onlooker, and then a cleaner of all that defiled His Father's House. It was thus written of Him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up" (John 2:17).

The Glorified Lord was clothed in garments denoting His High Priesthood within the veil, whither He went with His own blood as a forerunner for us, having become a High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek, and where He ever liveth to make intercession for all who draw nigh to God through Him. The golden girdle He wears denotes the investiture of the Highest order, rank and power. His head and hair are white as wool, signifying purity rather than age. It is remarkable that the same characteristic of hair like pure wool was seen by Daniel when he saw the vision, of the One Who sat upon the Throne of fiery flames when judgment was set and the books were opened. " glorify thou me with THINE OWN self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was", so prayed the God- an on the eve of His cross and passion. The Father and the Son are one. The Ancient of days, and the Christ Who appeared to John, with head and hair as white as wool are one, blessed for evermore.

The Apostle says that "his eyes were as a flame of fire", all- searching and all consuming and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace. Fire is His very essence of

being, fire of love towards perishing sinners, fire of wrath upon sin; fire which consumes and melts and burns all that is not of its own nature, so as to transform all that it touches into His own element. The Man on the Throne had as it were "the appearance of fire" when Ezekiel saw Him, and the Man Who appeared to Daniel had eyes as "lamps of fire", as our God is a consuming fire.

His voice as the voice of many waters is always sweet to His Bride but terrible to those who do not know Him. "1... out of his mouth went a sharp two edged sword", for His mouth gives forth words which are "living and active and sharper than a two edged sword". It pierces even to the dividing of the soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and is quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. Yes, His Word acts as a sacrificial knife in all who yield to Him and are laid upon the altar of His cross in fellowship with Him, to be consumed by the heavenly fire -a whole burnt offering to God. The Lord write His Word upon our hearts and prepare and propel us in the path of His glory.

Thank you for your prayers for the Kalimpong Convocation in the premises of the church at 61- Shaddai. Already about three thousand have registered to be accommodated here, drawn from various parts of Darjeeling District besides Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nagaland and Assam, besides those from the South. This is the fourth day and many more are expected. God's servants Bros. Lazar Sen, T.E. Koshy, J.C. Rao and myself are sharing the ministry of the Word based on the theme, "Behold, I am the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" (Jer. 32:27). This first and foremost refers to the return of Israel from Babylonian captivity, as foretold through the prophecy of Jeremiah after 70 years (Jer. 29: 11- 13) and fulfilled by the wisdom and power of Jehovah, overthrowing kingdoms ruling the gentile world. Separate gatherings for sisters, children and young men are also held, while the older brothers go for street preaching as usual. Hundreds have given names for prayer, for salvation, as well as restoration and renewal of their lives and families. With the new songs in Nepali and Hindi, besides the prayers of the saints, a good spirit of gladness and godliness is prevailing in the gatherings, besides a sacrificial spirit of service to cater to so many. Brothers and sisters are systematically attending to the various departments of food and accommodation, sanitation etc. Do pray for the ministry of the Word yet to be accomplished till Sunday the 25th, and procession as usual on Friday besides baptisms on Saturday.

Praying that the Lord may prepare all of us for fulfilling all things, personal, family wise and in the fellowship of the church, according to the good pleasure of His will in Christ Jesus our Lord and for His eternal glory ,

Eph 1:16-20, I Peter 4:13-17, Romans 6:4,5,22.

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K.Phillip.

WATCH

BAKHT SINGH

Asa and Jehoshaphat were two kings of Judah who experienced much blessing from God, but the history of their reigns contains a solemn warning for all God's people today also. The greater the longing we have for spiritual growth and the more we are blessed by God and used in His service, the more we shall become the object of the attacks of Satan. We must learn to be very watchful indeed if we wish to overcome the enemy and live in the

victory of Christ.

Let us consider the reign of king Asa. He began his reign with God's full approval and he "did that which was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God: For he took away the altars of the strange gods, and the high places, and brake down the images, and cut down the groves: And commanded Judah to seek the LORD God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and images: and the kingdom was quiet before him" (2 Chronicles 14:2-5). In those days Israel as a nation had begun to worship other gods. They bowed down before trees and idols. There was great spiritual darkness over the land. But king Asa set his heart to obey God and His word. He utterly destroyed all altars, high places, images and groves. He built fenced cities in Judah (v.6). W- read that "... they built and prospered" (v.7). God was with king Asa; and He blessed and prospered him. Thus we see that as long as we obey God fully and honor Him in everything, we can claim His promises and He will manifest His power on our behalf.

Soon after this the Ethiopians came out against Israel with hundreds of chariots and thousands of soldiers. But Asa was not afraid; he believed God would help him. King Asa prayed to God and the result was that God gave him a great victory. The Ethiopians were overthrown and Israel carried away much spoil (vs. 10-13). This shows that as long as we honor God's Word and obey Him, He will surely deliver us from our strongest enemies. Even if they come upon us unexpectedly like a flood, we need not be afraid. The Lord will sustain us in every trial and carry us to triumph in every battle.

As long as Asa was obedient God sent His prophets, such as Azariah, to lead, guide and encourage him. Azariah said to him; "Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak: for your work shall be rewarded" (2 Chronicles 15:7). Thus God will send His servants to us also to encourage, exhort and warn us. We stand very much in need of this kind of ministry, because the enemy is always watching for a chance to deceive us by his subtle tricks and wicked devices. Asa took courage through the words of the prophet Azariah and put away all abominable idols out of the land (v.8). We also must accept God's word when He sends it to us through His servants and resolutely put away every questionable thing out of our lives.

Asa even had to take a strong stand against his own mother Maachah, because she had made an idol in a grove. He boldly removed her from being queen, cut down her idol, stamped upon it and burnt it (v.16). Sin has entered into many homes through fathers, mothers, husbands, wives and sometimes even through the children. In many cases the whole family has ultimately been ruined. There will be occasions when you will have to take a strong stand for God's Word in the face of opposition from dear ones. Because of natural affection many people tend to condone the sins of loved ones instead of urging them to repent, confess their sin and put it away. If we like Asa take a strong stand against sin even in our loved ones, God will surely help us to bring them to the experience of salvation.

Although Asa accomplished all this, we notice that he did fail in just one thing; he did not remove some of the high places in the land, and people continued to sacrifice to other gods upon those high places (2 Chronicles 15: 17; 1 Kings 15:14). In India even till today, you will find on almost every high hill and under every green tree, that people have built either a temple or a mosque. Likewise, wherever the Roman Catholics see a high place, they like to build a shrine and put a statue in it. In the same way the children of Israel had built their shrines on high places all over the land. This showed their disobedience, blindness and stubbornness. King Asa allowed some of these high places to remain. This seemingly unimportant detail weakened his faith and brought about his downfall.

The result of this weakness in king Asa's faith became evident very soon. Baasha king of

Israel came to fight against Juda. King Asa turned to the king of Assyria for help instead of trusting in God (2 Chron. 16:1-6). Although by this means Asa succeeded in defeating Israel1_he brought upon himself the displeasure and judgment of God.

It was at this time that the words of 2 Chronicles 16:9 were spoken by God through the prophet Hanani : "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him ". In these words we have a promise, which brings us much comfort, inspiration and strength. As long as we continue to put our trust in God, and seek to honor and obey Him implicitly, His eyes will run to and fro throughout the whole earth on our behalf; and no matter what our danger, need, problem or temptation, He will cast down our enemies, meet every need, solve every problem and give us victory over every temptation.

Because king Asa had failed in a small matter of obedience and faithfulness, the Lord was not able to fulfill this promise for him and in the second part of the same verse the Lord had to tell him., "Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars". In this we have a warning for ourselves, that if we fail as Asa failed, we also will forfeit the promise of God.

Sometimes when people fail to get a promotion in their job, they are persuaded by their friends to give bribes in order to secure it. They argue, "We prayed to God and waited long enough, but He did not answer our prayers; so we were compelled to use the usual method". They succeed in getting the promotion, which they longed for, but they lose their faith in God. As a result, they end their lives like Asa without peace or joy:

Thus although king Asa began his life well, with faith in God, he ended it in misery. What a great lesson this is to us all! You too, might have begun your spiritual life well. But now, because of your trials, perhaps you are being tempted to give bribes or submit a false statement. If that is so, you would do well to take a warning from the life of king Asa.

A Christian lady doctor known to me had an income of As. 40,000 a year through her practice. Her friends advised her to declare a lesser figure of As. 25,000, because if she gave the correct figure, the Government officers would still say that, like most others, she also had given a false figure, and was actually getting much more. She came to me for advice. I told her that she was a Christian and so should never tell a lie but should give the correct figure even though the officials might harass her, saying she must be getting much more than that. In the end, the Lord would honor her.

(To be contd.)

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NO 2

"SECRETS OF GUIDANCE"

An amazing fact is that while the Bible is full of promises of the way in which the Lord will guide His people, yet guidance seems one of the most puzzling topics to many professing Christians. One reason for this may be that most of us have grown used to a sub-scriptural level of Christian experience. A great deal of so-called "doctrine" is basically an attempt to explain away the glorious promises of God, and try to make them fit in with our own meager experience of Him.

Just as we need to make a personal commitment to accept the Lord Jesus as our own personal Savior, so we need to make a deeper commitment to accept Him as our own personal Guide. When Jesus called the disciples to follow Him, "they arose, left all, and followed him" (Luke 5:11,28). And the Lord Himself said, "whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33). May be the trouble with many of us is that we really do not want to follow Christ as His disciples, but we merely desire good advice from Him when we reach perplexing spots on life's highway.

Try to imagine a tourist engaging a guide to conduct him through some dangerous and intricate mountain pass. "Now listen:" he instructs his guide, "I don't want you interfering with my free will at every corner of the road. I want to be free to use my own judgment most of the time and go the way that I think is best and easiest. But when we come to a dangerous place, will call on you for help." Would a guide take such a one as his charge? Suppose he did. After many self-satisfied and foolish choosing of his own path, the tourist at last finds himself facing an impassable barrier and asks, "Which way do we go from here?" "Oh", the guide replies, "You will have to go back five miles to the place where you foolishly took the wrong turn. There is no way through from here!" Or the tourist could blithely slither down some steep slope into a pleasant valley with no outlet, and find it impossible to climb back up the slope by which he descended, because there is no way to return!

The only way we can successfully know guidance is to accept the promise, "the Lord shall guide thee continually" (Isa.58:11). Unless we are willing to put everything into His nail-pierced hands, and are willing to follow every commandment of the Word and every impression of His Spirit, we have no right to expect Him to take us on as His disciples and lead us through the deceitful and dangerous pathway from time to eternity. "Full surrender" means full surrender to the guidance of the Holy Spirit all the time.

Much of our guidance should of course come to us through the Bible. Here we get so many plain commands, and clear principles of life, that we shall not need any special inner guidance when our directions are already written for us. Also we shall strongly suspect anything that claims to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit if it conflicts with the Word of God. Sometimes too, the Lord will impress strongly upon us some text from His

Word, which so fully answers the problem before us that we see this text as His voice speaking to us.

Guidance usually comes to us through the sense of "I ought or "I ought not" to do so and so. In other words, the life of guidance includes doing everything I ought to do and refraining from everything I ought not. This is so simple and basic, and yet most of us have reconciled ourselves to the idea that we shall always be doing what we ought not, and failing to do what we ought. But a moment's thought will show us how ridiculous is this idea. If we are not willing to follow our inner Guide in the little things, how can we expect Him to instruct us in the big things? It is when we are in the place reached by obedience in little things that we receive the guidance for the big things. If we consistently choke off the voice of the Holy Spirit when He speaks about little things, we will spoil the fine edge of our sensitiveness to His voice and become spiritually deaf.

All this calls for a deeper repentance in our life. So often we take repentance to mean that we cease from gross sins. But the root of repentance is that I stop doing those things that I like. Many of us have never truly repented at all. We want to get to heaven when we die, but we want to live all our time on earth pleasing ourselves. In regard to gross sins, we may have refrained from them because of our pride (disguised as "self - respect"), instead of from love for God. So many who are asking for the secret of guidance, may have to begin by true repentance and the new birth.

Many ask, "How can I know which impressions come to me from the Holy Spirit and which from the devil or some deceiving spirit?" This has to be learned by experience.

"Jesus is our Shepherd, Well we know His voice;

How its gentlest whisper, Makes our hearts rejoice".

This is part of the secret. When the Lord speaks, there is joy in hearing His voice. Though we may be fearful of the path He sets before us, yet we recognize the love in the One directing. Often, too, we find He is positive in His directions: "This is the way, walk ye in it". But the devil's impressions are hard, demanding, fear-inspiring, and are often merely negative: "Thou shalt not surely die."

Then again, Satan often appeals to our own pride, ambition, covetousness: "If you do this you will be recognized as a success. You will be popular; you will gain riches". But the Lord Jesus calls us to go the way of the cross, the way of self-sacrifice, personal loss, suffering, and rejection "outside the camp" for His sake.

One of the modern heresies that seems unrecognized even in the midst of the evangelical church is to ignore the fact that the Lord has chosen the way of the cross, not only for Himself, but for His people too. "Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"(Jas.2: 5).

A good guide can keep his followers from going wrong. For fear of making a mistake in guidance, many make the biggest mistake of all by shuffling along, following others and not the Lord Who alone can lead them right.

Should you feel the Lord is impressing on you to follow a certain course, take some tentative steps in that direction, but do not commit yourself at the start. As you go step by step, the way shall open up before you. But if at some point you feel a strong check in your spirit, you will recognize this as a danger signal and stop for more guidance from Him. It is often much better to take some exploratory step forward after prayer, than to sit still and do nothing. A ship in motion can be guided into the right direction, but a stationary ship cannot be guided at all. If we sincerely want God's precious will for our

life, we may safely trust Him to guide us. He will hedge up our way and keep us from going disastrously astray. He will even bless our mistakes and make them a blessing to others. But we must be honest and sincere, seeking only His glory, and not trying to prove that we have been right or that we have the secret of infallible guidance. If we take such a proud attitude He will graciously humble us.

Our Father has more than one motive in guiding us. First, He wants us to do His will on earth as it is done in heaven. Second, He wants to make us a channel of His divine blessing to others. Third, He wants to transform us into the image of His Son. This will mean, chastening and discipline. Fourth, He wants to make us partakers of His holiness. Fifth, He wants to prove to us that He is an all-sufficient Source of supply, wisdom, and grace.

"Only let us follow, Whither He doth lead,

Through the thirsty desert, or the dewy mead"

LETTER FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

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January 9, 2006

Dear Fellow-Believers in Christ,

Greetings in the precious and prevailing Name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who is "alive for evermore", Who hath led us into 2006, in His faithfulness and mercy. Blessed be His Name Who ever Liveth to make intercession for us, and is able to save us to the uttermost. May we be found prostrate at His feet, struck down by the vision of His Majesty and Might, as Apostle John of old, dead to all that is of ourselves, and made alive to all He would be pleased to reveal unto us. Thus we may be sanctified and strengthened by His hand upon us, to be worthy channels of communication for what His heart is set upon to accomplish in us and through us, as His bond servants, even for His Church (Rev.1: 17-19; Eph.3: 5,8-11; 2 Cor. 5:7, 14-16; Rev.1: 1,5,6).

The Lord gathered many for the year-ending services in our assemblies. Pray that the word that has gone forth through the messengers in every place, with the Motto Texts, individual promises and connected ministries, may accomplish in the hearers, especially the new corners, the work of salvation, restoration and revelation of God's purpose in Christ. More than 4000 assembled in Hermon and Hebron at Hyderabad, when Bro. T.E. Koshy ministered the Word. The meeting continued till the early morning of January 1st. At Jehovah-Shammah, the gathering was about 1500, and Bro. John Richards of U.S.A. was present to share a brief message, based on the "I WILLS" in the New Year's Motto Texts. This was followed by taking individual promises as well as worshipping the Lord with our substance from willing hearts. The gathering ended by 1 a.m. closing with refreshments for all. Let us remember the many hundreds of such gatherings in the land and regions beyond, that the Holy Spirit may accomplish a new work in all, as they desire from the beginning of the year to walk in newness of life, and to worship and serve Him, Who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Let us also remember before the Throne of Grace the Special Gatherings, God willing to

be held at Jettivaripalle, Jehovah - Shammah, Chennai, Carmel Prayer House, Ambur, and many other places in view of the holidays from 12th to 15th January. Also on the 26th of January (being the Republic Day) meetings are arranged in various places. Pray for the Youth Reunion, God willing to be held at Hebron on that day, and special gatherings for various assemblies around Salem, Vizag, to be held there from 25th to 29th January.

Let us also pray for those at the helm of affairs in the Government whether in the States or Centre, that they may be given wisdom for good governance for the welfare of the nation and the freedom enshrined in the constitution may be preserved for our liberty of worship besides the service of His Kingdom as His worshippers. We have to pray for such areas where our believers are facing trials and opposition for their faith.

Pray for Bro. Sudhir Chase(son of Bro. Jaykar Chase), who was united in marriage at Hebron on the 6th January, with Sis. Susan Stanley (daughter of Bro. Stanley Edwards, a responsible brother in the church at Patmos, Coimbatore).

In the midst of rejoicing with them that rejoice in the house of feasting, we had to be at the house of mourning at Jerusalem, Kurnool, on the next day, the 7th of January to comfort and sympathize with the family of His servant, Bro. K. Aravindam who was promoted to Glory on the 4th January. Multitudes of believers, saints and servants had already assembled there for the funeral service of His honored servant. With love and esteem for their spiritual father, thousands filed past with sorrow the mortal remains and then in procession to the graveside. Bro. G.T. Benjamin shared the word that as Elijah left his mantle, Bro. Aravindam has left the mantle for us to take it up for the future of the Testimony of the Lord at Jerusalem and regions around. This was followed by worship and prayer by Sis. (Mrs.) Rojamma and the eldest son David, after which we did the final committal and benediction. The following is a write up concerning our brother.

Bro. Aravindam, born in Gudur, came to know Christ as his Savior and Lord at the age of 13. While in service in the Railway as a Ticket Collector, stationed at Bhimavaram, he was instrumental in calling late Bro. Bakht Singh for meetings in the town and West Godavari District. He was used of the Lord in the formation of assemblies in Guntur, Tenali and Vijayawada. Later Bro. Bakht Singh called Bro. Aravindam to Jehovah - Shammah, Chennai, where he was baptized and united in marriage with Sis. Rojamma in 1957. Besides Kadapa, Guntakkal and Proddatur, they were used of the Lord, at Jerusalem, Kurnool, the longest, nearly 30 years in all - the last span of 20 years from 1986 till his Home - call to Glory on 4th January. This happens to be a week short of his 84 years of age. The Lord had made him a spiritual father for the calling out of many servants and handmaidens of the Lord to full time ministry. Thus His servant, we add in the words of Apostle Paul, finished his course... kept the faith(2 Tim.4:7). May the Lord grant him what He hath laid up for him at that day. In the meantime, let us pray for the family members and the church at Jerusalem, who would miss him.

Though belated, we convey the gratitude and thanksgiving of the saints and servants with Bro. Andrews of Sangareddy, for enabling them to construct the new place of worship, Zion, at Medak. Also for all the help given for its dedication on the 15th December, 2005, in which nearly 5000 participated for the glory of God.

My wife Mrs. Celestial Phillip covets prayers for her cousin Bhanumathi's youngest son G. Prashanth, as he leaves for Auckland to rejoin duty. He was united in marriage with Sis. Grace Vinaya, (daughter of late Bro. T. Samson of Shamnagar) on 29th December, 2005, in the church at Shamnagar, Hyderabad.

Praying that we may behold Him, Who is alive for evermore, by His Spirit's work in us in a fresh way, to equip us in the inner man before we launch forth into the activities and responsibilities of the year, in the service of His glorious Gospel and the upbuilding of His

Church,

2 Cor. 3:17,18 ; Phil. 4:5-7, 13 ; Rev 22:12,13.

I remain, Yours in His grace,

K.PHIILLIP.

WATCH -2

BAKHT SINGH

In many subtle ways we will be constantly tempted to go against our conscience. We should not be deceived by the hope of some earthly gain to surrender our moral integrity.

King Asa was given God's message of warning through the prophet. But instead of accepting it thankfully, he became infuriated with the prophet and put him in prison. However this did not change God's message, and Asa was troubled by wars for the rest of his life. He had forfeited the blessing of God.

Jehoshaphat was the son of king Asa. He also began very well like his father (2 Chron. 17:1 - 12)). As long as he obeyed God he went on prospering. But later on, although he knew how his father had failed the Lord and brought loss upon himself, he also succumbed to the subtle devices of the enemy, and brought destruction upon himself. He chose Ahab's daughter Athaliah for his son and in this way he and Ahab became great friends. The result was that much worldliness entered into Jehoshaphat's life.

The same calamity has befallen many believers. At first they showed much zeal for the Lord. They always carried their Bibles with them and witnessed and preached very boldly. Then the time came for them to arrange the marriage of a son or daughter. Tempted by worldly gain and prosperity they made alliances with ungodly families. When some servant of God took courage to warn them and show them God's Word, like king Asa they became very angry with him. As a result, now they have fallen into sorrow and shame.

A few years after the marriage of his son Jehoram, Jehoshaphat went to Samaria to visit Ahab, and Ahab prepared a great feast for him (2 Chron.18:2). That is just how worldly people will deceive you. When you show willingness to be friendly with them they will make a great feast for you and flatter you to gain your confidence. Later on they will show their true colors.

After the feast was over, Ahab came out with his scheme. Would Jehoshaphat go out with him to Ramoth Gilead and fight the king of Syria? After enjoying such a nice feast how could Jehoshaphat say, "No"? He had to say, "Yes". So he replied, "I am as thou art, and my people as thy people; and we will be with thee in the war' (v.3). Thus it was that Jehoshaphat was found identified with a man who was actually an enemy of God. In spite of knowing this, Jehoshaphat became their friend and partner.

I know many cases of believers who have agreed for marriage with unbelievers, and now their peace and joy and zeal are all gone. Once they used to begin and end every day with a song. But now there is no song of praise upon their lips any more!

Jehoshaphat was almost killed upon the battlefield. Ahab's false prophets had foretold that Ahab would come out victorious over his enemies in the battle. They had said, "Go

up; for God will deliver it (Ramoth Gilead) into the king's hand" (18:5). It was only because of pressure from Jehoshaphat that Ahab called for the Lord's prophet Micaiah. When Micaiah came, he said to the two kings, "I did see all Israel scattered upon the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and the Lord said, These have no master; let them return therefore every man to his house in peace" (2Chron.18:16). The two kings had themselves sent for Micaiah to hear. God's word from him, but now that he had given them the word of God faithfully, Ahab was very angry with Micaiah and put him into prison. Ahab was killed in the battle, and Israel was defeated (vs.33,34). Jehoshaphat also was about to be slain in the battle(v.31) and it was only by the mercy of God that he returned home alive.

All this is a warning to us not to allow worldly friends like Ahab to deceive us; not to be attracted by worldly pomp and glory to make marriage alliances with ungodly people; and not to get angry with God's servants who give us God's word. On the other hand we are exhorted to obey God and honor His living Word at all times and at any cost.

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(Concluded)

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