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JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

The Life & Times of Elijah

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

FACTS FROM THE FIELD

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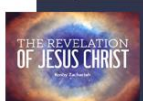
Editorial - Koshy Zachariah

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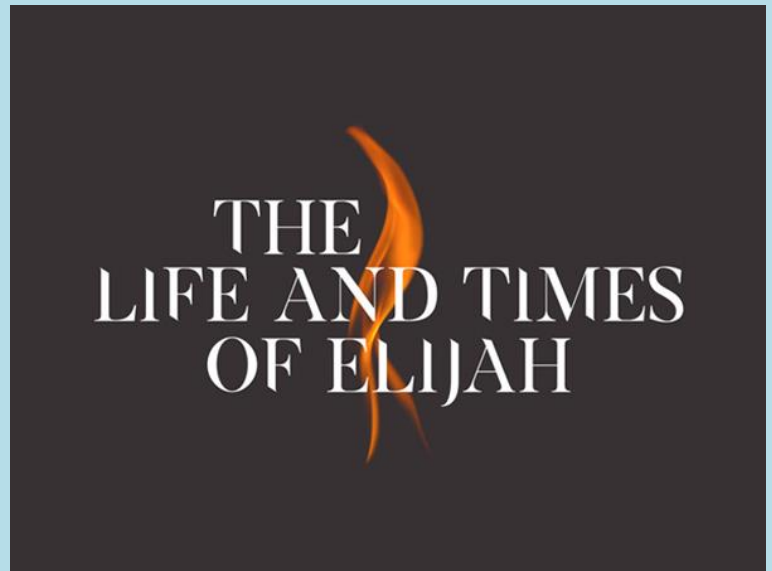
Editorial - Koshy Zachariah

JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST

After the rapture, all genuine Christian believers have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Scripture asserts this in 1Corinthians Chapter 3;13-15. The Day mentioned in verse 13, refers to the Judgment Seat of Christ, when all their service for the Lord will be reviewed. The process of review is likened to the action of fire. The fire will test each one's work of what sort it is. The outcome is the reward. If anyone's work which he has built, endures, he will receive a reward. The works are mentioned in verse 12. They could be gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. L W Rogers points out "Loss does not imply the forfeiture of something once possessed." It should be clear from this verse that the Judgment Seat of Christ is not concerned with the subject of believers' sins and their penalty. The penalty of a believer's sins was borne by the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross of Calvary, and that matter has been settled once for all. Thus the believer's salvation is not at all in question at the Judgment Seat of Christ; rather it is a matter of his service. We should note that the Foundation is Jesus Christ. The service or work is on this Foundation. That is what we read in verse 12. If anyone builds on this Foundation, William MacDonald opines: "Only one foundation is required for a building. Once it is laid, it never needs to be repeated. The Apostle Paul

had laid the foundation of the Church in Corinth. That foundation was Jesus Christ, His Person and Work. Subsequent teachings in a local church may be of varying degrees of value. For instance, some teaching is of lasting worth and might be likened to gold, silver, or precious stones. On the other hand, teaching in the local church might be of passing value or of no value at all. Such teaching is likened to wood, hay and straw. This passage of the scripture is commonly used in a general way to refer to the lives of all Christian believers. It is true that we are the building, day by day and the results of our work will be manifested on the judgement day. However, a careful student of the Bible will want to note that the passage does not refer primarily all believers but rather to preachers and teachers.

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The Life & Times of Elijah

Merwyn Wisvaart, UK

FLEEING FROM JEZEBEL

(1 Kings 19.1-18)

Jezebel's fury in Jezreel, (vv.1,2)

Ahab hurried back to Jezreel and reported to Jezebel all that Elijah had done that day at Mount Carmel. The prophets of Baal were defeated and slain. Ahab gave no glory to the Lord, who had answered by fire from heaven consuming the burnt sacrifice and the wood on Elijah's altar, 18.38. Jezebel was filled with rage and blind, unreasoning hatred. She thought only of revenge and sent a messenger to Elijah to inform him that within twenty-four hours he would die. If not, her gods, the divinities of paganism, would hold her accountable and her life would be forfeited.

She overlooked at least three things. The gods whom she claimed to fear had been impotent to protect the prophets of Baal. She did not pause to consider the implications of making such a threat against Elijah, who had so recently proved that his God possessed such tremendous powers which he was prepared to use on His servant's behalf. The message she sent to Elijah had forewarned him and afforded him an opportunity to escape. Up to this point, the prophet had been guided by the Lord; but when he read the message brought by Jezebel's messenger, he succumbed to sudden panic. Momentarily forgetting his faith in God, he 'went for his life'.

For one thing, he was bitterly disappointed; there was no acknowledgment by Ahab or Jezebel of what the Lord had done with such a spectacular demonstration of His power at Mount Carmel. The people had fallen on their faces and cried with one voice, 'The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God', 18.39. In spite of this, the events on mount Carmel had not resulted in the national revival and recovery from idolatry that Elijah had hoped for, and he was overcome with anxiety for his own safety. It seems incredible that the man who had stood at Carmel, unflinching before the 450 prophets of Baal, should flee in fear from one evil woman.

Elijah in the wilderness, (vv.3-8)

When Elijah fled from Jezebel he did not stop until he had reached Beersheba, the most southerly point in Israel. A biblical phrase used nine times in the Old Testament is 'from Dan to Beersheba' - from north to south.

Leaving his servant at Beersheba, he pressed on a day's journey into the wilderness, totally dejected, wishing only to be alone. He sat down under a broom tree, glad for the shade it provided, and asked the Lord that he might die. He said, 'It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers', v. 4. It seems ironic that the man who was destined never to die should flee from Jezebel to escape death; and now he expresses a desire to die. What a contradiction! He had been unable to bring about the restoration of Israel and their deliverance from idolatry. He had failed just as his forefathers had done. He said, 'I am no better than they'. Could we conclude that he had harboured the thought that he was superior to others and better than former generations?

Elijah was totally downcast; he could see no future for himself in the work of the Lord. Mount Carmel had been his finest hour, but the wilderness beyond Beersheba was, without doubt, his lowest hour. What a stark contrast there is between chapter 18 and chapter 19. In chapter 18, he had experienced God's power and blessing, 'And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah', 18.46. In chapter 19, he is utterly dejected and depressed. What an amazing change of circumstances in so short a time. We are reminded of Peter, who drew his sword in the garden of Gethsemane in defense of his Master; and yet soon afterwards denied him before a servant girl in the house of Caiaphas.

Elijah lay down and slept under the broom tree. He was exhausted after the long journey of over one hundred miles. Probably he had had very little to eat since he left Jezreel and was now physically weak, which added to his depression. As he slept, an angel touched him and said, 'Arise and eat'. He touched him to waken him and prepared food to strengthen him: a cake baked on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. While, Elijah slept, the angel had prepared his breakfast; 'And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again', (v. 6).

'The angel came again the second time, and touched him, and said, Arise and eat; because the journey is too great for thee. Elijah arose, and did eat and drink and went in the strength of that food for forty days unto Horeb the mount of God', (vv. 7, 8). The two meals which the angel gave him were sufficient to sustain him during the long journey ahead. How often, as believers, the journey can seem too great. It is then that the Lord grants us rest, gives us spiritual food, and quickens our steps heavenward.

Elijah was the first to use the divine title, 'the Lord God of Hosts', (vv.10,14). While one angel was sent to minister to God's discouraged servant, the Bible speaks of 'an innumerable company of angels', (Heb.12.22), stating 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him', (Ps. 34.7.)

The Lord will provide:

This was not the first time that the Lord had provided food in a miraculous way. In Psalm 78 verse 19, the question was asked, 'Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' The answer is given in the following verses, '[He] opened the doors of Heaven, and had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full', (vv.23-25). It was God's provision for the children of Israel in the same wilderness where Elijah now was.

It was not the first time that Elijah had been sustained by food which was miraculously provided. At Zarephath, in the home of a widow, his own prophecy was fulfilled, 'And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah', (1 Kgs. 17.16).

In spite of the murmuring and failures of the children of Israel in the wilderness, the Lord continued to guide them and provide food for them until they reached the promised land:

'He took not away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people', (Exod.13.22). The Lord continued to provide manna until they reached the borders of Canaan, 16.35.

Elijah in the cave at Horeb, (vv.9-18)

'Of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth', Heb.11. 38. It was in the cave that Elijah heard the voice of the Lord, asking, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' He had known the guidance of the Lord formerly, 'The word of the Lord came unto him, saying', (1 Kgs.17.2,8; 18.1). He was directed to the brook Cherith, 17.3; to Zarephath,v.9; and to shew himself to Ahab, 18.1. However, he had fled from Jezebel without asking the Lord for guidance, and now he must answer the Lord's searching question, 'What doest thou *here*, Elijah?'

The prophet answered, 'I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life to take it away',(19.10,14). These two verses are identical; in each of them Elijah uses four personal pronouns. Instead of looking up, he was now thinking only of self-preservation; he was looking in. The Lord's answer is recorded, 'But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal', (Rom. 11. 4; cp. 1 Kgs.19.18.)

The Lord spoke again to Elijah, 'Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice'. Only then did Elijah venture to the entrance of the cave; although he had not been told to 'Go forth' as he had in verse 11.

In scripture, the wind, the earthquake, and the fire are all associated with God's judgement. The Lord was not appearing in judgement to Elijah, but speaking in a 'still small voice', a voice of gentle stillness. This was the third time the Lord spoke to the prophet in the cave. Was it because he was ashamed that Elijah wrapped his face in his mantle before he went out? The Lord spoke to him again, 19.13. What a lesson for us to learn once more; it is in the stillness of God's presence, away from the din and clamour of a busy world, that we hear the Master's voice.

The question to Elijah was repeated, 'What doest thou here, Elijah?' His answer was the same in verses 10 and 14. There was no change to his thinking, in spite of all he had seen and heard. When the Lord spoke to Elijah again, (vv.15-18); he commissioned him to carry out further tasks:

1. Anoint Hazael to be king over Syria;
2. Anoint Jehu king over Israel;
3. Anoint Elisha to be a prophet 'in thy room'.

No servant, however gifted, is indispensable; and when the Lord calls them home the work will continue in the hands of others. How significant, then, were the words regarding Elisha, his successor: 'and Elisha . . . shalt thou anoint in **thy room**', (v. 16).

On the Mount of Transfiguration

In Luke's account of the transfiguration, Elijah is with the Lord Jesus; 'And, behold, there appeared with him two men, which were Moses and Elias . . . and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem'. All three had fasted for forty days and nights: Moses, (Deut.9.9); Elijah, (1 Kgs.19.8); and the Lord Jesus, (Luke 4.2). As in all things, the Lord Jesus is unique and supreme. He was the only one of them who had the power, if He had so desired, to miraculously produce food and end His fast.

Both Moses and Elijah were marked by failure, and were unable to complete their service. By smiting the rock at Horeb, Moses was not permitted to enter the land of Canaan. By fleeing from Jezebel, Elijah left his tasks unfinished and had to anoint Elisha in his place. The Lord Jesus is the perfect, unfailing servant. The conversation on the mountain was of a finished work, 'his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem', (Luke 9.31)

XX

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Koshy Zachariah

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST

Koshy Zachariah

(Chapter 12:4b-7, Part IV. 29)

We saw in our last issue, “a woman clothed with the sun, Israel...and a great red dragon, Satan, casting down a third part of the stars of heaven-the apostate leaders and rulers of Christendom. And the dragon stood before the woman who was ready to give birth, to devour her child as soon as it was born.

Vs.4b,5, AND THE DRAGON STOOD BEFORE THE WOMAN WHO WAS READY TO GIVE BIRTH, TO DEVOUR HER CHILD AS SOON AS IT WAS BORN.

5 SHE BORE A MALE CHILD WHO WAS TO RULE ALL NATIONS WITH A ROD OF IRON. AND HER CHILD WAS CAUGHT UP TO GOD AND HIS THRONE.

The dragon stood before the woman confronting her to devour the child. At this our thought centres on the history and circumstances at the birth of the Lord as detailed in Mathew chapter 2. Neither the woman nor Israel was the object of Satan’s hatred. The seed of the woman was his prime and only object. When the Lord was born, Satan used his minister Herod, the vicegerent of Ceasar in Palestine, the representative of the Roman empire, to kill the infant Jesus our Lord. But here Satan, not Herod is the real murderous enemy of Christ. Herod was a true child of his father the devil (Jn.8:41,44). When his plan failed, he focused his cruel rage against the innocent male children hoping that through this the infant Jesus also might be killed.

In verse five we read, “she bore a male child”. “This somewhat singular expression does not mean mere distinction of sex. A worthier purpose is intended. The moment that Christ is born, unlike every other male child, universal dominion is conferred upon Him; He steps, so to speak, at once into the rights and glories of the Messiah and yet the wider range of sovereignty as Son of Man (see Ps.2 for the former and Ps 8 for the latter” (WS).

Further we note “who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron.” At this, our attention is immediately drawn to Ps.2:9, “You shall break them with a rod of iron.”The old prediction is reasserted here. The iron rod in the hand of the One who rules the nations will be first laid on the guilty kings and peoples of the West (Rev.19), then on those of the north and east (Isa.10; Zach.12,14). He breaks up the consolidated power of earth, whether gathered against himself or His people. He breaks the iron will of the nations. His hands grasp the reins of universal government, crushing to atoms every opposing power, shivering sceptres and crashing crowns and kingdoms, till kings and peoples bow before Him and own His sovereign sway.” (WS).

Then we read, “And her child was caught up to God and His throne.” This clearly shows the ascension of the Lord, forty days after His resurrection; the fact is stated briefly by Mark in chapter 16:19, but more fully by Luke in chapter 24:50,51 and Acts 1:9-11. Some people hold the view that the church is included in the rapture of the Man-child. From the details in the Scripture, we know that the rapture of Christ and the rapture of the church are two distinct events. In truth the word “ascension” is never used of saints. The ascension of Christ, is an event of His

personal glory and naturally we cannot share it. In this verse there is no mention of His life and death in earth. The reason is simple. The vision is in heaven and hence the short history in earth is not dealt with. Therefore His birth and His rapture are combined, as if no period of thirty three and half years separated the two events. The signs are in heaven; the history is on earth.

Vs. 6. "THEN THE WOMAN FLED INTO THE WILDERNESS, WHERE SHE HAS A PLACE PREPARED BY GOD, THAT THEY SHOULD FEED HER THERE ONE THOUSAND TWO HUNDRED AND SIXTY DAYS.

We should bear in mind that the woman represents Israel and the Man-child, the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore what happened to the Man-child and what happened to the mother are not contiguous or simultaneous events. In between these two events, the period of grace till the rapture of the church comes in. This being reality and history, this period is not highlighted. Walter Scot opines, "For just as we have a paranthesis of thirty three years, between the birth and the rapture of the Child, so an interval of nigh 2000 years comes in between the rapture and the flight. In fact the whole history of Christianity bridges the time from the ascension of Christ till the woman flees into the wilderness." The term wilderness denotes a place of isolation, deprived of natural resources and this wilderness isolation points to afflicted and painful circumstances of Judah during the tribulation. This is the great day of Jacob's trouble. (Jer.30:7), when the afflicted are just like "every man with his hands on his loins, like a woman in labour and all faces turned pale (Jer.30:6). This awful time is sketched in detail by the Lord in His prophetic discourse on the Mount of Olives. (Matt.24:15-28; Mk.13:14-22; also in this book chs. 13 and 17).

In verse six we read, "where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days."

We can presume that those who witness in Jerusalem are all martyred and those who did flee to the mountains from various towns in Judah have escaped slaughter. The suffering Jews in Jerusalem (ch.11) and those gone to the mountains (Matt.24:16) form one body of Jewish witnesses. Walter Scot opines, "The martyred company of Judah are the harpers and singers on the sea of glass (ch.15). The preserved company of Judah, the brethren and companions of the slain, are those on Mount Zion with the Lamb (14:1). (The martyred company is not numbered; those preserved are spoken of as 144000 (verse 3 of chapter 14. The 144000 of chapter 7 are a distinct company The former is of Judah only, the latter of all Israel)". Further we read that God provides for the woman both place and food during the definite 1260 days. This shows the Lord's interest in His sorrowing saints. This period of 1260 days refers to the last half week of Daniel's prophecy.

Vs. 7. "AND WAR BROKE OUT IN HEAVEN: MICHAEL AND HIS ANGELS FOUGHT WITH THE DRAGON; AND THE DRAGON AND HIS ANGELS FOUGHT, AND PREVAILED NOT.

Walter Scot observes, "The scene described here is not spoken of as a sign. The presence of Satan in heaven is a reality. A war there, between the hosts of good and evil under their respective leaders, Michael and the dragon, is most sure. The statement that Satan has a place in the heaven, not in the immediate presence of God, is received with surprise by many and with incredulity by others; and it is deemed stranger still to speak of actual conflict in the place beyond all others of peace and rest, in the place of "no midnight shade, no clouded sun, but sacred, high eternal noon.

But when the vastness of heaven is considered we cease to wonder." This fact is evidenced by Scriptural evidences. Satan appeared before God in the days of Job, accusing that righteous man; Zachariah also in a vision beheld him accusing Joshua, the high priest. He is permitted by God to act as the prosecuting attorney. Satan is called the prince of the power

of the air. Verse 7 starts with, "And war broke out in heaven". This war is between Michael, the leader of the heavenly hosts and the dragon, the leader of the evil hosts.

Michael is no stranger to the student of the Word of God. We have him in the book of Daniel, as the great angelic prince, the arch angel who is particularly charged with the care of Daniel's people. Daniel's people are symbolized by the woman who gave birth to the Man-child. Walter Scot states, "Who is Michael (=who is like unto God?). This distinguished angel is mentioned five times in the Scriptures. (Dan.10:13,21;12:1; Jude.9, Rev.12:7). He seems to be the leader of the angelic hierarchy, as he is termed by Jude as a archangel; and in Daniel 10:13, where Michael is first named, he is spoken of as "first of the chief prince (see margin). In each of the five passages where his name appears and in their several contexts, the Jewish people are in question. Evidently, he is the angel to whose guardian care the interests of Israel are committed. "And at that time, shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people, ie., the Jewish people. (Dan.12:1). The period referred to by the prophet is the same time beheld in the vision by the Seer of Patmos. The great tribulation is to be entered upon. But Michael makes it his business to see that Israel does not perish. "He (Jacob) shall be saved out of it"(Jer.30:7) Michael is a militant angel."

Wars and strife between nations may appear to be man-made. But the truth is that they are the reflex of opposing spiritual powers in the lower heavens. The invisible struggles between the powers of light and the forces of darkness are real and earnest.(ISam.16:13-15; IKings 22:19-23). And by the influence of these spiritual beings, the world is providentially governed. Angelic agency towards the saints of God on earth is (Heb.1:14, Acts 12) a generally admitted truth; but their action in determining the issue of battles and shaping national policy and human interests, generally is not recognized as it ought to be. Of course all is under the wise, strong, controlling hand of God. He is the supreme Arbiter in human life and history. In chapter 10 of the book of Daniel, Michael goes to the help of an unnamed angel who had wrought at the court of Persia for twenty one days. (vs.13). With the assistance of the archangel, the destinies of Persia were directed resulting in the two associated facts: Babylon the oppressor overthrown and Judah the oppressed, delivered. Michael too figures in the contest about the body of Moses. Satan sought possession of the body, no doubt to ensnare Israel to worship it, as they did the brazen serpent (2kings 18:4). But no human hand dug the grave of Moses. Jehovah buried him in a valley in the land of Moab...but no man knoweth of his sepulcher unto this day (Deut.34:6)" (WS).

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FACTS FROM THE FIELD



July - Aug-23

Issue-14

ANDHRA PRADESH

Didde Yosebu, Godavari.

Everything at the church is going on well. But on June 5th, he suffered a stroke and fell ill. He spent a few days in the hospital, but thanks to God's kindness, he is now able to carry out his duties as before. He requests the prayers of the saints .

BIHAR

Hariom Kumar, Nalanda.

Brother asked for our prayers for his health as well as for his younger son, who is a year old and

frequently ill. They also require land for the assembly hall.

KARNATAKA

Venkatesha Murthy, Mysore.

Brother informs that the activities at their assembly are going on well. On June 25th, they had a story time session for children through the Zoom platform, and God blessed it. Please pray that many more children will join in these activities in the future.

Francis David, Mysore

In the unreached areas of Karnataka, God opens many doors for them by His grace. Please pray for these opportunities, as well as for his wife, whose uterus was removed due to excruciating pain, and for the wife of another evangelist from his church, who is currently hospitalized for a major surgery.

A. S. Sabu, Ariskere.

Brother informs that by the grace of God, their two gatherings in the village and town were blessed with the addition of new souls. They have therefore asked for our prayers as they plan to build an assembly hall.

MADHYA PRADESH

Jagveer Singh, Gwalior.

In his place, God is working mighty things. They had a productive outreach programme last month. Please pray for his wife, who is in the family way, and for his young daughter, who started going to school.

Ramesh Kumar, Katni.

Please pray for the brother and his family's quick recovery as they were hit by a vehicle behind them as they were driving their way home from the Bible study in Pondi village. Additionally, please pray for the completion of his house.

Rajendra Singh, Datia.

The church's activities in Datia are all continuing smoothly. Brother asked for our prayers for many souls being added to the church, but their hall is too small for everyone to sit, so he wants to build a hall that can accommodate everyone.

Sushil Raj Robert, Katni.

God had been so merciful to them in their efforts in Katni. After many years of labour and prayer, God had given them the grace to start two churches in the communities of Basadi Village and Rewa district. Kindly remember this matter in your prayers.

MAHARASHTRA

Babu Kutty A.S, Thane

By God's grace, their ministries are prospering. Since they encountered opposition during their previous hospital visits and outreach efforts, Brother asked for our prayers for their ministries.

Babu Varghese, Mumbai

The ministry of the church in Virar and Bhayander is going well. On August 1st, the eighth batch of bible school is scheduled to begin. He requested our prayers for his ministry and a speedy recovery after his hernia surgery on June 8th.

NAGALAND

Sion Ranjan Pani, Diampur.

God had enabled our brother in starting a new group with 7 new families. They are planning to organize a baptism service for those who are ready. Please pray for Diana, one of his church members who is fighting HIV.

ODISHA

Stephen John Nanda, Bhubaneswar.

Amid various challenges and obstacles, the Lord is leading them in Khordha. He sought our earnest prayers for their ministries at Bhubaneswar and Khordha, and for the new students at Harvest Bible School.

PUNJAB

Noel Rajan, Bathinda.

Brother says that, by God's Grace, believers and ministries in Bathinda are prospering. He requests us to pray for those kids and their salvation as well as for the upcoming ministries. They had a VBS programme from June 25-27, and 40 kids joined.

TAMIL NÂDU

Louis Rathnakumar, Kancheepuram.

Our brother says that their ministry is successful. They began a Hindi gospel gathering, and as a result, 11 new believers joined the congregation. Prayers are requested for the new believers.

N. Arokiadoss, Thanjavur.

Brother informs that God had blessed them with new souls, and by His grace, the ministry is flourishing. They are requesting our prayers for them to grow spiritually. Last month, they held a baptismal meeting, and by His grace, everything went smoothly.

L.C Samuel, Dindigul.

