

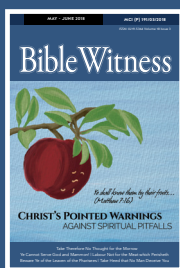
# Bible Witness



*Ye shall know them by their fruits...  
(Matthew 7:16)*

## CHRIST'S POINTED WARNINGS AGAINST SPIRITUAL PITFALLS

Take Therefore No Thought for the Morrow  
Ye Cannot Serve God and Mammon! I Labour Not for the Meat which Perisheth  
Beware Ye of the Leaven of the Pharisees I Take Heed that No Man Deceive You

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Singapore

**Printer**

Ee Tai Press Pte Ltd

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#### SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The magazine is distributed free from 2006 onwards. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).  
Postage and handling charges for 2 years (12 issues):

<b>SURFACE MAIL</b>	<b>Singapore/Malaysia S\$10.00</b>	<b>Other Countries S\$14.00</b>
<b>AIR MAIL</b>	<b>Asia S\$26.00</b>	<b>Other Countries S\$34.00</b>

International bank draft, money order or postal order drawn on a Singapore bank in Singapore dollars may be made payable to "Bible Witness".

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# TAKE THEREFORE No THOUGHT FOR THE MORROW

MATTHEW 6:34

*Prabhudas Koshy*

“**T**ake therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof” (Matthew 6:34). Much reassurance and consolation are inherent in this instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ; He spoke these words, knowing that uncertainties would cloud the minds of His followers and troubles would bother their hearts. This is not spoken against Christians making necessary and sensible plans for the future. After all, He insisted on the necessity for proper planning in submission to God’s will when He said, “For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?” (Luke 14:28; cf. Proverbs 24:27). This is spoken against believers’ undue worrying about their future provisions to meet their future needs.

## **Worry Dishonours God**

While it is legitimate to make proper provisions for tomorrow, the Lord forbids His people from worrying about (and thereby being unduly bogged down by) the difficulties and needs of tomorrow. Worry dishonours and displeases the Lord. It obviously shows a lack of faith and confidence in the Lord and His promise of gracious, faithful care of His people. It also manifests an unwillingness to patiently wait on Him. Such a disposition of heart is certain to give rise to numerous unsavoury experiences and ungodly behaviour, such as fear, depression, discontentment, greed, envy, murmuring, quarrels and stealing.

Earlier in the same sermon on the Mount, the Lord gave a pointed warning concerning the spiritual dangers of worrying. Jesus asserted, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the



other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?" (Matthew 6:24-25). You cannot serve God and worry about tomorrow's needs at the same time. It is akin to doubting God's willingness and ability to provide for His followers who faithfully serve their heavenly Master. Christians who are anxious about the needs of this earthly life not only fail to demonstrate their confidence and dependence on God's good providence, but they also betray a wavering allegiance and a conditional submission to His absolute sovereignty. Worry is as good as distrust and dishonour of our blessed Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Moreover, worry discredits our heavenly Father's special paternal care for all His children. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matthew 6:26-30). In worrying, you are overlooking God's care of the rest of His creation. Jesus' insistence here is that followers of Christ

should have no real reason to be anxious about the supplies for their sustenance, for God, their heavenly Father, will certainly care for them as He cares for all other creatures around them. Jesus drives home His point by highlighting the way the heavenly Father cares for all the creatures of the land and the air. Though those wild creatures do not hoard anything for their future, their Creator cares for them daily as they go out in search for their food. How much more will He then care for His redeemed children! So, worrying about one's life expectancy or life's basic necessities (such as food and clothing) is to foolishly question the unmistakable and unfailing providential care of the heavenly Father.

## **Worry Undermines Faith**

Worry, furthermore, is a serious threat to living a life of faith. "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:30-33). Indeed, know ye not that God owns "the cattle upon a thousand hills" (Psalm 50:10b), and has, at His disposal, all the resources to meet our every need? While faith reassures one that "no good thing will (God) withhold from them that



walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11b), worry makes one blind to all these biblical truths.

Constant worry can result in believers living a life bereft of faith. It is the characteristic of the “Gentiles” (i.e. the unbelieving). Our minds should not be like the unbelievers’ minds, which are enveloped in their overriding concern for the worldly goods. The Gentiles are primarily motivated by their anxiety for worldly goods (i.e. materialism). While they eagerly seek after earthly goods, wealth, fame and glory, Christians must rather seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, being strengthened, cheered and guided by their faith in a God who supplies all the physical and spiritual needs of His children. While Gentiles languish in worry, Christians must grow in faith, obedience, service and righteousness. Those who put God first and trust Him throughout their lives can be sure of God’s sustenance.

## **Worry Squanders Daily Supply of Grace**

Jesus also forewarns all His followers against the common evil tendency of people to occupy their minds with possible future troubles even when there is currently nothing troubling in their lives. By saying “for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself”, the Lord expects His children to face the future – no matter how uncertain or complex it may appear – with the firm knowledge that it will be taken care of by God’s providence as it unfolds. If the heavenly Father would grant them another “tomorrow”, it will arrive with all His provisions and tender care to meet its

challenges and needs. No one who trusts in Christ should waste today’s God-given opportunities and means to fret about tomorrow’s needs and troubles, which are still yet future and may not even come to pass. He only needs to fulfil his daily commitments to Christ and His righteous kingdom by availing himself of what is at hand through God’s daily supply of grace. In order to triumph for Him, His kingdom and His righteousness, Christians fight the battles against each day’s temptations and trials with what is at hand today – their time, possessions, relationships, appointments, advantages, etc. In worrying about tomorrow, they squander what they have today by squirrelling them away for tomorrow, thereby forfeiting God’s divine purposes for the here and now.

Indeed, why should we unwisely distress ourselves with tomorrow’s problems and lose all or most of what is at hand? Besides clouding our reasoning and diminishing our ability to accomplish (day by day) whatever is noblest and most glorious according to His eternal purposes, worry also results in lost opportunities as it causes hesitation and failure in our immediate service to God. Let us not be losers in today’s spiritual combat by needlessly worrying about tomorrow. With each day given to us, God promises to give us His daily supply of grace. The same goes for tomorrow if He would add another day to our lives. It is obvious that by worrying today about tomorrow, we will not receive anything for tomorrow’s challenges. Isn’t it far better and wiser for us to exert all our mind and strength to live for our present victory by utilising all that He has given



to us? Let us not squander today's grace but be consecrated to do His good will now, and focus on each day's victory and achievements.

## Conclusion

Christians are not to be worriers! If worry ever invades our hearts, we must immediately fill our hearts with the memory of God's goodness, gracious promises and faithfulness. We must also then go on to seek God's will for us and dedicate ourselves to fully accomplish His will, according to His grace given to us. There is no necessity for Christians to be anxious about the future. Rather, if we stop worrying and "seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness", then the sure promise of our loving heavenly Father is: "all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Amen.



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JERUSALEM



# YE CAN NOT SERVE GOD & MAMMON!

MATTHEW 6:24

*Ho Kee How*

As Christians, though we are in the world, we are not to be of the world, but as “strangers and pilgrims, (to) abstain from fleshly lusts”, and to reject the lifestyles and philosophies espoused by this self-indulgent world system (cf. John 17:16; 1 Peter 2:11). Without question, the whole world (with its political, social and economic systems) is presently under the grip of “the prince of the power of the air”, namely Satan, who (Scripture tells us in Ephesians 2:2) is “the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience”, who are constantly being instigated to walk “according to the course (i.e. present

age or system) of this world”. That is why our Lord Jesus Christ, while He was on earth, pointedly and painstakingly warned against the danger of believers being sucked into that world system. Instructively, in Matthew 6:24, He has this to say: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

Now, Jesus is most concerned that we keep our undivided love for God from being tainted by the world’s attractions through earthly riches. Essentially, He is probing His listeners’ loyalty: “Who (or

what) dictates your life – God or mammon (i.e. material wealth)?” Now, this may be an easy intellectual question to answer, but alas, as our Christian experience bears out, not so easy a practical choice to make, let alone a lifelong conviction to uphold! The consecrated Christian knows full well that Christian commitment is a constant battle, a relentless fight to the end – against sin and the dazzling temptations of the world around us!

## Ensnaring Trap of Materialism

Jesus is acutely aware that one sure, ensnaring way of getting sucked into the world system is through the desire to have more earthly riches. Of course, money per se cannot be enjoyed. What can be enjoyed, rather, are the goods and services which money can buy and secure to provide for our daily needs and sustenance. The problem is, it doesn't just stop there. The tendency is that many Christians, prodded on by the affluence around them, go further – they crave for more wealth to secure more goods and services to fulfil (unfortunately) the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (cf. 1 John 2:16). This inordinate craving for money, which is the driving force in the dealings of this world (where generating wealth is the number one criterion in its political and economic systems), will unconsciously but inevitably cause a person to make decisions, align his priorities, channel his energies accordingly. In so doing, he has just made riches his yardstick and key parameter in defining happiness and success. In other words, he has made mammon his master!

In clinging on to mammon, a person will soon esteem lightly God's influence in his life. In “loving” and “holding to” mammon, he will come to “hate” God's ways and “despise” God's counsel (through His Word). This is an inevitable consequence, according to Jesus in Matthew 6:24. So, there is a real danger of Christians allowing God's rightful preeminent place in their lives to be usurped by mammon by falling into this materialistic trap.

But there is a more subtle danger: i.e. Christians thinking both masters can co-exist in their lives! “Having the best of both worlds”, they say – they want to “have their cake and eat it”! Nothing is more foolish and miserable. Divided loyalty is NO loyalty! Didn't Jesus say that anyone “that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me” (Matthew 10:37-38)? To take up one's cross is to be prepared to give even one's life for the service of the Master. Indeed, “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it” (Matthew 16:25). That is the kind of single-hearted devotion and consecration demanded of the disciple of Christ! Being enamoured with material wealth and having a materialistic



mindset certainly make one unworthy of the kingdom of God.

## **Beware of a Divided Heart**

True allegiance involves forsaking all to follow the Master (cf. Matthew 19:27-29). For the Christian, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10b), for “the LORD thy God is a jealous God” (Deuteronomy 6:15a). God will not entertain or tolerate “sharing the limelight” with any other thing that would occupy the seat of our affection and devotion. So, beware of having a divided heart.

A divided heart is a dangerous, nay treacherous, character predisposition. It can cause you to play people out by not being faithful to your calling / commitment. Seemingly innocuous and non-threatening to the casual observer, it is also a subtle predisposition in that a divided heart is usually not very blatant in the beginning; in fact, it does show some indication of godly commitment at the start. But therein lies its treachery. A divided heart actually masks a deep-seated aspiration, which will eventually grow into a full-blown passion and consuming

desire, destroying your very spiritual well-being in the end.

Alas, many Christians who began well but ended badly, due to their being ensnared by materialism, usually did not notice anything amiss at first. Even if they did, they casually brushed aside their vulnerability to such unrighteous influences. We see this in the sad example of the “just but vexed” Lot. Lot was already quite well-to-do before departing from the spiritual protection and godly influence of his uncle Abraham, for he “had flocks, and herds, and tents”, and his “substance was great” (Genesis 13:5-6). In “pitch(ing) his tent toward Sodom” (Genesis 13:12b), it revealed his heart’s desire for the prosperity and affluence of that city, notwithstanding its exceeding wickedness and sinfulness (Genesis 13:10, 13). His pursuit of wealth culminated in him settling in Sodom, not caring that the spiritual welfare of his entire family was being compromised and would ultimately be sacrificed (cf. Genesis 19:14, 26, 31-32)! Lot’s folly was manifested in his thinking that he could somehow find a “balance” in serving God and mammon, which proved to be a spiritual impossibility.

## **Folly of Serving Two Masters**

This is corroborated by the choice of words Jesus used and the Greek grammar employed in Matthew 6:24c – “Ye cannot” – which portray vividly the absolute devotion and exclusivity of that master-servant relationship. Wisdom and observation tell us that it is practically impossible to have two chief ends in life – glorifying God and promoting mammon. Both are diametrically opposed to each other – “Ye cannot serve God and mammon”! Sadly, many who love to associate with church and identify with Christ do so with a divided heart. They have a tendency to dabble in limited worldly activities, and then rationalise within themselves that they are able to extract certain benefits and enjoy the pleasures of the world without being totally sold to their unwholesome ideology / ungodly connotations.

Such misguided thinking is tragically demonstrated in the horrifying end of “one of the twelve” (cf. Matthew 26:14-16), namely Judas Iscariot. Unlike Peter and the rest of the disciples who had left all to follow Jesus (Matthew 19:27), Judas followed with a divided allegiance. In all likelihood, when he initially chose to follow Jesus, Judas’ enthusiasm was real. But the sad reality is that while he might have been sincere, he was not wholehearted in following Christ. He joined Jesus more for political reasons than spiritual. Christ’s miracles awoke in him political ambition, prospect of power and, undeniably, material wealth as well. His material obsession was highlighted when the apostle John exposed him as “a thief ... (who) had the

bag, and bare what was put therein” (John 12:6). In his vain attempt to serve two masters, Judas ended up betraying Jesus, literally exchanging Jesus for mammon by “selling” Him away for thirty pieces of silver! However much he claimed to value the divine Master, he valued earthly riches more. In “holding to” riches, he gradually valued Christ less. His ultimate dastardly act of betrayal revealed his gross misestimation and under-valuation of Christ. Oh, the folly of serving two masters!

## **We Are Not Our Own!**

The apostle Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 that we are not our own, but “are bought with a price”. What is that price? It is the infinite price of the precious blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:19)! We must realise that in time past, we were all alien to God’s promises, “having no hope, and without God in the world” and doomed to a lost eternity (cf. Ephesians 2:12). The infinite, eternal and unchangeable thrice-holy God took the initiative to reconcile us to Him by sparing not His only begotten Son, but delivered Him up for us all (Romans 8:32). As our Substitute in obeying all the law on man’s behalf, Christ has earned the righteousness for us (cf. Galatians 4:4; Romans 5:19b). As our Great High Priest in laying down His life on the cross, Christ suffered once and for all the punishment for sin on our behalf, this being the only ransom that can satisfy the demands of God’s holy law and perfect justice (cf. Hebrews 2:17; 9:12, 14). As God’s blood-bought children, we stand justified in Christ, by whom we now have access to God’s throne of grace (cf.



Romans 5:2). Oh, what sublime grace! Surely, when we think of that “wondrous cross” on which the sinless Son of God willingly died to gain our salvation, it must dawn on us that such “love so amazing ... demands my soul, my life, my all”, to use the words of the hymn-writer.

As God’s redeemed saints, we have turned from past loyalties “to serve the living and true God” (1 Thessalonians 1:9b). If we say we serve Christ our risen Saviour, we are saying that Christ has full authority over every aspect of our lives. Hence Jesus’ stringent, though absolutely logical and reasonable, condition for Christian commitment: “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Having given His all for us, He demands our all in response – total consecration to the Lord,

being unspotted by the world, is our only reasonable response and service (cf. Romans 12:1-2). There can be no joint first with mammon (or any other “idol” of the world). God must have the sole first place, or no place at all, in our lives!

## Conclusion

Having said that, the Bible is not saying that money has no place in our lives. God and mammon can co-exist in our Christian lives. But the distinction is clear: God is the Master; money, rather, is the servant. Money can be used to glorify God – “Honour the LORD with thy substance” (Proverbs 3:9a). Indeed, money – like fire – is a bad master but a good servant. In the biblical sense, money can co-exist with God, but only as a good servant. Amen.



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# LABOUR NOT FOR THE **MEAT** WHICH PERISHETH

JOHN 6:27

*Reggor Galarpe*

“**L**abour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life...” (John 6:27a). These were the words spoken by the Lord Jesus Christ to a great multitude of people, who a day before had seen Him perform the miracle of feeding the 5,000 with five loaves (John 6:10-13, 22), and who had thereafter been seeking after Him. It was actually part of the Lord’s rebuke that we read in the preceding verse: “...Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled” (John 6:26).

Jesus knew very well their motives and intents in their coming to Him; they were not really seeking after Him but after what

He could provide for them. Obviously the Lord was not impressed, hence the rebuke which exposed their selfish and materialistic hearts. They were so blinded by their superficial and physical desire for food that they missed the true spiritual significance of the previous day’s miracle. Yes, they had witnessed the miracle that Jesus had performed, but they failed to grasp its spiritual implications. They failed to comprehend what really matters most and what is essential in life. In this regard, Jesus exhorted them to be preoccupied with the “food” which is imperishable, i.e. which endures unto eternal life, instead of working for the “perishable” food, which in this case was the physical food they sought after.



Like the multitudes in the time of Jesus, many people today are engrossed in seeking after the physical, material and temporal things in life, which to them are the so-called necessities of life, not realising that there is more to life than mere physical needs. The Lord Jesus Himself has said; “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). What’s worse is that many, not merely satisfied with the basic necessities of life, even go further to pursue the vanities of life! The problem is that they spend a great deal of their time, energy and money on these worldly pursuits, which in the end will not bring true inner satisfaction to their restless, immortal souls. Oh, how well Solomon, the wisest king of Israel and the man who had it all, had said: “Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 2:11).

## **Seek After Things of Eternal Value**

In uttering His pointed warning in John 6:27, Jesus does not mean that we are to quit our jobs and take the vow of poverty. Neither is Jesus encouraging idleness and laziness. Nowhere does Jesus show contempt for work. He said of His own disciples, even as He sent them out: “the labourer is worthy of his hire” (Luke 10:7b). Indeed, the Bible has a lot to say about labour and work. We are commanded to work diligently to provide for our own needs and the needs of others – “Let him

that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth” (Ephesians 4:28). In the same vein, we are warned “that if any would not work, neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

Rather, by warning against exerting our energies and resources “for the meat which perisheth”, Jesus is pointedly showing us by way of contrast where we should be putting our focus on, and what our proper perspective should be. Just as He has warned us in Matthew 6:19-21, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” We are to keep eternity’s values in view as we sojourn here on earth as “strangers and pilgrims” (cf. Hebrews 11:13). The point simply is that all material things will eventually pass away. Thus, we should not be caught up in chasing after them, to the extent that we neglect those things that are of great and eternal value.

## **Seek After God and His Righteousness**

Jesus had earlier, in His sermon on the Mount, taught the multitudes to “take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?”, but to “seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto

you” (Matthew 6:31, 33). Here the Lord stressed on what should be our priority. We are called upon to see beyond the temporal – to realise that there is more to life than eating, drinking and clothing, “for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Luke 12:15b).

Man is generally concerned with his physical condition and what directly affects him physically. Thus, he tends to be more concerned about food and drink for the satisfaction of his stomach, and clothes for the covering of his body, instead of the great purposes of God for him. While he sees to it that he and his family will not experience poverty and bodily deprivation, he is rather oblivious to the perilous condition of his spiritual poverty. Certainly, we cannot ignore our physical needs, but as the Lord Jesus unequivocally reiterated, “The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment” (Luke 12:23).

It is this misplaced priority that we see in many, which manifested their folly. In putting premium on the needs of the body and neglecting the soul, many fail to see the great value of seeking after God in His Word and His righteousness. Many have

undervalued the truths of God’s Word and thus are unable to discern spiritual things, while yet countless others are just totally blinded to their spiritual bankruptcy. Realise that to undervalue God’s truths is to undervalue eternal life, which Jesus was emphasising in His admonition in John 6:27. When the Lord Jesus said, “Labour not for the meat which perisheth”, He also refocused our attention on what should be our priority, that is, to labour “for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life”. He further added that the latter is that “which the Son of man shall give unto you” (John 6:27b). It is a free gift – through His righteousness earned on our behalf and His atoning death for our sins, definitely not of our works, lest any man should boast (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9).

## **Seek After Things Above**

A line from a familiar chorus goes like this: “Like the woman at the well I was seeking, for things that could not satisfy.” This is a fitting description of many people today who just cannot see past the temporal things that can only satisfy the body but not the soul. This is clearly demonstrated

*In putting premium on the needs of the body  
and neglecting the soul, many fail to see the  
great value of seeking after God in His Word  
and His righteousness.*



by the vain earthly pursuits they are preoccupied with – wealth and riches, fame and honour, worldly entertainment and pleasure, with all the associated vices and vanities therein. Their ardent belief is that these are the things in life which can really bring them satisfaction and happiness. Oh, how tragically mistaken they are!

This is clearly illustrated in the Lord's parable in Luke 12:16-21 – “And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.”

The words of the Lord through the prophet Isaiah speak loud and clear on this regard: “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness” (Isaiah 55:2). Becoming engrossed in things that do not matter to

God's kingdom will ultimately bring deep regrets. Furthermore, setting your affection on things on the earth (cf. Colossians 3:2) is vain as things of this world are, at best, fleeting and fading – they just could not satisfy! Certainly, true wisdom tells us to “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15a), for “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof” (1 John 2:17a). Rather, seek after things above, for these pertain to “that meat which endureth unto everlasting life”.

## Conclusion

“Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life...” Anything that wears out over time, anything that is of no eternal value, or anything that has no bearing on the soul's well-being, is to be referred to as “meat which perisheth”. Whether it is great material wealth, luxurious creature comforts, earthly fame, prestigious education, etc., these should not be the supreme goal of the occupations and preoccupations of our lives. Indeed, “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36). Labour not to satisfy yourself with these “perishable” things in life. Rather, labour with the view of exalting Christ and find lasting, not fleeting or fading, satisfaction in all that you do for Him and for His glory. Amen.



# BEWARE

## Ye of the LEAVEN of the PHARISEES

LUKE 12:1

*Samson Hutagalung*



Jesús frequently cited the Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes as corrupt and perverse religious leaders who led the Jewish people astray. As spiritual leaders, they were supposed to guide the people to know God and His will based on the preserved Word of God (Psalm 12:6-7). They neglected and abandoned their divine responsibilities, and had caused the people to become “scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36; cf. Mark 6:34). The people were without a shepherd who could feed them with the Word of truth. They were spiritually



hungry and thirsty, but none of their so-called religious leaders could satisfy them with the precious truths of God.

The Pharisees, Sadducees and scribes were the religious leaders who claimed to have dedicated their entire lives to the ministry of the Word. In reality, they had abused their authority by devouring widows' houses, swearing unlawful oaths, neglecting mercy and faith, as well as putting up displays of outward piety (Matthew 23:14, 16, 23, 27-28). Their hypocrisy knew no bounds in their pretentious honouring of the prophets whom their fathers had killed (Matthew 23:29-31)! In deliberately ignoring God's truths in their practices, they showed they had no delight in applying what the Holy Scriptures said. Hence the message of warning spoken by Jesus: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy" (Luke 12:1b).

## **The Use of Leaven**

The use of the word "leaven" is instructive. Leaven, such as yeast or baking soda, is a powerful fungus that can cause fermentation and make a lump of dough to rise into a fluffy loaf of bread. Without yeast to leaven the dough, the loaf that comes out of the oven will be flat. Remarkably, it takes only a small amount of yeast to leaven the dough thoroughly.

The use of "leaven" in the Gospels can be divided into two types. On the positive aspect, Jesus used "leaven" to describe the kingdom of God, like in the "Parable of the Leaven" as recorded for us in Matthew 13:33 and Luke 13:20-21. The small and insignificant beginnings of the kingdom

of God will one day give rise to a great kingdom. This illustrative use of leaven serves as a symbol of the final triumph of the Gospel in this age. In the negative sense, Jesus used "leaven" as a warning to the disciples and multitudes (Matthew 16:11-12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1), against the backdrop of unbelief and rejection of the Jewish religious leaders of the authority of Jesus. Leaven here is used to reveal its very nature to corrupt that with which it is mixed. Jesus likened the Pharisaical doctrines and influences to leaven, which had the subversive effect of eroding the people's confidence in God's Word and their faith in the living and true God.

## **The Pharisaical Hypocrisy**

When Jesus warned the people of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1), He was essentially against the doctrine and conduct of the Pharisees. They were like leaven which has the potential of affecting and influencing not only their own lives, but everyone who came into contact with them. Their doctrines contained a mixture of God's truths and man-made traditions that could spread very quickly, affecting the thought processes of all and sundry, and in no time corrupting the true meaning of God's Word. Jesus uncompromisingly condemned their hypocritical conduct and life. Following are several crucial areas in which Jesus Christ denounced the Pharisees for their hypocritical manner and life.

Firstly, the Pharisees did their religious works in order to be seen and complimented by others (Matthew 23:3-7). They were

more interested in gaining the approval and honour of those around them than of God. Their entire lives and actions were not for the glory of God but for their own glory (cf. Luke 11:43). Their ears were “tickled” when their fellowmen called them “Rabbi”, and their heads “swelled” when they were recognised and respected by others. The Pharisees performed all their good deeds and religious obligations in front of people as much as possible. They said their prayers publicly on the street and made them long and loud (cf. Matthew 6:5).

Secondly, the Pharisees prevented others to know God and His truth. When they disagreed with Jesus’ teachings, they tried to prevent others from listening to and following Jesus. They gave others the impression that only they had the truth, thereby promoting themselves (frail and fallible men as they were) as the standard of truth. Jesus had no qualms pronouncing “woe” upon them for such a blasphemous attitude and presumptuous conduct (Matthew 23:13)!

Thirdly, the Pharisees abused their authority to make themselves rich. They were condemned for their very act of “devouring” the houses of widows by rattling off long prayers for them. They were supposed to protect the weak widows who had lost their husbands. On the contrary, they literally robbed them through their pretentious religiosity. They did so by persuading the widows to give their money as an offering unto the Lord, which they misappropriated and kept for themselves (Matthew 23:14).

Fourthly, the Pharisees burdened their followers with unreasonable and grievous

demands (Luke 11:46). They expressed their zeal and earnestness in converting the heathen to the Jewish religion, though without any pious intention to save their souls (Matthew 23:15). Instead of bringing them to a saving knowledge of the living and true God, they bound those new converts to serve their religious system and subject their conscience to their control and power.

Fifthly, the Pharisees neglected justice, mercy and faith (Matthew 23:23; cf. Micah 6:8). While they tried to obey those commandments they liked, they conveniently omitted the most important ones. Jesus makes it clear that living a life of faith towards Jesus Christ included love towards man, for piety to God leads to charity towards fellowmen (cf. Matthew 25:40). The lack of grace in their lives was a telltale sign of spiritual deadness. While the Pharisees “majored” in the lesser things of the law, they neglected the “weightier matters of the law”, namely “judgment, mercy and faith”. They thought that they could do no wrong though they were guilty of so many heretical and false teachings!

Sixthly, the Pharisees had made the commandments of God “of none effect” by their own traditions (Matthew 15:3-6). They had violated the major principle of the law with their traditions, and placed traditions above the Law of God. This was clearly seen in the case of caring for their elderly parents (or rather, the lack of it), whereby they tried to absolve themselves from their filial responsibility by saying that the share they were supposed to give to them was to be offered to God



as “Corban” (Mark 7:11). They let their parents suffer and kept the money in their hands!

Seventhly, the Pharisees were hypocrites for not practising what they preached. Jesus denounced such religious leaders who taught one thing but did another (Matthew 15:7-8). Outwardly they appeared as pious men, but inwardly they were rotten and filthy as graves (cf. Luke 11:44)! To put it bluntly, their outward appearance and character did not match their inner reality.

## **Beware of Hypocrisy**

Note that the Pharisaical hypocrisy is more than just pretentious acts; it is also closely knitted with their doctrines (cf. Mark 7:1-9), which made it all the more treacherous. In fact, Jesus had earlier pronounced curses upon the Pharisees, as recorded in Luke 11:42-52. They had openly rejected all of Jesus’ rebukes and admonition, thus manifesting their resentment, resistance, animosity and rejection of the Messiah. Jesus’ warning spoken publicly was primarily intended for the sincere seekers of God’s truths in the midst of the crowd of people. Some in their midst had certainly become disaffected by the unbiblical Pharisaical teachings and vexed by their insincere, treacherous ways. Jesus’ use of the word “Beware” is a call for personal attention, such that the people might protect themselves lest they be led astray by the “fermenting” influence of the Pharisees.

The religious leaders in Jesus’ day had been acting contrary to what they were teaching and abused their office for riches and honour. Jesus’ warning to the disciples to beware of the Pharisaical hypocrisy is a continual one even today, because of the malicious danger of hypocrisy to those around and its putrefying effect in the possessor’s heart. Its effect and influence can spread quickly like the leaven in dough; it can permeate one’s life until it breaks out in open rebellion against God. Jesus’ warning against hypocrisy must be taken seriously and nobody should entertain hypocrisy in his life. As “a little leaven leaveneth the whole



lump” (1 Corinthians 5:6b), it takes only a little dose of hypocrisy to grow into a major spiritual problem, and ultimately, to ruin one’s spiritual life. This leads us to our next point.

## **How Should Christians Escape from Hypocrisy?**

### **Fear God, Not Man**

“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe” (Proverbs 29:25). In Luke 12:4-5, Jesus warned believers not to fear the Pharisees, but rather they should fear and honour God. Fearing God is the only way to avoid eternal condemnation and judgment of God. “Fear God” is a command and not a choice for those who genuinely believe in Christ. When you fear God, you will hate hypocrisy. Hypocrites do not fear God but are affected by the fear and favour of man; they thus live their lives to please men. Everything that the Pharisees and Sadducees did, they did it before and for men.

Hypocrisy in our time is not much different from that in Jesus’ day. It all begins when the fear of man is elevated above the fear of God. Hypocrisy occurs in the church in which people appear to be holy and pious, but they do all kinds of evil and wickedness at home and in work places. Such people desire to be acceptable in the sight of men, just like the Pharisees. If you want to avoid being hypocritical, you must stop fearing men and start fearing God. As Jesus pointedly highlighted, “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him” (Luke 12:4-5).

### **Know Who God Is**

Another reason we need to fear God is the fact that nothing escapes God’s knowledge. The hypocrites think that nobody knows what their thoughts and motives are. Oh, how tragically mistaken they are! They fail to comprehend that God knows all things; He is omniscient. Even the sparrows, which are tiny little birds that nobody cares about and which are of little value in the market, are closely monitored by God (Luke 12:6). If God does not “forget” such a tiny creature, how much more intimately does God know about us, who “are of more value than many sparrows” (Luke 12:7b)!

Furthermore, Jesus said that God knows the very number of hairs on our head (Luke 12:7a). This was both a warning to the hypocritical Pharisees and an assurance to the genuine believers among the crowd of people. Jesus could sense that genuine believers in the crowds apparently were getting distressed and weighed down by the Pharisees’ religious manipulation and intimidation. The Pharisees had become grievous and forceful in their arrogant ways and religious policing of the people. What’s worse was that they did not practise what they preached. In short, they were full of hypocrisy! This admonition from Jesus, that God knew each one of them and that they were more valuable than many sparrows, was a great assurance to the genuine believers that God knew everything which happened and would

happen in their lives. Knowing who God truly is would make one realise that there is certainly no room for hypocrisy, for no one can fool God.

### Keep Godly Company

Scripture counsels us to stay away from ungodly, sinful and scornful company (cf. Psalm 1:1). This is in line with Paul's pertinent warning to the Corinthian believers – “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33). Christians should not build close associations with evil persons so that they do not expose themselves to their teaching and communication, which can fill their minds with evil thoughts. They ought to avoid hypocrisy that is around them and not permit any “leaven” of sin to fester in their lives. Christians should quickly pluck it out before it takes root,

otherwise by nature it will grow very fast and defile one's entire life (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:6)! Truly, “He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed” (Proverbs 13:20).

### Conclusion

Dear believers, as the “unleavened” in Christ (1 Corinthians 5:7), we are to deal with one another in “sincerity and truth” (1 Corinthians 5:8b), not with hypocrisy, for “the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned (that is to say, hypocrisy excluded)” (1 Timothy 1:5). Indeed, as Jesus has pointedly warned us, “Beware ye of (which can also be taken to mean “put far away from yourself”) the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy”!



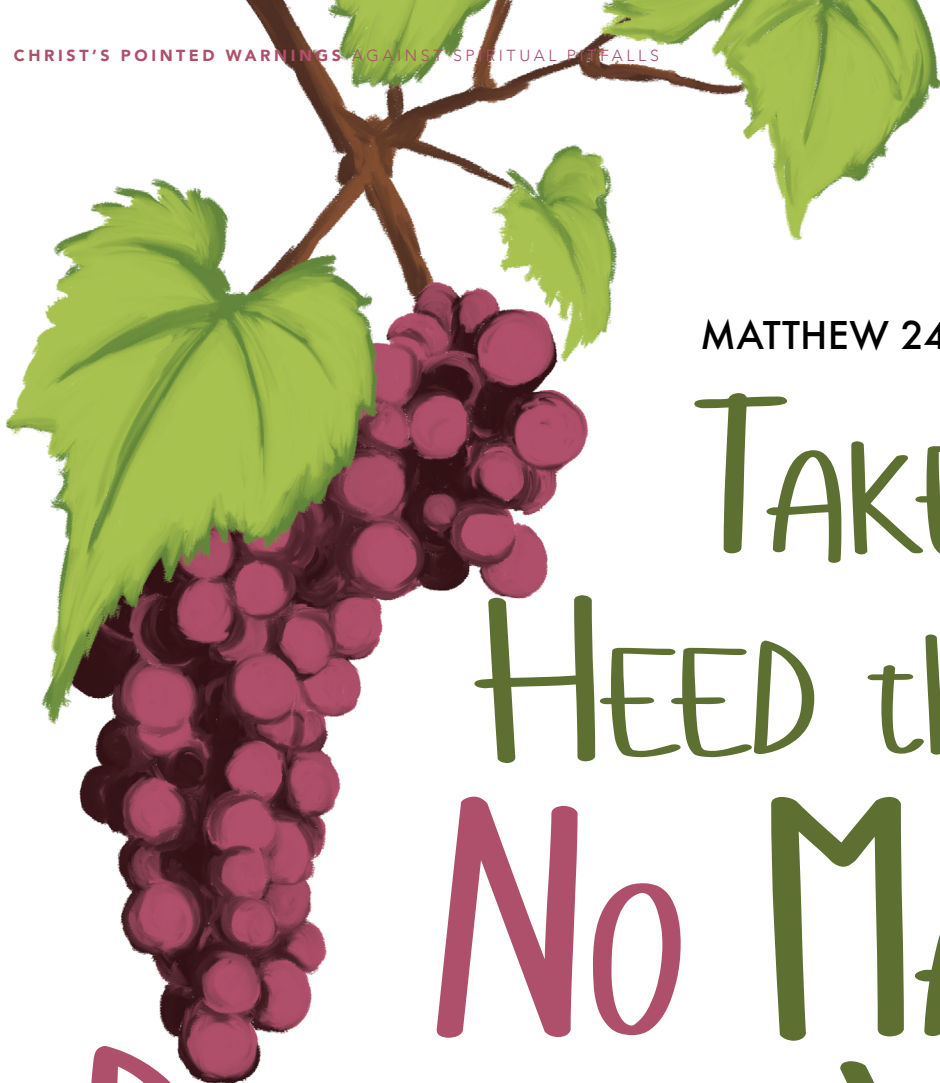
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MATTHEW 24:4

# TAKE HEED that No MAN DECEIVE YOU

*Paul Cheng*

When Jesus foretold the major events that would herald His return to earth, the first sign He mentioned was that of religious imposters (Matthew 24:4). Throughout church history, there had been many false Christs claiming to be the Messiah or His representative. However, these would be nothing compared to the intensity of the massive waves of religious deception (as the end of the age approaches) which would culminate in the coming of the Antichrist, the epitome of all the false Christs (cf. 2 Timothy 3:13; Daniel 9:27). Hence Christ's pointed warning given to the disciples – "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many" (Matthew 24:4-5). Living in these last days, how can we believers discern and be watchful of spiritual deceptions?

## **Ye Shall Know Them by Their Fruits**

The religious imposters may claim to preach and teach in Jesus' name, with some professing to possess supernatural gifts or powers, such as exorcism (the casting and binding of demons). As a result, they may appear to perform seemingly mighty works; but to such individuals, Christ would say, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:23). Jesus has this pertinent counsel for His true followers: "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:16-17). True faith cannot be separated from good works. Using the analogy of a tree, faith is the "root" while works are the "fruits". If no good fruit comes forth, it may mean that the roots are dead. That would mean that it is a worthless tree, implying a dead and worthless faith!

The deeds of the religious imposters are futile, for they do not conform to the will of God. They reject the sovereign lordship of Jesus Christ over their lives; instead of glorifying Him, they seek rather to exalt and magnify their own standing and popularity. They crave for their works to be praised by men (cf. Matthew 23:5). Outwardly appearing to be holy and righteous, their hearts are nonetheless full of "hypocrisy and iniquity" (cf. Matthew 23:28)! They may be very articulate, pretending to be knowledgeable in biblical truths, but in reality, they are ignorant through and through concerning spiritual truths. If they truly know God, they would

understand what He requires of them, that is, to be obedient to His law. Alas, they "majored" in trivial aspects of the law, but "omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith" (Matthew 23:23b). False and deceptive teachers betray their false spiritual credentials by not manifesting what the Lord requires of them, which is "to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (cf. Micah 6:8).

As the apostle John pointed out, "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous ... whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:7, 10b). In other words, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1 John 2:4). Indeed, "Ye shall know them by their fruits"!

## **Ye Shall Know Them by Their Doctrines**

Tellingly, the teachings of the religious imposters would not lead the people unto the path of righteousness but rather lead them astray. "Deception" is the most apt word to describe their teachings. They may claim to have been commissioned by God as "prophets" and even "apostles" empowered with the authority to deliver so-called divine messages, but truly they are not appointed by God. Not only do their messages contradict the Holy Scriptures, they would also try to intimidate the people by claiming to have received new revelations from God. One need only to heed the warning in Revelation 22:18-19 to realise their error – "For I testify unto

every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Nevertheless, many would still follow their pernicious ways because these false teachers would entice people with the fake gospel of “easy-believism” and “cheap grace”. In advocating free living and accentuating that God would forgive and accept all and sundry, no matter how they live their lives, these false teachers blatantly accommodate sins and wickedness. With little teaching or no emphasis at all on repentance and the wrath of God upon sin, they cause those who fall prey to their erroneous doctrines to become increasingly desensitised to sin and iniquity, consequently living their lives with no spiritual or moral absolutes.

Just as the apostle Paul warned the Galatians, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed” (Galatians 1:6-9). Thus, lest we be led astray, it behoves us to examine all teachings in the light of

the biblical doctrines of Scripture which have been “once (and for all) delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3b).

## **Ye Shall Know Them by Their Lives**

In his epistle, the apostle Peter sombrelly warned that false teachers would “count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you” (2 Peter 2:13). Worryingly, they have no shame in overtly desiring to live in luxury and extravagance, much like the “health, wealth and prosperity gospel” preachers of our time. Their sinful lifestyles are financed by and built out of exploiting and deceiving the churchgoers; yet they would still “boast” of their possessions as a mark of God’s blessing. They can be very shrewd and skilful in various money-making tactics, turning the Gospel into means of lucrative gains and enriching their own pockets. Having rejected the only Saviour, they could only behave according to their earthly wisdom and corrupt natural instinct because they are not prompted or led by the Holy Spirit (cf. Romans 8:9). The tragic situation is that these false teachers are operating within the church in the midst of God’s people; they are the tares amongst the wheat, the goats amongst the sheep (cf. Matthew 13:24-30; 25:31-46)! And therein lies the treacherous danger. Hence the Lord’s urgent injunction that God’s people be vigilant to take heed that no man deceive them.

That is not all. These false teachers are also described as “having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin;



beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices" (2 Peter 2:14). They have a lustful appetite for sexual sins, and their wandering eyes cannot be satisfied, always looking around for another victim. The original word for "beguile" (*deleazo*) is a fishing term which means to entrap or to lure with a bait. Christ's disciples knew this term very well because they were called to be fishers of men (cf. Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17) in preaching the Gospel of eternal salvation. In contrast, these false teachers are "fishers" of men with an evil intent to deceive, chancing upon those who are gullible and shallow in their biblical understanding. However, the most comforting thing is that God has pronounced His judgment upon these accursed pseudo-preachers and teachers, "whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not" (2 Peter 2:3b).

Furthermore, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished" (2 Peter 2:9).

## Conclusion

Meanwhile, the only way true believers can safeguard themselves against the spiritual deceptions of false religious teachers, which will be rampant in these last days, is to take heed of the Word of God as a lamp and a light to distinguish between truth and error (cf. Psalm 119:105). Therefore, with great diligence, may we strive to "Study to shew (ourselves) approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15) – and thereby continue in the things which we have learned and been assured of from the infallible Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:14). Amen.



# 15<sup>th</sup>

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# Charles Haddon Spurgeon

## (1834-1892)

### The “Prince of Preachers” – Part 3

*(Retold from “Spurgeon – Prince of Preachers” by Lewis Drummond, published by Kregel Publications; “Trial and Triumph: Stories from Church History” by Richard M. Hannula, published by Canon Press; “The Suffering Letters of C. H. Spurgeon” by Hannah Wyncall, published by Wakeman Trust, London; “The Forgotten Spurgeon” by Iain H. Murray, published by The Banner of Truth Trust.)*

Retold by Jenny Lok

Illustrated by Andronicus Koshy

In January 1852, Charles Spurgeon was formally appointed the pastor at Waterbeach Baptist Chapel. He served in the church for about two and a half years and was fondly referred to as the “boy preacher”. Under his pastorate, the congregation grew in great numbers, from 40 to 400 worshippers! The Holy Spirit was indeed working mightily through Spurgeon. There was a genuine revival as many, even the worst of criminals in the village, came to the Lord. They stopped their crimes and started going to church! At Waterbeach, Spurgeon learned to minister to all kinds of people – the “perfectionists, half-hearters, hypocrites and misers”. He grew in maturity and made many good friends out of these people too! Spurgeon’s heart was constantly praying to God for souls and more souls. This spurred him on to reach out not only to large groups of people, but also to individuals who needed the love of Christ or some encouragement in their Christian life. Having served well as a young preacher, Spurgeon was advised to attain some formal theological education. However, by God’s providence, it did not take place. Instead, Spurgeon decided to continue his ministry at Waterbeach.

One day in late 1853, Spurgeon received an invitation to preach at New Park Street Baptist Church, “the largest Baptist church building in London”. The task seemed rather daunting for a 19-year-old village preacher who had never set foot in



London. He knew he was just a “simple country boy” who was often criticised for being overly confident. Surely the Londoners would despise him, especially for his lack of formal theological training. However, upon the earnest request of the New Park Street Baptist Church, he agreed to preach to its congregation on 18 December that year. Though unused to the hustle and bustle of London city life, Spurgeon trusted in God’s leading and managed to preach to a relatively small congregation of 80 people. This was quite a relief to him as he felt that at least not many would know of his mistakes should he fail in his preaching!

In his first sermon at New Park Street Baptist Church, he preached from James 1:17, and the title of his message was “The Father of Lights”. To the Londoners, Spurgeon was like “a breath of fresh air” in a church that was filled with too much formal and lifeless preaching. Gradually, he attracted larger congregations in his subsequent preaching engagements in the church. The leadership of the church was fully convinced that Spurgeon was the pastor they were looking for. On his part, Spurgeon sensed their “deep spiritual hunger” and according to God’s will, he started to prepare himself for future ministry in the New Park Street church. The following year, Spurgeon left his congregation at Waterbeach for the pastorate of New Park Street. The brethren at Waterbeach



New Park Street Chapel, at the time  
C.H. Spurgeon commenced his pastorate there.



New Park Street Chapel,  
after C.H. Spurgeon's expansion



reluctantly let him go as they submitted to God's leading in this matter.

At New Park Street Baptist Church, Spurgeon was happy to be simply called "Pastor" Spurgeon or "Mr" Spurgeon, instead of "Reverend" Spurgeon. He threw himself heart and soul into serving God's people in London, and was much respected for his Christian love and humility. Constantly, he would urge the brethren to pray without ceasing for him and the ministries in the church. He also reminded them to rely on God's strength and the working of the Holy Spirit in their service. Soon the church grew in such great numbers that the auditorium and all the spare rooms were not enough to accommodate the ever-growing congregation.

By faith, Spurgeon led the people in a project to expand the church auditorium. In the meantime, the church rented "Exeter Hall, a large public auditorium" with a seating capacity of 5,000 people. On the first day of service, it was filled to capacity! Many flocked to hear him preach and his fame began to spread throughout London. Initially, Spurgeon received favourable comments from the London press. However, as the years went by, members of the press who belonged to the rich upper class became increasingly unhappy with Spurgeon's popularity as a new preacher in London. They called him names and regarded him as a mere country boy of average ability. Just as he began publishing his weekly sermons, more insults and criticisms were levelled at him, some of which were ever so harsh and hurting. In the midst of many trials and struggles, Spurgeon wrote: "I am down in the valley, ... but all the scars I receive are scars of [honour], so faint heart, on to the battle!" And so Spurgeon laboured on in the strength of the Lord to meet the demands of his ministry at New Park Street.

After completion of the renovations at New Park Street Church, the congregation was happy to be back at their own premises. However, their joy soon turned into dismay when they realised that the enlarged premises still could not hold the crowds that came Sunday after Sunday. Always innovative,

Spurgeon – in the footsteps of George Whitefield, a great preacher of England in the 18th century – began preaching in open spaces all over England. All these he did in addition to his morning pulpit ministry at New Park Street Chapel and the evening service at Exeter Hall.

Such diligence and devotion from a young pastor truly endeared him to his congregation at New Park Street Church, particularly a young lady named Susannah (or Susie) Thompson whose parents were members of the church. It was through Spurgeon's ministry that Susie began to seek God's help and guidance in her spiritual walk. Susie grew in her faith and Spurgeon was most delighted to receive her into his church after her baptism, having read her testimony of faith prior to that. In His perfect time, God brought Spurgeon and Susie into closer fellowship, which soon blossomed into a deeper love for each another. On 8 January 1856, both were happily united in



holy matrimony. It was a beautiful wedding, and many thronged the streets to see the newlyweds.

After a short honeymoon trip to Paris, Spurgeon returned to his busy life as a pastor and on many occasions, continued to travel to distant places to minister to God's people. As a young wife, Susie was not used to his frequent absence and was always on the verge of tears each time Spurgeon left home. On seeing that, Spurgeon gently reminded her, "Well, don't you see, you are giving me to God in letting me go to preach the Gospel to poor sinners, and do you think He likes to see you cry over your sacrifice?" That worked wonderfully! Susie was thankful for the gentle rebuke and learned to smile during such times.

In turn, Susie proved to be a loving helpmeet for Spurgeon. Whenever he faced an endless stream of spiteful comments from his enemies, Susie would read to him from Matthew 5:11-12, which she printed on a big card – "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Spurgeon was greatly strengthened in his heart and continued to trust the Lord and serve Him. However, both Spurgeon and his wife did face financial difficulties sometimes. Spurgeon would often find himself left without any funds as he had given generously to various needs in the church. Nonetheless, God never failed to supply all their needs in the nick of time.

(To be continued...)

*Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you,  
and persecute you, and shall say all  
manner of evil against you falsely, for my  
sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for  
great is your reward in heaven: for so per-  
secuted they the prophets which were before  
you.*



# Bible Trivia - Exodus 39 & 40

Sarah Yong

Read the respective Bible verses from Exodus 39-40, and then fill in the numbered boxes to complete/identify the names of various locations/items in the Tabernacle.  
(Note that they correspond to the numbers in the layout of the Tabernacle below.)

1

T

yard (40:8,33)

2

A

[entrance to this yard (40:8)]

3

Altar of

B

offering (40:6,29)

4

E

[place for priests to wash (40:7,30-32)]

5

Table of Shew

R

(39:36; 40:22-23)

6

N

altar (39:38; 40:5,26)

7

A

of the door to the tabernacle (40:5,28)

8

C

[item with 7 lighted lamps (39:37; 40:4,24)]

9

L

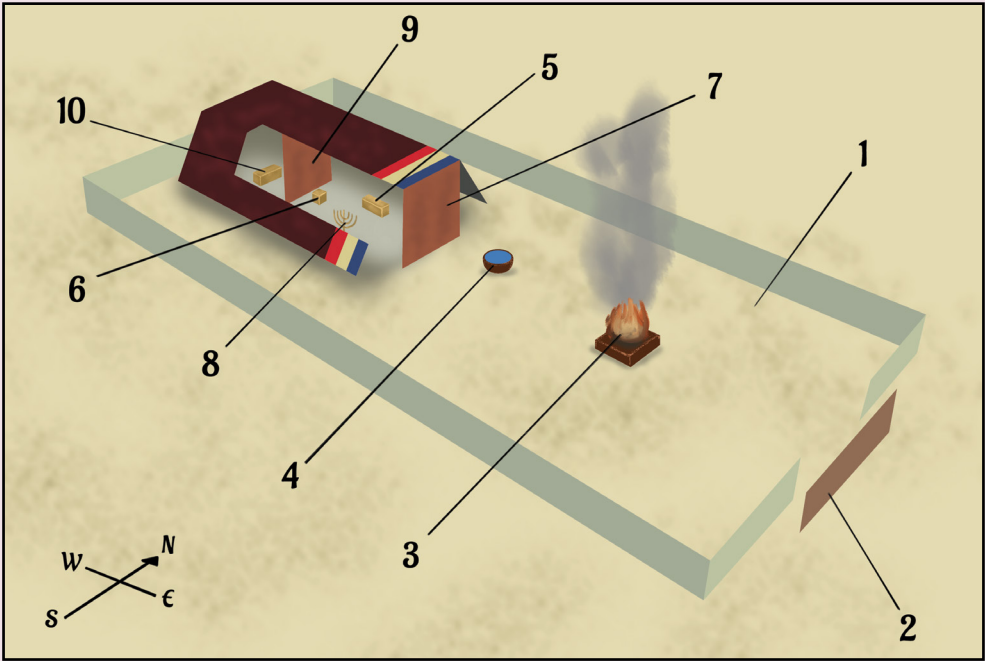
[this separates the Most Holy Place (40:3,21-22)]

10

Ark of the

E

(40:2-3,20-21)



**ANSWERS TO BIBLE TRIVIA - EXODUS 36 & 38 (VOLUME 18, ISSUE 2, P. 31)**

Exodus 36:1-7 Passage: free, Bezaleel, wise, service, sufficient; Exodus 38:21-31 Passage: testimony, Judah, Dan, gold, brass  
Part A: able, clean, pure, before, purposeth, cheerful; Part B: freewill, glory, worship, thanksgiving, tithes



(Photo edited from Google Maps)

## URGENT HELP NEEDED!

# GETHSEMANE B-P CHURCH BUILDING PROJECT

**S\$1.2 million more** by the end of **July 2018**  
for the completion of transaction and renovation of  
**33 Ubi Crescent**

*"... who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom  
for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14c)*

These words of Mordecai to Esther in a time of great distress and  
urgent need of the Jewish people moved her  
to act sacrificially and prayerfully for their deliverance.

O dear child of God, would **you** not act, according to the divine enablement  
you have, to help Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church and  
Bible Witness Media Ministry in this hour of their great need?

Join us to **pray** for the LORD's provision. **Give** generously.  
**Act speedily** to help this work of the LORD.

Cheque may be made payable to "**Gethsemane B-P Church**".  
(Please indicate "Building Fund" on the reverse of the cheque and send your love-gift to  
**Gethsemane B-P Church, 510 Geylang Road, #02-06, Singapore 389466.**)  
Alternatively, you may call our office at **6741 1910** for internet banking arrangements.