

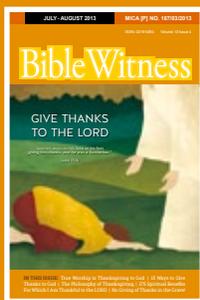
Bible Witness

GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD

*"And fell down on his face at his feet,
giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan."*

Luke 17:16

IN THIS ISSUE: True Worship is Thanksgiving to God | 15 Ways to Give Thanks to God | The Philosophy of Thanksgiving | 175 Spiritual Benefits for which I Am Thankful to the LORD | No Giving of Thanks in the Grave!



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About the cover

Jesus' words to the leper who returned to give thanks: "Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger... Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole" (Luke 17:17-19).

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Editorial

Dear reader,

Will you praise the Lord, or hold your peace?

If you are an individual who hesitates to praise your God, take notice of Jesus' words in Luke 19:37-40 – "And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples. And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

Can stones cry out praises to God? What improbable instruments to raise the voice of praise and worship! And yet, Jesus said that "the stones would immediately cry out". He did not say, "If these should hold their peace, the angels would cry out, or other men would cry out."

Praises to God should never be held back. The Pharisees wanted Jesus to stop those who rejoiced and praised God, so they said to Jesus, "Master, rebuke thy disciples." Would Jesus attempt to restrain the praise of God? Isn't God worthy of all our praise all the time? "From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the LORD'S name is to be praised" (Psalm 113:3).

It is intolerable that we, who are created and redeemed to glorify God, would hesitate to praise His name. Do you care to render praise to God? If you would remain oblivious to your duty to praise God for His countless blessings, He may pass you by and ordain others to praise Him.

If your heart has been as unresponsive to the Lord's goodness as an inanimate stone, then I pray that you will be commanded by the Lord to declare His praises in all places. His voice through the Holy Scriptures calls all His people to give thanks and bless His name. So, for the praise of God by the redeemed everywhere, we publish this issue "Give thanks to the Lord".

I conclude with this prayer: "O Lord, let all Thy redeemed tell of Thy goodness. May many stony hearts henceforth shout out Thy praise everywhere. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created. Amen."

Heartily in Christ,
Prabhudas Koshy



*“And fell down on his face
at his feet, giving him thanks:
and he was a Samaritan.”*

Luke 17:16

True Worship is Thanksgiving to God

Prabhudas Koshy

Worship requires a thankful disposition of heart. So the Scriptures enjoin us to “Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name” (Psalm 100:4). Without a thankful

frame of mind, you cannot be a true worshipper. Every worshipper’s thought, attitude and action must be moulded by an overwhelming feeling of thanksgiving.

Numerous patterns and exhortations are given in the Bible with the aim that

believers may come to worship God with thankful hearts. In 1 Chronicles 16:8, David exhorted us, “Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.” The phrase “call upon his name” is an alternative expression in the Bible for the worship of God (cf. Psalms 99:6; 105:1; Isaiah 12:4). Hence, the emphasis of David’s exhortation is that it is to give thanks to God that we gather together to worship. Again in 1 Chronicles 16:34, David says, “O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good; for his mercy endureth for ever.”

David, being a man of thanksgiving, not only readily gave thanks to God, but also encouraged all of God’s people to give thanks and worship Him. In Psalm 35:18, David’s personal commitment as a worshipper is recorded – “I will give thee thanks in the great congregation: I will praise thee among much people.” In Psalm 30:4, he exhorted God’s people to give thanks to Him, saying, “Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”

When we come into a congregation of God’s people, each of us must take it upon himself as a personal duty to give thanks to God. We cannot be spectators in the Lord’s house. We cannot be just sitting on the pews, listening to someone else’s thanksgiving prayer or singing. It is not sufficient that we just appreciate the giving of thanks by others, saying, “Oh, that was a nice way of praising God; you did well.” Even though it is good to encourage those who express their praise to God, everyone

must praise God on his own. We cannot be unthankful among the saints who come to worship. We must be deeply engaged in giving thanks to God. Have you been thankful in worship services?

In worship, our thanks must be directed God-ward. Psalm 75:1 says, “Unto thee, O God, do we give thanks.” A basic response to people who have helped us is to be thankful. All the more, we should be thankful to God who gives us certain people to be of help to us. The ultimate “thanks” belongs to God, and it must be readily directed to Him. We should never fail to give thanks to God – “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High” (Psalm 50:14). Every worshipper must personally engage with God, and give thanks to Him.

It is not just the thankfulness of heart that the Bible teaches, but the giving of thanks. Many people are thankful but they do not give thanks. What the Bible teaches us is to be a people who give thanks to God. Just feeling thankful is not worship. Thankfulness tends to be passive and silent, whereas thanksgiving is active and spirited. When it comes to giving thanks to God, the Bible lays emphasis on action over passivity – “O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people” (Psalm 105:1).

Genuine worship arises only when all of the worship, whether be it song, prayer or hearing of the sermon, is rendered in thanksgiving to God. The entire worship service must be an expression of our thankfulness to God. So, when we come

together to worship, let us offer our thanksgiving to our benevolent God who has bestowed upon us His great salvation and all spiritual and earthly blessings through Jesus Christ.

Sing to give thanks to God

When you sing in worship, it is not to impress the person who is sitting next to you. You sing because you want to thank God, knowing that singing His praises is a divinely-appointed means of thanksgiving. Psalm 147:7 exhorts God's people to "Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God."

Are you a tight-lipped Christian who refuses to sing to God to give thanks for His blessings? Are you giving excuses for not singing to express your gratefulness to Him? Do you say, "Yes, I am thankful, but I do not want to show off that I can sing"? No, there is no showing off if your heart is thankful to God. You are showing off only if you are thinking about impressing others. Your worship is not something that should be constrained by people or some other inhibition. You should not be ashamed to sing and give thanks to God. As the psalmist says, "I will sing of the mercies of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations" (Psalm 89:1).

Singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs is an expression of thanksgiving to God. So, sing and praise God by saying, "Praise the Lord, blessed be thy name", both in your heart and with your mouth.

Give offerings with thanksgiving

"Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength" (Psalm 29:1; cf. 96:7). Psalm 96:8 teaches us: "Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts." This is what the Scriptures say. The Hebrew word *minhâ* translated as "offering" is commonly used to denote a "bloodless" offering, such as a thank-offering from a worshipper who comes to the Lord's house.

Why do you give? You give because the Lord has blessed you with your daily supply and more. When you give to the Lord your tithes and offering, you are acknowledging that the Lord is the Giver of all good things in your life. So Paul advised the Corinthian Christians, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him..." (1 Corinthians 16:2). Our sentiment in giving must be thankfulness to God for all His provisions – "Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store" (2 Chronicles 31:10).

There was a time when I was disturbed by a line of prayer that I heard after the collection of offering: "Lord, we give you a little out of the much you have blessed us with." It sounded like an excuse for our meagre giving? Did God direct us to give only a little? So I advised our worship leaders not to use that line in prayer

because it seems to suggest that we can give as little as we wish, and God would still be happy. We are supposed to give with a cheerful and generous heart. 2 Corinthians 9:7 says, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” Let not your praise be marred by your stingy behaviour. “We give little out of much” is a statement of guilt. We must be giving as much as the Holy Spirit requires of us. Our giving is to be directed by God because it is a thanksgiving offering. We should not give and then say, “I’m sorry I can only give a little.” What kind of worship would that be? If you can only give 10 cents because that is all God has given you, be sure that it is not a small gift. It is a big gift because you respond according to what God has given. It is not the size of your gift, but the size of your thankfulness to God. When you sing, sing with all your heart. When you say, “Praise the Lord”, say it because the Spirit of God causes that response within you. Similarly, when you give, give as the Lord directs you, without restraint.

Testify His goodness with thanksgiving

Give thanks by testifying of the wonderful works of the Lord, telling people how God has been good to you. Psalm 22:22 says, “I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.” Psalm 26:12 also says, “My foot standeth in an

even place: in the congregations will I bless the LORD.” The time of fellowship after the worship service is not for you to talk about how you played golf or caught fish or went on a holiday. It is not wrong, however, if you were to say that the Lord helped you through your difficulties: “I had a backache when I played golf, but the Lord was very kind—He sustained me and did not allow it to get worse.” But sometimes, people seem to have nothing to praise God for. It is always about what they had done, or what had happened, or what their children had done, but seldom do they praise God. God’s people must always be a people of thanksgiving. For them, the greatest joy on earth is to glorify God; whether they eat or drink, all must be done to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31). “Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (Psalm 107:8, 15, 21, 31).

Thanksgiving comes as a result of the remembrance of past blessings and of the hope of what God is able to do unto us in His great mercy and goodness. “Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever” (Psalm 106:1). Thank God not only for all His blessings in the past, but also for the fact that He remains good and merciful even today, and throughout our life on earth. “Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:1-2). ■

1 Worship God on the Lord's Day

The title of Psalm 92 reads, "A Psalm or Song for the sabbath day." This psalm was written for use in the Sabbath-day worship service in the temple of God. This is abundantly clear from the references made in the later part of the psalm to "the house of the LORD" and "the courts of our God" (v. 13). This psalm of worship in the Lord's house begins with an encouragement to give thanks: "It is a good

thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High."

So it is a scriptural expectation that God's people will gather to give thanks to Him in worship. The Sabbath day is for God's people to come together to worship the Lord with thanksgiving. It has always been demanded of His people to honour God on the day of worship. Isaiah 58:13-14 admonishes us: "If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath

a delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable; and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the LORD; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it."



15 WAYS TO GIVE

Prabhudas Koshy

God has not left His people to figure out on their own how they can adequately express their thanks to Him. Clear instructions are given to them in His Word concerning how they can give thanks to God. In this article, we will examine the fifteen ways that the Scriptures teach us to offer our thanksgiving to the Lord.

Let your heart pulsate with gratitude at the recollection of God's benefits and say



*A
Thanks
Giving
Heart*

2 Offer private worship to God daily

The examples of godly men mentioned in the Bible also call us unto times of private worship to give thanks unto the Lord. Daniel was a fine example of this wholesome practice. Concerning him, we read: "he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as

he did aforetime" (Daniel 6:10). In Psalm 119:62, the psalmist testified, "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee because of thy righteous judgments." In Psalm 145:2, David says, "Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever." All these biblical examples encourage us to give thanks to God by daily dedicating special occasions to the worship of God.

3 Thank God continually in all circumstances

In Hebrews 13:15, we are exhorted: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name." The phrase "fruit of our lips" refers to what the lips produce, that is, words of praise to God. We must cultivate the habit of readily expressing thanks to God at all times.



How can we not praise Him always for His great salvation and all the accompanying spiritual blessings in Christ?

Likewise, Ephesians 5:20 says, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." It must be our lifelong occupation to give thanks to God. Is He not worthy of our continual praise and thanksgiving? Since all that we are, and all that we have, and all that we do are of His gracious blessing, let us always render thanks to Him. Centuries ago, Gurnall, a

Christian author, spoke of "the double action of the lungs" – the air sucked in by prayer and breathed forth again in praise. Let this be true of all of us.

The Scriptures also teach us to do all things with thanksgiving – "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). The Christian must not seek to please himself, but desire only to praise the Lord Jesus Christ. He should do all things in devotion to God, and this is his sacred calling in life.

THANKS TO GOD

"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name."

4 Declare His goodness among His people

According to Scripture, we are to express our thanksgiving to God by publicly acknowledging and declaring among His people that He is the source of all our blessings. 1 Chronicles 16:8 exhorts us: "Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people." Therefore we must resolve like the psalmist who said, "I will give thee thanks in the great congregation" (Psalm 35:18; cf. Nehemiah 12:31, 38-40).

It is sheer ingratitude if we do not acknowledge the Lord

as the giver of all our blessings. Having thankful hearts will surely cause us to acknowledge the Lord and His goodness publicly, as well as make known to others the marvellous works that God has done for them. Let others know how He has delivered us from our troubles; how He has healed us from our sickness; how He has provided us with good things; how He has given us wisdom and guidance in our ignorance; how He has answered our earnest prayers, etc. May every child of God vow within his heart: "That I

may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works" (Psalm 26:7).

Whenever there is an opportunity to testify God's goodness, let us not hesitate to give glory to Him by mentioning what He has done for us. In church prayer meetings, fellowship groups, during pastor's visits or when opportunity arises to show Christian hospitality, let us readily tell of God's special providence that has helped us. Psalm 107:22 exhorts us: "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing" (cf. Psalms 75:1; 105:1).

5 Declare His works among the heathen

Everyone who is thankful to the Lord must declare His works even among the heathen. David said in Psalm 18:49, "Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O LORD, among the heathen, and sing praises unto thy name." When we declare God's goodness with a thankful spirit among the unbelieving people, we magnify the greatness of our Lord before them. This will cause them to consider the goodness of the



Lord and to put their trust in Him. Truly, Christians who are full of thanksgiving will engage in witnessing to non-Christians. "Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvellous works among all nations" (1 Chronicles 16:24). "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people" (Psalm 96:3). Let us tell those who have not known Him yet of His redemptive work on the cross and His power to deliver sinners from sin. May we never forget to praise our God before the unbelieving because it is our God-given duty of thanksgiving.

6 Encourage His people to give thanks

Like the psalmist who encouraged other saints to give thanks to God in Psalm 97:12, we must also exhort others to bring their thanks to God. "Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness." One's commitment to give thanks to God will make him a promoter of thanksgiving among God's people.

May it also be our joy to call on others, saying, "O magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together" (Psalm 34:3). Praising God alone is necessary and wonderful, but there is a greater beauty and magnificence when the praise is offered in the company of

godly men and women. Hence the saying: "God's praises sound best in concert."



Let your blood flow for your Saviour's praise.

7 Sing His praises

We are repeatedly exhorted in the Scriptures to sing unto the Lord with hearts of thanksgiving. "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness" (Psalm 30:4).

Believers are encouraged to give thanks by singing in the congregation of God's people, in the choir and during private times of thanksgiving. In Psalm 95:1-2, we are besought to sing unto the Lord in public worship – "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."

Choirs singing songs of thanksgiving have always been part of the worship of God. We read in Nehemiah 12:46 that "in the days of David and Asaph

of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God". Groups of singers were appointed to sing praises to the Lord in the house of worship. Another example is found in 2 Chronicles 29:30 – "Moreover Hezekiah the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the LORD with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped" (cf. 1 Chronicles 25:1-3). When the Jews who returned from exile laid the foundation of the new temple, "they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because he is good, for his mercy

endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid" (Ezra 3:11).

We are also taught to sing unto the Lord in our personal moments of thanksgiving as much as in the public worship of God. "But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning; for thou hast been my defence and refuge in the day of my trouble" (Psalm 59:16; cf. 69:30). "Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night



8 Pray with thanksgiving

Even in times of great turmoil and anxiety we are taught in the Scriptures to pray with thanksgiving. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). Also, in



Colossians 4:2 – "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."

During prayer, instead of being thankful, most of us are prone to complain and to ask with much bitterness. May our hearts be admonished, for unthankful men are not fit to pray. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men" (1 Timothy 2:1). We should not go

to God to plead distressingly as with a despot who hates to give. Since He has been ever willing to hear and deliver us, let us go to Him in prayer with a joyful and thankful heart. We may be of a sorrowful disposition because of our debilitating situation, but let our souls be thankful even as we bring our petitions to Him, knowing that our God is a very present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1).

9 Live a holy life

It is from those whom God has called and separated as His saints through faith in Christ that He desires the offer of thanksgiving. Colossians 1:12 says, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." People who are full of thanksgiving live joyfully as "saints in the light". The word "light" denotes purity,



knowledge and gladness. When God's redeemed people pursue a life of holiness, they manifest their thankfulness to God for their redemption.

God has no pleasure in the offer of praise from the wicked who live unrepentantly in their sins. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is his delight" (Proverbs 15:8). The following testimony of the psalmist shows us that without

clean hands and pure hearts, we cannot give thanks to God. "I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O LORD: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works" (Psalm 26:6-7). Our offer of thanksgiving and prayers must be soaked in holiness. Otherwise, the Lord will be greatly displeased (Malachi 2:11-12).

Let your arteries and veins carry the praise of God and fill every part of your being.



10 Speak words that befit thanksgiving

his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life" (Psalm 42:8). The apostle Paul wrote: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:19-20).

As saints of God, only words that reflect gratefulness to God should come from our mouth. Bad language and evil communication emerge from unthankful hearts, not befitting the glory of God. The apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:3-4, "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather

giving of thanks." Thanking or praising God is more becoming for Christians than jesting. Nothing is more inconsistent with a Christian's character than silly, unwholesome, vulgar conversation. Words we utter should glorify our Saviour. When we meet together, we would rather speak of the goodness and greatness of the Lord, and His decrees and deeds than some trifle matters of this world. When we sing, we would rather choose songs that will praise God than any other song.

11 Pay our vows

“Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the most High” (Psalm 50:14). Many who pray for God’s deliverance and help would promise God their thanksgiving offerings, but would not keep their promises upon receiving God’s answer to their prayers. Broken vows are evidence of unthankful and unfaithful hearts. Those who have no intention to offer to God their promised thanksgiving

offerings are callous pretenders. God cannot be deceived. God cannot be mocked. He warns us in Ecclesiastes 5:4-5, “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.” If you have faltered in your vow, better repent at once and, like Jonah, hasten to pay it. “But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD” (Jonah

2:9). Every thankful person must hasten to fulfil his vows.

Likewise, our tithes and free-will offerings must be given without delay to honour the Lord who continuously blesses us. “Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine” (Proverbs 3:9-10). “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come into his courts” (Psalm 96:8).



Let your body, the temple of God, be sanctified for His praise.

12 Give thanks before your meals

We are taught in 1 Timothy 4:4 that we ought to partake of our meals with thanksgiving – “For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving.” Our Lord showed us an example when “he took the seven loaves and the

fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude” (Matthew 15:36). In the same manner, the apostle Paul set an example to us by giving thanks before he ate – “And when he had thus spoken, he took bread, and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat” (Acts 27:35).



13 Partake in the holy communion with thanksgiving

Our Lord, when He first instituted this ordinance, gave us an example that we should come to the “Lord’s Table” with thanksgiving. In Luke 22:17-19, we read, “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the

vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.” So when we come together to commemorate our Lord’s death through the holy communion, let us come with thanksgiving for His love, His salvation, His promise of second coming and His provisions.



14 Listen to the preaching and grow in steadfast faith

In Colossians 2:7, the apostle Paul exhorts us to be "rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving." Here, the challenge given to the believers is to abound in thanksgiving for God's Word



that is given to them so that they may remain steadfast in their faith, being well-grounded and built up in Christ.

Do you give thanks to God for the faithful and efficient teaching of God's Word that you have been receiving? It is a very special blessing indeed, in these last days when false teachers abound, that God still provides us with faithful men to preach His Word. Is there anything so

precious and glorious as the faithful teaching of God's Word? If there is anything for which we ought to be thankful, it is the knowledge of the great truths regarding our Lord and Saviour. We cannot be built up in Christ or grow in Him unless we are first rooted in Him or founded upon His Word. Matthew Henry said, "God justly withdraws this benefit from those who do not receive it with thanksgiving."

Let your lips and limbs exalt your God in thankful service.



15 Give thanks for other believers

What a great example the apostle Paul was! He, the great champion of faith, rejoiced with thanksgiving for others who exercised sincere faith in Christ through obedience and service to Him. He told the believers in Ephesus that he "cease not to give thanks

for you, making mention of you in my prayers" (Ephesians 1:16; cf. Colossians 1:3).

We must, like Paul, give thanks to God when we see the wondrous work of God's grace transforming sinners to saints and rebels to servants. A thankful recognition of Christian excellence in others must be every Christian's natural response as well.

Dear reader, if you are truly saved and a child of God, you cannot but be a thankful person who always gives thanks to God. Think of the innumerable, invaluable blessings you have inherited in Christ. As Colossians 3:15 reminds us, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." ■

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THE PHILOSOPHY OF THANKSGIVING



This article is written by the late Rev Dr Timothy Tow, the founding pastor of Bible-Presbyterian churches in Singapore and Malaysia. Rev Tow was a man of thanksgiving. Very often, I heard him say, "Praise the Lord." He often urged his church and his students in FEBC to cultivate a thankful spirit before the Lord. He would always call the church anniversary meeting "Thanksgiving Service".

May this article teach all of us to come before the Lord with a biblical spirit of thanksgiving.

—Pastor Koshy

“Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (Psalm 103:2).

Giving thanks to God is a characteristic of Christians. The first thing in the morning that we do is to thank God for His safe keeping in the night. We say “grace”, i.e. “thanks” before our three meals. When we go to bed at night, we take time to thank the Lord for that day’s provision. For this reason, Paul exhorts: “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 5:20).

What is the philosophy of thanksgiving?

According to Psalm 103, thanksgiving should, first of all, arrest our forgetfulness. “Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits” (verse 2). How human it is to forget – not the wrong of others, but their good! And as to God’s goodness? How many a vow uttered in groaning illness, in the throes of writhing pain, in dark moments of grim danger or haunting fear are forgotten on the morrow of deliverance! How many a Calvinistic Christian is obliviously slumbering in his armchair of salvation! Forgetfulness of God’s mercies is a sin of omission.

Secondly, thanksgiving is a rebuke to the ungrateful. These are the people who take the blessings of God for granted. These belong to the “familiarity-breeds-contempt” class. Once, there were ten lepers cleansed as they were on their way to see the priests according to Jesus’ word (Luke 17:11-19). Only one, a Samaritan who was an alien, returned to thank the Lord at His feet. “Were there not ten cleansed?” asked the Saviour, “but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.” Ingratitude occupies not a few pews in every church today! It seems she is harboured in the hearts of old-timers more than in the newly-converted. The ungrateful

serve the Lord with their pout rather than their purse. Truly, none of us can escape from the sin of unthankfulness. Let us heed the Chinese saying, “Let those who drink the water think of its source.”

Thirdly, thanksgiving should isolate the downright insolent, nominal members of the church. These are they who have grown rich and powerful under the aegis of devout parents, like Esau under the benignity of his father Isaac. These, who have never thanked the Lord from the heart on an occasion for thanksgiving, demand rather that the Lord thank them! What travesty of Christian logic! Once, a poor country pastor approached a big town elder for a donation to his church building fund. Because this servant of God did not flatter and fawn, the self-esteeming elder told him off, “Here’s \$50, for that’s all you are worth. Take it or leave it.” Did the elder realise that in so doing, he was not insulting man but God? “He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me” (Luke 10:16). “Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD” (Jeremiah 9:23, 24).

Thanksgiving is the delight of the humble. He worshipfully brings his gift into the Lord’s storehouse. He also hears the Lord pronounce blessings upon his children and children’s children since he trusts the Lord with godly fear and has striven to keep His covenant and commandments. Since the day that the Lord gave him a job, he has not forgotten to budget the tithe first for his God. He gives thanks not once a year only, but upon every occasion of receiving goodness at His hand. ■

175 Spiritual Benefits

for which I Am Thankful to the LORD

Prabhudas Koshy

It is every Christian's solemn duty to recall all the benefits that he has received from the Lord and to thank Him. The Word of God expressly states: "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits" (Psalm 103:2). Also, in Psalm 105, we are exhorted: "O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people... Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth" (vv. 1, 5).

About 13 years ago, being moved in my heart to remember and give thanks to the Lord for all the spiritual benefits He has bestowed upon me, I attempted to list them. By His grace, I could recall 175 spiritual benefits which I am eager to share with you as they are also the blessings that the Lord has provided for every believer. Some of the listed benefits may appear to be repetitive at first glance, but careful consideration will reveal the distinct blessing each of them holds out to us. I would advise that you read Scripture references provided as they record the divine pronouncement of those blessings. If you are reminded of more blessings, write them down on a piece of paper for your future reflection and thanksgiving. Truly, God's blessings upon us are countless.

I give thanks to the Lord for:

- 1** God foreknew (loved) me from eternity past. *Rom 8:29; 1 Pet 1:2*
- 2** I am chosen in Christ. *Eph 1:4; Col 3:12; 1 Thess 1:4; 1 Pet 2:9; Rev 17:14*
- 3** God predestined me to be conformed to Christ's image. *Rom 8:29; Eph 1:5,11*
- 4** I have been saved *Eph 2:1-10*
- by His grace through faith. **5** I have been forgiven of all trespasses. *Col 2:13; 1 John 2:12; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14*
- 6** My
- sins have been completely purged. **7** I am redeemed because Christ paid my *1 Pet 1:18,19; Eph 1:7; Col 1:14; 1 Cor 6:20; 7:23*
- eternal debt through His blood. **8** I am redeemed from the curse of the law. *Gal 3:13*
- 9** I have been justified freely by His grace. *Rom 3:24; 4:5; 8:30; Titus 3:7; 1 Cor 6:11; Gal 2:16; Titus 3:7*
- 10** I am not under the law but under *Rom 6:14*

- grace. **11** My sins and resultant judgment have been taken away. **12** My sins will
John 1:29; Rom 5:16–19; 1 John 3:5 *Heb 8:12; 10:17*
- never be remembered by God. **13** I have been delivered from this present evil world.
Gal 1:4
- 14** I have been quickened by God from my spiritual deadness. **15** I have passed
Eph 2:1,5; Col 2:13 *John 5:24; 1 John 3:14*
- from death unto life. **16** I have been delivered from the wrath to come.
1 Thess 1:10
- 17** I will not come into condemnation or judgment. **18** I am delivered
John 5:24; Rom 8:1 *2 Cor 1:10*
- from so great a death (hell). **19** I have eternal life as a present possession.
John 5:24; 6:47; 1 John 5:11–13
- 20** I have been appointed to obtain salvation. **21** I have been made fit for
1 Thess 5:9; *Heb 1:14* *Col 1:12*
- heaven. **22** My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life. **23** I am alive unto
Phil 4:3; *Luke 10:20* *Rom 6:11,13; Gal 2:19,20*
- God. **24** My life is hid in God. **25** I have knowledge of the one, true God.
Col 3:3 *John 17:3; 1 John 2:3; 5:20*
- 26** My glorification is guaranteed. **27** I am eternally secure in God's love.
Rom 8:30 *Rom 8:38,39*
- 28** I am reconciled to God. **29** I am made nigh by the blood of Christ.
2 Cor 5:18,19; Col 1:20–22 *Eph 2:13*
- 30** I am accepted and highly favoured in the Beloved. **31** I am beloved of God.
Eph 1:6 *Col 3:12; 2 Thess 2:13*
- 32** I have been adopted. **33** I am a child of God. **34** I am a peculiar person;
Gal 4:5; Rom 8:15,23 *John 1:12; Rom 8:16; Gal 3:26;* *Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 2:9*
1 John 3:1,2; Gal 4:5–7
- God's special, purchased possession. **35** I belong to Jesus Christ. **36** I have Jesus
Gal 3:29; 5:24 *1 John 5:11–12*
- Christ as my present possession. **37** I am seated in heavenly places in Christ.
Eph 2:6
- 38** I am an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ. **39** I am dead to sin. **40** My "old
Rom 8:17; Titus 3:7 *Rom 6:2* *Rom 6:6;* *Gal 2:20*
- man" was crucified with Christ. **41** I have crucified the flesh with its affections
Gal 5:24

and lusts. **42** Christ is my life. **43** I can walk in newness of life. **44** I can serve

Phil 1:21; Col 3:4

Rom 6:4

Rom 7:6

in newness of spirit. **45** I can live unto righteousness. **46** I am delivered from

1 Pet 2:24

Gal 3:10–13

the ceremonies and curse of the law. **47** I have God's laws written in my heart.

Heb 10:16

48 I am "married" to Jesus Christ. **49** I am a partaker of Christ. **50** I am

Rom 7:4

Heb 3:14

identified with Christ in His suffering. **51** Christ is in me. **52** Christ dwells in me.

2 Tim 2:12; Phil 1:29; 1 Pet 2:20–21; 4:12,13;

1 Thess 3:3; Rom 8:18; Col 1:24

John 14:20; Col 1:27;

1 John 4:4

John 6:56; Gal 2:20;

1 John 3:24; 4:12–16

53 I am in Christ. **54** I dwell in Christ. **55** I was baptized into Jesus Christ by

John 14:20; 2 Cor 5:17

John 6:56;

1 John 3:24; 4:13,15,16

Rom 6:3; 1 Cor 12:12,13; Gal 3:27

the Spirit. **56** I am given the exceeding great and precious promises of God.

2 Pet 1:4

57 I have obtained a richly glorious inheritance. **58** All things are mine. **59** I am

Eph 1:11,14,18; 9:15; 1 Pet 1:4

1 Cor 3:21–23; 2 Cor 6:10

complete in Christ. **60** I will inherit all things. **61** I am enriched by Christ in

Col 2:10

Rev 21:7

1 Cor 1:5; 2 Cor 9:11

everything for His glory. **62** I am rich in Christ and His blessings. **63** My every

2 Cor 8:9; Rev 2:9

Phil 4:19

need is supplied. **64** I have all sufficiency in all things. **65** I have all things that

2 Cor 9:8

2 Pet 1:3

pertain to life and godliness. **66** I am a fellow heir with all believers. **67** I am

Eph 3:6

Eph 1:3

blessed with every spiritual blessing. **68** I am a partaker of God's promises in

Eph 3:6

Christ by the Gospel. **69** I am a new creature in Christ. **70** I have been renewed

2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10; 4:24; Col 3:10

Titus 3:5

by the Holy Spirit. **71** I am redeemed and being sanctified to the praise of His glory.

Eph 1:6,12

72 I am light in the Lord. **73** I am a child of light. **74** I am not in darkness.

Eph 5:8

Eph 5:8; 1 Thess 5:5

1 Thess 5:4

75 I have been delivered from the power of darkness. **76** I am a priest who can

Col 1:13

Heb 13:15,16; 1 Pet 2:5,9;

Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6

- offer up spiritual sacrifices. **77** I will reign with Jesus Christ. **78** I am privileged to
Rev 1:6; 5:10; 20:6 *1 John 1:3*
- have fellowship with the Father and with the Son. **79** The Spirit of God dwells in
Rom 8:9; 1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:21,22
- me. **80** I can now live in the Spirit and not in the flesh. **81** I am sealed with the Holy
Rom 8:9; Gal 5:25 *2 Cor 1:22; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13,14; 1 Thess 4:8; 1 John 3:24; 4:13*
- Spirit, which is the earnest of believers' inheritance. **82** My body is the temple
1 Cor 6:19
- of the Holy Spirit. **83** I have an anointing (unction) from the Holy One. **84** The
1 John 2:20,27
- Holy Spirit is my divine comforter and teacher. **85** I am given assurance by the
John 14:26; 15:26 *Rom 8:16; 2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13,14; 4:30*
- Spirit. **86** I am led by the Spirit of God. **87** God's Spirit has given me spiritual
Rom 8:14 *1 Cor 12:1,6-7*
- gifts. **88** My soul has an anchor, both sure and steadfast. **89** I am one of the called
Heb 6:19 *Rom 1:6; 8:28-30; Jude 1; Rev 17:14*
- of Jesus Christ. **90** I have been called unto the fellowship of God's Son. **91** I have
1 Cor 1:9 *1 Pet 5:10*
- been called unto eternal glory. **92** I have been called with a holy calling. **93** I am a
2 Tim 1:9
- partaker of the high and heavenly calling. **94** I have been called out of darkness into
Phil 3:14; Heb 3:1 *1 Pet 2:9*
- His marvellous light. **95** I am chastened and disciplined by my Heavenly Father.
Heb 12:6,7
- 96** I am part of that group which Christ is not ashamed to call His "brethren"
Heb 2:11; John 15:14,15
- and "friends". **97** I am a child of Abraham. **98** I can enjoy the blessing of Abraham.
Gal 3:7; 3:29 *Gal 3:9*
- 99** I am a child of promise. **100** I am a sheep in His flock. **101** I am a member of
Gal 4:28,31 *Luke 12:32; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25* *1 Cor 10:17; Eph 3:6; 4:25; 5:30*
- His body. **102** I am a living stone in His building. **103** I am a branch in His vine.
Eph 2:20-22; Heb 3:6; 1 Pet 2:5 *John 15:1-7*
- 104** I am a child of His kingdom. **105** I am born again into His family. **106** I am a child
Matt 13:38; Mark 10:14,15; Luke 17:21 *John 1:12,13; James 1:18; 1 Pet 1:3,23; 1 John 5:1* *1 Pet 2:10; Rev 21:7*

of His mercy. **107** The knowledge of God is made known by me. **108** The savour
2 Cor 2:14 *2 Cor 2:15,16*

(aroma) of Christ is made known by me. **109** I am an epistle of Christ. **110** I am
2 Cor 3:3

being changed into Christ's glorious image. **111** I am being perfected. **112** I have
2 Cor 3:18 *Phil 1:6*

put on Christ. **113** I am not of the world. **114** The world is crucified unto me.
Gal 3:27 *John 17:14,16* *Gal 6:14*

115 I am crucified unto the world. **116** I am separated unto the Gospel of God.
Gal 6:14 *Rom 1:1*

117 I am clothed in Christ's righteousness. **118** I am made holy and blameless, and
2 Cor 5:21 *Eph 5:27; Col 1:22; Jude 24; Col 3:12; Heb 3:1; I Pet 2:9; I Cor 1:2; Phil 1:1; Col 1:2; Rom 1:7*

hence a saint. **119** I am a stranger and a pilgrim who does not feel at home in this
Heb 11:13; I Pet 2:1; Phil 3:20

world. I am a citizen of heaven. **120** My faithful God will keep me from evil.
2 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 4:18

121 Christ has made me free, and I am free indeed. **122** I am God's servant/slave.
Rom 6:7,18,22; John 8:32,36; Gal 5:1,13 *Rom 6:22*

123 I am Christ's servant/slave. **124** I am a servant/slave of righteousness. **125** I have
I Cor 7:22 *Rom 6:18*

the mind of Christ. **126** I have a sound mind. **127** I have all the spiritual armour and
I Cor 2:16 *2 Tim 1:7* *2 Cor 10:4; Eph 6:10-18*

weapons I need. **128** I am more than a conqueror. **129** I have victory through Christ.
Rom 8:37 *I Cor 15:57*

130 I have overcome the world. **131** I always triumph in Christ. **132** I am indwelt
I John 5:4,5 *2 Cor 2:14* *I John 4:4*

by Christ who is greater than Satan and his minions. **133** Satan cannot touch me.
I John 5:18

134 I have God's all-sufficient grace. **135** I can come to the throne of grace to find
2 Cor 12:9 *Heb 4:16*

help in time of need. **136** I have God's power working in and through me. **137** I have
Eph 1:19; 3:20

access to the Father always. **138** I have a great High Priest in heaven. **139** I have an
Eph 2:18; Heb 4:16 *Heb 2:17,18; 3:1; 4:14-16*

unfailing intercessor and advocate. **140** I have peace with God. **141** Christ is my
Heb 7:25; 9:24; Rom 8:34; 1 John 2:1 *Rom 5:1* *Eph 2:14; Phil 4:7*

peace. **142** I have rest for my soul. **143** I am enabled during trials and temptations.
Matt 11:28–30; Heb 4:9 *1 Cor 10:13*

144 I am given comfort by God. **145** I am freely given truth and knowledge by the
2 Cor 1:3–7 *1 Cor 2:12*

Spirit. **146** I am not distressed or in despair. **147** I am not forsaken. **148** God is my
2 Cor 4:8 *2 Cor 4:9* *2 Cor 3:5*

Sufficiency. **149** God is my Strength. **150** God is my Helper. **151** My God is for me.
2 Cor 12:9,10; Phil 4:13 *Heb 13:6* *Rom 8:31*

152 The Lord is the Great Shepherd of my soul. **153** I belong to the Sovereign God
Heb 13:20,21 *Rom 8:28*

who works all things together for my good. **154** All things are for my sake. **155** I am
2 Cor 4:15

a labourer together with Christ. **156** I am His workmanship. **157** God works in me.
1 Cor 3:9; 2 Cor 6:1 *Eph 2:10* *Phil 2:13; Heb 13:21*

158 God's Word works in me. **159** I am sealed by God. **160** I am kept by the power
1 Thess 2:13 *2 Cor 1:22; Eph 1:13* *1 Pet 1:5*

of God. **161** I am preserved in Jesus Christ. **162** I am ministered to by the holy
Jude 1,24 *Heb 1:14*

angels of God. **163** I have a living hope. **164** I have a glorious future. **165** I have a
1 Pet 1:3 *Rom 8:18; 2 Thess 2:14* *2 Cor 5:1*

building of God, eternal in the heavens. **166** I am given encouragement and
2 Thess 2:16

good hope. **167** I will be given a new and glorified body like Christ's. **168** I will
Phil 3:20,21; 1 John 3:2

be preserved unto God's heavenly kingdom. **169** I am receiving a kingdom which
2 Tim 4:18 *Heb 12:28*

cannot be moved. **170** I have a place reserved in heaven for me. **171** I will not be
John 14:2,3; 1 Pet 1:3–4 *Rev 2:11; 20:6*

hurt of the second death. **172** I will have a new name. **173** I will have crowns.
Rev 2:17; 3:12 *1 Cor 9:25; 2 Tim 4:8; James 1:12*
1 Pet 5:4; Rev 2:10

174 I will sit with Christ in His throne. **175** I will be with my God forever.
Rev 3:21 *Rev 21:3,4*

NO GIVING OF THANKS IN THE GRAVE!

Biblical records show us that men of God were profoundly excited to give thanks to God and praise His name. Some even desired to live longer on earth just to worship God. When the thought of death gripped them or when they were about to die, they would pray to the Lord, “O Lord, please raise me up, because I cannot praise Thee in the grave.” They prayed in this manner not because they did not believe in a celestial life of joy and praise after death, but they were desirous of living longer on this earth to praise God.

In Psalm 6:5, the psalmist David asked the Lord, “For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” David was not denying the eternal promise of joy and praise after departing from this life. There is clear evidence that David looked forward with great hope of the heavenly joy and worship beyond death (Psalms 16:9-11; 17:15; 23:6). Then why did he say, “...in death there is no remembrance...”? From the perspective of earthly life, he was speaking about the ability to remember his benefits so as to give thanks to God. It would not have been possible to praise God if he were dead and buried. So in prayer, he was saying, “Lord, let me live a while more to praise Thee.”

All the redeemed people of God are a people of thanksgiving, whether on

earth or in heaven. We are always to be a thankful people. If a saint of God says, “Lord, let me live another year so that I can praise Thee”, it is a legitimate prayer. Do not request: “Lord, let me live another year to get another million dollars” — this is not for Christians. The whole purpose of a Christian on earth is to glorify God with thanksgiving. So, if it is the desire of any of you to live another year, pray that it will be to give thanks and exalt His name.

David again expresses the same sentiment in Psalm 30:9 — “What profit is there in my blood, when I go down to the pit? Shall the dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?” Shall the dust praise God? When your body decomposes and disintegrates, it turns into dust and cannot praise the Lord. So while you are alive, praise Him. “O Lord, for another day to praise thee!”

Similarly, the sons of Korah sang in Psalm 88:10-12, “Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Selah. Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark? and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?” In the cemetery, there are many gravestones with carvings of the cross or certain Bible verses on them. However, Christians who are buried there will not say to you, “Thanks for visiting.

I want you to know that the Lord has been good to me." In death's corruption, you will not be able to move your lips. As it has been said, "Damp earth covers the dumb mouths."

How sad it is that some Christians refrain from praising God! They just would not open their mouth to praise God! Even in a small fellowship group, when they are asked to pray or give thanks, they excuse themselves saying, "No, you pray; I don't want to pray." Dear reader, your mouth and lips are given to you to praise God. When death's sullen stream overcomes your body, your mouth shall be silenced from praising God. So may you decide in your heart like the psalmist, "Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honour all the day... My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers thereof. I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. Thy righteousness also, O God, is very high, who hast done great things: O God, who is like unto thee!" (Psalm 71:8, 15-19).

After a child is born, the parents eagerly wait for him to call them "papa" and "mama". What joy fills their hearts when their child calls them! Should a child of God then be embarrassed to say, "My Father, I praise thee"? It is not about the beauty of your expression nor your verbal prowess, but a genuine, heartfelt response to His grace that has blessed your life. The life which has been given to you is for the praise of the giver of that life. The gift of eternal life is to redound to the glory of God (2 Corinthians 4:6, 15).

Heaven-bound people are going to give endless praises to the Lord before His throne (Revelation 5:8-14). In fact, one way to prove that people are truly redeemed is that they will be a people of thanksgiving (1 Peter 2:9). So if you are a person who is totally detached from the praise of God, then there is no evidence in you that you are bound for heaven.

It is so unfortunate that some people would say, "I don't have to go to church to worship God. I am quite thankful to God, and that is good enough." This is not what the Scriptures teach us in the verses that we have been considering. So much of the Bible tells you to come to the congregation to praise God (Psalms 22:22, 25; 35:18; 66:16; 95:2; 107:32; 108:3; 109:30; 111:1; 116:14, 18; 119:46; 149:1). Come to the house of worship with prepared hearts. Think of the things that you want to thank God for—His good provisions, the things that the Lord had done for you in the past week, the wise counsels that He had taught you when you meditated upon His Word, etc. Say in your heart as you worship with the congregation, "O, how wonderful are these commandments, for they have shown me the path of righteousness! How profitable are these warnings that have kept me from sinning! How glorious are the truths that have enlightened me in the midst of the darkness of falsehood! How helpful are these promises that have given me courage! Yes, I shall stand in His presence with the rest of the brethren and worship Him for all these things!"

So often, people come to worship the Lord with hearts that are not adequately prepared to praise Him for all His benefits. May God forgive us! May God call us to repentance that we may be a thankful people. While we are alive, we are to praise God with thanksgiving for all that we enjoy—both spiritual and material blessings. ■

Notes of Gratitude

23rd July 2013

Dear Pastor Koshy,

Greetings in the blessed name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With gratitude in my heart, I can say with Paul, "For what thanks can we render to God again for you" (1 Thessalonians 3:9) because of the new issue of magazine received from the Bible Witness Media Ministry (BWMM).

I am joyous and thankful to the Lord because your ministry is constantly supplying one of the things which is lacking in our ministries.

I have been empowered again through these magazines to teach, preach and effectively pastor the congregation placed under my care. Therefore, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude for the articles in the magazines. As much as I have always been blessed to receive that which is needful in our ministry, I do not forget to thank our Lord and pray for your ministry which has provided an avenue of resources to me. Thank you and may our good Lord in His mercy and grace strengthen you and all the contributors of the articles as well as the staff.

Rev Albert Ben Kainesie

Pastor, First Presbyterian Church
Freetown, Sierra Leone



2nd August 2013

Dear Bible Witness Media Ministry staff,

Grace and mercy to all of you.

I thank the Almighty God for the opportunity that He has given us to serve Him.

I write to thank you for the constant supply of the Bible Witness to us. Since 2009, I have been receiving the Bible Witness magazines which are distributed among our three churches in Nairobi (IPC Githurai, IPC Kayole and IPC

Roysambu). The Christians here really like these magazines and greatly appreciate them. Initially, I used to receive 70 copies but now I am receiving 150 copies. Thanks to Rev Koshy because when I informed him that there was a great demand for the magazine, the response was an increase in the number of copies sent. We really appreciate them. May God bless the BWMM. I have attached some testimonies from some of those who have read the Bible Witness.

God bless
In His service,
Rev Titus Nzoka
Mwingi, Kenya



To the editor, Bible Witness magazine,

I give thanks to the Almighty God for the continuing growth of Gethsemane and her generous contribution towards issuing the "Bible Witness" magazine to many people in the world, including me. I remember receiving the first copy of Bible Witness through Pastor Titus Nzoka back in 2010. It has been of great spiritual blessing to me all these years.

It's my prayers that the Lord will continue to bless and sustain the Bible Witness ministry for His own glory.

Be blessed
Caxton Manzi
Independent Presbyterian Church
Githurai, Nairobi, Kenya



To editor, Bible Witness,

The Bible Witness magazine has been a great help to me. It has given me an extra clear understanding of the Scriptures. Many tough

topics in the Bible have been explained in detail and supported with Bible verses. I am very grateful for the servants of God who have laboured tirelessly to edify God's people and to warn those who are not faithful to God's Word.

Your labour in the Lord is not in vain.

Solomon Muthui

Independent Presbyterian Church
Githurai, Nairobi, Kenya



My Testimony on Bible Witness

Bible Witness, as the name suggests, presents the closest interaction with the Bible that unravels deep mysteries concerning this life. It has helped me in understanding some of the verses in the Bible and enabled me to correctly interpret the Word of God according to the way it should be done.

Take for instance, Bible Witness, Volume 12 Issue 2 (April–August 2012), I learned about the sovereignty of God. This enabled me to appreciate the greatness of God as cited in various places in the Bible. There is a common perception that God is very mysterious and a difficult subject to understand, but this particular issue has made it plain and brought me closer in my understanding of who God is.

Another issue, a landmark issue, is that of September–October 2012 on the basics of prayer. This issue serves as an eye-opener for me as it answers my various questions about those people who use casual language like “Daddy”, “Jesus my buddy”. It taught me to have reverence for God when I speak to Him.

The children's page also contains useful information. The Bible Trivia has always helped me to keep in touch with the Bible teachings and details about the Scriptures while the illustrated stories talk about men of God who really made an impact on other people's lives because of their devotion to the work of God. This has enabled us as Christians to identify with them and strive to work for God.

May God abundantly bless the Bible Witness Media Ministry and those who have helped to

make this work a success so that we may continue to spread biblical messages that will change the lives of many people.

Paul Musyoka Kimanzi

Independent Presbyterian Church
Roysambu, Nairobi, Kenya



3rd August 2013

Dear Brethren in Christ,

Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Thank you very much for sending me the Bible Witness regularly and I received it with gladness. It helps me to grow in my spiritual life and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thanks to Rev Dr Prabhudas Koshy who brings his inspiring biblical insight to every doctrine of the Bible and this has helped me to enhance my biblical knowledge. In the issue which you have sent to me, May-June 2013, I read a notice for the updating of subscription. In connection with this, I would like to continue to receive the said magazine for the edifying of my spiritual life and to share with other Christians what I have learnt from it. My address is: Mr Herminio M. Catacutan, 297 Nursery Road, Dona Agrifina Subd Brgy. Salapungan, Angeles City 2009, The Philippines. Thank you for being part of this ministry and I look forward to the other issues of the Bible Witness. May the Lord bless this ministry and more people of God in the whole world will be blessed by it. God bless all the staff of the Bible Witness Media Ministry as well as the Pastor, Rev Dr Koshy. May the Lord give him more wisdom and knowledge in teaching the unadulterated Word of God.

In Christ,

Herminio M. Catacutan
Angeles City, The Philippines



BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 13

Sarah Yong

1 READ EXODUS 13. Match each partial statement on the left with its relevant half on the right to form a complete sentence.

After leaving Egypt the children of Israel were commanded to... **A**

They were to ascribe their release from bondage to the LORD... **B**

Five different nations were living in the land of the Canaanites, but the LORD... **C**

They were to eat unleavened bread for seven days and... **D**

As a sign and memorial of the LORD's deliverance, **E**

Every firstling that was male would be set apart for the LORD as a reminder of... **F**

The people of Israel were also reminded to tell their children... **G**

God did not lead the people through the way of the land of the Philistines... **H**

Moses carried along with him the bones of Joseph when he left Egypt, **J**

The people had come to Succoth from Rameses, **K**

1 promised to give them this land, flowing with milk and honey.

2 have a feast unto the LORD on the 7th day.

3 sanctify the firstborn of man and beast in their midst.

4 they were to observe the Passover yearly.

5 who had brought them forth by the strength of His hand.

6 the redemption of all the firstborn of man among them.

7 lest they witnessed war, became fearful and yearned to return to Egypt.

8 and now they continued their journey, encamping in the wilderness of Etham.

9 how the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt.

10 for Joseph had believed in the fulfilment of God's promise to His people.



2 Fill in the missing letters for each word to complete the poem below.

The L ___ went before His people by day
 In a pillar of cloud that led the w ___;
 And with the pillar of f ___ giving light,
 The people moved onward through the n _____.

ANSWERS TO VOLUME 13 ISSUE 3: BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 12 (P.27)

- John 1:29 – Lamb, world
- 2 Cor 5:21 – sin, righteousness
- 1 Cor 5:7 – passover
- Heb 9:22 – shedding, remission
- 1 Jn 1:7 – son, blood
- Jn 3:16 – loved, begotten,
 believeth, everlasting
- Bonus* – God, Lord, Jesus,
 Saviour

S S E N S U O E T H G I R
 B O J G O V J L O R D J E
 E H N G N I D D E H S E V
 L G O D U R S P G I B S O
 I L K L H E D S N F C U S
 E V E R L A S T I N G S S
 V B M O R T V W E M N T A
 E M C W B E G O T T E N P
 T A B S A V I O U R T R C
 H L O V E D O O L B O G O

Alfred the Great

A MAN OF STATUS, ACCOMPLISHMENT AND
SPIRITUAL CONVICTION

Story retold by Ruth Low. Illustrated by Linus Kok.



In England, in the 800s, a royal mother gave birth to her fifth son. This baby boy was called Alfred. Alfred's mother died when he was only five, and likewise his father when he was eight. Thus, Alfred grew up without parents, and was brought up in the palace with lots of feasting, merry-making, coupled with drunkenness, and physical training in sports such as leaping, wrestling, running and hunting.

Thirteen-year-old Alfred was dissatisfied with these physical enjoyments of court life. He became increasingly intellectually hungry, which led him to learn how to read although his progress was slow due to a lack of good teachers; and spiritually, he was constantly examining himself and searching for the truth. He developed a deep sense of shame over his wrong deeds and thoughts, and desired to know what would happen to his soul one day. He would often go on his knees to pray for the deliverance of his sins, only to find to his dismay that he would



repeat those same sins. He then prayed that God might make him more devoted and help him believe in Him. God answered his prayers by giving him an understanding of the Gospel and how Christ died for his sins. Alfred finally came to a saving knowledge of the Lord, experiencing the wonderful unburdening of his guilt.

Alfred grew into a fine young man who fought battles for his country, particularly against the Danish. The Danish had invaded the land, burnt homes, looted churches, and killed men, women and children without mercy. Alfred's army was made up of those whose homes had been destroyed and families scattered. They engaged in a fierce hand-to-hand combat with the enemy by using swords and axes, hacking at one another to kill or be killed. The Danish defence broke and they retreated in disarray to their base camp. However, victory for the English did not last. More Danish enemies poured into the country. It was at the height of this emergency that Alfred succeeded the throne of England. The new King Alfred had to fight another nine battles against the enemy within a year, during which his heart was lifted up by the praise of his lieutenants. So despite his military achievements, Alfred drifted away from God. He no longer prayed nor experienced God's peace.

After seven long years, King Alfred's men became too tired to hold out much longer and were forced into submission. As a result, the king himself, a few of his troops, his wife, Ealhswith, together with his little children, had to take refuge in a wild swamp in Selwood Forest. It was during this time of despair that Alfred recovered his spiritual strength and returned from his backsliding. He repented of his pride and self-reliance. God mercifully and graciously gave him the ultimate victory over the Danish through a sudden, surprise attack on them that caught them unguarded and left them defeated.

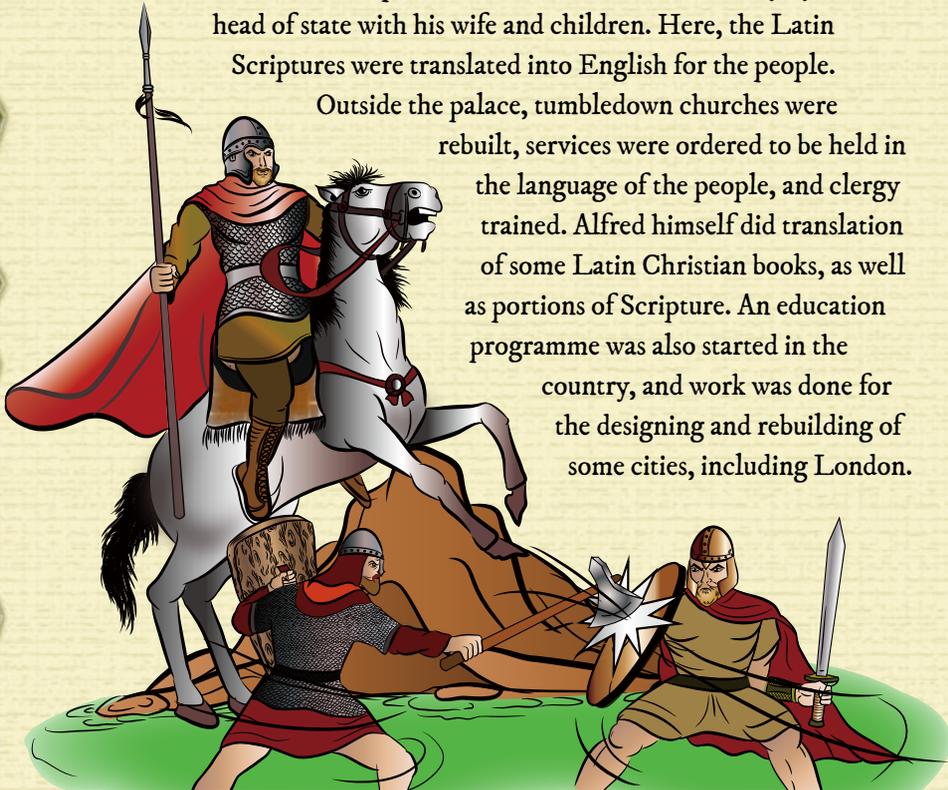
England had peace for six years after that. But as this country had been in a state of wickedness and disorder, King Alfred sought to reform it. He introduced imprisonment and made assault, immorality and Sabbath-breaking illegal. The king's palace was also transformed from a drunken

Saxon court to a place where the Bible was read daily by the head of state with his wife and children. Here, the Latin Scriptures were translated into English for the people.

Outside the palace, tumbledown churches were

rebuilt, services were ordered to be held in the language of the people, and clergy trained. Alfred himself did translation of some Latin Christian books, as well as portions of Scripture. An education programme was also started in the

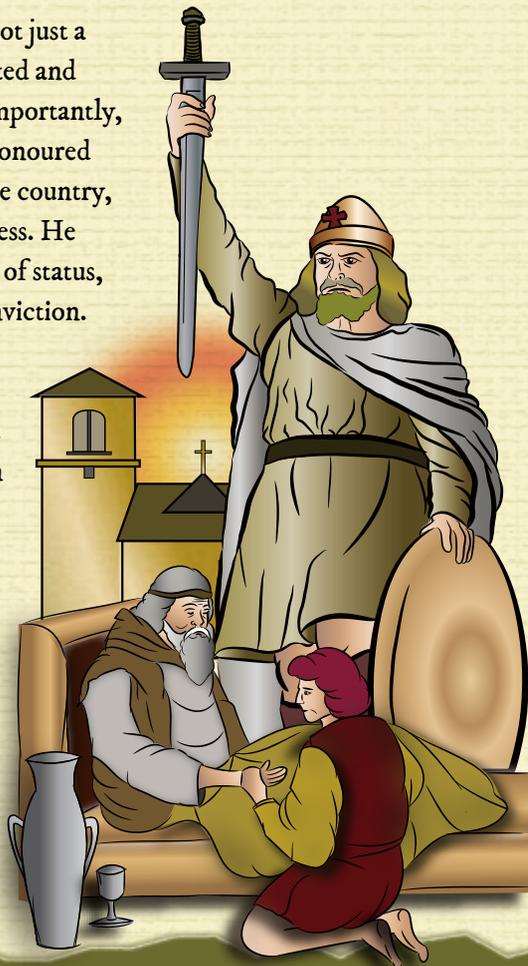
country, and work was done for the designing and rebuilding of some cities, including London.



Nearing the end of his life at the age of fifty-two, and suffering from a painful illness, King Alfred called for his eldest son, Edward, and left this memorable commission: "My son, I feel that my hour is near, my face is pale, and my days are nearly run. We must soon part. I shall go to another world and you shall be left alone with all my wealth. I ask you, for you are my dear child, strive to be a father and a lord to your people. Be the children's father and the widow's friend. Comfort the poor and shelter the weak, and with all your might put right what is wrong. And, my son, govern yourself by the rules, then the Lord will love you and above all things God will be your reward. Call upon Him to advise you in all your need and He shall help you all the more to accomplish all you intend."

Certainly, King Alfred was not just a man of high position who attempted and achieved much in his life. More importantly, he was one who feared God. He honoured the Lord through his deeds for the country, and the Lord gave him good success. He was truly Alfred the Great, a man of status, accomplishment and spiritual conviction.

Dear children, may you likewise learn to be always selfless and humble for Christ, even when you have achieved earthly success and glory. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).





DIVINE CONQUEST *of a* DEFIANT HEART

It is not just about a prophet in the belly of a fish. The book of Jonah is really about God conquering a self-willed, disobedient and defiant human heart to declare His gracious, redemptive plan through him. In the upcoming Bible Witness Retreat, learn how God conquers, turns and directs our adamant hearts to set us sailing towards His eternal purposes and glory.

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- S\$160/child (With bed, 5-12 years old)
- S\$130/child (Without bed, 5-12 years old)

All fees include transport, accommodation, meals and notes. Registration forms can be downloaded from www.biblewitness.com/retreat. For more information, please contact Lok Kwok Wah at 6741 1910 or send an email to editor@biblewitness.com.

Register before 31 August 2013! Hurry!

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bible study retreat
A time to be refreshed and revived!