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October 2018
Volume 47 Issue 10 No.511

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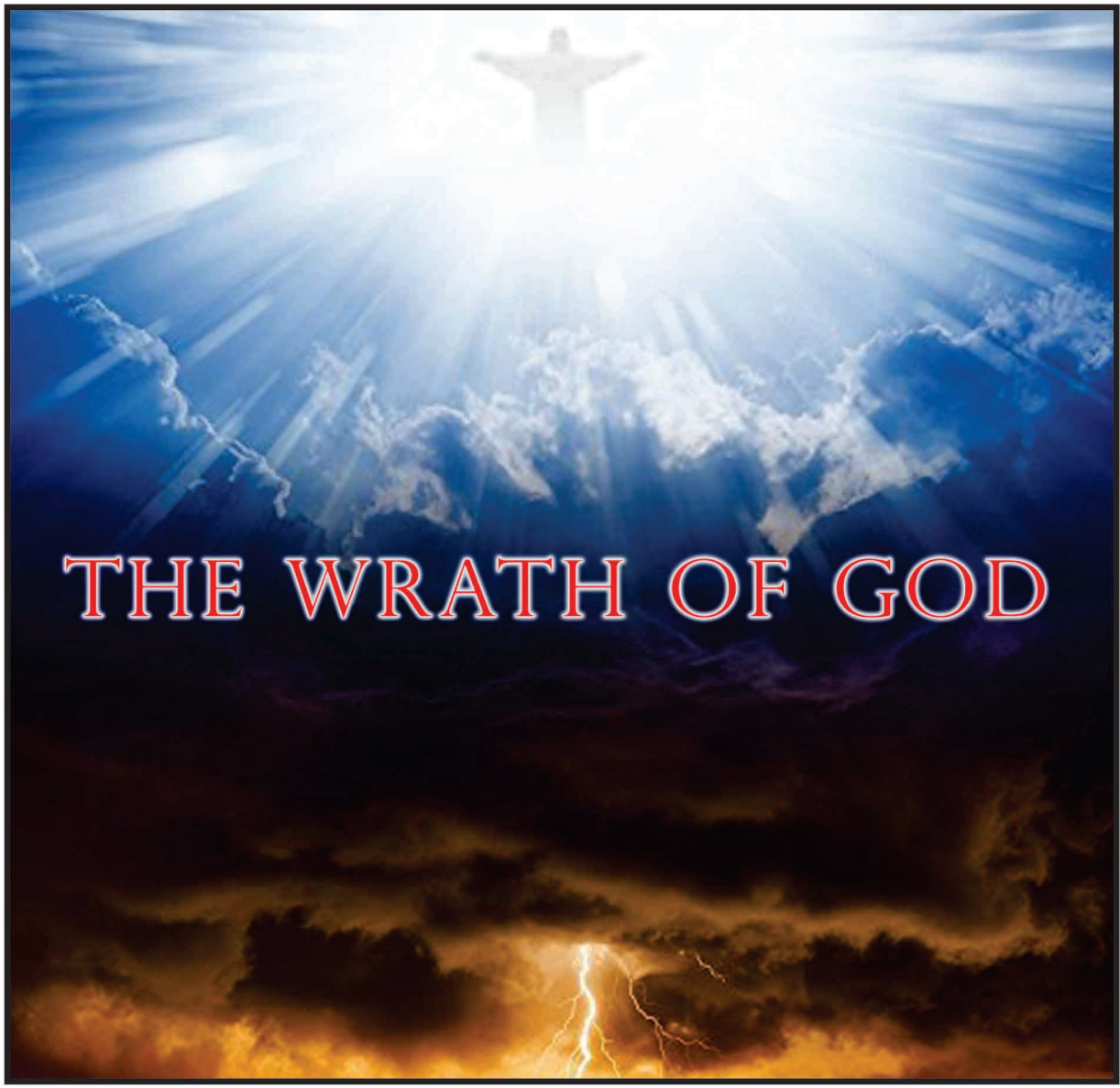

The Wrath of God

Is it a Myth or a Reality?

Dr. David R. Reagan

Back in the mid-1990s, a popular radio talk show host on an Oklahoma City secular station interviewed me live on the air via telephone. He had seen an article I had written about the financial accountability of Christian ministries, and he had liked it. He began the interview by graciously giving me the opportunity to talk non-stop for about ten minutes about the way God had transformed my life and called me into the ministry. We then moved on to a discussion of the scandals that had recently rocked the Christian community nationwide.

The Unmentionable Word

Everything went well until the host asked me to summarize the fundamental message of my ministry. I responded by saying that God had called me to proclaim "the soon return of Jesus in wrath."

Before I could proceed with my explanation, the announcer cut me short. "What do you mean, 'wrath'?" he asked. "I mean that Jesus is going to return very soon to pour out the wrath of God upon those who have rejected God's love and grace and mercy."

"Your God is a monster God!" he snapped. He then added,

"I happen to be a Christian, and I can tell you that my God wouldn't hurt a flea!"

That was the end of the interview. He hung up on me. I was not given an opportunity to respond to his misrepresentation of our Creator.

Satan's Grand Deception

The radio host's vehement response to the wrath of God did not surprise me. It is characteristic of both Christians and non-Christians, and I have encountered it many times. Satan has sold the world a bill of goods concerning the nature of God. Most people, both Christian and non-Christian, tend to view God as being a sort of Cosmic Teddy Bear. They see Him as big and warm and soft, full of infinite love and forgiveness. He couldn't hurt a fly, and He certainly wouldn't be so cruel as to condemn or harm any beings created in His own image. On the Day of Judgment, God will simply give everyone a big hug and wink at their sins. The only problem with this wonderfully comforting image is that it is a lie straight from the pit of Hell.

The True God

Yes, the Bible teaches that God is loving, patient, caring, and forgiving (Psalm 86:15 and John 3:16). As the apostle John put it, *"God is love"* (1 John 4:8). Two of my favourite passages in the Bible emphasize the personal loving nature of God. One was penned by the apostle Peter. In 1 Peter 5 : 6-7 he says that we are to cast all our anxieties upon God *"because He cares for you"*. That is a very comforting thought. The other passage that I love to read over and over consists of words spoken by the prophet Jeremiah in Lamentations 3 (RSV): *The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion,"* says my soul, *"therefore I will hope in Him."* But the Bible also clearly teaches that there is another aspect of God's character that

is equally important. It is the aspect that Satan wants us to ignore, and he has been very successful in prompting ministers to overlook it. After all, it doesn't produce popular sermons! I'm speaking, of course, of the holiness of God (Leviticus 11:44, Isaiah 6:3 and 1 Peter 1:16).

Grace or Wrath?

The Bible teaches that God is perfectly holy. Because of this attribute of His character, He cannot tolerate sin (Numbers 14:18). The Bible says God must deal with sin, and He does so in one of two ways — either grace or wrath. All of us seem to know John 3:16 — a very comforting verse about God's love for us. But few of us seem to be aware of the words recorded a few verses later in John 3:36 — words taken from a sermon by John the Baptist: *"He who believes in the Son has eternal life, but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* The apostle Paul emphasized this point in his preaching and teaching. In Ephesians 5 he warns against immorality, covetousness, and idolatry, and then he adds this observation: *"Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience"* (Ephesians 5:6). We come under God's grace by placing our faith in Jesus and appropriating His atoning sacrifice for our lives (1 John 1:7). There is no salvation apart from Jesus (Acts 4:10-12). Those who have rejected God's free gift of grace in Jesus are under God's wrath (John 3:36), and they have no one to blame but themselves.

All of us seem to know John 3:16 — a very comforting verse about God's love for us. But few of us seem to be aware of the words recorded a few verses later in John 3:36

The Unchangeable God

Despite the Bible's clear teaching that our Creator is a God of both love and wrath, I never cease to be amazed at the number of pastors I run across who argue that the God of wrath is the Old Testament God and not the God of the New Testament. In the process they ignore another clear teaching of the Bible that is found in Malachi 3:6 where God, speaking of Himself, says, *"I, the Lord do not change ..."* The New Testament confirms this important point in Hebrews 13:8 where it says, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yes and forever."* Nonetheless, Jesus seems always to be presented in sermons as the meek and gentle Saviour who is full of grace and forgiveness. That statement is true, but it is not the full picture. Jesus castigated the Pharisees, calling them "hypocrites", "serpents" and a "brood of vipers". Likewise, in His letters to the seven churches of Asia Minor, Jesus condemned the church at Thyatira for tolerating a false prophetess. He called upon the church to repent, and then He warned that if they refused to repent of their immorality, He would cast the offenders *"upon a bed of sickness", "killing them with pestilence"* (Revelation 2:22-23).

Types of Wrath

The Bible reveals several different aspects of the wrath of God:

Consequential Wrath — This is what might be called "sowing and reaping wrath". It is the wrath we bring upon ourselves when we reap what we sow through sinful living.

Cataclysmic Wrath — As evidenced in disasters, either natural or man-made, like the 9/11 attacks. God allows these as a way of calling people and nations to repentance.

Abandonment Wrath — The wrath exhibited by God when He turns His back on a person or a society, allowing self-destruction.

Eschatological Wrath — The wrath God will unleash on all the world during the Great Tribulation.

Eternal Wrath — The ultimate punishment God will inflict upon those who are consigned to Hell.

Abandonment Wrath

God's wrath of abandonment is what our nation is experiencing today. Again, this type of wrath can fall on an individual as well as a society. A Biblical example of it in the life of an individual can be found in the story of Samson. Although he was mightily anointed by God to protect Israel from the Philistines, he persisted in sexual sin to the point that the Scriptures say that *"the Lord departed from him"* (Judges 16:20). As a result, he was captured by the Philistines and ended up committing suicide. In Romans chapter one, the Apostle Paul strongly warns of God's wrath of abandonment concerning nations. He asserts that *"the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness ..."* (Romans 1:18). He then proceeds to tell how God does this when dealing with a nation that is in rebellion against Him.

First, God steps back and lowers the hedge of protection around the nation, allowing evil to multiply. The result is an outbreak of sexual sin (Romans 1:24-25). If the nation refuses to repent, God takes a second step back and lowers the hedge even further (Romans 1:26-27), producing a plague of homosexuality. If the nation persists in its rebellion, God will take a third step back and abandon the nation to "a depraved mind" (Romans 1:28).

The Coming Wrath

God's eschatological wrath will fall on all the world when Jesus returns (Jude 1:14-15). The passage in Revelation which pictures the return of Jesus says that He will return in righteousness to *"judge and wage war"* (Revelation 19:11). The first time Jesus came, He came in loving compassion with eyes filled with tears. But when He returns, He will come in vengeance (Revelation 6:12-17), with eyes like a flame of fire (Revelation 19:12). He will come to destroy the enemies of God (Revelation 19:11). The presidents and kings and prime ministers of the world will get on their knees and cry out for the rocks and mountains to fall upon them, so great will be the terror of the Lord (Revelation 6:15-17). The unrighteous will stumble about like blind men, and their blood will be poured out like dust (Zephaniah 1:17).

The first time Jesus came, He came in loving compassion with eyes filled with tears. But when He returns, He will come in vengeance

The Meaning of Wrath

Does this make God a "monster"? No! On the contrary, it proves His goodness, for how could a good God ignore the evil of sin and allow it to go unpunished? His wrath against evil will demonstrate His righteousness. The prophet Nahum summed it up best. Writing of the love of God, he

said, *"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knows those who take refuge in Him"* (Nahum 1:7). But a few verses earlier Nahum had also spoken of the holiness and wrath of God: *A jealous and avenging God is the Lord; The Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, And He reserves wrath for His enemies. The Lord is slow to anger and great in power, And the Lord will by no means leave the guilty unpunished.*

God's wrath is never motivated primarily by a desire to punish. Rather, it is designed to bring people to repentance so that they might be saved. Even in His wrath, God remembers mercy. God demonstrates His mercy in wrath by never pouring out His wrath without warning. He tried to warn Sodom and Gomorrah through Abraham. He warned Noah's world through the preaching of Noah for 120 years. He sent both Jonah and Nahum to warn the pagan city of Nineveh. Consider too how He sent prophet after prophet to call the nations of Israel and Judah to repentance (2 Chronicles 36).

God's wrath is never motivated primarily by a desire to punish. Rather, it is designed to bring people to repentance so that they might be saved. Even in His wrath, God remembers mercy

The Lord, the God of their fathers, sent word to them again and again by His messengers, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place; but they continually mocked the messengers of God, despised His words and scoffed at His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, until there was no remedy. God's mercy in wrath is also manifested in the fact that He always leads up to His final outpouring of wrath through a series of progressive judgments. These remedial judgments are outlined in detail in Deuteronomy 28:15-57. This characteristic of God's wrath is demonstrated in the prophecies concerning the Tribulation. Rather than simply pouring out His wrath on the rebellious nations of the world, destroying them in one instant of overwhelming catastrophe, He subjects the world to a series of judgments that sequentially increase in scope and intensity (Revelation 6,8-9,16). Although most people refuse to repent in response to these judgments (Revelation 9:20-21), there is *"a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues"* who do repent and respond to Jesus in faith (Revelation 7:9).

These radically different responses to the wrath of God illustrate the point that was often made by Billy Graham: "The same sun that melts the butter also hardens the clay." The wrath of God melts some hearts in repentance, but it has the effect of hardening the hearts of many others.

Wrath and the Redeemed

Many Christians respond negatively to Bible prophecy. It's not at all unusual to hear a Christian say something like this: "I don't want to hear anything about prophecy because it's too full of gloom and doom".

Well, there is a lot of gloom and doom for those who refuse to respond to God's gift of love in Jesus. But there is only good news for the Redeemed. The Old Testament ends with a passage that presents both the gloom and the joy of end time prophecy. Malachi says that when the Lord returns,

the day will be *"like a furnace; and all the arrogant and every evildoer will be chaff"* (Malachi 4:1). That's the bad news.

But consider the good news: *"But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall"* (Malachi 4:2). There is no reason for any child of God to fear the wrath of God. Paul wrote that since we have been justified by the blood of Christ, *"we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him"* (Romans 5:9). And in a most comforting verse, Paul told the Thessalonians that Jesus will "deliver" the Redeemed "from the wrath to come" (1 Thessalonians 1:10). The reason, Paul explained, is that *"God has not destined us for wrath, but for obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"* (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

A Plea

Are you under grace or wrath? The choice is yours. Jesus is coming soon. When He appears, will He be your Blessed Hope or your Holy Terror? Will you cry for the mountains to fall upon you? Or, will you go forth leaping with joy like a calf released from a stall? God loves you and He wants you to accept His Son as your Savior so that you will come under grace and can participate in an event that will occur when Jesus returns (Isaiah:35:10):

"And the ransomed of the Lord will return and come with joyful shouting to Zion, with everlasting joy upon their heads. They will find gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing will flee away."

(Taken from the magazine 'Lamplighter' Issue January - February 2018)

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Six signs of a born-again Christian

Bishop J.C. Ryle (1816-1900)

Are you born again? This is one of life's most important questions. Jesus Christ said, *"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).

It is not enough to reply, "I belong to the church; I suppose I'm a Christian". Thousands of nominal Christians show none of the signs of being born again which the Scriptures have given us—many listed in the First Epistle of John.

1. John wrote: *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" (I John 3:9). "Whosoever is born of God sinneth not"* (5:18).

A person who has been born again, or regenerated, does not habitually commit sin. He no longer sins with his heart and will and whole inclination. There was probably a time when he did not think about whether his actions were sinful or not, and he did not always feel grieved after doing evil. There was no quarrel between him and sin; they were friends. But the true Christian hates sin, flees from it, fights against it, considers it his greatest plague, resents the burden of its presence, mourns when he falls under its influence, and longs to be completely delivered from it. Sin no longer pleases him, nor is it even a matter of indifference to him; it has become a horrible thing which he hates. However, he cannot eliminate its presence within him.

"The true Christian hates sin, flees from it, fights against it, considers it his greatest plague, resents the burden of its presence, mourns when he falls under its influence, and longs to be completely delivered from it

If he said that he had no sin, he would be lying (I John 1:8). But he can say that he hates sin and that the great desire of his soul is not to commit sin at all. He cannot prevent bad thoughts from entering his mind, or shortcomings, omissions, and defects from appealing in both his words and his actions. He knows that *"in many things we offend all"* (James 3:2). But he can truly say, in the sight of God, that these things cause him grief and sorrow and that his whole nature does not consent to them. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

2. John wrote: *"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God"* (I John 5:1).

A man who is born again, or regenerated, believes that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour who can pardon his soul, that He is the divine person appointed by God the Father for this very purpose, and beside Him there is no Saviour at all. In himself he sees nothing but unworthiness. But he has full confidence in Christ, and trusting in Him, he believes that his sins are all forgiven. He believes that, because he has accepted Christ's finished work and death on the cross, he is considered righteous in God's sight, and he may look forward to death and judgment without alarm.

He may have fears and doubts. He may sometimes tell you that he feels as if he had no faith at all. But ask him if he is willing to trust in anything instead of Christ, and see what he will say. Ask him if he will rest his hope of eternal life on his

own goodness, his own works, his prayers, his minister, or his church, and listen to his reply. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

3. John wrote: *"Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him"* (I John 2:29).

The man who is born again, or regenerated, is a holy man. He endeavours to live according to God's will, to do the things that please God and to avoid the things that God hates. He wishes to continually look to Christ as his example as well as his Saviour and to prove himself to be Christ's friend by doing whatever He commands. He knows he is not perfect. He is painfully aware of his indwelling corruption. He finds an evil principle within himself that is constantly warring against grace and trying to draw him away from God. But he does not consent to it, though he cannot prevent its presence.

> *"A man who is born again does not use the world's opinion as his standard of right and wrong. He does not mind going against the world's ways, ideas and customs. What men think or say no longer concerns him*

Though he may sometimes feel so low that he questions whether or not he is a Christian at all, he will be able to say with John Newton, "I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am." What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

4. John wrote: *"We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren"* (I John 3:14).

A man who is born again has a special love for all true disciples of Christ. Like his Father in heaven, he loves all men with a great general love, but he has a special love for those who share his faith in Christ. Like his Lord and Saviour, he loves the worst of sinners and could weep over them; but he has a peculiar love for those who are believers. He is never so much at home as when he is in their company.

He feels they are all members of the same family. They are his fellow soldiers, fighting against the same enemy. They are his fellow travelers, journeying along the same road. He understands them, and they understand him. They may be very different from himself in many ways—in rank, in situation and in wealth. But that does not matter. They are his Father's sons and daughters and he cannot help loving them. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

5. John wrote: *"Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world"* (I John 5:4).

A man who is born again does not use the world's opinion as his standard of right and wrong. He does not mind going against the world's ways, ideas and customs. What men think or say no longer concerns him. He overcomes the love of the world. He finds no pleasure in things which seem to bring happiness to most people. To him they seem foolish and unworthy of an immortal being.

He loves God's praise more than man's praise. He fears offending God more than offending man. It is unimportant to him whether he is blamed or praised; his

first aim is to please God. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

6. John wrote: *"He that is begotten of God keepeth himself"* (I John 5:18).

A man who is born again is careful of his own soul. He tries not only to avoid sin but also to avoid everything which may lead to it. He is careful about the company he keeps. He knows that evil communications corrupt the heart and that evil is more catching than good, just as disease is more infectious than health. He is careful about the use of his time; his chief desire is to spend it profitable.

He desires to live like a soldier in an enemy country—to wear his armour continually and to be prepared for temptation. He is diligent to be a watchful, humble, prayerful man. What would the apostle say about you? Are you born again?

These are the six great marks of a born again Christian. There is a vast difference in the depth and distinctness of these marks in different people. In some they are faint and hardly noticeable. In others they are bold, plain and unmistakable, so anyone may read them. Some of these marks are more visible than others in each individual. Seldom are all equally evident in any one person.

But still, after every allowance, here we find boldly painted six marks of being born of God.

How should we react to these things? We can logically come to only one conclusion—only those who are born again have these six characteristics, and those who do not have these marks are not born again. This seems to be the conclusion to which the apostle intended us to come. Do you have these characteristics? Are you born again?

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HAI DEEPA!

(The first prize winning Gospel Tract of the Gospel Tract Competition)

Mrs. Margaret Manuel

"Hai….. Deepa! Happy birthday!" It was Deepa's birthday. Being wealthy, they had thrown a big party and her college mates were dropping in with their gift boxes. The day came to an end after much fun and fare. As days passed by, the tables were turned. Her father met a huge loss in his business. They had to sell all their property to clear their debts.

They had moved to a different town. With tears streaming down her eyes, she was unpacking. Unable to face her dad, she had locked herself in the room. Her eyes fell upon an unopened gift package. She ripped it open. It was a Bible. As she flipped through the pages, her eyes fell on, *"godliness with contentment is great gain"* (1 Tim 6:6)*, "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs"* (I Tim 6:10). She realised that her father's love for money is the reason for their present situation. She underlined the words that 'spoke' to her. It seemed as if someone was speaking to her.

She ran to her father crying, "Dad, daddy! Listen to what I am reading." She began to read from that which she had underlined. Her father became furious. He grabbed the Bible and threw it off yelling, "From where did you get this! This is the reason for the curse!". She picked it up and went off to her room. That night, her father couldn't sleep. He tossed and turned but sleep eluded him. Somehow he felt that what she had read should be true. At day break, he got the book from her and began to read from it. He realized that what is written is true. As a family, they cried saying, "Jesus, if You are the True and Living God, forgive us the sins of greed, pride and jealousy". They felt peace in their hearts. They started a new business with what they had. Slowly, they moved up the ladder.

Soon, it was Deepa's birthday. There wasn't any extravagance. But peace and joy reigned. They explained the reason behind their joy and peace to the guests. They shared what Jesus did to them.

Dear reader, who is this Jesus? He is God, who came in search of man. If He had thought, He could have been born in an affluent palace and have commanded everybody to bow and worship Him. But, He was born poor for our own sake. He grew up in poverty. Yet, He went about doing good. The blind received their sight, the lame walked, the leprous were healed. Even the dead were brought back to life. Those in power said in fear, *"The world has gone after him"* (Jn 12:19). Somehow, they wanted to kill Him. They raised false witnesses against Him and mercilessly gave the most cruel punishment of those days – death by hanging on a cross. But this death on the cross was not an accident. It was for this very purpose that Jesus came, to die for the sins of all humans. But He rose again on the third day. Even today, He is with us. He is very near to them who trust Him.

We may be faced with difficult situations in our life. It may be similar or different to

what Deepa faced. The life that we live in this world is very short. When there is a birthday, there surely will be a death-day. We cannot evade it. Jesus is the only way to escape hell's fire and enter heaven. If you choose to follow Jesus, choose a corner and confess to God whatever small or big sins you have committed. He alone can offer forgiveness of sins and peace which no one can give.

May Jesus help you to enjoy joy and peace in this life and eternal joy and Eternal Life in Heaven.

DECISIONS OF A SPIRITUAL LEADER

Will you please examine yourself, your behavior and your attitude as you go through the list below? Please spend sufficient time with your co- leaders to discuss each statement, make sure they are Biblical and then see how you can ensure these in the God-given ministry to establish His Kingdom in His ways.

1) I need to love my co-workers and strengthen my relationship with them.
2) I will take efforts to understand my co-workers.
3) I will be a role model.
4) I will accept them as they are and start helping them.
5) I will build trust by helping them know that I care.
6) I will be open-minded.
7) I know building relationship is time-consuming and costly. Yet I decide to pursue it.
8) I will help in fulfilling their calling and interest.
9) I will delegate some of my responsibilities to show that I consider them important.
10) I will be patient in my dealings.
11) I will help them to learn Kingdom values.
12) I will take interest in their family.
13) I will put myself in their shoes to understand them and their difficulties.
14) I will be transparent in all my dealings.
15) I will improve my communication with them. I will share more and try to help them understand me better.
16) I will find the goodness in them and start appreciating.
17) I will maintain equality at all cost.
18) I will pray for them and their needs regularly. I will enquire them regularly and show that I care for them and pray for them.
19) I will go, out of the way to help them in times of crisis in their lives.
20) I will spend quality time with them.
21) I will visit their homes and start talking with them about matters not pertaining to work.
22) I will allow them to express themselves freely and will listen to them patiently.

- Compiled by Mr. J.J. Ratnakumar (Founder, MUT) during a discussion with the leaders of various organisations

In His Strength, In His Way

R.Robin Sam, Director, Blessing Youth Mission

(Ministerial Happenings in the Mission from April 2017 to March 2018)

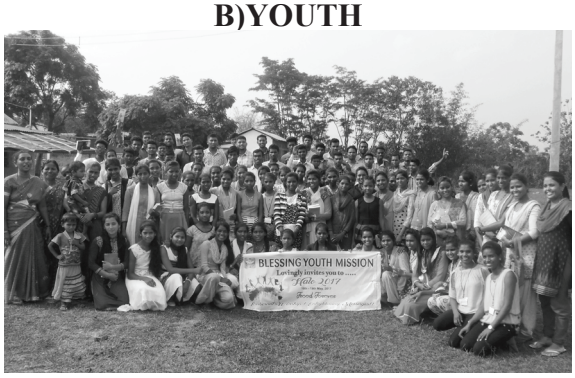
I praise God for His faithfulness for leading us through yet another year. It is a great joy to report what God has done from April 2017 to March 2018. This includes the 'Year of Reconciliation' and the 'Year of Integrity'. Though we faced many challenges in our Mission Fields, we still hold on to the promises of God. We can testify like Paul: *"for great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries"* (1Corinthians 16:9).

As we know, prayer is the backbone of missionary work. All the missionary families and the native workers gathered at eight places of India for prayer, heart-searching and planning from 6th to 8th December 2017. All the missionaries prayerfully fixed their personal and team targets for the year 2018.

A)REVIVAL

After a long gap, BLESSO in North India was organized in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) from 27th to 30th September 2017. 338 people participated and were blessed. It was a time of reconciliation with God and man. Some people openly reconciled with their opponents. We have also conducted BLESSOs in Trichy (Tamil Nadu); Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) and Kazipet (Telangana). REVIVO was organized in Sitteri (Tamil Nadu) and Dhanpur (Odisha). Through the revival programmes conducted in various places of India, 16919 people were reached, 6616 souls were led to Christ and 1219 people received the power of Holy Spirit and also our missionaries got the opportunity to preach the word of God in 296 churches. We praise God for 36 different teams of partners who visited our mission fields all over India through the Needy Land Tours and got the missionary vision.

B)YOUTH



Youth Workers' Training Programme was conducted in Jaipur (Rajasthan) during April 2017 and it was a great success. 153 new youth prayer cells were formed in this period. 'Halo' was conducted in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh), Cuttack (Odisha), Neemkathana (Rajasthan), Tintiliguli (West Bengal), Dhanpur (Odisha) and Sitteri hills (Tamil Nadu). We were also able to conduct 90 other youth programmes. By His grace, during this period 13,513 youth were reached with the glorious gospel of Christ.

C)LITERATURE

BYM had been publishing books, tracts and a periodical titled 'Blessing' in Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu. One major Literature Drive Programme was organized in Nagpur (Maharashtra) and mini LDP programmes were conducted in 5 other places. 6 new books were published and 32 were reprinted. Magazine Editors Training Programme was organized for editors of all vernacular languages of the BLESSING magazine in Blessing Literature Centre, Chennai. 11 missionaries participated.

D)CHURCH PLANTING



The church planting ministry of BYM is concerned with planting churches in unreached places. 474 worshiping congregations are regularly functioning. We could form 82 new congregations and build nine new church buildings, eight new worship sheds and one youth counselling centre for the glory of God. 54,277 people heard the Gospel through Christmas programmes conducted in 430 different places in India.

E)SOCIAL CONCERN

The Mission runs various hostels and Day Care Centers to cater to the needs of the poor. The Feed Odisha Project continues to minister to the poor people in Odisha. Praise God for the first church that was dedicated after 18 years of initiating the Feed Odisha Project.

9,897 poor people benefited through different social welfare schemes like Medical Camps, Dental Camps, Poor Feeding, Health Centre, Tuition Centre and Hostels.

NEW INITIATIVES & STAFF WELFARE

We recently gave emphasis to the Rural Youth Ministry in the Mission fields. We could conduct youth revival programmes for the youth in our Church Planting fields. The Hope Infinity Shelter (HIS) was dedicated for the glory of God in Jaipur, Rajasthan. BYM Online Desk, BYM Media Wing and BYM IT Team, all of which came into being in the recent years are doing their respective jobs in terms of reaching the next generation of youngsters and partners. Our messages are regularly uploaded in our YouTube channel, aired in Sathiyam TV and the recently revamped website is being clicked by partners and first time users all over the world. We have initiated MMM - a conference call prayer initiative through mobile phones to pray for the Mission, Missionaries and Ministry.

By His abundant grace the 200/400 Plan was completed successfully and is being reflected in our annual sponsorship remittances. The Bless Bharat team is praying and planning for bigger and better programmes in the days to come. During this period we could increase the missionary kids allowance by 20% on an average. We have also given one-month paid leave for all the missionaries so that they can be spiritually and physically enriched. We have also granted a special leave for the missionaries when they plan for their children's wedding along with a special financial gift. A new guest house at Vellore has been dedicated for the benefit of the missionaries by a partner and another partner has dedicated a guest room for missionaries in Chennai. Thank God for the renewed concern among the partners towards the welfare of the missionaries.

STAFF TRAINING

The Training Department functions effectively with the goal of equipping and energizing the missionaries of BYM to work for the Lord with zeal and enthusiasm amidst odd situations. Here we give the details of the training programmes organized during this period:

1. Formal Orientation for Revival Staff (FORS), at Sitteri Hills during 11th & 12th April 2017. 15 missionaries participated.



2. Church Elders Training Programme was organized during August 2017, from 17th to 19th in Shahgarh (Madhya Pradesh). 18 elders in Madhya Pradesh participated.

3. Pre-Orientation Training (POT) for Native Workers was organized in BCTC, Dhanpur from 21st to 25th August 2017. 10 native workers participated.

4. Staff Study Programme – Level II was organized from 3rd to 9th September 2017 at Alnavar (Karnataka). 21 missionaries from Karnataka participated.

5. Two Language Improvement Programme for Staff (LIPS) were organized in BCTC, Dhanpur (Odisha). One from 22nd to 26th April 2017 and the other from 18th to 22nd September 2017. 19 missionaries participated.

6. Staff In-Service Training (SIST) was organized in Shahgarh (Madhya Pradesh). 34 participated.

7. Harvesters' Orientation Training (HOT) was organized in Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh) from 5th to 7th November. Dr. Vasantharaj Albert from Church Growth Association was the resource person. 30 missionaries participated.

8. Church Elders' Training Programme was organized in Burusahi (Odisha) from 22nd to 24th November 2017. 24 church elders from 13 congregations participated.

9. Skill Development Programme (SDP) for women staff in Gujarat was organized during 29th& 30th November in Nadiad (Gujarat).

SUMMARY

To summarize, we give below the various ministerial events and the corresponding outcomes:

Revival

- *9 major Revival programmes*
- *8 special prayer gatherings*
- *36 Needy Land Tours*
- *57 other Revival programmes*
- *16919 people were reached*
- *6616 souls were led to Christ*
- *1219 were anointed by the Holy Spirit*
- *Missionaries preached in 296 churches in North India*

Youth

- *8 major Youth Camps*
- *90 other youth programmes*



- *7 training programmes were conducted*
- *13,513 young people were reached with the glorious Gospel of Christ*
- *4205 souls were won and*
- *153 new Youth Prayer Cells were formed*

Literature

- *One major Literature Drive Programmes*
- *Five mini LDPs*
- *6 new books were published in different languages*
- *32 titles were reprinted.*

- *Magazine Editors Training Programme was organized for editors of all vernacular languages of the BLESSING magazine*

Church Planting

- *5,190 souls were won*
- *1,180 people obeyed the Lord*
- *82 new congregations were formed*
- *9 new church buildings & 8 new worship sheds were dedicated*
- *10,158 children received spiritual nurture through VBS ministry*
- *54,277 people heard the Gospel through Christmas programmes in 430 places.*

Social Concern

- *9,897 under privileged people benefited through different Social Welfare Schemes like Medical Camps, Dental Camp, Poor Feeding, Health Centre, Tuition Center, Computer Centre, Tailoring Center, Day Care Center and Hostels.*

ROAD AHEAD

1.Strengthening of Staff Individual Mentorship Programme(SIMP).

2. Strengthening partners in each region by personal visit and encouragement.

3.Rebuild 2020 - an infrastructure development plan for all our Mission stations.

4. Praying Hands - a project to mobilize funds for Bless Bharat.

5.500 Youth Rally - a programme to identify and develop the next generation for God's Kingdom.

6. Inter-Missions Network - mobilizing the whole Church to reach the Nation.

7.Workers Training Programme(WTP) for new missionaries.

8. Raising Lay Leaders in Non-Tamil States.

9.Preachers Orientation and Training Programme in Non-Tamil States.

10.Every Church A Village (ECAV)- a plan to pioneer Church planting in new places.

11.ESAP, EFAM & ESAV to be revamped and restructured.

12. Online Store for all our books.

Conclusion

As we labour in fulfilling the Lord's end time plan, our common enemy the devil is more active in raising people against the work of God. There have been increased instances of persecution in our fields. But we do not lose heart, for God is our refuge.

This calls for increased prayer from our side and meaningful involvement in the days to come.

We are living in a critical time. What we need is more prayer, more passion and more participation. Let us not forget that we are responsible for this generation of believers and non-believers alike. Let us hold on to the promise that God has given us and let us attempt great things for God and expect great things from God.

On behalf of all the missionaries of the Mission, I sincerely thank all those who prayed, laboured and sacrificed to accomplish the God-given Vision and Mission. I would also like to thank the Partnership Agencies, Mission Mobilizers (Pledge Collectors), Directors' Team, Executive Committee Members, Administrative Committee Members and all the Board Members for their valuable suggestions and help. May He continue to 'shower His blessings' upon us in the days to come as we eagerly wait for His return!

"In everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1Thessalonians 5:18).

Do You Hear Them?

Mr. Simon Rajasingh, Krishnagiri, TN

The Holy Bible is filled with anecdotes of people with diverse natures. The Lord has used each one of them for a specific purpose. They all serve as a role model (either good or bad) for us in our daily walk with God. Let us meditate on three characters who did have a need to be fulfilled.

1.Blind Bartimaeus

As Jesus was walking on the streets of Jericho, Bartimaeus, being blind, cried, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"* (Mk 10:47). He cried even louder as the sound did not even reach the ears of the crowd that was following Him. Though his cries annoyed them, they were not stirred up to take him to Jesus. But, he was desperate to meet Jesus. He firmly believed that if he met Jesus, he would be able to receive sight again and all his worries would vanish. Hence, he kept on shouting. But no one cared to take him to Jesus…

2.The invalid man at the pool of Bethesda

He had been invalid for 38 years! He would have been even sick of waiting for the angel to stir the waters. For, he had none to help him get into the waters when the angel stirred it (Jn 5:6,7). He too had a desire. Yet, his hope was not fulfilled. The colonnades would have been a shelter not only for the sick but also for their relatives. Many would have been healed and left the place. As people passed by, they would have noticed him. They would have even enquired him. Aren't we eager to know about other people's affairs? They would have even discussed elaborately with him. But, alas! There was none to help him. Even those who received the healing had turned a blind eye to him. There was none to take him to the angel of God…

3.Zacchaeus, the shortie

Jesus had entered Jericho. People were thronging around Him. And Zacchaeus, the tax collector, entered the crowd to see Jesus. But he couldn't; because he was short. He would have tapped their backs asking them to move a bit so that he too can see Jesus. He would have even requested them to lift him up so that he can have a glimpse at Jesus. For, he had heard about Jesus, that He is able to forgive sins, cast out demons and to give freedom in life. He would have begged a lot of people there to help him to see the Lord. But his pleadings fell on deaf ears. For the Scripture says, *"on account of the crowd he could not"* (Lk 19:3). So, he had to run ahead and climb up on a sycamore tree to see Jesus. There was none to help him…

Why were these people pushed aside? Why were their requests not granted? Did they ask for something which they already had? Were they anti-social elements? Were they untouchables? Why were they rejected? They just asked the people to take them to Jesus. They were desperate in knowing Him. But, the followers of Christ at that time behaved as if nothing concerned them. They were filling their own selves with the bounties of freedom and miracles from His table.

Even now, there are scores of people in our neighbourhood who seek Jesus. They

are not going to implore us to take them to Jesus or show Christ to them. But, they long for the freedom that can be found in Him.

There's hardly a preacher who doesn't speak about evangelizing. The call to evangelise outweighs the calls for other commitments. Is sharing the Gospel so hard? No! It is every man's cup of tea! It suits the unschooled (Peter), the unskilled (Moses), the young ones (the slave girl of Naaman), the gladiators (Samson), the weak (Paul), the rejected (lepers) and the list is unending… For it is not a job. It is an 'expression'. It can be carried out by anyone who knows to laugh and cry.

If we have realised the value of the blessing and the freedom that we have inherited through Christ, we will be able to articulate it with joy. Our circumstances will not be a hindrance to express our true feelings. We can always share the love of Christ to any needy person regardless of the milieu. We cannot help but share. We just can't walk quietly on the street, waste time in front of the television or just indulge in excessive sleep.

Joseph couldn't contain himself before his brothers. Paul couldn't stand as a mere prisoner in front of King Agrippa. King David could not contain himself when he brought the ark of the Lord back. If you could feel the joy of the freedom, the salvation, the blessings that Christ had given you, if you could sense that it is bubbling over, then go. Go and proclaim the Good News. Plan. Muster your prayer cell members, your college mates... Go! Go in search of the lost in the highways, villages, college gates… Be swift to fulfil the Great Commission.

Praise God for the New Office Bearers of Blessing Youth Mission

Chairman	:Mr. Godwin Samuel
Vice Chairman	:Mr. Kamalakumar
General Secretary	:Mr. Needhidasan
Treasurer	:Mr. Alexander

Let us pray for divine wisdom upon them to lead the Mission in a Godly way.

Meaningful Celebrations



Recently we received a call from one of our partners stating that he wants to give a dinner feast to the children of our Homes in Odisha. It was his child's birthday and they wanted to celebrate it in a meaningful way. As per his request we arranged a dinner feast at the homes. It was a time of joy and happiness for both the children and the sponsoring family.

The Mission runs a total of 8 homes in Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh housing 254 children in all. Such good-will gestures will encourage these children and will also nourish them physically.

If you want to encourage the children in a similar fashion, kindly contact us:

bymhqc@gmail.com

Tel :00 91 8770048378



FIELD FRAGRANCE!

ANDHRA PRADESH

- Deborah team visited district women sub jail and distributed New Testaments to 6 people.
- BYM Sunday was observed at 'Christ the Savior Church' Steel Plant.
- 200 women were blessed in a Womens' Retreat at the Union Chapel, Telugu Church at old Visakhapatnam.
- Pray for the planned state level Blesso at Gudivada during Oct 16-19.

ASSAM

- 450 boys and girls participated in Halo. 50 people committed to start prayer cells and 36 committed their lives for missionary work.
- 20 youths gathered for the Youth Meet in Baptist Church.
- 120 boys and girls attended the Youth Retreat and 30 women gathered to pray for our Nation.
- Pray for Healing: Popi Pegu (Anemia).

GUJARAT

- 8 people surrendered their lives to God.
- 30 participated in the youth meeting conducted at Padhara Church.
- 35 believers took part in the 3-days fasting prayer and were strengthened in faith.
- Pray for the planned youth retreat, family retreat, youth leaders' family gathering and Ladies Meet.
- Salvation: Mogra, Chimon, Mukesh, Ramesh and Kheshri.

KARNATAKA

- Pray for the planned Women's Retreat.
- Healing - Susila (Joint pain) and Dasarath (Mental Illness).
- Channabasu and Geeta to be delivered from evil spirit.
- Raju and Shivu to get a job.
- Salvation - Hanumanth, Madev, Manju, Ravi, Arjun, Santhosh, Savitha, Basavaraj, Manthesh, Nirmala, Gowramma, Anitha, Annapoorna, Sumangala, Banu, Yellappa, Beemanna, Chennappa, Jegadesh, Suresh, Ramanna, Vishwanath, Nagaraj and Subash.

KERALA

- 65 people attended the Partners' Meet in which Mr.Peter shared the Word of God. He also shared in an EU meet, Elohim Church and a CSI Church.
- 30 tickets booked for Maharashtra visit in the month of October. Pray for safe journey and to accomplish God's purpose through the team.

ODISHA

- Katko, a *poojari* accepted Christ.
- Jagannath family confessed their faith.
- Pray for open doors in 13 villages.
- Healing : Santosh & Suresh (Fracture); Triapti (Asthma); Milky, Laxman (Cancer); Manjula, Papamma (Paralysis); Ravi (Rheumatism); Wano (Joint Pain); Katko (Thyroid); Jagdeesh (Chest pain); Mosari, Sukhman, Sonia (Arthritis); Hiramoni (TB); Darsani (Kidney problem); Gupta, Moti, Champa, Manasi (Fits); Manjula

(Brain TB); Bandhu (Leprosy) and Puravi (Kidney failure).

- Bijay, a believer fell down from a coconut tree and died on the spot. Pray for the bereaved family.
- Sridhar is facing opposition in his village. Pray for God's intervention.
- New Contacts - Basudev, Prasanth and Gupta.
- Sabita, Reena, Sutuli and Guri to have children.
- Pares to be delivered from evil spirit. He is suffering for the last17 years.

PUNJAB

- 7 magazine readers' family participated in the Magazine Readers' Meet.
- 70 youth boys and girls attended the one day youth retreat in United Christian Institute.
- Pray for the mini LDP at Chandigarh.

RAJASTHAN

- Healing - David Doss (Pancreas cancer, jaundice and heart problem); Sarah Joseph (Fissure & breathing problem); Shindu Chinaya (TB); Shakthi (Mental disorder).
- Lakshmi to be delivered from evil spirit.
- Blessing of the womb: Gudiya, Sukma and Kali.
- Salvation: Suresh, Ankitha, Rohith, Mamtha and Meena.

TAMILNADU

- Healing: BYM Missionary Rebecca James (Cancer); Kalaiyarasi (Kidney failure); Raman (Kidney problem); Kali (Joint pain) and Lakshmi (Mental illness).
- Blessing of the womb: Palaniammal, Gowthami, Shanthi, Roja, Pacchaiammal and Veeramma.
- Suitable Life Partner: Singaram, Chenniyappan, Balaji, Vidhya, Nandhini, Dhanasekar, Sandhiya, Prabhakaran, Parimala, Venkatesh, Murugan, Sangeetha, Immanuel and Mani.

TELEGANA

- 140 attended the Youth Retreat in Warangal in which 40 committed their life.
- Gospel was shared to 30 patients and 10 Telugu New Testaments were distributed.
- 7 people attended the all night prayer and 20 youth attended the Fasting Prayer.
- Pray for healing - Samrajyam (Joint pain); Vijji (Kidney stone) and Deevenamma (Liver problem). Missionary Ratnakar Rao and missionary kid Enosh have heart problem.

UTTAR PRADESH

- 28 confessed their faith publicly.
- Pray for Ram Devi and Santhosh to have children.
- Seetha, Chandha, Shivam, Saki and Kiran to be delivered from evil spirit.
- Ram Prasath, Lakhan, Suresh, Ajeeth, Mothilal, Manoj, Ramdas and Mani to be delivered from alcohol addiction.
- Rakhu to be healed from kidney stone.
- New contacts - Akhilesh and Piyush.
- Suitable life partner - Dinesh and Rethu.

GENERAL

- Mrs. Elizabeth Albert (Age 70) mother of missionary Jancy Jeyakumar went to be with the Lord on 4th August. Pray for the bereaved family.
- Mrs. Elizabeth Kanthi, (Age 86) mother of missionary Ruth Manivannan went to be with the Lord on 31st August. Pray for the bereaved family.

You can download more praise and prayer points from our website www.bymonline.org

Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers
for India Under No. 30302/76
Published on the 4th week of every previous month
Posted on 24/25 of every month

Postal Registration No. TN/ARD/82/2018-20
Licensed to post without prepayment
TN/PMG(CCR)/WPP691/2018-2020

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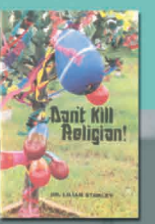





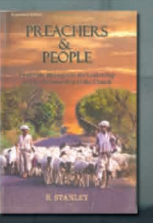





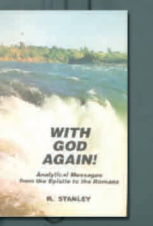

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This Magazine presents the message and the ministry of Blessing Youth Mission, an inter-denominational Christian organisation, dedicated to Church Revival and Missionary Evangelism, functioning since 1971.

YEAR OF INTEGRITY 2018

Subscription:
Single Copy: Rs. 10/-
Annual Subscription : Rs. 100/-
Life Subscription: Rs.1000 /- for 15 Years (will receive not only the Magazine but also the books published by BYM from the date of the enrolment).
Other Language Editions:
Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu.

BLESSING YOUTH MISSION
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Printed by Paul Aravamuthan at M/s Bapuji Printers, 5 Kurban Ali Street, Woods Road, Mount Road, Chennai 600 002 and Published by V. Ashok Immanuel on behalf of Blessing Ministries, No.21 West Coovam River Road, Chintadripet, Chennai 600 002. Editor : J.D. Sapphire