

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 HIGH PRIEST

The moment we consider the role of a high-Priest, we are straightaway taken to the verses in Hebrews 5:1-3. "For every high-Priest taken from among men, is ordained for men in things pertaining to God that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins; who can have compassion on the ignorant and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof, he ought as for the people, so also for himself to offer for sins". The foremost qualification of the Aaronic Priesthood was that he had to be chosen from among men because He was to act for men in relation to God. He was to act as an intermediary between men and God. He should be able to understand the weakness and frailty of a human nature. And then He was to represent to God the needs of men being righteous before God; for this reason he had to offer sacrifices for himself. The office of a high-Priest was not something chosen by men as a vocation. All were not allowed to serve in the tabernacle except Aaron and his successors. The high-Priest's main function was to offer gifts and sacrifices – gifts point out to all offerings other than sacrifices whereas sacrifices point out to all those offerings wherein blood was shed. The high-Priest was to be that person, who could always reflect his own frailties and weaknesses so that he could have compassion on his fellow-beings.

In the tabernacle, behind the second veil, was the Holiest of All or the Holy of Holies. It was the one spot on earth where God manifested Himself. Only one man in the world could go to this spot – the high-Priest of Israel. He could not go very often; he was allowed to enter in only one day of the year. That day was the Day of Atonement. And he should go with the blood that was offered for himself and for the people, for all the sins committed in ignorance. The Holy Spirit teaches that man had distanced himself from God through sins and therefore a mediator was necessary to approach God through the blood of a sacrificial victim. William MacDonald opines, "The gifts and sacrifices could never make the

worshippers perfect in regard to the conscience. If complete remission of sins had been procured, then the offerer's conscience would have been from the guilt of sin. But this never happened. As a matter of fact, the Levitical offerings dealt only with ritual deployments. They were concerned with such externals as clean and unclean foods and drinks and with the ceremonial washings that would rid the people of ritual impurity but they did not deal with moral cleanness. The offerings were concerned with a people who were in covenant relationship with God. They were designed to maintain the people in a position of ritual purity so that they could worship. They had nothing to do with salvation or with cleansing from sin. The people were saved by faith in the Lord on the basis of the work of Christ still future". Thus despite the fact that the high-Priest could present himself and the people before God with a sense of being freed from the guilt of sin, he could not himself be holy or his people. There was only a temporary reprieve and temporary covering of sin. Therefore, year after year this was done.

For this reason, a high-Priest who could be without sin and could make a permanent atonement for the sins of the people was necessary. Thus we read, "But Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place having obtained eternal redemption (for us). For if the blood of bulls and of goats and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb 9:11-14). Our Lord offered His own blood. He finished the work of redemption at Calvary. The work is completed once and for all. Then He entered into the Most Holy Place once for all. At the time of Ascension, He went into God's presence. By His sacrifice He

obtained for us eternal redemption; His blood is of infinite value and its power is adequate enough to cleanse the sin of the whole world. Of course, its power is applicable only to those who accept Him by faith. The Lord's offering was to the Most Holy God. And God accepted it once and for all as a permanent offering since He was the spotless and sinless Lamb of God. The Lord had not repeated the offering as the Aaronic high-Priest had to do. The latter went into the Most Holy Place only once a year with the blood of sacrificed animals and not with his own blood. The Lord's role as a High-Priest accomplished in principle four things. He has appeared once for all – no more repeated offerings. He appeared at the end of ages – a propitious time. He appeared to put away sin – a perfect work giving eternal forgiveness. And He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself – a personal sacrifice. We could join Philip P. Bliss concerning our High-Priest.

*“Bearing shame and scoffing rude,
In my place condemned He stood
Sealed my pardon with His blood
Hallelujah! What a Saviour!”*

The writer to the Hebrews says that no one can truly sympathise unless he has gone through similar experience. “For we have not a High-Priest, which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb 4:15). He could sympathise with us in all things except our wrong doings because He never experienced it. We are told, “For as much then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.....For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels; but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High-Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted; He is able to succour them that are tempted” (Heb 2:14-18). What a High-Priest we have! The writer to Hebrews says, “Seeing then that we have a great High-Priest that is

passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God” (Heb 4:14). Notice the excellences of our great Lord. (1) He is a great High-Priest. None under mosaic economy was ever called great, though there were many high-Priests (2) He has passed into the heavens. The disciples saw the Ascension with their own very eyes. He sat at the right hand of God (3) He is a man – the name Jesus given to Him at His birth links with His humanity and (4) He is the Son of God revealing to us that He is divine. He was equal with God the Father. No wonder He is called a great High-Priest.

In Heb 5:10, we read, “Called of God an High-Priest after the order of Melchizedek”. Though His Priesthood is of the Melchizedekan order, yet His Priestly functions are similar to those carried on by the Aaronic Priest. Melchizedek is an excellent type of our Lord Jesus Christ. He combined the offices of King and Priest. He “is the King of Salem, Priest of the Most-high God.....being by interpretation King of righteousness and after that also King of Salem, which is King of Peace; 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” (Heb 7:1-3). The writer here is distinguishing between the Melchizedekan Priesthood and the Aaronic. Aaronic Priesthood necessitated that a man had to be born of the tribe of Levi. His qualification began at birth and ended at death. Not so with Melchizedekan Priesthood. His Priesthood continues.

In Hebrews 8:1&2, we read, “We have such an High-Priest who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man”. What a triumphant note in the usage “we have”! No high-Priest ever sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty – none ever held such a place of honour and power. How much we should rejoice in our High-Priest – the apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb 3:1).

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THE SUPERIOR MERITS OF CHRIST'S BLOOD

E J Mathew

The epistle to Hebrews tells us about the better things under the NT covenant available to NT believers vis-a-vis Israel. Chapter 9 dwells upon the superior merits of the blood of Christ in contrast with the blood of animals shed during OT economy. May we briefly examine them:

1. The offering of a sacrifice by the High Priest and his going to the Holiest of Holies with blood was a recurring event every year whereas Christ entered the holiest ONCE for all and never to be repeated 9:12, 10:10

2. The OT high priest had the blood of goats and calves in his hands every time but Christ went with His own shed blood into the holy place. The blessings which accrue through Christ's blood are far superior to the blood of animals for its blessings are available for eternity.

3. Christ went with His blood into a greater and more perfect tabernacle. He went as a high priest of good things to come; He was a high priest of the order of Melchizedec. His high priesthood/high priestly ministry was unique; he was King of Salem (Jerusalem), High priest of the Most High God and to whom Abraham (which included Levi and Aaron) gave tithes. Consequently the blood shed and offered by Jesus Christ is far superior to the blood of animals which even Melchizedec could have offered to God.

4. Through the blood of Christ we have achieved eternal redemption unlike the redemption of Israel. They had to offer and shed blood every time they committed sin. They had to renew their experience of redemption whereas the redemption through Christ's blood is once for all never to be repeated.

5. Whereas the sprinkling of the blood of the bulls and goats helped sanctification

and purification of the flesh, the blood of Christ purges our conscience from the effects of dead works and enables us to serve (worship) the true living God.

6. Through His blood, Christ has established a new covenant far superior to the Old covenant. This latter covenant has been established irrevocably through his death once for all. While Moses enacted the covenant with Israel, he took the blood of the calves and goats with water and scarlet wool and hyssop and sprinkled both the book and the people saying this is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you (Heb. 9:19-20). In contrast, Christ has become the Mediator of a better covenant established upon better promises. The Lord Himself stated concerning His blood: This is the blood of the New Testament shed for the remission of our sins. How superior are the blessings that flow from His blood and His ever binding New Testament (covenant).

6. It is an established law of God that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins. Accordingly, the blood of you and I who are sinners by birth and by practice should have been shed. But, not only were we spared from shedding blood, our guilty consciences have been purged with the sinless and most holy blood of the Son of God and we have been granted access to the very presence of the Most Holy God. The Lord Jesus is ever present there to sympathize with us as our High priest and to intercede for us. His intercessory ministry is so superior to the OT ministry that He is able to save us to the uttermost.

May these thoughts cheer us and stimulate our hearts to serve Him more acceptably and to glorify Him through our humble services for Him.

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THE KINGS OF JUDAH (12)

HEZEKIAH

Koshy Zachariah

2Kgs18-20; 2Chr 29-32;Isaiah 37-39

**Contemporary Prophets – Isaiah, Micah,
Nahum, Itasca**

Hezekiah was twenty five years old when he began to reign. And he reigned twenty nine years in Jerusalem. Ahaz, his father, died at the age of thirty six. It is difficult to believe that his son Hezekiah could be twenty five years old. There is some discrepancy and we shall leave it there. His mother's name was Abija. Her name meant "whose father is Jehovah". She lived to her name by bringing up her son Hezekiah in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. We read of Hezekiah, "And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God and in the law, and in the commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his heart and prospered" (2 Chr 31:21). "He trusted in the Lord God of Israel; so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah nor any that were before him. For he clave to the Lord and departed not from following Him but kept His commandments which the Lord commanded Moses" (2 Kings 18:5,6). "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord according to all that David his father did" (2 Kings 18:3). If Ahaz had been so bad a man to come of a good father like Jotham, Hezekiah had been so good a man to come of a bad father like Ahaz. How true is the reflection of the wise preacher? We read, on one's successor "who knoweth whether he shall be a wise man or a fool" (Eccl 2:19). "He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord and repaired them. And he brought in the Priests and the Levites and gathered them together into the east street and said unto them "Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place" (2 Chr 29:3-5). "God's things first" and that was how Hezekiah saw to it and the Lord blessed him for that. He began with the sanctuary without any delay on the first day of the first month of the first year of his reign (v 17). So it should be in this day of Church dispensation. Instead we see everyone minds his own things and has no time for the Lord or his ministry. In true fatherly love to them, Hezekiah addressed the Priests and Levites, "My sons" (v 11). That is how the men in oversight in Christian assemblies should look at the congregation, so that a bond exists among the members as of one family. In 2 Chr 29:6-11, Hezekiah addressed the Priests and Levites with facts pointing out the failures of the past and the need for revival. God was at work when the king was engaged in the Lord's matters. The response was good and we read, "And they gathered their brethren and sanctified themselves and came according to the commandment of the king, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the

house of the Lord" (v 15). On the eighth day of the month, came they to the porch of the Lord: so they sanctified the house of the Lord in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month, they made an end (v 17). In addition, they re-sanctified "all the vessels which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression" (v 19). "Then Hezekiah the king rose early and gathered the rulers of the city and went up to the house of the Lord" (v 20). They made a sin offering for the kingdom and for the sanctuary and for Judah. At the king's commandment that the burnt offering and the sin offering should be made for all Israel, an atonement was made for Israel (v 24). And the Levites stood with instruments (like cymbals, psalteries and harps) of David and the priests with the trumpets to sing unto the Lord. That was one of the memorable days for Jerusalem. As the burnt offerings continued, "they sang praises with gladness and they bowed their heads and worshipped" (v 30). Then Hezekiah answered and said, "Now ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord, come near and bring sacrifice and thank offerings into the house of the Lord" (v 31). The liberal burnt offerings brought by the congregation were in so much abundance that the Priests being few could not flay all the burnt offerings and the Levites had to help them. We read, "And also the burnt offerings were in abundance with the fat of the peace offerings and the drink offerings for every burnt offering. So the service of the house of the Lord was set in order" (v 35). And Hezekiah rejoiced and all the people, that God had prepared the people: for the thing was done suddenly (v 36). "And Hezekiah sent to all Israel and Judah and wrote letters also to Ephraim and Manasseh that they should come to the house of the Lord at Jerusalem to keep the pass-over unto the Lord God of Israel. For the king had taken counsel and his princes and all the congregation in Jerusalem to keep the passover in the second month. For they could not keep it at that time because the priests had not sanctified themselves sufficiently; neither had the people gathered themselves together to Jerusalem. And the thing pleased the king and all the congregation" (2 Chr 30:1-4). Hezekiah had consultations among his people. As a result, "they established a decree to make proclamation throughout all Israel, from Beersheba even to Dan, that they should come to keep the passover unto the Lord God of Israel at Jerusalem: for they had not done it of a long time in such a sort as it was written" (v 5). How sad it was that they had not observed one of the significant yearly feasts for a long time. How wonderfully God awakened the conscience of Hezekiah for a revival? "So the posts went with letters from the king and his princes throughout all Israel and Judah". The

message was beautiful. It reads, “Ye children of Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and He will return to the remnant of you, that are escaped out of the hand of the Kings of Assyria. And be not ye like your fathers and like your brethren which trespassed against the Lord God of their fathers, who therefore gave them up to desolation as ye see. Now be ye not stiff-necked as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto the Lord and enter into His sanctuary, which He hath sanctified for ever; and serve the Lord your God that the fierceness of His wrath may turn away from you. For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful and will not turn away His face from you if ye return unto Him (vv 6-9)”. So the posts passed from city to city through the country of Ephraim and Manasseh even unto Zebulun, but they laughed and mocked them. But some were delighted. Even in the present dispensation, this is happening. Some receive the word of God, but most of the people laugh and mock to their own destruction and condemnation. We have the records in the New Testament how the word of God was rejected. In Acts 17, we note that God’s solemn message delivered at Mars Hills in Athens received the same treatment, some mocked and some received.

However, we read, “And there assembled at Jerusalem much people to keep the feast of unleavened bread in the second month, a very great congregation. And they arose and took away the altars that were in Jerusalem and all the altars for incense took they away and cast them unto the brook Kidron” (2 Chr 30:13,14).

“Then they killed and ate the passover on the fourteenth day of the second month; and the Priests and Levites were ashamed and sanctified themselves and brought in the burnt offerings into the house of the Lord (v 15). We read that there were many who had not cleansed themselves though they ate the pass-over and Hezekiah prayed for them. “And the Lord hearkened to Hezekiah and healed the people” (v 20). And the whole assembly took counsel to keep other seven days and they kept other seven days with gladness (v 23). “So there was great joy in Jerusalem; for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel, there was not the like in Jerusalem. Then the priests and the Levites arose and blessed the people and their voice was heard and their prayer came up to His holy dwelling place, even unto heaven” (vv 26,27).

“When all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah and broke the images in pieces and cut down the groves and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all” (2 Chr 31:1). On the part of Hezekiah, “He removed the high places and broke the images and cut down the groves and broke

in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made” (2 Kings 18:4). Then all the children of Israel returned every man to his possession into their own cities (2 Chr 31:1). Then Hezekiah set in order the Priestly and Levitical service. He asked the people to give the tithes to the priests and Levites. The response was so good that there was abundance in corn, wine, oil, honey and of all the increase in the field. The children of Israel and Judah brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep and the tithe of holy things (v 5,6). The offerings continued from the third to the seventh month and Hezekiah had to build store houses in the temple to keep the abundant provisions. “And thus did Hezekiah throughout all Judah and wrought that which was good and right and truth before the Lord his God. And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God and in the law and in the commandments to seek his God, he did it with all his heart and prospered” (2 Chr 31:20,21).

After setting in order the spiritual matters, Hezekiah turned his attention to the matters concerning to material things. In the second year of his reign, “He rebelled against the king of Assyria and served him not. He smote the Philistines even unto Gaza and the borders thereof from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city” (2 Kings 18:7, 8). But in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, Sennacherib, king of Assyria invaded his kingdom and took all the fenced cities. Hezekiah’s faith in his God appeared to have waned by this time. And he did not seek the face of his God or the mediation of any Prophet. He panicked and was weakened. He sent a mercy plea to the king of Assyria to Lachish saying, “I have offended, return from me: that which thou puttest on me will I bear” (2 Kings 18:14). Hezekiah had to pay three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. This was a very heavy levy. And to pay this, Hezekiah had to take all the treasures of the house of God and of his own house. Even he cut off the gold from the doors of the temple of the Lord and from the pillars which Hezekiah, king of Judah had overlaid. God wanted to teach Hezekiah a lesson. Even his submission and the payment of the levy did not satisfy Sennacherib and this wicked king was determined to take possession of Jerusalem. Then Hezekiah “took counsel with his princes and mighty men” (2 Chr 32:3). Then he addressed the people in faith saying, “Be strong and courageous, be not afraid or dismayed for the king of Assyria nor for all the multitude that is with him: for there be more with us than with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles” (2 Chr 32:7,8). This stand should have been taken in the same faith earlier but he gave in under pressure without depending on the Lord fully. “And the people rested themselves upon the words of Hezekiah, king of Judah” (v 8). Sennacherib then sent his servants to Jerusalem to intimidate and frighten them with discouraging words. From the passage recorded in the scripture we could see that Rab-Shakeh (2 Kg 18:19), Sennacherib’s commander-in-chief was an

accomplished diplomat and he hoped to incite sedition in the city. But his labour was in vain. People held their peace and believed in the assurance Hezekiah had given to them in the name of the Lord.

Some of the king's officers (2 Kings 18:37) came to the king with their clothes rent and told him the words of Rab-Shakeh. Then Hezekiah himself "rent his clothes and covered himself with sack cloth and went into the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 19:1). Then he sent words to Isaiah the Prophet saying, "This day is a day of trouble and of rebuke and blasphemy: for the children are come to the birth and there is not strength to bring forth. It may be, the Lord thy God will hear all the words of Rab-Shakeh whom the king of Assyria, his master hath sent to reproach the living God; and will reprove the words which the Lord thy God hath heard; wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that are left" (vs 3-4). The Prophet was not perturbed and his answer was decisive. Isaiah said unto them, "Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord, "Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold I will send a blast upon him and he shall hear a rumour and shall return to his own land and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land" (vs 6-7).

Sennacherib, though wanted to return to his country, was hesitant to let off his siege of Jerusalem and as a last measure when every threat failed, sent a letter to king Hezekiah hoping to frighten him further. And Hezekiah when he received the letter took it to the house of the Lord and spread it before the Lord. That was a child-like trust. He prayed sincerely and earnestly. This prayer is recorded in 2 Kings 19:15-19. God answered him through Isaiah which is recorded in vs 32-37. The answer included, "For I will defend this city to save it for mine own sake and for my servant David's sake" (v 34). As assured, the angel of the Lord, "smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and four score and five thousand; and when they arose early in the morning behold they were all dead corpses. And we read, "Sennacherib king of Assyria departed.....and it came to pass as he was worshipping in the house of Nisroch his god.....his sons smote him with the sword" (vs 35-37). "Thus the Lord saved Hezekiah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib the king of Assyria and from the hand of all other and guided them on every side" (2 Chr 32:22).

Now we see, "Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem" (2 Chr 32:25). "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the Prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him and said unto him, "Thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order; for thou shalt die and not live" (2 Kings 20:1). Hezekiah's repentance on hearing the news is one of the best in the scripture. "Then he turned his face to the wall and prayed unto the Lord saying, "I beseech thee O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee

in truth and with a perfect heart and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore" (v 3). The prayer was an intense rather an intimate one. "And it came to pass before Isaiah was gone out into the middle court that the word of the Lord came to him saying, "Turn again and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, "Thus saith the Lord the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears; behold I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up into the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years" (2 Kings 20:4-6). We see that he asked for a sign to assure himself of his recovery. God gave the king a sign. The shadow turned back by ten degrees. How great is our God! He only could do that without shaking the foundation of the earth and the very existence of the universe and the galaxy systems.

When God prospers people in material things, they get lifted up with vanity. The greatest pitfall of the Christian believers is the abundance of wealth and material prosperity with which they have been blessed. The end result of this is the show, put up in terms of palatial houses, rich wardrobes, very costly clothes, luxurious cars and properties. Now, when Hezekiah lifted up himself in vanity, the Prophet came and reproved him. He asked, "What said these men? And from whence came they unto thee. And Hezekiah said, "They are come from a far country, even from Babylon. And he said what have they seen in thine house. And Hezekiah answered, "All the things that are in mine house have they seen; there is nothing among my treasures that I have not shewed them" (2 Kings 20:14, 15). Hezekiah was truthful. He showed his house and his armour and in that process, his strength and weakness. He could have shown the house of the Lord, the importance of the contents and the importance of worship. That he did not. Then Isaiah said unto Hezekiah, Hear the word of the Lord. Behold the days come, that all that is in thine house and that which thy fathers have laid up in store unto this day shall be carried into Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the Lord" (vs 16,17). How sad is the end of "display of wealth and resources"?

"And Hezekiah had exceeding much riches and honour: and he made himself treasuries for silver and for gold and for precious stones....., for God had given him substance very much" (2 Chr 32:27-29). And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might and how he made a pool and a conduit and brought water in to the city, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Judah (2 Kings 20:20). "Hezekiah slept with his fathers and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David; and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour at his death" (2 Chr 32:33).

Hezekiah in many respects is a wonderful king, worthy of emulation. His bold decision to break the brazen serpent and his sincere prayer for extension of life and "God's things first", shall stand out. "After him was none like him among all the kings of Judah nor any that were before him (2 Kings 18:5).

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Vineyard News

ANDRA PRADESH

01/08/08 **A. G. Jacob, Visakhapatnam**
They had conducted a family conference attended by more than 500 people and it was a great blessing to all the participants. Many testified of being awakened by the Lord. Prayers are requested for the Missionary Awareness Programme for the youth which would be held, God willing, in October-08.

02/08/08 **K. Paul, Sidhantam**
Five villages in their Mandal were covered with the gospel by conducting gospel meetings, distributing tracts and doing personal evangelism. Some people accepted the Lord as the result of this ministry. Pray that God may bless them with more souls in the coming days.

03/08/08 **A. Daniel, Pilligundla Colony**
They have recently started a new assembly testimony at Kallumarri in Karnataka border. Around 20 believers are attending the meetings. The ministry in Pilligundla is going on well, some new believers have expressed their desire to take baptism. Pray that God may enable them to grow spiritually.

04/08/08 **P. Daniel, Jagannadapuram**
Our brother met with a bike accident recently and was severely injured. After being hospitalized and treated, he is now convalescing at home. Covets the prayers of the saints for speedy recovery.

CHATTISGARH

05/08/08 **Benjamin Raot, Rudukela**
Despite heavy rain and storm in this area the Lord helped them to visit many villages with the gospel of Christ. Among the four villages they visited, Bible classes have been started in two places and in one place four people believed on the Lord. The assembly activities of Jharam and Rudukela are progressing well. Five people have accepted the Lord recently. Pray that God

may open many more doors for the gospel.

GUJARAT

06/08/08 **Xavier Antony, Bharuch**
By God's grace the ministry here is going on well. Four believers have obeyed the Lord in the waters of baptism recently. In addition to the local ministry here, they have also started Bible class in a village called Attali, about 40kms away from Bharuch. Prayers are solicited for these ministries.

07/08/08 **T. L. Joseph, Jamnagar**
The ministry here is going on well. Prayers are coveted for his good health so that the ministry may proceed unhindered.

HARYANA

08/08/08 **K. K. Thankachan, Bhiwani**
With the help of the brethren from Delhi Bethesda Assembly, God helped them to conduct gospel meetings in Bhiwani. Around 500 New Testaments and a good number of gospel literature were distributed. They also shared the gospel to 250 prisoners in the jail. Prayers are solicited for the spread of the gospel in Bhivani.

KARNATAKA

09/08/08 **D. Albert Anandaraj, Siddantapuram**
They as a family continue their ministry among the children, youth and sisters. Hundreds of people are attending the meetings, among whom four took baptism recently and many others confessed their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover 75 people are doing Emmaus Correspondence Course. At present he is working with the YMEF team in Kollegal Taluk. Please uphold these ministries in your prayers.

10/08/08 **Christopher H., Belgaum**
Brother visits many schools with charts declaring the glory of God and the salvation in Jesus Christ. They praise God for His blessings upon the marriage of their son and also confinement of

their daughter, who gave birth to a baby boy. Prayers are solicited for these matters and also for the Konkani Bible translation ministry.

11/08/08 **Vasanti R. Pai, Challakere**
Local village ministry, children ministry, and outreach ministry are going on well. Brother informs that he stays in the church building since he does not own a house. He requests the prayerful support of the believers for the construction of a small house.

12/08/08 **Ravinandan, Nagavally**
Special meeting was arranged for two days in the month of May-08 and was a great blessing for all the believers of this assembly. They conducted a VBS also in the same month and was attended by more than hundred children. Pray that the Word preached through these meetings may change the hearts and minds of the people.

KERALA

13/08/08 **S.G. Gilbert, Kunnanpara**
The new ministry in Kunnanpara is going on well. God helped them to purchase four cents of land, in the month of April-08, which includes an old shed. They express their thankfulness to all who helped in this matter. They conducted two days of VBS attended by 51 children. Two days of gospel meeting also was conducted in the month of May-08. Prayers are requested for the growth of this assembly since they are facing many oppositions from the non-Christians.

MAHARASTRA

14/08/08 **K.S. Thomas, N. Mumbai**
They have shifted their residence to another rented house for the furtherance of the gospel. Please pray for the needed grace to continue His work faithfully in the days to come. Please note his new address: *K.S. Thomas, P.O. Box. No. 13, Flat NO. 12, Mangal Pravesh C.H.S, Plot No. C-16, opp. Railway station, Sector No.3, Airoli, Navi Mumbai- 400 708.*

ORISSA

15/08/08 **K.C. Thomas, Lamtaput**
A six months Bible training programme was started on 16th June-08 for the benefit of local

brethren. The Lord's work in Kendrapara district undertaken by Lamtaput Assembly is going on well. Pray for Bondo tribal groups with whom public interactions are strictly prohibited and also for the seven Bondo children who are being educated.

16/08/08 **Rosen Bagh, Bandhaguda**
They have extended their ministry to two more new villages, Mohali and Thumbarla. Nevertheless the ministry in Bandhaguda is going on well. They had conducted VBS camp in the month of June and was attended by more than hundred children. Pray that the Word sown in the hearts of these little ones may influence their families to open their doors for the gospel.

PUNJAB

17/08/08 **K.K. Oommen, Pathankot**
On 14th June-08 a special meeting was conducted for the children and youth. Bros. Mahindra Singh, Vijaya Raju, Philip Mathew and Linto Thomas attended the meeting as special guests. Pray that God may help them to conduct many such meetings in future.

18/08/08 **Madan Paul, Ludhiana**
A new Assembly hall is under construction in Ludhiana city, in the slum area for the believers there. But the work has been stopped for the time being because of the opposition from the anti-Christian people. Earnest prayers are requested for the restarting of the construction and also for the good health of his wife who is suffering with Diabetes.

TAMIL NADU

19/08/08 **A. Belthasar, Nilakkottai**
Brother informs that his daughter's marriage went on well by the grace of God. They conducted an outreach ministry from July 2nd to 11th and on 14th and 15th. Prayers are also requested for the children-home ministry, which now has 26 inmates.

20/08/08 **R. Paul, Palani**
Here the Lord's ministry is progressing well. Recently five new believers expressed their desire to be baptized. Two families who are affected by HIV are attending the meetings regularly. They conducted VBS in two places in this summer and were attended by more than two hundred children. Kindly remember all these matters in your valuable prayers.

21/08/08 **E. Noah, Bodinayakanur**
They have started a gospel team, namely Jehovah Jireh Gospel Team (JJGT) for an extensive ministry in these areas. They have also bought a new vehicle for the same. Pray that this team work may be a great help for spreading the gospel in these areas.

22/08/08 **Madaswami, Manaparai**
By the grace of God our brother's health is improving. Now he is able to walk with the help of a walking stick. Continue to uphold him for his complete healing.

23/08/08 **S. Muthiah, Mudukulathur**
They are continuing the ministry here with much hope in the Lord, though the place is affected by drought. Believers in this assembly are very poor. Brother requests the prayerful support of the believers for his children's educational needs (son is studying BBA final year and daughter in the 7th Std).

24/08/08 **Sam Thomas, Udamalpet**
Ministry here is blessed by the Lord. Prayers are requested for the salvation of one Mr. Mathew, whose wife is already a believer in the Assembly.

25/08/08 **T. Ramesh, Namakkal**
They are planning for four days special meetings from August 2nd to 5th, with guest speakers Bros. Thirunaukkarasu and Joseph Rajan. House visiting in the morning, Bible study in the noon and Gospel meeting in four villages in the evenings are the programme for the special meetings. Pray that this effort may encourage the believers and many may come to the saving knowledge of Christ.

WEST BENGAL

26/08/08 **Jayanta Das, Kolkata**
They are planning an outreach in the local areas with the help of local evangelists in Kolkata. Prayers are solicited for the good health of our brother and his wife, since they are undergoing some treatment.

27/08/08 **Pradeep Kumar Dey, Gazole**
He has shifted to a new place called Gazole in Malda district since he felt the great need in this place. God helped them to start a new Assembly testimony with three families. Prayers are requested for a young man, suffering from eye problem who accepted the Lord recently and also for the villagers who are in trouble because of the heavy rain and flood. Please note his new

address: *Pradip KR Day, Gazole P.O., Malda-Dist. West Bengal*

OTHER MATTERS

28/08/08 **Bethel Brethren Assembly, Angul**
Mr. Pradeep Kumar Behera has been working in this area for five years. An assembly testimony is established in a place called Dalabehersahi. The Lord extended the work to some other villages and an assembly testimony is started in Similipada also with 32 believers. The assembly is gathering in the house of Bro. Philip and they request prayers for the growth of this assembly.

29/08/08 **Christian Brethren Church, Holalakere**
Evangelist K.V. Varghese has been working in this place since 1998. The assembly is growing under his ministry, but the major problem is that they don't have an Assembly hall. Now they are looking for a place and then to build an Assembly hall which would approximately cost 8 lakhs and 50 thousand rupees. Since the believers of this assembly are very poor, they request the prayerful support of the believers for this need.

30/08/08 **Brethren Assembly Thirumala, Trivandrum**
On April 13th 2003, this new Assembly testimony started here in Thirumala and around 100 people are attending the worship meeting from 35 families. Four years before they had bought a piece of land for the building of an Assembly hall and the work has been completed and dedicated for the service of the Lord on 25th June. They express their heartfelt gratitude to all who liberally supported for the construction of the assembly hall.

31/08/08 **Bethel Brethren Assembly, Irumumanda**
The assembly here was founded by late K. John in 1982 and a small Assembly hall was constructed by the help of Dr. Leeser. But it was completely damaged in 1996 cyclone. Now there are more than 70 people gathering here for the Sunday worship and they are in need an Assembly hall. The approximate cost of the hall would be 5 lakhs 67 thousand. Prayers are coveted.

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KNOW YOUR FRIENDS AT SBC

Ratheesh S.

I come from Trivandrum district of Kerala. I was born and brought up in a Hindu family. One day a Christian friend of mine took me to a Gospel meeting. There I heard about the Lord Jesus Christ, by the preaching of a servant of God. That day I understood that I am a sinner and Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation. That day I confessed my sins to the Lord Jesus Christ and accepted Him as my Lord and Saviour on 20th May-1999. After that I was attending the church regularly and was baptized in the month of April-2002.



Then I was in fellowship with the local assembly at Mangalathukonam. I had a desire to know more about the Bible; so I joined Bethany Bible school, Kumbanad and studied for a year. After that I was involved in the ministry in my native place. It was then that the Lord called me for full time ministry in Nagaland. For more than two years I served the Lord there. While serving in Nagaland, I felt the need to study the Bible a little more deeply. So I applied to Stewards Bible College in Chennai and got admission for their three year course. By God's grace I could complete one year of studies and am now studying in second year. It is my earnest desire to go back to Nagaland and serve the Lord full time, after my studies. Kindly remember me in your valuable prayers.

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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.

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.

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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