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THE BIBLE TEACHER

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Indians As Missionaries

Most people here would think of missionaries as being foreigners only. But why must this be? Is the great commission directed only to the westerner? Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15, 16). Again, he said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." (Matthew 28:19, 20). This commission was originally directed to the apostles but it did not stop with them. You will observe that he went on to say that after teaching people and baptizing them that they should teach their converts all of those things which he had taught them and this would include the command to take the gospel into all the world. Not only is that true, but that same command has come down to every Christian of our day. This means that the Indian Christian has the same responsibility as the western Christian to take the gospel to others.

Just before Christ returned to the Father in heaven, he said to the Apostles: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you : and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." (Acts 1:8). If you will read through the book of Acts you will find that this is the exact plan that was followed in taking the gospel to all the world. First, the gospel was preached in Jerusalem and Judaea. Then Philip went down to Samaria and preached the gospel there. (Acts 8:5). Next we have him preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39), and Peter preaching to Gentiles, Cornelius and his household. (Acts 10). Paul was converted and went forth proclaiming Christ as a resurrected Lord, making three missionary journeys and going to Rome as a prisoner, but nevertheless, still preaching Christ. In Colossians 1:23 he said that the gospel had now been proclaimed to every creature under heaven. This was only about thirty years after it had been preached for the first time in Jerusalem. While you are thinking on this, keep in mind that this was done in a time of much persecution, when the members of the church were very poor materially, and they were without modern means of transportation and communication. Still, they did the job the Lord asked them to do because they had the faith, courage, and determination that were necessary to do it. What a wonderful and thrilling story !

But that was almost two thousand years ago. What does that have to do with us here in India ? It has everything to do with us. The Lord is also asking his people here in India to take the gospel to the world. But you say, "We are few, poor, and still in need of help ourselves." This is only an excuse. You begin where you are with what you have and go from there. For instance, if you are in New Delhi then that is your beginning point. If you are in Madras then that is your beginning point. And so on with the rest of India. As for money, that doesn't even enter the picture. You are a Christian, aren't

you? Don't you know what you did to become a Christian? If so, then tell your friend about it. If you have only a little time to do it in, then use the time you have. If each Christian would do this it wouldn't be long until the church of the Lord would be twice the size it is right now and on and on it would go.

If India is ever evangelized it will have to be done by Indian Christians. Foreign brethren can help with their presence and with their support, and this should be appreciated, but this has its limitations. In the first place, not enough foreign brethren could ever come to fully evangelize India. Also the government limits foreigners as to the place they can work. You can add to that language problems, cultural differences, and so on. Foreigners can plant the truth in various places, give some leadership in the beginning, provide literature and other aids, make training available and point the way, but there is little more that they can do. The sooner they can do their work and turn the enlarging of the work entirely over to the local Christians, the better it will be for all concerned. In other words—going back to our original statement—it is up to the Indian Christian to finish the job of evangelizing India and to go on to regions far beyond.

It is so easy to sit back and let the foreigner do all of it. But even if he could, this would not be good for him, for you, or for the work. Rather, he has come to India because Jesus commanded him to go. He has come preaching what Jesus preached and Jesus is commanding you to go and preach the gospel to others. You can do this if you will. What a blessing it should be to you to know that you are a Christian, a child of God, a member of the Lord's church and you should be so full of love and zeal for the lost that you would want to tell everyone.

You are in position to do this job. You are an Indian and you speak the language of the local people. You know your

own people and how to reach them. You can go into all parts of the country. You know the background and habits of the people. You know their religions and their needs. You know how to deal with them. Above all, you are a Christian and you have the truth and you have something which all of your people need. You are therefore in the right place at the right time to do this job.

You don't need foreign support to do this work. You don't need to give your full time to it. Instead, you need to be a Christian and a faithful Christian, setting a good example, and using the opportunities that are yours. If there are enough local brethren that can and will support you to give your full time to this work then that is good. If not, then if you love the Lord and lost souls and want to take the gospel to your people then you will find a way to do so. Your faith, love, zeal, and determination will make this possible.

Christians have a great challenge here in India. There are more than five hundred million souls at the present time and the population is growing daily. It is up to you to take the gospel to them. Don't say that it is impossible, that it can't be done. Of course it can be done. You can do it and will do it. Every one you convert can help you and every one they convert can also help. That means the job should be getting easier all the time.

The gospel needs to be taken to every State in this country and to every island and every territory that comes under the flag. Who will go to Jammu and Kashmir? What about the Punjab? How about the U.P., M.P., Gujarat, etc.? Then there is Haryana, H.P., Rajasthan, and all of the other areas on the mainland. Even if there is already a Christian in some of these, or even a number of them, still these States as a whole need many workers.

Who will go to the Laccadive and Andaman Islands? What about Goa, Pondicherry, and the eastern States and territories? What about the many tribal people throughout the country? Don't they need the gospel? And there are those who live in

the jungle and coastal areas. Others live in cold mountain heights and along the borders of friendly and unfriendly countries. Surely the gospel must be taken to them also.

How can we do all of this ? My brethren, we can go, go, go. Go by plane, by train, by bus, by boat, by car, by rickshaw by cycle, by bullock cart, by foot. We can go through Bible correspondence courses, through tracts, by conducting meetings, preaching on the streets, arranging Bible schools, through personal work, doing good works, and a thousand other ways. We can go to India, to the millions of India, all over India, and we will go when we love God and the souls of men, including our own souls. You are encouraged to go, challenged to go, and commanded to go. Woe be unto you and to this country if you don't go.

But wait : That is not all by any means. Who will go to Bangladesh ? Who will go to Nepal ? Who will take the gospel to Sikkim and Bhutan ? What about Afghanistan ? How about Sri Lanka ? Besides these there are the Persian Gulf countries, Burma, and the countries throughout Asia. What about Australia, New Zealand, and the Fiji Islands ? Think about the countries of Africa. Yes, even England, the other European countries, Canada, America, and the Central and South American countries.

If you went to all of these places, islands, and countries you would find that already a large number of Indians are there. How did they get there ? Simply because they wanted to go. They went to immigrate, to get education, for religious purposes, to work, to represent their government, and so on. You can go for the same reasons, but as a Christian you can preach to your people and to the people of those countries. Through your efforts the gospel can be preached to the world, and the Lord's church can be planted in many places where it might never be established otherwise. Yes, you can be a missionary for Christ at home and away from home. It is an ideal situation for you. All you have to do is to get up and go and preach. May the Lord bless as you do so.

ASSOCIATE EDITORIAL

So What Is The Answer ?

The word love means kindness, a favour done. When Jesus was upon this earth, once he was asked by a certain scribe : "Which is the first or the great commandment of all ?" Jesus answered and said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength : this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:30, 31). Wasn't God kind enough toward mankind when he gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, whom he sent to die for you and for me ? What a great favour he did when He spared us from the eternal death and in our stead allowed His only begotten Son to bear our sins upon the cross and to die !

Today we live in a world which is full of strifes and wars. There is no peace. In fact, nations are trying to find a right solution for peace to be maintained in the world. Many have thought that big armies, arms, and destructive bombs, etcetra, is the solution. But can peace, in fact, be established through these things ? Actually speaking, more distress and fear is prevailing today in the world because of all of this. So, what is the answer ? The answer comes from the pages of the Bible, "And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13). Yes, love is the answer. Showing what love can actually do, the Apostle Paul says, "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). Just imagine if all the people of the world had this kind of love then what a wonderful world it would be ! There would be no envying, no strife, no hatred, no selfishness, no wars, no evil, no iniquity,

but truth and peace. Oh, how much we need the true love in the world today. In this world of insecurity, what is the answer? Love is the answer.

Man, today is lost in his sin. He is dying without hope. Man, because of his sins, is separated from God, the source of eternal life. Man's utter folly is described in the Bible, by the prophet of God, in these words, "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spiders web: he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works: their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thought are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings; they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." (Isaiah 59:2-8).

Sin is reigning in the world today greatly. Every human being is burdened with the load of sins. Every individual soul is stained with sin. God says in the Bible, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" and again, "For the wages of sin is death....." So what is the answer? Seeing man's helplessness, a merciful loving God emptied himself. He saw that man is helpless for saving himself from the destructive power of sin. He knew that man with his sinful soul cannot reach up to him to plead for himself for his salvation. He therefore, Himself came down upon earth from heaven and revealed himself in Jesus Christ. Certainly, love is the answer.

Oh, what a great thing the love is. The thing that man through all of his wisdom and effort could not attain, God's love made possible. He sent His Son, Jesus, to live in this sinful world, and to go through all the sufferings. Loving God, ".....made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." (2 Corinthians 5:21). And finally, He allowed him to die upon a cross, and made him the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Thus, He revealed that He is the just and the loving God. His justice is seen in this that the wages of sin, death, as was required, was paid through the perfect sacrifice of Christ. And His great love is manifested in that He allowed Jesus, His Son, to die for our sins, in our stead. Jesus, too, loved us greatly in that he was willing to suffer all things for mankind. Speaking of him, Paul says, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Galatians 1:4). And again the Holy Spirit, through this Apostle, tells us, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God : But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men : And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:6-8). Oh, the amazing love of Christ. It is true that without this love there was no other way for man to be saved from his sins. Love is the only answer.

In this world of insecurity man's great need today is for peace : Peace upon the earth and peace with God. How can everlasting peace be accomplished ? Love is the answer. Are you feeling insecure ? The love of Christ is the answer for you : as Apostle Paul says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:1).

Bible Questions And Bible Answers

These questions come from Churachandpur, Manipur.

QUESTION : "Hebrews 7--Melchisedec, King of Salem, Priest of the most high God. Who was he? Was this Jesus Christ or another person? What is Salem? Does it refer to the present Jerusalem or to another place?"

ANSWER : Melchisedec was King of Salem and a priest of the most high God. Although Abraham was a great man, he paid tithes to Melchisedec which shows that Abraham was inferior to him. He was "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made **like unto** the Son of God; abideth a priest continually". (Hebrews 7:3). That is, there was no genealogy or record of him and therefore no one knew when he was born, who his parents were, when he died, etc. In other words, not much was known about him.

He was not Christ, but **like unto** the Son of God. Christ was without beginning and end, without an earthly father, and the High Priest of God.

Jerusalem of today is probably the Salem of ancient times.

QUESTION : "In Matthew 16:20 and other Bible verses our Lord Jesus Christ charged his disciples that they tell no man he was Jesus the Christ. Why did he do this? What was his motive behind this?"

ANSWER : First of all, let us read Matthew 16:20. It says, "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." First of all, it should be understood that when information comes from second-hand sources it is not always reliable. Sometimes those who are telling a story will add to it or subtract from it or distort it in some way. Then those who may be listening to the story could well reason that this is only one more tale that they have heard, like many others. Perhaps Jesus felt it would be better

for him to convince the people directly through the miracles that he would perform. Second, Jesus did not come to merely get a lot of publicity. He was not trying to make a name for himself in the popular sense of the word. He was not performing miracles merely for the purpose of building up his own reputation. Neither was it necessary for him to send his disciples out to spread the word concerning his power in order for him to get attention. He knew, rather, that his works spoke for themselves. In spite of the Lord's request, news spread quickly concerning his mighty works, and many believed.

It is interesting to note the contrast in the way Jesus worked and the way so called miracle healers work today. Jesus asked his disciples not to go out telling that he was Jesus the Christ, but rather he was willing to let people make up their own minds after seeing the miracles that he performed. Today, however, those who claim to perform miracles tell their followers to go out everywhere and tell the people what great things they can do. Those who are wise know that if these people could really perform miracles with God's help or without it, they wouldn't need to resort to cheap publicity stunts to get a following but their miracles would draw the people. This is proof positive that they are only fakes and imposters.

How Much Do You Give To The Lord ?

Most Christians want to put something into the Sunday collections, but more often than not it is not more than a few paisa or a rupee or two. If one is not able to give more than this, then this is commendable. In some cases, those who give that much are giving far more than ten per cent of their earnings. With the majority, sad to say, such giving is but mockery. Such people should be putting in much more each week.

Because they do not they end up in robbing God by withholding that which belongs to him.

The Bible clearly teaches that Christians are to give on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2), and that they are to give as they have been prospered. Likewise, they are to give cheerfully, as they have purposed in their hearts, and not grudgingly or of necessity. (2 Corinthians 9:7).

The Christian receives according to what he puts in. The reason many find Christianity to be dull, boring, and unrewarding is because they have never put anything into it. Those who have invested time, energy, and money have found that the rewards and blessings are great indeed. Try it and see if it does not work.

Can One Be Saved Without Being A Member Of The Church ?

If so, why did Christ build it, die for it, love it, and promise to return for it ?

If so, why is Christ the saviour of it, adds the saved to it, and serves as its head ?

If so, why does the Bible even talk about it ?

If so, why does the Lord honor it by allowing it to wear his name ?

Information On The Bible Teacher

We have been asked why we do not date the magazine. Although we put out an issue each month, we have left the date off so that whatever copies are left over can be used at any time. When something is dated, and it is late, or used later, it would be rejected because it is out of date. We feel

that the material in these magazines should be good and up to date at all times.

Should you miss a magazine it may not be our fault. We try to send it to you every month but one or more issues may get lost in the mail. Should this be the case, we are very sorry but there is nothing that we can do.

If you are receiving more than one issue of the magazine, please give a copy to a friend or let us know about it. Sometimes we have two different spellings of the same name or a variation in an address and this may lead us to send two or more magazines to the same address. If this be true then we need to know so we can make the necessary corrections.

When you change addresses, please let us know and send both your new and old address so we can change it.

If you are getting this magazine, but would prefer not to receive it, then let us know. We don't want to waste a magazine and spend postage money on those who do not want it.

With Volume five and Number one issue we hope to increase our circulation to 5,000 copies. We hope you like our new cover design.

“Win A Prize” Bible Quiz, No. 12

Here is your opportunity to win a book that will help you in your Christian life—absolutely free! All you have to do is find the correct answer to the following questions, give the required Bible references, and send them to: The Quizmaster, Post Box No. 3815, New Delhi 110049. Please post them so that they will reach us within two weeks of your receiving this magazine. Don't give up too soon!

1. Does the Bible say: “Three wiseman came from the East”? Give the reference that proves your answer.

2. What three excuses were made by those who were bidden to a wedding feast? Hint: Parable.

3. Who had a vision of a sheet, held up at four corners, and containing all manner of four-footed beasts, clean and unclean?

4. Who succeeded Elijah?

5. Shechem, Hebron, Kedesh, Ramath, Golan, Bezer, were names of six very special cities. What common name did they have?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUIZ, NO. 11

1. Adam, when he hid from God in the garden of Eden, Genesis 3:10. 2. Gabriel, Luke 1:26. 3. John on Patmos, Revelation 10:10. 4. Moses, Exodus 32:32. 5. No, 1 Timothy 6:10 says the love of money is the root of all evil.

Who Will Go?

Who will go to the State of West Bengal? Calcutta is one of the largest cities of India and is the Capital of that State. It has many other cities and villages. A few years ago the church of the Lord was established in Calcutta but since then it has ceased to meet. Only two or three members are left. Several from there, though, have taken a Bible correspondence course and numerous ones are receiving The Bible Teacher each month.

Bengali is spoken throughout the State as well as some English and perhaps other local languages. Besides Hinduism, and other religions, various denominational groups are there. This has been a major center of missionary activity from the beginning.

Bible correspondence courses, tracts, preaching, filmstrips, etc., are methods that can be used to proclaim the gospel to people. They are willing and ready to hear God's will. The

great need at this time is for someone to go to work with them.

Who will go to Calcutta to establish the Lord's church and remain with it to help it to grow and spread? As a member of the church, will you go? If you will, and will do the job that needs to be done, the Lord will surely bless your labors. Let us all pray about this and work together to make this possible.

If you do not have any support, simply move there, find a job, and begin to conduct worship in your home. As you have the opportunities, encourage others to meet with you. Preach and teach God's word to your friends, and look for ways to advertise your efforts. Let us know about this and we will furnish you with the names and addresses that we have. Perhaps you have the type of job that will permit you to be transferred there. There may be other ways for you to go there, but do try.

Brethren, here is a golden opportunity for us to take the gospel to Calcutta and throughout West Bengal. Let us have the vision, zeal, and courage to go.

Jesus Is Coming

Jess Willis

All who read the New Testament have read that Christ is gone to prepare a place in heaven and will come again to take Christians to live with Him in those mansions where He now is (John 14:1-6). No man knows the day of the great return. It will be when man least expects it (Matt. 24:36-44).

The theory that Jesus will come to rule a thousand years upon the earth is without foundation. Let us note three of the many facts which show this.

1. The earth will be destroyed at Jesus' coming (2 Pet. 3:10-11). If the earth is burned up and destroyed then it will

not be here for Jesus to rule, nor for people to inherit.

2. Saints will meet Him in the air (1 Thess. 4:17). He is to come in the clouds (Rev. 1:7). Nothing is said about His either setting foot on the earth or ruling upon the earth when He returns.

3. Jesus is already reigning upon the "Throne of David" (Acts 2:30-31). He already has all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). He was not defeated in His crucifixion. We do not need to look for another person to establish the promised kingdom. Christ is not to establish it in the future. His death, burial, and resurrection was to establish that kingdom and in Paul's day people were being added to it (Col. 1:13; Act 2:47).

We plead for every God-fearing Bible-student to accept the teachings of Christ, follow His instructions, and prepare to spend that blessed eternity with Him when He returns.

Putting Jesus First

Mark H. Nunley

In Matthew 6:33 we find Jesus saying to us, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." In order to have all of the physical blessings and all of the spiritual blessings both that we so desperately need, we must put the Lord first in our life. God Almighty, Jesus Christ, and the kingdom (which is the church) must occupy the number one place in our life. Our devotion and efforts must be centered upon these if we are to live a successful and faithful life as a Christian so that we might enter heaven some day.

One of the accounts that we read about in the New Testament clearly gives lessons to us concerning the centering of our attention upon the Lord. The record is in Matthew

14:22-23. We find Jesus commanding His disciples to get into a ship and sail across the sea of Galilee so that He could send the multitude home and go up into a mountain to pray.

On the sea, a great storm arose which was typical of the sea of Galilee, and the disciples were having a great deal of difficulty. Then in the fourth watch of the night (which was sometime between 3 and 6AM) we find Jesus walking on the water towards the ship. When the disciples saw Him, they were terrified thinking that they had seen a ghost. But Jesus said, "Take courage, it is I; do not be afraid." And Peter said, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to You on the water." To which Jesus said, "Come." So Peter got down out of the ship and began to walk on the water by the power of the Lord.

Peter did fine while he kept his eyes on Jesus. But after a while he took his eyes off of the Lord and began to notice the raging storm. And upon this he became afraid, and his faith wavered, and he began to sink in the sea. And Peter cried out, "Lord, save me!" And Jesus immediately reached for His hand and took hold of Peter, and Jesus said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" Then the record tells us that when they got back into the ship, the wind stopped. And then the disciples said, "You are certainly the Son of God." Now that we have the account before us, let's see the lessons about putting Jesus first.

The terrible storms on the sea of Galilee can well represent the troubles and problems that we encounter in our lives. And just as Peter walked on the water through the storm, so we need to walk through the storm of life towards Jesus. As long as Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he successfully walked through the storm. But when he took his eyes off of the Lord and began to worry about the storm around him, he began to sink because his faith wavered. The same thing is true for us today. No matter what troubles and problems may surround

us, we can walk successfully through the storm of life, IF we keep our eyes, our attention, centered upon Jesus. It is when we begin to worry about problems and troubles about us that we begin to doubt as Peter did which will allow our problems to overcome us.

When the Lord is first, when we have all of our attention and devotion centered upon Him, we can cope with any circumstance that life may have in store for us. And we can come through these things successfully. The Apostle Paul had this to say about serving the Lord in Phillipians 3:13-14, ".....one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead. I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

Paul forgot about the things in life that he had to glory in or be proud of. He forgot about the good works that he had done in the past. He forgot about his past sins that had been washed away by the blood of Christ. And he pressed onward and upward with Christ out in front of him, with the goal in mind that he could stand approved in the sight of God. And this is the approach that you and I need to take towards life.

Like Peter, we need to press on through the storm of life with our efforts and attention centered on Christ. Like Paul, we need to forget what lies behind us, and we need to daily serve the Lord faithfully now so that we might stand approved on the day of judgment. And when we go at serving the Lord in this way, then we can truly be putting the kingdom of God and His righteousness first in our lives.

महान वैद्य

लेखक—सनी भाई

यदि हम प्रभु यीशु के जीवन के बारे में बाइबल में से पढ़ें तो एक विशेष बात जो हम देखेंगे वह यह है कि उसका स्वभाव अत्यन्त ही नम्र तथा दयालु था। मत्ती, यीशु का एक चेला, यीशु से संबन्धित एक घटना का वर्णन करते हुए लिखता है, “और जब वह घर में भोजन करने के लिये बैठा तो बहुतेरे महसूल लेनेवाले और पापी आकर यीशु और उसके चेलों के साथ खाने बैठे। यह देखकर फरीसियों ने उसके चेलों से कहा ; तुम्हारा गुरु महसूल लेनेवालों और पापियों के साथ क्यों खाता है ? उस ने यह सुनकर उन से कहा, वैद्य भले चंगों को नहीं परन्तु बीमारों को अवश्य है। सो तुम जाकर इस का अर्थ सीख लो, कि मैं बलिदान नहीं परन्तु दया चाहता हूँ ; क्योंकि मैं धर्मियों को नहीं परन्तु पापियों को बुलाने आया हूँ।” (मत्ती ९:१०-१३)।

यदि आपका कोई प्रिय मित्र या सम्बन्धि या स्वयं आप किसी भयंकर रोग का शिकार हो जाएं, तो वास्तव में आप बहुत चिन्तित होंगे, और अपना पूरा प्रयत्न करेंगे कि ऐसे रोग से चंगे हो जाएं। हम अपना समय देने के लिये तैयार हो जाएंगे, अपना धन भी खर्च करेंगे, और यदि धन के अभाव के कारण हमें अपना कुछ सामान भी बेचना पड़े तो हम इस से भी पीछे नहीं हटेंगे। वास्तव में जो कुछ भी हम से हो सकेगा हम करेंगे ताकि अपने प्रिय मित्र, या सम्बन्धि अथवा स्वयं अपने आप को घातक रोग से बचा लें। वास्तव में कितने अधिक चिन्तित हम हो जाते हैं जब हम शारीरिक रूप से बीमार पड़ जाते हैं। परन्तु क्या कभी आपने यह भी विचार किया कि आप और आपके मित्र इत्यादि आत्मिक रूप से भी रोगी बन सकते हैं ? वास्तव में, आत्मिक रूप से बीमार होना एक अत्यन्त ही भयंकर बात है। यदि कोई शारीरिक रूप से बीमार हो जाए तो उसे कुछ समय के लिये शरीर में दुख सहना पड़ेगा या कदाचित् शारीरिक मृत्यु का सामना करना पड़े। किन्तु, आत्मिक रोगी को न तो केवल अनन्त दुखों को ही भोगना पड़ेगा, परन्तु नरक में अनन्त दण्ड, अर्थात् अनन्त मृत्यु, का भी सामना करना पड़ेगा।

क्या आप जानते हैं कि मनुष्य शारीरिक भाव से तो मिट्टी से रचा गया है, और इसलिये इस भाव से एक दिन अवश्य ही वह मिट्टी में मिल जाएगा।

परन्तु आपका आत्मा, अर्थात् भीतरी व वास्तविक मनुष्य, जो कि परमेश्वर का स्वरूप है एक दिन परमेश्वर के पास लौट जाएगा, ताकि आपका न्याय हो ? (समोपदेशक १२:७) । कदाचित्, आप आत्मा के अकथनीय महत्त्व से अज्ञात हों । परन्तु यीशु मसीह ने इसके महत्त्व पर प्रकाश डालते हुए कहा, “यदि मनुष्य सारे जगत को प्राप्त करे, और अपने प्राण की हानि उठाए, तो उसे क्या लाभ होगा ? या मनुष्य अपने प्राण के बदले में क्या देगा ?” (मत्ती १६:२६) । उदाहरणार्थ, यदि आप पूरे संसार की सम्पूर्ण सम्पत्ती धन इत्यादि एक ओर रख लें, और फिर केवल एक आत्मा की तुलना उस सब से करें, तो वास्तव में उस एक आत्मा का मूल्य उस सब से बढ़कर ठहरेगा । यहां प्रभु यीशु के कहने का यही तात्पर्य है ।

पाप एक भयानक रोग है । यह बीमारी प्रत्येक आत्मा में पाई जाती है । वास्तव में, यह एक अत्यन्त ही घातक रोग है । इस घातक रोग के विषय में परमेश्वर अपने वचन में कहता है, “प्रत्येक व्यक्ति अपनी ही अभिलाषा से खिंचकर, और फंसकर परीक्षा में पड़ता है । फिर अभिलाषा गर्भवती होकर पाप को जनती है और पाप जब बढ़ जाता है तो मृत्यु को उत्पन्न करता है ।” (याकूब २:१४, १५) । तथा, “सब ने पाप किया है और परमेश्वर की महिमा से रहित हैं ।” (रोमियों ३:२३) । और “पाप की मजदूरी तो मृत्यु है.....” (रोमियों ६:२३) ।

क्योंकि पापी मनुष्य तथा भवित्र परमेश्वर एक साथ नहीं रह सकते, इसलिये मनुष्य आत्मिक जीवन के स्रोत, परमेश्वर, से अलग है, और इस कारण मनुष्य आत्मिक स्वभाव में मृतक समान है । मनुष्य की अत्यन्त ही भयानक तथा निराशाजनक स्थिति का वर्णन करते हुए परमेश्वर का भविष्यद्वक्ता कहता है, “सुनो, यहोवा (परमेश्वर) का हाथ ऐसा छोटा नहीं हो गया कि उद्धार न कर सके, न वह ऐसा बहिरा हो गया है कि सुन न सके; परन्तु तुम्हारे अधर्म के कामों ने तुम को तुम्हारे परमेश्वर से अलग कर दिया है, और तुम्हारे पाप के कारण उसका मुंह तुम से ऐसा छिपा है कि वह नहीं सुनता । क्योंकि तुम्हारे हाथ हत्या से और तुम्हारी अंगुलियां अधर्म के कर्मों से अपवित्र हो गई हैं; तुम्हारे मुंह से तो भूठ और तुम्हारी जीभ से कूटिल बातें निकलती हैं । कोई धर्म के साथ नालिश नहीं करता, न कोई सच्चाई से मुकदमा लड़ता है ; वे मिथ्या पर भरोसा रखते हैं और भूठ बातें बकते हैं; उनको मानो उत्पात का गर्भ रहता, और वे अनर्थ को जन्म देते हैं । वे सांपिन के अन्डे

सैते और मकड़ी के जाले बनाते हैं; जो कोई उनके अन्दे खाता वह मर जाता है, और जब कोई एक को फोड़ता तब उस में से सपोला निकलता है। उनके जाले कपड़े का काम न देंगे, न वे अपने कामों से अपने को ढाँप सकेंगे। क्योंकि उनके काम अनर्थ ही के होते हैं, और उनके हाथों से उपद्रव का काम होता है। वे बुराई करने को दौड़ते हैं, और निर्दोष की हत्या करने को तत्पर रहते हैं; उनकी युक्तियाँ व्यर्थ हैं, उजाड़ और विनाश ही उनके मार्गों में हैं। शान्ति का मार्ग वे जानते ही नहीं और न उनके व्यवहार में न्याय है; उनके पथ टेढ़े हैं, जो कोई उन पर चले वह शान्ति न पाएगा।” (यशायाह ५६: १-८)।

महान् तथा प्रेमी परमेश्वर जानता था कि मनुष्यों में “कोई धर्मी नहीं, एक भी नहीं” (रोमियों ३:१०)। और इसलिये पृथ्वी पर एक भी मनुष्य ऐसा नहीं था जो मानव जाति को पाप की बीमारी से चंगा कर सके। मनुष्य को एक उद्धारकर्ता की आवश्यकता थी। एक ऐसे वैद्य की आवश्यकता थी जो मनुष्य को पाप जैसे आत्मिक घातक रोग से चंगा कर दे। ऐसा वैद्य कहाँ से आए? पृथ्वी पर तो “कोई भी नहीं, एक भी नहीं” मनुष्य को निराश्रय व असहाय देखकर परमेश्वर को दया आई, और उस ने स्वयं ही, यीशु मसीह के द्वारा, अपने आपको स्वर्ग से इस पृथ्वी पर प्रकट किया। उस ने यीशु को पृथ्वी पर इसलिये भेजा ताकि वह मनुष्य को बताए कि पाप से छुटकारा प्राप्त करने के लिये उसे क्या करना चाहिए। यही कारण है कि यीशु ने कहा कि वह एक ऐसा वैद्य है जिसकी आवश्यकता पापियों, अर्थात् बीमारों को है। प्रभु यीशु ने अपने विषय में लोगों को बताते हुए कहा, “क्योंकि परमेश्वर ने जगत से ऐसा प्रेम रखा कि उसने अपना एकलौता पुत्र दे दिया, ताकि जो कोई उस पर विश्वास करे, वह नाश न हो, परन्तु अनन्त जीवन पाए।” (यूहन्ना ३:१६)।

क्या आप यीशु में विश्वास करते हैं? यदि आप आत्मा की बीमारी, अर्थात् पाप से छुटकारा पाना चाहते हैं तो यह अत्यन्त ही आवश्यक है कि आप उस आत्मिक वैद्य, यीशु, में पूर्ण विश्वास करें। और फिर विश्वास से उसके पास आकर उस दवाई को लें और अपनाएं, अर्थात् उसकी उन शिक्षाओं को स्वीकार करें और उनका पालन करें जो कि पाप से मुक्ति प्राप्त करने के लिये आवश्यक हैं। वे आज्ञाएं क्या हैं? उस ने कहा कि प्रत्येक व्यक्ति जो उसमें विश्वास करता है अपने मन को पापों से फिराए और उसके नाम में बपतिस्मा ले। उसने यह भी कहा कि जो ऐसा करेंगे उन्हें वह पापों से मुक्त करेगा तथा वे अपने पापों की क्षमा प्राप्त करेंगे। (लूका १३:३; मरकुस १६:१६; प्रेरितों २:३८)। यदि आपके पास बाइबल या नया नियम हो तो इन पदों को अवश्य देखें। और यदि इस विषय में आप और अधिक विस्तार-पूर्वक जानना चाहते हैं तो हमें अवश्य लिखें। ध्यानपूर्वक पढ़ने के लिये आपका धन्यवाद।