

Wisdom of God versus Wisdom of the World



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Texas church shooting leaves two people dead and one injured



The shooting took place at about 11:50 (29/12/2019) (17:50 GMT), during the morning service. The service was being live-streamed on social media. Video footage showed the gunman stand up from a pew and speak to a man nearby, who gestured at another

Texas: (29/12/2019) A gunman opened fire in a church in Texas, fatally shooting two parishioners before being killed by an armed member of the congregation. The gunman stood up from a pew at West Freeway Church of Christ in White Settlement, a suburb of Fort Worth, pulled out a shotgun and begun firing. Police said they were still trying to determine the attacker's motives. White Settlement Police Chief JP Bevering praised "the heroic actions" of those who confronted the attacker.

parishioner. The gunman then fired at the man he gestured toward.

The gunman fired again, at the man he had spoken to, before a member of the congregation acting as a security guard returned fire with a handgun, immediately felling the attacker. Several other parishioners also produced handguns and trained them on the attacker. It was not clear from the video footage whether any of the other armed parishioners fired shots.

▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 08

Chinese Pastor Sentenced to Nine Years in Prison



International Christian Concern (ICC) has learned that Pastor Wang Yi from Early Rain Covenant Church (ERCC) in Sichuan was sentenced to nine years in prison for "subversion of state power" and "illegal business operations."

Based on the statement posted on the website of the Chengdu court in Sichuan, Pastor Wang has also been deprived of his political rights for three years and 50,000 yuan (\$7,160 USD) of his personal property was confiscated.

According to China Aid, Pastor Wang was secretly tried on December 26, his wife

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Church in Northern India Shut Down After Attack by Radicals



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India: Tribal animists burn Bibles, Church, threaten to 'chop' Christians 'to pieces'

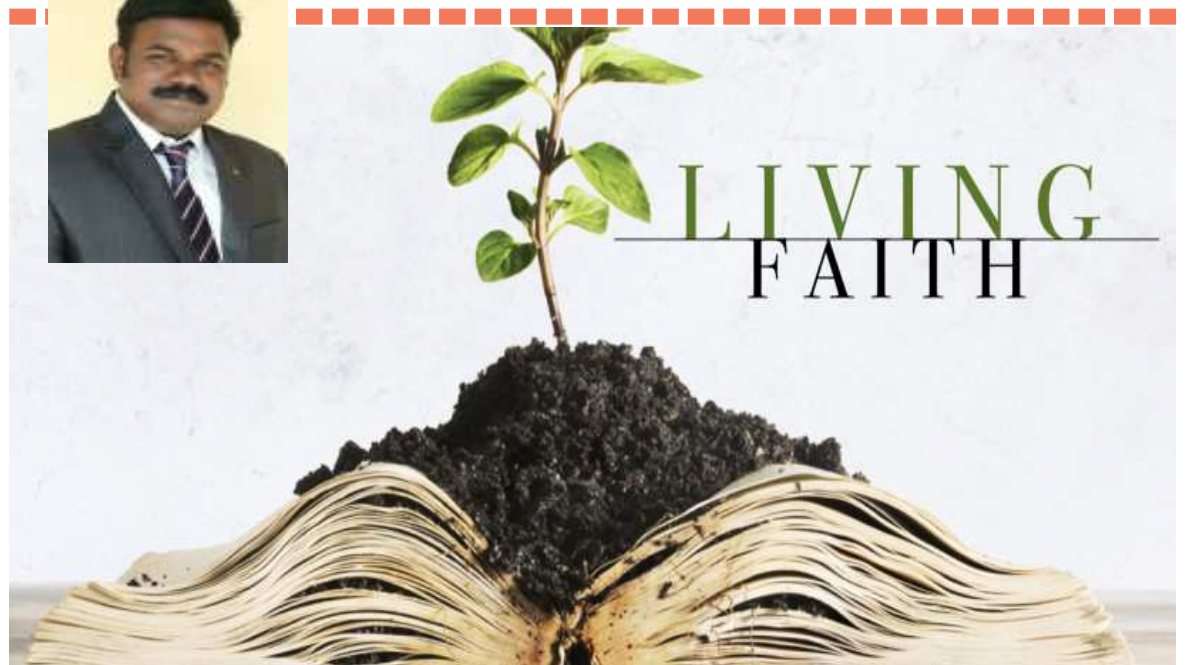
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Rev. Manuel Joseph Th.M.
Sub-editor, End-Time News

Living In Faith Every Day!

This is simple! A lady and her son will guide us through this! The story dates back to the time of the prophet Elijah! In fact, in the first chapter (1 Kings 17) we see him has the story explained very well.

Elijah was on the run! He had to because the prophecy he had for Ahab the king! There will not be any rain for a few years except at the word of the prophet! The king was after him and the Lord instructed him to hide by the brook by the Cherith where He had arranged him food and drink in a mysterious way. The ravens were in charge of the food and the brook had water! And when the drought started showing its real face, the water was no more and the Lord, in His mercy, directed the prophet to a house in Zarephath, a city 85 miles away. At the city gate he found his host, a woman, a widow, probably crying, collecting firewood for cooking with the last portion of her flour and oil! What an amazing sight! Tired and Hungry, he will have some food at last, he thought! But she had the saddest of her tales for him. She had in mind a final meal with her son and then killing themselves as drought is becoming severe and there is no hope for the family to survive! They had no other option except killing themselves before they die of hunger and thirst!!



The prophet insisted her to make bread for him first and then later for her and for her son. Then he blessed her saying that she will never run out of supplies throughout the famine! Wow! What a comforting word! I can just imagine what she must have felt that moment! I would love to believe that she took those words to her heart and trusted that God will help her family survive such a perilous time. Her fear got vanished and in faith she was taking a step ahead, a step of

believing every day! She did what exactly the prophet asked her to do: prepared a tasty meal for him first! That was the first day she prepared the food for her and the rest of the family, including the guest, with the least amount of flour and oil that she had!

This miracle continued every day until it started raining in Israel after three and a half years! Every

▶▶▶ **FULL STORY ON - 08**

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Most Christians misunderstand what Heaven really is, Theologian NT Wright says

Prominent theologian N.T. Wright says the New Testament does not say what most people believe it says about Heaven, which is that it's merely a place one goes after death. In truth, he says, it's about creation being restored through God's ever-advancing Kingdom.

In an editorial for TIME magazine, the former Anglican bishop and acclaimed author stressed that, contrary to contemporary believers, early Christians did not conceive of Heaven as merely a place they go when they die.

Those who did believe in the idea of "going to Heaven when you die" when the New Testament was written were "Middle Platonists" those like Plutarch, a pagan priest in Delphi."To understand what the first followers of Jesus believed about what happens after death, we need to read the New Testament in its own world — the world of Jewish hope, of Roman imperialism and of Greek thought," he said.

"The followers of the Jesus-movement that grew up in that complex environment saw 'Heaven' and 'Earth' — God's space and ours, if you like — as the twin halves of God's good creation."



Instead of saving people from Earth, early Christians believed God was bringing Heaven and Earth together, making creation new, restoring the world from all its pathologies.

"They believed that God would then raise His people from the dead, to share in — and,

indeed, to share His stewardship over — this rescued and renewed creation. And they believed all this because of Jesus," Wright stressed.

Christ's resurrection was the starting point of this great work of renewal, He went on to say, and this was understood by the earliest believers."Jesus embodied in Himself the perfect fusion of 'Heaven' and 'Earth.' In Jesus, therefore, the ancient Jewish hope had come true at last. The point was not for us to 'go to Heaven,' but for the life of Heaven to arrive on Earth," Wright said, noting that Jesus taught His followers to pray for God's Kingdom to come on Earth as it is in Heaven.

According to the Pew Research Center's 2014 Religious Landscape Study, 72 percent of Americans said they believe in Heaven. In the survey Heaven was defined as a place "where people who have led good lives are eternally rewarded."In that same study, 37 percent of those who do not affiliate with any particular religious tradition, known as "nones," said they believed in Heaven.

Biblical home of the Ark of the Covenant is 'discovered' in Israel



An ancient stone slab found in a temple excavation outside Jerusalem may be connected to the Old Testament's Ark of the Covenant, according to a recent report. Archaeologists found the artifact while excavating a 3,100-year-old site

near Beit Shemesh, west of the capital. They began excavating the temple in 2012.

Archaeologists identified the building as a temple because it had thick walls, was separated from houses in the ancient

village, and had a platform likely used for religious ceremonies. Inside the structure the researchers found animal bones, pottery shards, cups, and carved stones that could have been used as olive presses or for pouring wine, all of which could have been used in religious practice, Tel Aviv University archaeologist Prof. Shlomo Bunimovitz told Haaretz.

In the middle of the 12th century BCE the building was razed and some of the artifacts shattered. The area was then turned into an animal pen and buried in layers of black animal dung, which the researchers first mistook for ash.

Bunimovitz said that putting animals in the space was likely "an intentional desecration" of the area, probably by the Philistines. Beit Shemesh was in a volatile border area between the Philistines and areas controlled by the ancient Israelites.

Beit Shemesh was abandoned or destroyed, and then rebuilt, several

Knowledge that comes through education and experience is essential up to a certain level. Without knowledge gained from progressive researches, the advancement of society would become impossible. Educated engineers design buildings and bridges, and experienced doctors treat the sick with the latest medical innovations. Transportation has become very convenient with automobiles, commuter trains, airplanes, etc. New technologies such as computers, mobile phones and internet connections have steered the globe into the modern communication era. Reasonable knowledge of language, history, geography, science, mathematics, economics, technology and other useful subjects provide social and economic developments that every society needs for its growth and stability.

Education and training are crucial for the growth of the business world, which in turn provides employment opportunities for people's financial needs. Information on various subjects is indispensable for the world's growth and should not be totally rejected as evil. Nevertheless, the world's educational system becomes unacceptable when it attempts to indoctrinate people with many illogical and false theories, teaching them baseless fabrications in the name of science, philosophy, psychology, or religion in the hope of deviating them away from the God of the Bible. The indoctrination of human souls with false information against the truth of the word must be disapproved and renounced by God's children as evil deceptions. This proves that the wisdom mentioned in the scriptures is contrary to many views held by the wisdom of this world. When the world speaks of wisdom, it is unlike the wisdom of God. Keeping this in mind, Apostle Paul discusses how the wisdom of this world differs from the wisdom of God, because each stands on its own foundation, opposing one another. God's wisdom nullifies and supersedes the world's wisdom whenever they disagree with each other.

God's wisdom is eternally conserved in Him in



K. Vargheese

Wisdom of God versus Wisdom of the World

fullness, which is displayed all the time in the universe and also dispensed as necessary to the created worlds through the Spirit of wisdom.

In Rom 16:27, Paul gives glory to "the only wise God" through Jesus Christ (ESV). In Revelation, Apostle John saw all the angels falling down before the throne of God and worshiping him, saying: Amen! Blessing and glory and **wisdom** and thanksgiving and honour and power and might **be to our God forever and ever! Amen** (Rev 7:11-12). So the true wisdom belongs to God forever and comes from Him to the created entities.

The New Testament explains that the manifold wisdom of God was revealed to the world through the gospel (Eph 3:8-11).

In the dispensation of grace, the Gospel of Christ contains all the riches of full wisdom, because in Christ "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2:2-3). Without Christ, the significance of knowledge and wisdom becomes vain and fruitless.

The scriptures call the wisdom that does not include the gospel of Christ as "the wisdom of this world" (1 Cor 3:19) and "fleshy wisdom" (2 Cor 1:12). This

wisdom founded on "the basic principles of the world," which include human traditions and deceitful philosophies that exclude Christ and His Gospel of salvation (col 2:8). Paul tells that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God," and ask the wise of this world not to boast in their futile wisdom (1 Cor 3:18-21). Through the gospel of Christ, God challenges and defeats all worldly beliefs, traditions, and philosophies, eradicating them from the lives of His children (1 Cor 1:18-21). The message of salvation in Christ overpowers all other arguments that stand against the only wise God and His eternal wisdom.

Christians must use discernment to differentiate the world's wisdom when it contradicts divine wisdom. For better understanding, the wisdom of God is contrasted with the wisdom of world in the following list.

"WISDOM OF THE WORLD" vs. "WISDOM OF GOD"

1. Comes from fallen humanity and is influenced by the devil and the corrupted worldly system. Conserved in the Creator God who has absolute wisdom that flows Him as necessary into creation.

2. All religions are acceptable and there are many pathways to one superior life after death. Jesus Christ is the only way to receive salvation and inherit eternal life.

3. Developed by rigorous education and worldly experiences. Given by God to Christ's believers who seek Him by reading the Word and by fellowship through the Spirit.

4. Believes that everything in this world evolved into existence by random chance, as explained by the Bing Bang theory. Affirms that God created all- visible and invisible- with divine purposes, especially human beings made in His image.

5. Founded on the basic principles of the world that include deceitful philosophies and human traditions. Founded on Christ in whom the Father has hidden all knowledge and wisdom.

6. Learned from many epics, moral books, philosophies, religions and traditions that teach people worldly knowledge and wisdom. Received from the word of God and also from the Spirit of Wisdom who teaches true knowledge and wisdom to the saints.

7. There is no absolute truth on moral concepts, and therefore,

FULL STORY ON - 05

▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 01

India: Tribal animists burn Bibles, Church, threaten to 'chop' Christians 'to pieces'



Tribal animists wielding axes surrounded a church building in eastern India and threatened to "chop" Christians "to pieces" before burning the church to the ground amid escalating persecution in the south Asian country.

Animists in Odisha state's Perigaon village, Rayagada District, staged the attack on Dec. 1 after they raided Christians' homes where they seized and burned Bibles five days earlier. Animists worship gods based on ancestors, spirits, and nature. "After we concluded the prayers and community lunch service on Dec. 1, a batch of around 15 tribal men came with axes, surrounded the church and threatened that they will chop us into pieces," pastor Bibudhan.

The assailants surrounded the pastor and his wife as they were trying to return to their home in another town, he said. "They took us inside the village and held us hostage for more than four hours," Pradhan said. "They abused us in vulgar language, words that I can't utter with my mouth, and threatened us that their gods and goddesses will swallow us alive for propagating Christianity in an Adivasi (indigenous tribal) hamlet."

Eventually, the assailants released the couple after ordering them to stop holding worship services and never again enter the village. That night, the animists set the mud-and-bamboo structure on fire, the pastor said. "Christians from the Adivasi hamlet reside about 1 kilometer far from the church site," Pradhan said. "But the fire spread faster, and within 10 to 15 minutes the roof made of dry grass shattered, and the bamboos also caught fire."

A few days earlier, a gang of drunken animists raided the homes of several Christians as they slept, destroying any Bibles they discovered. "They were horrified by what happened the night before," he said. "The drunk men abused the Christian families in filthy language and forcefully searched their homes for Bibles. The Christians tried hard to resist them to no avail. They gathered the Bibles from Christian homes at one spot at

the center of the village, poured kerosene and lit fire."

The animists reportedly ignored their pleas to calm down and spare their Bibles, he said, adding that their complaints to the village elders were ignored. "But the elders of Perigaon village justified the act of burning Bibles and in return abused me in filthy language," he said. "They said that because of me the village has lost its rich culture and values, and that I had introduced a foreign faith, and that my presence and the Christian prayers in the village had hurt them deeply. Eventually, police arrested the assailants and briefly held them in custody before releasing them. "No cases were registered against the assailants, who confessed that they had set the Bibles ablaze, held the pastor hostage and later burned down the church," one Christian, Hananiyo Lima.

Church members have decided not to take further legal action, Pradhan said, as villagers threatened to expel the Christians' children from government welfare hostels and forbid burials within village limits. Pratap Chinchani, an attorney for legal advocacy group Alliance Defending Freedom-India, criticized police for turning against the victims and forcing them to sign official documents saying in essence, "There won't be Christian prayers in the village — you move out of Rayagada and conduct your worship service elsewhere," he said.

Odisha's population of 4.1 million is 93.6 percent Hindu, 2.77 percent Christian and 2.17 percent Muslim, according to the 2011 census. India is ranked as the 10th worst country when it comes to Christian persecution, according to Christian support organization Open Doors' 2019 World Watch List. Christian persecution has steadily increased across India since the election of President Narendra Modi in 2014 and the rise of his Bharatiya Janata Party, which is the political arm of the Hindu nationalist organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

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moral values are relative. There is absolute truth that comes from God who is the Truth.

8. Good deeds are sufficient to please higher powers and obtain favour in this life and afterlife. Eternal salvation requires faith in the Saviour Jesus and surrender to the God of the bible and His ways.

9. As far as one obeys the laws of his residing nation or any other visiting nation, he is legally alright and accountable to no higher power. Everyone is accountable not only to the regional laws but also to God, whose divine laws supersede earthly laws.

10. Human conscience is the final judge of a person's life. God is the final judge of all people born on earth.

11. Positive attitude is the pathway to a peaceful and happy life on earth. Fellowship with God through the Holy Spirit provides eternal joy to saints both on earth and in heaven.

12. There is neither heaven nor hell, and each man can create his own heaven or hell, since they are only life's experiences on earth. Heaven is a real place where saints will live with the Lord forever; Hell is also a real place where unbelievers will be eternally condemned.

13. People can accomplish anything they want; nothing is impossible to achieve if one tries hard. Everything is possible only with the Almighty God; people are subject to His sovereign will.

14. Success is determined by one's accomplishments in education, position, profession, business, economic status, etc. Success is based on one's sacrificial and compassionate Christian life and being fruitful for God's Kingdom on earth.

15. Human beings should control the destiny on the earth. The creation belongs to the Creator who controls His creation.

16. Love accepts all kinds of lifestyles in this world as natural and normal. God's true love rebukes lifestyles that lead people away from His ways to eternal judgement.

Human wisdom, understanding, or counsel cannot succeed against the Lord's omniscient wisdom (Prov 21:30). God warns those who trust in the world's wisdom that it will ultimately perish one day, whereas His wisdom will be established forever and ever. It is every person's responsibility to first search for divine wisdom, which He revealed in creation through His created entities and the gospel of His Son (Isa 29:14; 1 Cor 1:19). The creator knows everything about His creation, and therefore, it is better to believe rather than challenge His narration of the truth about this life in the physical universe and the afterlife in celestial eternity.



Pastor Shibu Thomas
Oklahoma, USA

The very thought in the heart of the people who are sunk in disappointment is that they have no one and they have no value. These thoughts would finally bring them to an abyss of despair and depression. Dear friend, realize this very thing that you have been created in the image of God and adorned with the glory and honor little lower than of His and He has filled you with all His goodness and mercy! You are highly favored of God! You have a spirit that is worth than the whole world! Don't you think that God cares for that Spirit within you? When He created the

Sun, the Moon and the hosts of stars and when He created everything on the surface of the earth with the word of His mouth, He created the man with His own hands and in His image! Don't you understand that it is an expression of His love towards you?

When the potter places a lump of clay in his wheel, he intends what to make out of it. When it finally takes the shape as he expected, he finds joy in it. A potter may never be happy to see one of his creations kept inside a house decorated, but rather he may become happy to see one outside the house lasting through the fierce weathers and hostile conditions, yet with plants

flowers. Apostle Paul said, the potter has the right to use one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use. The vessels are devoid of rights to ask why. Moreover, vessels are needed for each and every need.

You don't need the honor pertaining to somebody. When you become a wonderful vessel in the hand of God, you become one honored. Do not be worried about other's standing in the sight of God, rather acknowledge that the Lord is your strength!

Prayer: Lord, thank you for making me honored in your sight and for becoming my strength!

Honored and Strengthened by God!

*I am honored in the eyes of the Lord and my God has been my strength
(Isaiah 49:5)*

▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 03

times within 200 years. Last summer the team uncovered a huge stone, flat on top, sitting on two smaller stones, forming a kind of table. The archaeologists said it was unlikely that the tablet had fallen into the position.

The arrangement of stones sounds like the description of the stone on which the Ark of the Covenant was placed in the First Book of Samuel, and is from the same era, Tel Aviv University archaeologist Dr. Zvi Lederman, who heads the project, told Haaretz.

The text says that the ark was first left in the community of Shiloh, north of Jerusalem, after the Israelites first arrived in the area.

In a battle the Philistines then took the ark, but after God punished them with illness, they returned it to the Israelites. When the Philistines returned the ark to Beit Shemesh, "a large stone was there," the Book of Samuel says. The residents of the town "took down the ark of the Lord and the chest that was with it, in which were the articles of gold, and put them on the large stone," the text says.

The ark was later transferred to Kiriath-Jearim, then to Jerusalem. There are inconsistencies between the ancient account and the modern-day site, however — the text says the stone was in an open area in a valley, for instance, while the stone slab was housed in a temple above the town.

The connection between the text and the Beit Shemesh finding does not confirm the placement of the ark at the site, but suggests that there is some historicity to the ancient text. The text was likely written several hundred years after the site was destroyed, but the writer seems to have had knowledge of the stone and the religious significance of Beit Shemesh, Bunimovitz said.

It is not even clear how the ancient residents of Beit Shemesh identified themselves at the time, the report said.

Beit Shemesh has been a community and transportation hub for some 3,000 years. Excavations have revealed human settlement on the archaeological mound since the late Bronze Age. This pre-biblical history is preserved in the town's name, which is taken from the Canaanite sun goddess, Shamash.

Many of the great characters of the Hebrew Bible also passed through Beit Shemesh, literally the House of the Sun — until the Assyrian King Sennacherib stormed the land in 701 BCE, as recorded in the book of 2 Kings.

'Roaring Twenties' prayer initiative calling on 1 million young Christians to fast, pray for awakening



Christian leaders are calling on 1 million people, particularly youth in the United States, to fast and pray for an awakening at the beginning of each year this decade as part of the "Roaring Twenties" fast.

The Roaring Twenties fast is fundamentally about cultivating expectant hope for another great spiritual awakening in America and in

the nations around the world amid bitter divisions and political turmoil.

Malachi O'Brien, a pastor at the Kansas City-area Church at Pleasant Ridge and former second vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, recalled an experience he had with Think Eternity founder and evangelist Matt Brown while they were attending a young leaders gathering featuring Louie Giglio back in June. There, Giglio shared

a phrase about what God was doing on Earth in the upcoming decade, "the roaring '20s." "I just began to really think on that, that there's such a direct correlation from the 1920s to the 2020s. So many things politically, spiritually, economically. The decade began one way, it ended a vastly different way," O'Brien said.

▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 09

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▶▶▶ **FULL STORY ON - 02**

day she will put her hand in the flour bin and she will have enough of it and the oil jar had the sufficient amount of oil to cook the meal. The believing lady exercised her faith every day, more precisely, each and every time she cooked a meal! Wow! Is this not the way to live in faith every day? Yes, certainly!! Trust in God every day and believe His word! You will accomplish what once you thought was impossible! You will make it, even after facing all odds on the way! You will have peace, even when everything and everyone around seem grim! You will have everything the Lord has in store for you if you live in faith every day in this New Year!

Live in faith every day and stay blessed in 2020!

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The two churchgoers who were shot died later in hospital, police said. Members of the congregation in the nearly full church were seen on the livestream ducking down behind pews as screaming filled the room. Jack Cummings, a minister at the church, told that the gunman had been "acting suspiciously" and drew the attention of the church's security team.

The security team team is made up of volunteers from the church's membership who are licensed to carry firearms. "They saved a lot of lives today because this thing would have been a massacre otherwise," Mr Cummings said.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott called the shooting "an evil act of violence". "Places of worship are meant to be sacred, and I am grateful for the church members who acted quickly to take down the shooter and help prevent further loss of life," he said in a statement.

Witness Isabel Arreola told local broadcaster CBS DFW: "It was the most scariest thing. You feel like your life is flashing before you. I was so worried about my little one."

In September, a new law came into effect in Texas that allowed licensed handgun owners to carry weapons in places of worship. The state has seen a number of deadly shootings this year. In August, 22 people died and 24 were wounded at a Walmart store in El Paso. The same month a gunman killed seven and wounded 20 at Odessa-Midland.

In 2017, 26 people were killed when a gunman opened fire at a Baptist church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, during a Sunday service.

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Jiang Rong's birthday, at the Chengdu Intermediate Court."A large amount of plainclothes officials were stationed near the court, according to one witness who was detained and later released. Only government appointed lawyers were at the trial," the persecution watchdog stated. "No members of Pastor Wang's family or members of Early Rain Covenant Church were invited to the proceedings."

Wang's wife has been placed under house arrest along with her 12-year-old son, with no access to the outside world. She was also detained for several months until she was released on bail last June.

Wang's lawyer, Zhang Peihong, who has been prevented from representing him, commented on Facebook today, "Woe to you, for you see evil as kindness and see kindness as evil. You are not sending a criminal to prison, instead you are crowning a righteous man."

A church leader who is a friend of Pastor Wang told ICC, "The reason why the authorities picked nine years for his imprisonment is so that when he comes out, he will lose influence. The government wants to use him as a scapegoat to warn other house church pastors not to do the same like him."

Pastor Wang is the last person from ERCC who was sentenced, after elder Qin Derfu was sentenced to four years in prison for "illegal business" on November 29. Given the lack of rule of law in China, it is unlikely that Pastor Wang's sentence will be overturned.

He was detained last December along with his wife and more than 100 other ERCC members, many of whom have since been released on bail, but still placed under surveillance.

Gina Goh, ICC's Regional Manager for Southeast Asia, said, "The sentence of Pastor Wang Yi further proves that the Chinese government disregards religious freedom and is paranoid about Christians from house churches. The unfounded accusations against Pastor Wang Yi and the inhumane treatment of his wife and son are pure evil. The international community must rally behind Pastor Wang and condemn China for its ongoing persecution against Christians."

▶▶▶ **FULL STORY ON - 01**

India – On Sunday, January 5, a mob of radical Hindu nationalists attacked and disrupted a house church in India's Uttar Pradesh state. According to local reports, the mob disrupted the Sunday worship service and made threats against the pastor and other Christians participating in the service. As a result, local police closed down the church.

According to Pastor Veerendra Kumar, head pastor of Viswavani Church in Kalwanakara village, 15 members of the Hindu YuvaVahini group attacked the worship service at around 12 noon. Approximately 40 Christians were in attendance when the mob attacked.

"They asked me to come out of the church and started to use abusive language," Pastor Kumar told International Christian Concern (ICC). "They threatened me and said they would break my hands and legs if I continued to lead prayers."

According to Pastor Kumar, the radicals went on to accuse him of forcefully converting poor Hindus to Christianity by alluring them with benefits and physical wellness. This false accusation is often used by radicals to harass Christian leaders in India.

As the radicals continued to harass Pastor Kumar, local police arrived on the scene. These officers told Pastor Kumar that he needed official permission to run the church and shut the church down.

In December 2019, Viswavani Church constructed a new building that was intended to be used for church activities. During the construction, Pastor Kumar was threatened multiple times and told not to conduct Christian prayers in Kalwanakara.



▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 07

The Lord put it on O'Brien's heart to call 1 million young people to fast and pray through the next decade, especially given how prayer has shaped recent decades.

In 1995, Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade, issued a call for fasting in hopes of spiritual revival, which was considered radical at the time, he noted. Leaders such as Ronnie Floyd, Jerry Falwell, Steve Gaines, Lou Engle, John Piper, and many others joined him in fasting for revival. By the end of the 1990s, two global 24/7 prayer movements were launched, one in the United Kingdom and one in the United States.

"I believe that the Lord wants to mark a new generation, mark them with spiritual hunger and thirst that they rest not in what we can do when we have large stadium gatherings or when we do large events, but let them be marked that it's not by might nor by power but by His Spirit. And to know that there is something powerful that happens when we really consecrate ourselves to a place of fasting and prayer."

Pastor Jentezen Franklin, whose Free Chapel church in Gainesville, Georgia, corporately fasts and prays each January, also came on board to support the initiative. What they soon found was as they put forward plans for the Roaring Twenties fast, others were sensing the Holy Spirit calling them to similar things, O'Brien said. Think Eternity's digital mission director Jon Groves said that growing up as the son of an evangelist he was often exposed to "revival" churches and having revival meetings regularly. Yet when he became a pastor he started studying revivals of history, great awakenings, and culture-shifting movements that shook entire continents.

"And that's what I began to crave," Groves said in comments emailed. "Throughout history, communications shifts and true revivals have walked hand in hand. The printing press and Martin Luther. Movable type printing and George Whitefield. Television and Billy Graham. And today, in the biggest communication shift in 500 years, with social media apps and networks exploding by the millions every single day.

Although the data show that the faith of young people is dissolving by the millions, "we serve a God who loves to baffle statisticians," Groves stressed.

The younger generations have rarely been taught about fasting and thus do not know the power of it, he said. "But if we want to see God do something new in and through us, we're going to have to be stretched in new ways." "When you fast, you encounter and realize the presence of God in such a unique way. My desire for all those who participate is that just as Jacob left his encounter with God having a limp, that my generation would forever be dissatisfied with anything less than a miraculous move of God."

Sparkling Wisdom!

Forgiveness

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you - **Matthew 6:14**

- ❖ It takes more courage to be humble than it does to be prideful. - **Matthew Hagee**
- ❖ Faith is believing BEFORE what will only make sense AFTER. - **Steven Furtick**
- ❖ Refuse to be average. Let your heart soar as high as it will. - **A.W. Tozer**
- ❖ Sometimes what makes us insecure and vulnerable becomes the fuel we need to be overachievers. The antidote for a snakebite is made from the poison, and the thing that made you go backward is the same force that will push you forward. - **T.D. Jakes**
- ❖ If your happiness is based on things or having your way all the time, then you won't be happy very long. Be thankful for what God has done for you and what you have now, so you can enjoy your everyday life while you're waiting for unanswered prayers to be answered. - **Joyce Meyer**
- ❖ If you judge people, you have no time to love them. - **Mother Teresa**
- ❖ The best use of life is love. The best expression of love is time. The best time to love is now. - **Rick Warren**
- ❖ God allows us to experience the low points of life in order to teach us lessons that we could learn in no other way. - **C.S. Lewis**
- ❖ To lead the orchestra, you have to turn your back on the crowd. - **Max Lucado**
- ❖ It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving. - **Mother Teresa**



Abigail Thyvilayil John

Amazing Works of God in Our Life



Feba George

God works differently in the life of each person and he has a unique purpose for each of us. And some things that God does in our lives are beyond our understanding and we can only stand in awe of His wonders. In life, we might sometimes take some small decisions for God, but the leading of God is so amazing that He takes the tiny steps to a different level of honour in our life.

A recent experience in my life goes along the same lines. In my school days, in one of the youth camps, I took a decision to serve God as he calls me even if he sends to the deepest corner of the world. Probably, I couldn't comprehend at that time the gravity of the decision that I made in the camp. The youth leader asked a simple question, "Who would go out to serve God if He

calls you?" I had nothing much to think that day and with tears in my eyes, I committed myself to the will of God. And even years later, God still remembered my decision and gave me many opportunities, even though I forgot about it many times. Recently, God gave me the privilege to be in a remote village in Sikkim for 2-months as part of the research work of my M.Tech curriculum in IIT Bombay and surprisingly it was again a reminder of the decision I made as a school girl.

Sanghanath Village in South Sikkim district is a very remote village located on a hilly terrain in Sikkim with lots of hardship. The village faces a lot of mobility issues and road connectivity in the area is very poor. The households were very sparsely populated up and down the hill and visiting households for the survey was a hard task. The food habits of the people were so different as they consumed only breakfast and dinner. It was a difficult task to adjust with the new food timings but eventually, we managed with small snacks.

Communicating with the tribal community in Nepali was a challenge but we could manage with Hindi with some of the

people and some of the local people supported us as interpreters. But beyond all these facts, the most beautiful thing in the village was that there were churches in that very remote village. I was so surprised and happy to find that gospel is spreading even into the remote regions of the country. The experience was totally new to me but at the same time, I could experience the caring hand of God upon me all throughout the two-month stay. I also got opportunities to share my testimony with them and speak the word of God and I could literally stand in awe at the ways God was leading me in such a strange place.

I felt it was really amazing that God brought me from a faraway land to be in the midst of saints and testify His holy name. And I praise God for all the apostles and missionaries reaching out to the unreached to share the gospel and I think we should be really thankful to all the workers of God because of whom we are in Christ. It is only the grace of God that leads us amazingly every day!

Romans 8:28 says,

▶▶▶ FULL STORY ON - 10

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who[a] have been called according to his purpose.”

Sometimes, we don't even understand what is happening around us. And in such desperate situations, we might ask God a lot of questions. Everyone would have one such low point in life where we would ask God a lot of questions. But in His perfect time, God answers all our questions. And even if any answer is still in 'pending' status, we don't need to be worried about it because the perfect time is also in 'pending' status.

The life of Joseph is a perfect example of this context. Joseph was a faithful man and God gave him a big and amazing dream. It was God who gave him the vision that his father and brothers would bow down before him as we read in Genesis chapter 37.

Genesis 37: 9-12

“9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. “Listen,” he said, “I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” 10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, “What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before

you?” 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.”

But the immediate events in his life after the dream were a stark opposite to the vision he got from God. Following are the events that took place in his life:

- The brothers stripped him of his beautiful tunic (Genesis 37:23)
- He was sold by his brothers to Midianite merchants (Genesis 37:23)
- The Midianites sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar (Genesis 37:36)
- Joseph's master took him and put him in prison (Genesis 39:20)
- The chief cupbearer whom Joseph helped forgot him (Genesis 40:23)

At this point of time, Joseph might have had a lot of questions because his dreams didn't much match with the reality of incidents happening in his life. But looking closely at all these portions in the bible, one thing is very clear, 'God was with Joseph wherever he was...'. Genesis 39:2,3 says, "The Lord was with Joseph so that he prospered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian master.

When his master saw that the Lord was with him and that the Lord gave him success in everything he did, Joseph found favour in his eyes and became his attendant." He was sent to jail but wherever he was Joseph found favour in the eyes of jail warden. The warden put Joseph in charge of all those held in the prison, and he was made responsible for all that was done there. The warden paid no attention to anything under Joseph's care because the Lord was with Joseph and gave him success in whatever he did (Genesis 39:20-22). So basically it was not as if God left Joseph to suffer alone but God was in control of whatever was happening in Joseph's life. And eventually, as time unveiled the mystery God led Joseph to be in charge of the whole of Egypt and God literally fulfilled the vision he gave to Joseph Genesis 41: 41-44).

God knows what he is doing with each of our lives and sometimes the immediate events of our life may not go hand in hand with the promises we have got from God. But in these circumstances, we shouldn't fear anything because He is still in control. However low the situation might be, God can still raise us to be in control over the things as He is by our side. Let us trust God blindly!

The one who gave the promise is powerful enough to fulfill it!

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