



# GRACE & PEACE

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# REJUVENATION AND RENEWAL



 By Nelson Thomas

**W**hile pondering upon the wonder of God's creation, the Psalmist writes, "You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; and You renew the face of the earth." (Psalm 104:30). Decay and destruction are the result of sin. Everything of this world becomes old and fades away (Isa. 40:6). However, God remains the same, and He has a process in place to renew and reform what was marred by sin.

Not only God renews the face of the earth, but He also regenerates and transforms man from the deformity caused by his fall. The Lord taught this truth to Prophet Jeremiah with an illustration. He told the prophet to go to a potter's house and notice the way he makes a vessel.

As the prophet was watching, "the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter; so he made it again into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to make." (Jeremiah 18:4) Then the Lord told Jeremiah, "Look as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are you in My Hand, O house of Israel!" v. 6.

What a comforting reality it is that we are in the hands of an unchanging God and He is still working on us, in spite of all the imperfections.

## HUMAN IMPATIENCE

Sad to notice, often man is so impatient with himself and even others. We write off the erring ones immediately and refuse to see any rays of hope in the midst of confusion. We act and speak with deep sense of hopelessness and finally give up!

Such a response pattern is against the way the Almighty God works among mankind. He is more than willing to rejuvenate and refresh us for better. In the story of the prodigal son, the Lord Jesus Christ describes the loving heart of God the Father who graciously re-establishes a disturbed relationship and covers the repentant one with new attire (Luke 15:22).

## THE SAINT'S LONGING

King David desired for a renewed spirit and a restored joy (Psalm 51:10, 12). Indeed, this is the desire of every human being who bears the consequences of their sin.

Later the Lord promised the people of Israel, "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within them and take the stony heart out of their flesh and give them a heart of flesh..." (Ezekiel 11:19).

In the New Testament, this is exactly what He does through the Lord Jesus Christ. "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold all things have become new." (2Corinthians 5:17). "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10).

Notice that it's not just a repairing work, but through the wonderful working of the Holy Spirit, a penitent sinner who trusts the Lord Jesus Christ is regenerated (Titus 3:5). As spoken by Ezekiel, we have been given a soft heart in the place of a hardened one. (Eze. 36: 26).

## CONSTANT REPLENISHMENT

After this basic work of God, scripture teaches of an ongoing divine work to renew our inner man on a regular basis (Phil. 1:6; 2:13; Romans 12:2; 2Cor. 4:16). By the constant renewal of our heart, we are being transformed to Christlikeness (Rom. 8:29; 1 Cori. 3:18).

Our spiritual development in fact depends upon this progressive transformation through knowledge and understanding (2Peter 3:18).

God in His sovereign will and wisdom allows various experiences in our life that contribute to this internal makeover. This leads to new strength, new hope and even a new song (Isa. 40:31; 48:6; Psa. 40:3; Eph. 3: 16, 17).

Dear believer in Christ, do not be discouraged. God has not finished yet with us; He is still working on us. God revived not only David who was fallen, He also revived Elijah who was depressed, Jonah who went astray, Peter who betrayed the Lord, and Mark who was incapable. He can do the same for you as well!

## OUR RESPONSIBILITY

We only need to yield to the Lord confessing our sins and failures. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1John 1:9). Without our wholehearted cooperation, the Lord will not bring about any change in us. His invitation is open; it’s up to us to come willingly and be submissive.

“Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD, “Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They shall be as wool. If you are willing and obedient, You shall eat the good of the land.” (Isaiah 1: 18, 19).

It is also the Lord’s promise that all those who wait upon Him shall experience this renewal to go forward in their spiritual life, in spite of all the adverse circumstances (Isaiah 40:31).

## EXTENDED DAYS

Beloved, as the Lord has allowed us to enter into another New Year, let it be our prayerful efforts to lead a more profitable Christian life ahead.

Forget not the voice of the keeper of the vineyard, “Sir, let it alone this year also..’ (Luke 13: 6 – 9). How grateful we ought to be to the Lord for extending our days. It’s not because we are better than others, but the Master is waiting patiently for appropriate fruits from us.

If not now, when are we going to change? How long shall we lead such hardened, unfruitful lifestyle?

As we often say, ‘just one life and that will be over too fast’. Let us long for enduring change so that we may not be ashamed at judgment seat of Christ. It is time for rejuvenation, renovation and growth. The Lord will do it only if we are willing and give in. (Jeremiah 3: 12 – 15).

*May the Lord graciously grant all our esteemed readers a blessed and fruitful Christ-honoring*

**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2023**

# BEING IN HIS FATHER'S BUSINESS



 By James R. Nair, Rajasthan

*And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" (Luke 2: 49)*

Jesus' earthly parents did their best that they could to 'perform all things according to the law of the Lord' (v. 39). Yet, how tragic it is, humanly speaking, to learn that they 'lost' Him for about four days (cf. Luke 2: 41 – 49).

Observing Passover was so dear to them, and probably an ecstatic moment each year; but this year, a few anxious moments awaited them coupled with a bitter truth – 'I must be about my Father's business.'

A few reflections in this major let down here; let us note to observe at the beginning of this New Year.

## Assumption of His Presence

Seven days have been finished (v.43), now on their way back, as anyone else would be content, Joseph's and Mary's Passover is accomplished for this year. Yet, amidst the celebration, there lies a danger, a blind assumption, they supposed Him to have been in the company (v.44), but He was not! It is so heart-breaking to see that they went about a day's journey, roughly 20 miles, with this assumption.

How often we too had assumed that He was with us, while we marched ahead in our so-called spiritual accomplishments, performing everything according to the existing customs and traditions, yet failed to understand that He lingers behind to be at His Father's House?

If He is not to be found, let this be a reminder that we are at fault, quite occupied in our commitments, thoughtful of our own matters. Our spiritual tasks and commitments should not be merely customary, but focussed on the Holy One and on doing His will.

## His Presence is a Conditional Obligation.

“Why have You done this to us?” (v. 48) - this could be the complaint of many of us too. A few might disagree here with Jesus’ reply and exclaim, “Oh! That’s a little rude from the Boy!” But Mary, rightfully as a mother, demands a reply to His apparently insubordinate action, to which the Saviour replies with authority that He is more obliged to doing His Father’s will, because that delighted Him (Ps. 40:8).

This passage may not be taken as an example of the Lord’s defiance to His earthly parents, but rather His desire to be about His Father’s business in His Father’s house. He was definitely subject to them in Nazareth and increased in the favour of God and men (v. 51, 52).

But don’t we, just like Mary who as a mother claims His subjection or presence, sometimes claim our Lord’s obligation to be with us through His promises? He silently reminds us, that for Him, nothing holds above His Father’s business. The Lord testified once, “The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him” (Jn 8:29).

God’s presence is assured to them who do His will, His Son being a perfect example for us. His obligations to be with us are assured with His eternal promises, but we need to be doing His will.

## Find Him in the Right Company

They supposed Him to have been in the company, presumably a group that was merely interested in ‘observing’ the Passover as a tradition and returning back. However, He was found in that congregation who were listening and asking Him questions (v. 46).

His presence is with those who desire to talk to Him. If our company is with those who are just mindful of earthly things, we might ‘lose’ Him, for we may never find an acceptance in Him. We might as well do many things in His name, but if we fail to do His Father’s will, He would simply reject us, “I never knew you” (Matt. 7:21-22).

It is worth mentioning here that our Lord counted His disciples, who did the will of His Father, as His own, more than His own mother and brothers, who remained standing outside, when they sought to speak with Him. (Matt. 12:46-50).

While they travelled only a day’s journey without knowing His absence, it almost took three days for them to find Him. A caution for us here is that it is very easy for us to lose Him, but quite difficult to find Him, unless we search for Him at the right place. One of the most important acts of doing His will is that we see the Son and believe in Him to have everlasting life (Jn. 6:40). Let us strive to be in the company of those who listen to Him and talk to Him.



His desire to visit the Father's house was not out of tradition, but to dwell in the house of the Lord. That was all what even David desired in his life and which he sought after, to behold the beauty of the Lord (Ps. 27:4).

The sons of Korah add that His tabernacle is lovely and a day in His courts is better than a thousand (Ps. 84:1,10). How often do we rush back to our schedules and commitments, and in the bargain lose Him? When was the last time we patiently waited for Him, that we may listen to Him or talk to Him?

How could we lose Him, if we continued our gaze upon Him, that Fairest of ten thousand? For He is that beauty that we should long to behold and that we will behold eternally! He desired to be in His Father's house and in His Father's business.

May that be our desire too, in this fresh year, as His dear children, to behold that Saviour steadfastly and to do His Father's will, and not lose Him in our earthly matters and customary traditions.

### OUTLINE

# NEW THINGS FROM GOD



*(Isa. 42:9; 43:43:19; 48:6)*

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <i>New Heart</i>                   | <i>Ezekiel 11:19</i>                             |
| 2. <i>New Mind</i>                    | <i>Romans 12:2</i>                               |
| 3. <i>New Man</i>                     | <i>Ephesians 4:24; 2:15; 2 Corinthians 4:16</i>  |
| 4. <i>New Strength</i>                | <i>Isaiah 40:31</i>                              |
| 5. <i>New Life</i>                    | <i>Romans 6:4</i>                                |
| 6. <i>New Song</i>                    | <i>Psalms 40:3; Isaiah 42:10; Revelation 5:9</i> |
| 7. <i>New Creation</i>                | <i>2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15</i>        |
| 8. <i>New name</i>                    | <i>Isaiah 62:2; Revelation 3:12</i>              |
| 9. <i>New Heavens and a new earth</i> | <i>Isa. 65:17</i>                                |



# NOTES ON TABERNACLE – 16:

## THE BRAZEN LAVER

### EXO. 30:17–21

 By Charles E. Wigg, Australia

**T**his was a kind of wash basin, placed between the brazen altar and the entrance to the holy place. The priests were to wash their hands and feet in its water, before they entered the holy place, “that they died not”.

It would show us the necessity of our daily cleansing by the power of the word of God, so that we may enjoy sweet communion with God, and the life of Christ that He has imparted to us.



#### Judicial vs. Moral Cleansing

We need to point out here the difference between judicial cleansing through the blood of Christ, and moral cleansing through the water of the word of God.

We are cleansed from our sins, through being washed by our Lord Jesus Christ in His precious blood on the day of our conversion. (Rev. 1; 5-6) The precious blood that He shed on the cross, satisfied the righteous claims of the holy judgment of God, and when we are washed in that blood we are forever cleansed from the guilt of our sins.

That washing is never repeated, and

never needs to be repeated, because the “Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, goes on cleansing us from all sin”, (the Greek word for ‘cleanses’, has the continuous, active sense.) That precious blood ever avails for me, and silences the voice of the “Accuser of the brethren”. (Rev. 12; 11)

When the soldier pierced the side of the Lord Jesus, both blood and water flowed out. The blood was to satisfy the righteous claims of a Holy God in judgment; the water was to cleanse the sinner from the defilement or pollution of sin. This water is applied through the reading of, and obedience to the word of God, and is to be repeated often, even daily.

## Constant Cleansing

Through the precious blood of Christ, I am forever delivered from the judgment of God, and can never again bring myself under that judgment. But because I walk in a world that is full of pollution, and because I possess a sinful fallen nature, I am in constant need of cleansing from the corruption of sin. This takes place, when convicted by the word of God, I confess them to the Lord Jesus, in genuine repentance, and He then cleanses me from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)

When the Lord Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, before the last supper, Peter first refused the kindly ministrations, but when the Lord told him that without washing, he could have no part with Him, Peter went to the other extreme, saying “not my feet only, but my hands and my head”. But Jesus replied “He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet but is completely clean, and you are clean, but not all of you.” John.13:10. The “All over”, washing takes place at conversion, but the washing of the feet, is a continuing daily experience.

## ANECDOTE

# NEW COAT OF THE COMMUNIST

Some years ago a crowd of men and women were gathered on a street corner, listening to a young orator tell of the benefits of socialism. He grew eloquent as he told of all that socialism could do for men and women. In his enthusiasm, he cried out, “Socialism can put a new coat on a man.”

In the crowd was one who had recently experienced the saving power of Christ in his life. He cried out, in answer to that challenge of socialism, “Jesus Christ can put a new man in the coat.” Better a new man in an old coat, than the old man in a new coat.

# THE WAY TO GOD



 By Aby Kuruvilla, Mumbai

**T**he seeker of heaven may have been taught that the way to God must be earned out of living a good life, doing good works, and visiting holy sites. While these may seem worthy endeavours, yet the seeker is not certain of the desired end.

May we then turn our attention to the Lord Jesus Christ who declared that He is “... the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6). In the pursuit of heavenly things, man is declared to be “without strength” (Rom. 5:6) and can by no means attain unto the standards of God. Therefore, we must entirely look unto the Lord to show us the way.

## Divinely Originated

The way to heaven could only be paved and completed by God himself. God himself took the initiative and sent His Son into the world. Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7). Man was not involved in His conception, for this was told to the virgin that gave birth to the child, “that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit” (Matt. 1:20). Thus, the way divinely originated from God.

At the outset of His earthly ministry, there came “a voice from heaven, saying, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17). The one who will show man the way must needs be publicly declared to the world that He is the One whom God has sanctified and sent. Thus, we see the way was divinely ordained by God.

After three and a half years of serving the people, the Lord knew that the climax of His earthly ministry would lie in Him having to die. However, neither those who hated Him nor the disciple that betrayed Him could of their own will, lay their hands on Him. But “Jesus... knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth...” (John 18:4). The perfect and sinless servant of God, willingly took that path of suffering and death. Thus, we see the way was divinely orchestrated.

## Price Paid

They bruised Him, pierced Him and thought to have killed Him. But until He completed what He came into this world for, He would not die. From that cross of shame and cruel sufferings, we hear a voice saying, "It is finished". He drank the bitter cup of judgment that was ours to drink; Love drank it all! The work now completed, "he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost" (John 19:30).

He was buried, but on the third day, He rose up from the dead and ascended up into the very presence of God. "Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them" (Heb. 7:25). Thus, the price paid, the pardon sealed and the way divinely opened, man can now come unto God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Repent and Believe

Sin prevents man from approaching God. God has judged every man worthy to die and to be eternally separated from His holy presence because of their sins. No work of man can save him from that judgment. God, in the Lord Jesus Christ, has opened a perfect and acceptable way for man to be brought nigh to God.

No work of man is involved, and no work of man is required for salvation's requirement to be completed. But the seeker of heaven and of the true God must repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thus appropriate the work done on their behalf for their salvation. Will you accept the way divinely offered?

## News & Views

# 1. THE INCREASING SUICIDE RATE IN INDIA

According to the data released by The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), suicide rate in India is increasing alarmingly. In 2021, the total death by suicide in the country was 1, 64, 033 which is 7.2% more than the previous year. This is the highest ever recorded number of suicides in the country, ever since reporting began in 1967.

Further, it has been revealed that of these cases, 50.4% are from five states, that is Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Karnataka. 72.5% are male suicides which also increased from the previous year.





The major reasons for these suicides are found to be physical ailments, academic failures, relationship issues, and financial struggles. However, the report also points out that addictions to drugs and alcohol as well as untreated mental illness aggravate the issues.

The officials are alarmed at the increasing rate of suicides by the young and productive population of the country and called upon the authorities to frame a better national policy on suicide prevention.

What a pathetic condition of a country that is often projected as the perfect example for the world! But the reality is distressing.

Education, wealth, and culture are not enough to give man peace of mind. The only place a sinful person can find peace of heart is at the feet of Christ. Confession, forgiveness, and cleansing of sin are wonderful experiences that a true believer can enjoy. Further, this opens the floodgates to unspeakable joy and comfort in the Lord, which the world will never fully comprehend (Isaiah 30:15; Matthew 6: 25 – 34; 11: 28, 29; Philippians 4: 6, 7). (NTK)

## 2. Strict Anti-Conversion Law

On 23 December 2022, Uttarakhand Governor Lt. Gen (Retd) Gurumit Singh approved the Freedom of Religion (Amendment) Bill 2022, which was passed by the legislative assembly on November 30.

Accordingly, any unlawful religious conversion in the state will be a cognizable offense and a non-bailable offense punishable by up to 10 years' prison term. Apart from the prison term, the offender will have to pay a fine of a minimum of Rupees fifty thousand and compensation to the victim of up to Rupees five lakhs.



The Act says, “No person shall convert, either directly or otherwise, any other person from one religion to another by use or practice of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means. No person shall abet, convince or conspire such conversion.”

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said, “A stricter anti-conversion law was necessary as Uttarakhand is the land of gods and practices like religious conversion are “detrimental to us”.”

Even though the title of the act refers to freedom, we are well aware of the intention behind the promoters. We have seen in many other instances, often a law becomes a tool to harass and suppress people with a different view. Praise be to God, our Lord is still on the throne. (ntk)



# RENEWAL

*“Lord, revive your Church and begin with me.”*

*-Chinese Christian*

*“To be the people of God without regeneration is as impossible as to be the children of men without generation. “*

*-Richard Baxter*

*“The dead dry days were gone. I was all the time tugging and carrying water, but now I have a river carrying me.”*

*-Dwight L. Moody*



## READER'S RESPONSE:

### Reader Response



*Dear Brother,  
Thanks for 'Grace and Peace E-Periodical'. Good, inspiring articles.*

*Babu Thomas, Chhattisgarh*

### Reader Response



*My dear brethren,  
I thank you from the bottom of my heart for all the years that you have sent me 'Grace & Peace E-Periodical'. I can perfectly and easily read it on the website also. I will continue reading your publication and thus, in addition to benefiting from the content, it will remember me to pray for my brothers in India. With love in Our Emmanuel,*

*Enrique González / Zamora /Spain*

### Reader Response



*Very comforting messages .....continuing in prayers for this wonderful ministry.*

*E . D . Maharashtra*

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