

# Vineyard Echoes

A monthly Magazine  
for the ministry of the Word and tidings  
of the Lord's work in India

**THE SEED IS THE WORD**



**THE FIELD IS THE WORLD**

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## THE SIN BEARER

**T**he boundless grace of God manifested in 2 Cor 5 :21, captivates our attention with considerable force. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him". The truth is that the Lord Jesus Christ knew no sin. Peter says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth" (IPet 2:22). Peter was referring to what Isaiah wrote (Is 53:9). John also says the same thing, "In Him is no sin" (1 John 3:5). But we see that God hath made Him to be sin for us. We must beware of any idea that the Lord Jesus Christ actually became sinful in Himself. This is a false idea. We clearly see that our sins were placed on Him, but they were not in Him. God made Him to be a sin-offering on our behalf. He, who knew no sin, became our sin-bearer. God imputed on Him all our sins so that we who knew no righteousness might become the righteousness of God in Him. No mortal tongue will ever be able to thank God for His great kindness. All what we could say with one accord is, "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom 5:20). I am always moved with the true statement of Paul, "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor 8:9). Do we have then a problem to know the abundant and marvellous grace of our Lord? Paul's statement is one of the greatest verses in his grand letter. He paints a lovely portrait of the greatest person who ever lived - so generous; generous enough to give His own very life to make us eternally rich. Moorhead comments, "He was rich in possessions, power, homage, fellowship, happiness. He became poor in station, circumstances, in His relations with men. We think of our giving a little money, clothing or food as sacrifices. But He gave Himself". The question may arise when was He rich? Certainly not when He took the birth as a babe in Bethlehem! Definitely not during the 33 years of His wandering as a homeless stranger in the world which His hands had made. He was rich in a bygone eternity - rich enough to own the universe He created by

"the word of His Power" (Heb 1:3). What a presentation of this great Son of God - to us our Lord, Lord Jesus Christ - in Hebrews 1:1-4". God who at sundry times and in diverse manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they". The Creator and the Sustainer became the sin-bearer. Our hearts are one with Isaac Watt who penned the beautiful hymn, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all".

John the Baptist said, "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the whole world" (John 1:29). We all know that the lamb was a sacrificial animal among the Jews. The Lord God made the provision of a lamb as a substitute to the man for his sins. The lamb was slain and its blood was sprinkled as a sacrifice. However, the blood of the lambs slain during the OT period could not put away sin. We read, "Sacrifices and offering and burnt offerings and offerings for sin, thou would not, neither hadst pleasure therein" (Heb 10:8). "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins" (Heb 10:4). The reason! "But in those sacrifices, there is a remembrance again made of sins every year" (Heb 10:3). Now these lambs were pictures or types, pointing to the fact that God would one day provide a Lamb, who would really take away the sins of the whole world. The godly Jews waited for this Lamb. And John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus Christ as that "Lamb" whom they were waiting for. Isaiah wrote, "And He bare the sin of many" (Is 53:12). Truly He did bear the sins of the whole world. In that process His visage was so marred more than any man and His form more than the sons of men" (Is 52:14). In chapter 53, we have a vivid account of His suffering. When He was made to carry all our sins, He was like "a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground. He hath no form or comeliness. And when we shall

see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men; A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief: And we hid as it were our faces from Him. He was despised and we esteemed Him not” (vs 2-4).

“He has borne our grief” (v 4). We are reminded, “Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow which is done to me” (Lam 1:12). This was His condition on the cross, when the hardened soldiers backed by religious fanatics and general populace watched callously His suffering. “He carried our sorrows” (vs 4). Philip P. Bliss overtaken with the anguish and sorrow of our Lord, penned

*“Man of sorrows, what a name,  
For the Son of God who came  
Ruined sinners to reclaim!  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!  
Bearing shame and scoffing rude,  
In my place condemned He stood;  
Sealed my pardon with His blood;  
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!”*

All our sins and transgressions were laid upon Him. We read, “we were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein in time past, ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath even as others” (Eph 2:1-3). We read, “The wages of sin is death (Rom 6:23). And the soul that sinneth shall die” (Eze 18:4). What does the scripture say? “But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin” (Gal 3:22). Then we should have died for our sins. But the Lord Jesus Christ stood in our place and “He was wounded for our transgressions and He was bruised for our iniquities: The chastisement of our peace was upon Him” (Is 53:5). Thus He became the sin-bearer.

God was dissatisfied with the inward lives of people who thought that they were pleasing God with the ceremonies and sacrifices. Therefore, God prepared a human body for His Son. We read, “Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared Me: Burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hast had no pleasure. Then

said I, Lo, I come, (In the volume of the Book it is written of Me) to do Thy will O God” (Heb 10:5-7). We read in v 9 that He took away the first, that He might establish the second, that is, He abolished the old system of offerings required by the law, by His own great sacrifice for sin. Paul wrote to the Romans, “God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Rom 8:3). By coming into the world in human form, He resembled sinful humanity. As a sacrifice for sin, Christ condemned sin in the flesh. Our sin nature is never said to be forgiven; it is condemned.

Paul said to the Galatians, “Even so, we when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: but when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under law, to redeem them that were under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (Gal 4:3-5). “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us” (Gal 3:10,13). He became a curse; yes He became our sin-bearer.

Paul wrote to Philippians, “He 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 (the sinbearing 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” (Phil 2:6-8).

Christ the sin-bearer was made to taste death for every man. He is now crowned with glory and honour (Heb 2:9). God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name (Phil 2:9). The sin-bearer is our Redeemer and Lord.



# THE BREAD OF LIFE (2)

(An exposition of John 6)

James Varghese, *Brahmavar*

Eating is shown as blessings of God's people in the OT. In the wilderness God gave them manna to eat. The land promised to them was "a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity" (Deut. 8:9). However, the physical bounty is only a part and more of a sign of the true spiritual blessings of God's people. In Dt. 8:3 we see that manna was given for their physical sustenance that they would know that the people of God live by the word of God. In that context, it might have meant that those who lived by the word of God would not lack their daily bread. But it also shows that the nourishment you get from the word of God is greater than that you get from eating bread. OT verses such as Isa.55:1; Ps. 22:26; 4:7 point to spiritual food and satisfaction of mind and spirit.

They knew that Messiah will be like Moses but greater than him. The problem with them was that they failed to recognize that the paramount ministry of Moses was giving them the Word of God and not feeding them. Their minds were preoccupied with mundane things. The people sought a sign similar to manna, a permanent daily supply of bread. The Jews had expected that when their Messiah comes, He would feed them with manna. There is mention of this in quite a few Jewish writings. Jesus offers them something far superior to manna, bread from heaven. The Father gives the true bread from heaven. He told them of the Bread of God that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

Father gives this bread; its supply is continual. At this the people asks Him, "Lord give this bread always", obviously without understanding the true meaning of what He said. In fact Father has been giving the heavenly bread *always*. After a profound description of *Wisdom* [comparable with John's *Logos*] in Proverbs chapter 8, in the next chapter, we see the Wisdom calling out, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine which I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding" (vv. 5-6). The idea of heavenly bread is clearer in the case of the Word of God given to Israel. The true food by which God ordered His people to actually live by is neither the bread of wheat or barley nor the manna that fell from the sky, but 'every word that proceeds from the mouth of the LORD' (Dt. 8:3). After giving people His Word, the LORD tells of it that it is 'life and good' and urge them to 'choose life' that they may live (Dt. 30:15,19). We may observe, in this connection the smooth transition Paul makes between the Word of God and Christ on one side and between the Word of God and the Apostolic preaching on the other in Rom.10:6-8 [where he quotes Dt. 30: 12-14]. Father gives the true life-giving bread, the Word. He has been giving; He is giving now; He continues to give. The bread of the Word of God that gave life to God's

people is now standing before them in the person of Jesus Christ. To their request to 'give this bread always', Jesus says in answer, "I am the bread of life". This is the meaning of the sign.

As prophet Isaiah has shown LORD Himself is that people must seek for the true bread which actually satisfies them (Isa. 55:1-4). The prophet said of this experience in another significant verse which Jesus quoted in Jn. 6:45, "All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the peace of your children" (Isa. 54:13). Where the spiritual meal was given in the past in the form Wisdom, in the form of Law, and in the form of exhortations of the prophets, it is now given by God Himself coming down to them in the person of Jesus Christ. People could have their meal in the literal presence of God.

## A Sermon in the Synagogue (6:36-50)

The scene is changed from the bank of lake Tiberius to a synagogue in Capernaum. Some of the things written here could have been already said at the lakeside but again taken as the subject of the sermon later in the synagogue. It is possible that the sermon begins at v.31 with Jesus paraphrasing Ex.6:4. More likely, the Lord took the verse they quoted for the text of His sermon.

Knowledge of the homiletic pattern of Jesus' time would help us to understand this passage better. The pattern is to begin with a citation of the Scripture, usually Pentateuch, which is sometimes paraphrased. The body of the sermon is a commentary on the Scripture text. Commonly, within the sermon there is a subordinate citation, often from the writings of the Prophets, on which a few lines of comments are given. Usually the statement that opens the discourse is repeated at the end. We can trace this pattern in the present discourse. The initial citation has been in v.31 and it is Pentateuch. Within the discourse there is citation from the Prophet (v.45). The statement opened the discourse (v.35) is repeated at the end (v.48).

One of the Scripture portions said to be read on Sabbaths close to the Passover feast is Gen ch.2 and 3 where the Garden of Eden is described. Jesus invites into greater blessings than that of the lost Eden, where it was told to Adam that if he ate the forbidden fruit he would die (2:17; 3:3) Jesus says about the bread of life, "one may eat of it and do not die" (v.50). While Adam was prevented from reaching the tree of life, lest he may eat its fruit and live forever (3:22), Jesus says, "If anyone eats of this bread, he will live for ever" (v.51). Where Adam was driven out of the garden (3:24), Jesus promises, "the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (v.37). We are reminded of Paul's words, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" (1Cor.15:22).

We can find quite a few similarities this discourse has with Jesus' first sermon in the synagogue in Nazareth, recorded in Lk. ch.4. There, after reading the text from Isa. 49:8-9 about the Messiah preaching deliverance, He said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing", meaning He was the Deliverer Isaiah spoke about. Here in John's Gospel, in the synagogue in Capernaum, after attention was drawn to God giving bread from heaven, He claims that He is that bread (vv.35, 41). In Luke, while the exposition remained on the theme of the text, it went into wider implication to show that those who would so be delivered must include the Gentiles, some thing the Jews could not appreciate. Here in John, Jesus dwelt on the text but showed that its implication is deeper than the superfluous audience can assimilate. In both instances, what initially sounded "gracious words" (Lk.4:12; cf.Jn.6:34) turned to be "hard saying" (Jn 6:60; cf.Lk.4:28) for His audience.

The 'Jews' mentioned in v.42 seem to be Galilean Jews. They are familiar with Jesus' family. The problem of the Jews of Judea was that Jesus was a Galilean and not from Judea (7:52). Curiously the problem of the Galilean Jews also was that Jesus was a Galilean, *one among them*. There was an unfortunate implied acceptance of their own inferiority to think that the Messiah could not come from among them. He came down from heaven to live among them. His '*coming down from heaven*' is mentioned seven times in this chapter alone. Now He shows that God the Father is working in *their* coming to Him also. It is as the Father draws they come to the Son. We may note the involvement of Trinity here. The Father draws people to the Son vv. 37, 44, 65. They come to the Son and hear His word. The Spirit works along with the word to give life to those who receive the word (v.63).

#### **Christ's Flesh and Blood (6:51-59)**

The term 'flesh and blood' is used in Heb 2: 14 to describe Christ's incarnation. His taking a human body of flesh and blood shows in what measure He participated in humanity. He became fully a man, one like them. He is the Logos who became flesh. For life, people must come to Him who came in the lowliness of being in human flesh. Calvin says, "there is no other way in which he can become ours, than by our faith being directed to his flesh. For no one will ever come to Christ as God, who despises him as man; and, therefore, if you wish to have any interest in Christ, you must take care, above all things, that you do not disdain his flesh".

That 'eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood' is a metaphor for 'believing' in Jesus Christ is evident from the parallelism in verses 40 and 54. It is, as Leon Morris puts it, 'the appropriation of Christ'. He says, "Eating and drinking thus appear to be a very graphic way of saying that men must take Christ into their innermost being". Morris has an interesting observation that the word for "eat" in vv. 54-58 [as different from the one used in the previous verses.] 'properly applies to somewhat noisy feeding (like munch or crunch) and there is often the notion of

eating with enjoyment'. Christ is our nourishment and cherishment. It leads to an intimate fellowship with Christ as Jesus said such one "abides in Me and I in him". Christ speaks of *giving* His flesh and blood for humanity. This is evidently about His sacrifice on the Cross for the redemption of the world. The One who became flesh and blood to participate in humanity is now giving His flesh and blood for the salvation of that humanity. How much He cares for man! To receive life from Him, men must believe in Jesus with reference to the salvation work He accomplished on the Cross by breaking His body and shedding His blood [for which the hour was coming]. The Lord spoke of this as an event to take place in future in v.51. Leon Morris points out [at v.53] that "eat" and "drink" are in aorist tense, denoting once-for-all action and not a repeated eating and drinking, such as would be appropriate to the sacrament. It is not from participating from Eucharist but by believing in Jesus that we receive life (v.40). It is by receiving the word of Jesus and experiencing the ministry of the Holy Spirit working along with the word that one will have spiritual life (v.63). However, the Lord's saying here does have a connection with Eucharist, since the central purpose of Christ's incarnation and the basis of our being given eternal life is what Jesus did on the Cross and the Eucharist is remembrance of this.

#### **True Disciples and Superficial Followers (6:60-71)**

We see the poor response of the people to Christ (vv.60-66). As long as they could see the miracle as a mighty work and they were physically benefited by it, they were happy. When they were told the spiritual truths, for most of them it was "hard saying" and they left the Master. As Calvin comments, 'the hardness was in their hearts and not in the saying'. The cause of their stumbling seems to be more the idea of death implied in His words than any ambiguity in His teaching. However, verse 62 shows that 'the cross does not stand alone. The crucifixion and resurrection and ascension are linked in an unbreakable sequence' (Leon Morris). Though the superfluous followers might go away, the true disciples would never leave Him. The former, if asked, 'what do you seek?' would answer, 'bread on a daily basis' (cf. v.26). The latter when the Master asked them, "What do you seek?" at the very outset of their life with Him, answered in effect, 'we seek You, we want to live with You' (Jn.1:38). Those who found life in Him would never go away from Him. When the Lord asked, "Do you also want to go?" they say, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" Peter's confession of faith and allegiance to Christ, with its depth of substance and emotion provides a sharp contrast. Where others said, "This is hard saying", the true disciples say, "You have words of eternal life". Where others say, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" the disciples say, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God". Such are the people who have actually eaten the Bread of Life.



# THE KINGS OF JUDAH (11)

## AHAZ

Koshy Zachariah

### Possessor

2 Kings 16; 2 Chr 28

Contemporary Prophets – Isaiah, Micah,  
Hosea, Oded

It is difficult to believe that a King like Jotham could have an offspring like Ahaz. He was wicked in every way. It is strange that the best of men frequently have the worst sons. Ahaz's mother is not mentioned. It is possible that his father was unfortunate in his choice of a wife. Probably his wife was indifferent to the ways of the Lord. The training a child should get in his younger days, is from his mother. His father being fully immersed in the fair administration of the kingdom would not have been able to bring up the child in the Lord's way. If he was under tutors or in the company of evil young men, it was natural that he would be rebellious to his father's devotion to the Lord. But right from the beginning, Ahaz demonstrated dislikes for the Lord's ways and great liking for the "system and show" involved in other religions. He got more fascinated and attracted to the design and pattern of the altar that he found in Damascus. He wanted more frills and more show for the house of the Lord and its contents. Some may call him a reformist, keeping alive to modern techniques and current practices.

The name Ahaz means "Possessor". Instead of being a possessor of the Lord, he turned out to be a possessor of worldly things and heathen gods. Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. "But he did, not that which was right in the sight of the Lord, like David his father: For he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and made also molten images for Baalim. Moreover, he burnt incense in the valley of the son of Hinnom and burnt his children in the fire after the abominations of the heathen whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel. He sacrificed also and burnt incense in the high places and on the hills and under every green tree" (2 Chr 28:1-4). No one could believe that Ahaz was the son of Jotham. He provoked the Lord God. And he himself was responsible for his idolatrous deeds. God also punished him for this. "Wherefore the Lord, his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria; and they smote him and carried away a great multitude of them captives and brought them to Damascus. And he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter" (v 5). We read in Isaiah 7 that Rezin the king of Syria and Pekah the son of Remaliah, king of Israel went up towards Jerusalem to war against it, but could not prevail against it. They wanted to displace Ahab with the son of Tabeal (it appears that he is not a Hebrew

and if this had happened then the Davidic dynasty would have been cut off. Though a large number of people were butchered and enslaved throughout Judah, these kings could not capture Jerusalem. We read that Pekah the king of Israel slew in Judah a hundred and twenty thousand in one day. This great disaster was unleashed on Judah "because they had forsaken the Lord God of their fathers" (2 Chr 28:6). Ahaz, the king of Judah, and the people alike were wicked and did evil continuously provoking the Lord God. The result was destruction. "And Zichiri, a mighty man of Ephraim slew Maaseiah the king's son and Azrikam the governor of the house and Elkanah that was next to the king" (v 7).

As if the damage inflicted on Judah was not enough, "the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand women, sons and daughters and took also away much spoil from them and brought the spoil to Samaria" (v 8). God was not happy with the large scale killing of the people of Judah and He did not want them to be bondmen to Israelites. So he sent a prophet (v 9) and told them of their folly making their brethren in Judah bond men. Then certain elders in Israel said, "Ye shall not bring in the captives hither: for whereas we have offended against the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great and there is fierce wrath against Israel" (v 13). We see that God moved the heads of the children of Ephraim. We the believers have a message from this. In many assemblies there are divisions and each of the group is trying to finish the other. Both the groups claim righteous before God and try to finish one another through war of words and even physical intimidation. This is totally foreign to the Scriptural instructions and it can never be acceptable to the Lord. They fail to understand that the wrath of God is against them. It is only a matter of time that the Lord teaches them a fitting lesson, sometimes through harsh ways. Beware of this and take corrective measures to ward off the wrath of God.

At the word of the Lord, the armed men left the captives and the spoil before the princes and the entire congregation. The people saw that the captives, their own brethren were treated kindly. "And the men which were expressed by name rose up and took the captives and with the spoil, clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, to their brethren; then they returned to Samaria" (v 14,15). Their conduct was morally beautiful.

Ahaz should have sought the help of the Lord. Instead, he asked the kings of Assyria to help him. At this juncture when the Edomite saw the humiliation of Judah and their weakness, they were emboldened to invade the land. They also carried many as captives to their land. Adding fuel to the fire, the Philistines simultaneously invaded the cities of the low country and of the south of Judah. And Ahaz was helpless and desperate. He could not even think on calling upon the Lord. When wickedness prevails all around, the mind would not turn on to the Lord. And we read that this "insult to injury" was because "The Lord brought Judah low because of Ahaz the King of Israel; for he made Judah naked and transgressed sore against the Lord" (v 19).

In 2 Chronicle 28:20-25, we have a record of Ahaz's wickedness. He would not turn to the Lord and repent. He sought the help of the king of Assyria, but it was of no use. He distressed them instead of helping them, though he was given the treasures of the house of the Lord, the kings house and of the princes. We read, "And in the time of his distress, did he trespass yet more against the Lord (2 Chr

28:22): this is king Ahaz. For he sacrificed unto the gods of Damascus, which smote him and he said, "Because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore, will I sacrifice to them that they may help me. But they were the ruin of him and of all Israel" (v 23). "And Ahaz gathered together the vessels of the house of God and cut in pieces the vessels of the house of God and shut up the doors of the house of the Lord and he made him altars in every corner of Jerusalem. And in every several city of Judah he made high places to burn incense unto other gods and provoked to anger the Lord God of his fathers" (v 25). It appears that he was determined to fill up the measure of his sins. A king like Ahaz does not deserve more consideration. More of his wickedness could be read in 2 King 16:10-13.

He gave a bad example to his grandson Manasseh. Someone said, "His ways were the manifestation of his nature; His acts more the display of His power". His sixteen years rein was the manifestation of wickedness. However he was buried with his father in the City of David.



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### KIND ATTENTION!

**The 17th All India Workers' Conference** is planned to be held at the OM Centre in Secunderabad, A.P from 16th to 19th October 2008. We expect several international speakers including J.B.Nicholson (Jr) and Kurian Parayil. We are expecting speakers from UK and Canada also. Earnest prayer support would be valued. We would be extending invitation to around 400 English knowing Evangelists. Please uphold this matter in your valuable prayers so that it will be a time of great blessing. Kindly note that admission is only by invitation.

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### HOME CALL

**John Das M, (63) Tanjore**, went to be with the Lord on 7th June-08, after a massive heart attack, while busy in the ministry. He laboured for the Lord for about 38 years and as a result of his labour five assemblies were formed. He is survived by his wife and three children all of whom are settled down in life. His son Cherian Johnson is now in full time ministry. The funeral took place on 11th June in Vennikulam, Pathinamthitta dt of Kerala. Remember the bereaved family in prayers,

**Evg. Narayan Paul, (74) Srikakulam, AP**, wen to be with the Lord on on Thursday June 12, 2008) at 8:15 PM after an attack of Cerebral Malaria and Jaundice. Bro. Narayan Paul was very weak since January this year. The good hand of the Lord was with him in planting over a hundred village churches in the hills and valleys of Andhra Pradesh and Orissa, primarily among the Sora tribe. Please pray for the grace of God and strength and comfort of all the family members as they are all going through unprecedented sorrow. He is survived by his wife Grace Paul, son Timothy (evangelist) and daughters Phoebe and Hephshiba (Arizona-USA) The funeral took place on 14/06/08, in the midst of a large gathering of believers are friends. Prayers are requested for the bereaved family.

# Vineyard News

## ANDHRA PRADESH

01/07/08 **Joseph Narsaiah, Bheemgal**  
From 10<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> of April they conducted Bible classes for youth at Rekulappally. It was a time of rich spiritual blessing. All the teenagers were revived. Eight of them came forward and accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. All the four neighbouring assemblies in the area participated. Prayers are requested.

02/07/08 **Paul Raju, Tanuku**  
Brother informs that from 28<sup>th</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> May 2008, an interior tribal evangelism was held, organized by Ch Paramanandam of Kothapadu. Many brothers and evangelists from the nearby places participated in the programme. Prayers are requested.

03/07/08 **David Brainard, Chilikaluripet**  
All the activities are going on well by the grace of God. Prayers are requested for some new contacts who are eager for the gospel and also for the educational needs of his two children.

04/07/08 **Y. Israel, Ukkunagaram**  
An outreach was held from 25<sup>th</sup> Feb to 1<sup>st</sup> March-08 in which around 30 brethren participated. 145 villages were covered with the Gospel, distributing 45000 tracts and booklets. 23 people made decisions for the Lord. Prayers are coveted.

## BIHAR

05/07/08 **Sanjay Ram, Bara Chakia**  
The ministry here is growing by His grace. There is a small assembly here with 15 believers taking part in the Lord's supper, and about 30 people attending the meeting. They stay in a rented house and conduct the worship there. Most of the believers are from poor background. They have regular outreach work in the villages. Prayers are requested.

06/07/08 **Niranjan Paswan, Munger**  
Three days of special meetings were held along with a baptism programme in a place called

Nawagadhi. About 30 people participated in the programme. Five believers were baptized and added to the assembly.

07/07/08 **Shampu Kumar, Bhagalpur**  
God has been continuously blessing their ministry, especially in the recent months. About 1000 people heard the word in the recent outreach work. God has opened the door of evangelism in a village called Shadipur. In the Good news children's club that they have started in a new village about 20 children are attending. Prayers are coveted for all these efforts.

08/07/08 **Abhay Kr Mandal, Lakhisarai**  
Outreach work was held in five villages, distributing 25 Bibles, 300 NTs, and 1000 Gospel portion. Prayers are requested for the seed sown.

## GOA

09/07/08 **David Joseph, Uphasnagar**  
God has graciously helped them in getting settled down in Goa. They are fellowshiping with the assembly at Vasco, and attending all the activities, as they spent time in praying for Goa and also seeking God's specific will and guidance to serve Him in this part of the country. Kindly note his new address: Mr. David Joseph, C/o. Zarina Patel, 89/12, Uphasnagar, Sancale, Goa-403 726.

## JHARKHAND

10/07/08 **P.M. Skariah, Tatanagar**  
Brother informs that by seeing the need of poor and destitute children to be educated and taken care of, they have started a children's home called Mercy Home. There are eighteen children in the Home and God willing the number will be 25 shortly. The prayers of the saints are solicited for the maintenance of this Home and also for all other ministries.

11/07/08 **Daniel Malto, Hiranpur**  
The Gospel work here is progressing well. About 60 believers are gathering here for worship on Sunday. Many of them are coming from different

villages nearby. Last year it pleased the Lord to add 24 people to His fold. Many of them are getting ready for baptism. Prayers are requested for the spiritual growth of these new believers.

12/07/08

**Somir Jha, Sahibganj**

In the recent outreach work held they were able to reach out to 79 villages with the Gospel. From April 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> they held a Bible camp in which brother Benjamin Alexandar shared the Word. During this time four believers were baptized. For the enhancement of the outreach work, they are praying for a four-wheeler. Prayers are requested for this ministry and also for the good health of his wife.

### KARNATAKA

13/07/08

**Koteswara Rao, Bellary**

He was able to participate in Gospel meetings in two places where totally ten people trusted the Lord. 21 other believers were baptized and added to the fellowship. Prayers are requested for these new believers and also for his other ministry travels in Andhra during the summer season.

14/07/08

**A.S Sabu, Arasikere**

The work is progressing in this place. The Sunday meeting is conducted in their home itself. They are planning to buy a plot of land for the assembly hall. Prayers are needed for this need. They have also started work in a place called Jawagal, about 35 Kms from here. Prayers are solicited.

### MADHYA PRADESH

15/07/08

**Shaji Varghese, Khandwa**

There are two small gatherings going on here: one in their home and another in a rented place about 45KMs from here in a place called Karpur. There are six Bible studies going on, two children's clubs and other outreach ministries. Prayers are requested for all these ministries and also for the good health of his family members. His wife Jiji is suffering from Rheumatoid Arthritis, his son Samson is suffering with Vitiligo (White spots) and his daughter Keren is suffering from some small growths in her vocal cord and needs surgery.

16/07/08

**Ranjit Kumar Bagh, Gwalior**

Brother has taken over the work in this area from Mr. Philip Abraham who pioneered the work in this place and has returned to Kerala due to his ill

health. The Lord is blessing the work. Please pray for the follow up programme in Gwalior, Dabra, Datia and Bitarbar.

### MAHARASHTRA

17/07/08

**Vijay Simon, Navapur**

By the grace of God the ministry is going on well especially in the villages. They have six assemblies and five local workers working along with him. They have an old jeep for the ministry; but it needs repair immediately. He is suffering from B.P and heart problem. Prayers are requested for all these matters.

18/07/08

**B.D.Balid, Ahmednagar**

Brother informs that for the past one year he was in fellowship with the assembly in Goregaon. The Lord used him to win eight souls and baptize them on 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb 2008. By the Grace of God the assembly is growing spiritually. From April-08, he has shifted his place of work to Ahemdnagar. Please note his new address: *B.D.Balid, Anugrah Bunglow, Opp. Saint Monica Training College, T.V. Centre Road, Ahmednagar-414 003, MH.*

### NEPAL

19/07/08

**Mathew Philip, Pokhara**

The Lord is helping them to continue the ministry here. They are planning to go for an outreach to a village about 12 Kms from here. From time to time they hold such efforts as a team. Prayers are requested for the ministries especially for the Sunday school and youth works. Please pray for a stable government in Nepal.

### PUNJAB

20/07/08

**Madan Paul, Ludhiana**

On 22<sup>nd</sup> May North – West India workers prayer meeting was held. The recent visit of the Lord's servant brother Victor Sundararaj from Chennai was a blessing to the assembly at Ludhiana. Prayers are coveted for all the on going assembly activities.

### RAJASTHAN

21/07/08

**Y. Thankachan, Bhilwara**

Brother informs that he is not keeping good health and is on medication. His mother was very serious

and had to undergo a surgery, however, the surgery was not successful as the cancer had spread to many areas. The ministries are going well and being blessed by the Lord. Kindly remember this brother in prayers.

### TAMIL NADU

**22/07/08**                    **R.Jeyapal, Sankarankoil**  
In the special meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> April-08, brother Aniyah Varghese shared the Word, and it was a blessing to all. Six persons who had earlier accepted Christ were baptized on 29<sup>th</sup> April-08. From 8<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> May-08, they conducted a VBS which was led by Jeykumar Nallathambi. About 300 children attended everyday. Prayers are requested.

**23/07/08**                    **Andavarsamy S, Mettupalayam**  
Brother informs that his wife and help mate in the ministry for all these years entered into the presence and glory of God on 29<sup>th</sup> January-2008, after a brief illness. She was admitted to hospital due to some heart problem. But it pleased the Lord to take her to eternal rest. Prayers are requested for the bereaved family.

### TRIPURA

**24/07/08**                    **C.O. Davis, Agartala**  
They had a baptism service held in the first week of May-08. Brother Santosh Thomas helped in the ministry during those days. By God's goodness some new souls were added to the church, although there were oppositions in some places. They plan to start the third assembly gathering at Goyal Nagar shortly. Prayers are requested.

### WEST BENGAL

**25/07/08**                    **Bablu Shah, Mohishila**  
Brother is helping in the ministry at Durgapur, as brother Jacob has moved to Kerala. He is also working in a place called Andal. An assembly testimony was started at Andal recently and the Lord is blessing the work; recently 7 believers were baptized and added to the fellowship. Nearly forty people are attending the meetings on Sunday at Andal. Brother is also involved in literature ministry, particularly in translating and editing books and periodicals. Prayers are requested.

**26/07/08**                    **Purnendhu Jha, Burdwan**  
The ministry at Chinakuri is going on well. Through the door-to-door ministry many have been contacted. Those interested are being followed up. Most of them are from NC background. They have started a children's ministry in a place called C.P. Dharwa. Prayers are coveted.

**27/07/08**                    **Rakesh Roy, Lapuria**  
The Lord is blessing the work here. They had ten days outreach work here and surrounding places. Many people heard the Word. Follow up work is going on. Pray that the seed sown will bear fruits.

**28/07/08**                    **Samuel Das, Adra**  
The children ministry is progressing well along with other ministries. They have about 285 students who are taking regular Bible studies. He requests prayer for the good health of his wife and for all the other ministries going on here.

**29/07/08**                    **Weleston Kisku, Burnpur**  
The ministry among the Santal people is going on well by the grace of God. During the months of January and February-08, they had an outreach work in different places as a team. They were able to get many contacts and they are being followed up. He also mentions about the need of an assembly hall, as it is becoming increasingly difficult to gather in the rented place.

### OTHER MATTERS

**30/07/08**  
**Gopalakrishnan, B. Steel City,**  
Brother has a fall in month of Feb-08. Although he did not have much injury at that time, after two months, it was noticed that his right arm was getting weaker and lean. On examination it was found that the nerve coming from the brain is affected and needs immediate surgery. Prayers are requested for his speedy recovery.

**31/07/08**  
**Christian Brethren Assembly, Kuwait.** A new assembly was started here in a place called Abbassia, on 15<sup>th</sup> Feb-08. Prayers are coveted for the spiritual growth of this new assembly. Contact: cbakuwait@gmail.com



**KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AT SBC**  
**Sanjib Maharana**

I come from Tankibelary of the state of Orissa. I was born and brought up in a nominal Christian family. However, I never knew Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and walked in the ways of the world, especially in the cinema world. Once I heard an evangelist preaching on Rom.12:1-2, which made me to think about my sinful ways.



On 20th August-2005, I realized that Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation and accepted Him as my Lord and Saviour. Then I received the real peace and joy in my heart as I became a real child of God by faith in Christ. I had a great desire to study the Bible deeply. So I joined the Stewards Bible College, Chennai and am studying the Bible now in the second year. Please pray for my studies and also for the salvation of my parents.

**Note:** Only Biblically sound articles are accepted for publication in "Vineyard Echoes". However, Vineyard Echoes does not necessarily endorse or hold responsibility for the views expressed by the authors in their articles and the material information furnished by the brethren for the Vineyard News column.

**All Correspondence, Articles and contributions for the Ministry may be sent to: The Gospel Fellowship Trust of India, No.1, Bethesda Centre, Kodungaiyur P.O, Chennai- 600 118, TN, INDIA.**

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**PRAY FOR**

**The Gospel Fellowship Trust of India**  
(Regd. Society No.183/1968)  
No.1, Bethesda Centre, Kodungaiyur P.O,  
Chennai-600 118. India.  
(Legal Jurisdiction: Madras)

**Objectives of the ministry of GFTI**

1. To encourage the preaching of the Good News of Salvation throughout India and elsewhere.
2. To encourage the planting of New Testament-based Christian Assemblies.
3. To act as a channel to pass on to the Lord's Servants (enjoying current commendations of their home assemblies) the voluntary contributions of God's people. We now serve over 900 brethren.
4. Assistance to those in distress through natural calamities etc.,
5. To support those in extreme need such as widows, the poor and those parents in difficulty to educate their children.
6. Evangelism through Literature, Special Conferences.
7. To Support Assembly-based Bible Education.