

CHRISTIAN ANGELOLOGY



Rev. Dr. Sundara Rao Tsappidi M.A., D.Litt.

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By

Rev. Dr. SUNDARA RAO TSAPPIDI M.A. D.Litt

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D.No. 47-2-7, Lourdunagar, Gunadala,
VIJAYAWADA - 520004. A.P., India.

Phone 0866-2451783

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Sundara Rao Ts.

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Foreward

Dr. Ts. Sundara Rao's latest book Christian Angelology Virgin Birth to New earth is the result of his extensive research and compilation of subjects pertaining to Christian faith. His Quest to dig deep and find the biblical treasures has resulted in unearthing valuable gems which are presented to us in the form of this book.

The diversity of the subjects is indeed interesting, covering a wide range of topics. Some of the chapters address that have been causing debates, ie,. Chapter-1 'Is Jesus born of a virgin ?. He not only mention Biblical evidence but provides historical facts in support of truth. The fact that Joseph, the legal father of Jesus is not of the line of the cursed king Jechoniah but of Nathan, another son of David who is eligible to rule is noteworthy.

Some chapters provide hitherto unknown details which satisfy the curious seeker for eg. Chapter-6 Christian Angelology and Chp-7 Seven Archangels give us extensive information on their categories and duties.

Most of us know that the Father of the Reformation, Martin Luther had posted 95 thesis on the door of the church at Wittenberg, but how many of us have read them all? Dr. Sundara Rao has included them all in chapter-11 Reformers of Christian faith.

Every chapter of the book contains information for our knowledge and edification. In spite of his physical weakness, Dr. Sundara Rao has made sacrificial efforts spending his precious time, energy and money for the glory of His savior to publish this book.

May our dear Lord Jesus Christ bless him abundantly so that he may publish more books in the days to come.

Kothapli Joy Manorama M.A., B.D
S.R. Nagar, Hyderabad

1. IS JESUS BORN OF A VIRGIN?

It is really tragic on the part of some so-called believers, who call themselves Christians questioned the veracity of the virgin birth, of Jesus Christ in the secret places of their hearts.

According to the bible, GOD created the first man from the dust of the earth, and breathed into him, the breath of life. Then GOD got an idea to create a partner to that man. So, He caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he was in his sleep created a woman. He called the man Adam and the woman Eve. It is not wonderful, that GOD created the woman from the rib of the man Adam? Abraham, who was called the first Patriarch, was 100 years old, and Sarah 90 years when that Godly woman miraculously conceived and after nine months gave birth to a boy and his name was Isaac.

As a matter of fact her womb was closed due to her old age but she gave birth to a child and it is because of the power of GOD. It is really a miraculous event regarding the birth of Isaac. So, God created life basing on the above mentioned those events. If GOD we pray is real GOD if He is wise and all pervading if He created the universe by speaking with it, into existence than the events that are mentioned above should not surprise the believers regarding the birth of Christ that is to say if we are faithful and believe in Him. There are certain things people naturally expect from the circumstances of GOD. So, if GOD could bring into existence from the dust of the earth from the rib from a dead womb then what is the difficulty in GOD having a young Godly Jewish Virgin Mary conceived and after nine months gave birth to a son. Therefore the true believers should not be surprised if the non-believers and unsaved people mock at the concept of the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. After all faithful people can understand that the physical sight cannot penetrate. Added to the citizens of heaven need not feel about it when the lost men or unbelievers try to threaten, the believers by saying that the virgin birth of Jesus was unbelievable. It is really

pathetic on the part of evil minded tag rag. It is quite but natural such spurious comments would pollute the perfect points and make them sad and malign the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But such spurious comments should not in any point intimidate faith on GOD. The heat that looks at the sunset is bankrupt. He understands something that intricacies and balance of nature. He was trained in the laws of science or comprehends the wonderful working of human body and then proclaims that there is no intelligent powerful personal creator. Because of the continuous faith of the believers caused them to have become more enlightened and as a result. They have thrown off the shekels which try to find with less sophisticated people. In their true faith and believe the Omnipotent GOD superintended a virgin birth why because it is His plan to them. But still it is tragic on the part of some who question the bonafides of Jesus Christ.

Through out their lives such people only look at the physical union of men and women for the birth the child. Unfortunately, it is their weakness in faith. If at all it is faith, it cannot say to maintain (a physical obstacle). In this connection, Apostle Matthew 21:21 said Jesus answered and said unto them “verily I say unto you”, if ye have faith and doubt not ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if he shall say to this mountain. Be though remembered and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. The virgin birth of Christ is an option to be considered. But it is a vital truth, for the believers who are within the scriptures and that should be embraced by the true believers with their faith. Nor thou virgin but there is no achievement of salvation for the humanity otherwise the death of Christ on the cross is nothing more than a vain martyrdom of a Galilean Jew. His virgin birth is one among great events in history.

The Holy Bible is called “The Holy Scriptures” (2 Timothy 3:15). The books in that are called Holy because they are the riped fruits of the co operative effort of GOD and man. With divine inspiration. Some gifted persons happened to write those books. In this context Apostle Peter wrote

Holy men of GOD spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:2). That is to say, Holy men, is with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit contributed their might for the world as Holy Scriptures. They could do that, by remaining under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. Here, we can understand clearly the intimate relationship between GOD and men. To, say briefly, if the Bible is called the Holy Scriptures, Jesus is called the Holy Child. (Acts 4:27).

The reference Jesus is called the Holy child because. He is the fruit of the cooperative effort of GOD and a 12 year old young Jewish girl Mary. Apostle Luke also in his book recalls the annunciation of the arch Angel Gabriel regarding the birth of Jesus Christ, The Messiah to Mary in this way The Holy Ghost shall come upon them. Therefore also that Holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called son of GOD (Luke 1:35)

1. The Spirit of GOD and chosen young virgin woman gave to us the Holy child.
2. The Spirit of GOD and chosen man gave to us the Holy scriptures
3. The Holy child is called the living logoes (word). The Holy Bible is the written logoes

Apostle John began his Gospel with these words. "In the beginning word (logoes) and the word was with GOD, and word was GOD" (John 1:1). The Children of GOD must take it for granted that Jesus in His flesh is the revelation of His heavenly Father. Added to this the scriptures also describe the attributes of the works of GOD. Since Mary was a direct descendant of King David her child Jesus was spoken of as the son of David. For the accomplishment of noble work, GOD selected Melchizedek among men and Mary among women GOD knew Mary from her childhood. He liked and loved her and choose her for his noble work. As the spirit of GOD came upon her (it is too deep for a common man to comprehend the subject) and her son was also called the son of GOD Mary gave birth to a child who was unique in everything. As Mary was a virgin her child was a

perfect humanity and untainted by sin. Because the spirit of GOD overshadowed his child was born to her became an undiminished duty the GOD man fully divine and fully human.

Some of the theologians called it hyper static union. It is really a glorious mystery. There is one popular saying during the Christmas season. That is Jesus is the reason for the season. This can be also said theologically but precociously as the virgin birth of Jesus is the reason for the season. Without the virgin birth of Christ, Christmas and incarnation (since Christmas is embellished with so much paganism) would become the biggest fraud that ever came down the pike of human history. GOD created Adam and Eve in His own image. As everything was the gift of Holiness they could have intimate communion with GOD in the Garden of Eden. When they disobeyed GOD by eating the fruit of the forbidden tree by the influence of Satan their holiness was tested. As a result they brought sin into the world. Even though Adam and Eve were originally created in the holiness of GOD as a consequence of their disobedience the image and likeness of GOD had gone out from them. So when they were sent out of the Garden of Eden and bore children they bore in their own fallen images but not in the image of GOD. When Adam was hundred and thirty years he begat a son in his own image and for at least 6000 years the "Apple" has not fallen down from the tree. In the early days though people did not commit any sin they were taken for granted that they had committed sin. So, to say by committing sin man is doing what comes naturally in his fallen condition. Let us not worry more about the unsaved man. But it is usually surprising if people who are living moral life also commit sin and for the wavering life of such people GOD need not be blamed. It is only the disobedience of man in the beginning toward GOD which put him into dilemma.

In the practical life a child need not be instructed to become bad. But any child is needed to be instructed to become good in his or her life. So, the history of humanity is the history of the growing sin of man or sin nature of man under the influence of Satan. But the purpose of GOD is to redeem the remnant by His grace. When the theologians talk about the

total depravity of man they are not saying that every human being will do every kind of evil deed. What they really wanted to say is that the bosom of every moral is the power to commit sin and the main reason was that man was the offspring of Adam, and so he was bound to possess sin nature, from the entire humanity. It is only Jesus Christ who was exempted to possess the sin nature because of his virgin birth since he was that he is holy harmless and separate from sinners (Hebrews 7.26) and without Adamic sin nature

The first chapter of the book of Matthews was written mainly for the first century Jewish people who were the descendants of King David, who were in the royal lineage. Unfortunately, this royal lineage was terminated with Joseph the betrothed husband of Mary (Matthew 1.16). The 14th descendant of King David according to the genealogy of king Jeconiah (Matthew 1.11) due to unpardonable sin committed by Jeconiah GOD declared curse on him, which was really very severe. It is written as thus saith the lord, write we this man childless a man shall not prosper in his days. For no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David ruling any more in Judean (Jeremiah 22.30). This curse put on Jeconiah by GOD does not mean that he would never have any more children but none of his seven sons or their descendants should sit on the throne of King David. Here is one technical problem for our understanding, that is, those who had the legal right to occupy the throne of David were stopped to sit on it due to the curse on Jeconiah.

This is the actual story. Joseph the exposed husband of Mary was the direct descendant of jeconiah. Even though Joseph inherited the legal right to sit on the throne of David through Solomon, he lost that right and eligibility because he happened to be the direct descendant of jeconiah and due to this reason Joseph was also under the curse of sin. For the purpose of common understanding. Let us discuss this critical point more clearly. If Jesus Christ had been the physical son of Joseph the husband of Mary he also would have become under the curse of Jeconiah seed. As a result, He too would not have the eligibility to sit upon the throne of King David and

rule over Israel and ultimately the world. This technical point posed a humanly impossible dilemma. In this context there are three main conditions to be met to substantiate the authenticity of the messiah. These three conditions mentioned below might appear impossible to fulfil.

- 1) Jesus had to be lineal descendant of David in order to fulfil GODs promise to David
- 2) And also he must be the legal son of Joseph in order to inherit the right to sit upon the throne of David
- 3) Jesus should not be the physical son of Joseph so that he would not be under the curse of GOD, like Jeconiah. So, without giving chance to the divinely inspired penmen, who would have given different story Therefore, the omnipotent GOD himself solved this complicated issue by the miracle of the virgin birth.

In the chapter 1 of the book of Matthew, it is clearly indicated that Jesus was not the physical son of Joseph. The scriptures also pointed out the same answer to the complicated issue. And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ (Matthew 1.16).

The expression of who is a feminine singular in the Greek language. Which indicates clearly that Jesus was born to Mary only but not Mary and Joseph? In the bible also it is mentioned that Joseph did not know Mary as his wife at the time of the birth of Jesus. But Jesus became the legal son of Joseph, who raised him as his own son even though he was not his physical son. As a legal son of Joseph Jesus could inherit the legal right to the throne of David. There is another condition which created a problem. The prophets of Israel prophesied that the messiah must be a lineal descendant of David. But was this condition fulfilled for this genuine doubt? the answer is found in the book of Luke after the death of Jesus Christ, John with Mary happened to go to Ephesus because of the persecution in Jerusalem. Luke went to Ephesus met Mary and got all the information regarding the family background, and he recorded the whole matter in his book later.

According to the record, Mary was the direct descendant of David. David had another son by name, Nathan of whom Mary was the descendant and who was a wise man, but not the descendant of Solomon who was also a cursed man. So to say the curse of Jeconiah fell upon Joseph, and the curse of Solomon fell upon Jeconiah. Therefore, the curse on Jeconiah which impacted Joseph did not affect Mary or on her son Jesus. And the final outcome was to say. Jesus was of the lineal son of Mary, and as a result became the direct descendant of David. Jesus became the legal son of Joseph, and thereby inherited the legal right to sit upon the throne of David. Yet he was not the physical son of Joseph. The result of the entire story is that his virgin birth caused him to escape from the curse of Jeconiah. But the most pathetic situation here is the Jewish translators actually committed a grievous blunder in their translation regarding the virgin birth of Jesus Christ. But in the New Testament it is clearly pointed out about the virgin birth. The inspired penmen wrote in the following way.

Now all this was done that it might
Be fulfilled which was spoken of the
Lord by the prophet saying. Behold
A virgin shall be with child and
Shall bring forth a son and they shall
Call his name Emmanuel which
Being interpreted is GOD with us (Matthew 1.22-23)

Therefore-

- 1) Jesus had to be a lineal descendant of David
- 2) Jesus had to be the legal son of Joseph
- 3) Jesus should not be the physical son of Joseph.

The prophet whom Apostle Matthew mentioned here was no other than prophet Isaiah himself. He was such a great prophet who could predict the birth of Jesus Christ the messiah more than 700 years before his actual birth. He wrote therefore, the lord himself shall give you a sign behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel

(Isaiah 7.14). The word virgin is the translation of the Hebrew word “almah” the theologians, who have been liberal and who wanted to explain away the miraculous and contemporary Jewish translations, who wished to keep Jesus Christ out of the old testament, argued that almah did not mean virgin. It means simply a young woman the theologians further argued that prophet Isaiah must have used the Hebrew word Betulah instead of almah for virgin. Before the birth of Jesus Christ between 200 and 300 years a group of Jewish scholars probably 70 in number happened to translate the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language. This extremely important translation took place in Egypt and it was known as Septuagint. It was the sincere effort of Greek emperor Alexander the great.

Alexander the great wanted to become the conqueror of the world. So, during his brilliant military conquests, he happened to spread the Greek language and culture throughout much of the civilized world. As a result in a little span of time, Greek became a most important language for many Jewish merchants and business men; who were primarily living outside the holy land. In a short time even in Israel Greek became a common language for everybody. And finally Jews were able to read Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. By that time Jesus Christ was not yet born. This remarkable event of the translation of the Old Testament took place more than 200 years before the birth of Jesus Christ Therefore; the translators had no ax to eat no doctrine to protect and no blindside to cover.

The real job of those translators was only to translate the Hebrew Scriptures into the Greek language as perfectly as possible. Those 70 Jewish scholars who were entrusted, this responsible task of translation looked into the book of Isaiah chapter 7 verse 14. Then they translated the Hebrew word almah into Greek word parathions. Those scholars knew perfectly that parathion has only one meaning and that is virgin. Through the centuries millions of people, have climbed the aerpotes in Athens to have a glance of the resins of the Parthenon it was called Parthenon because, it was the temple of Athena, the virgin Goddess of wisdom if the infant child of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke were not virgin born, then the Jewish translators

of the Hebrew scriptures, who knew both Hebrew and Greek intimately erred most grievously. If attempts are made to scratch out the virgin birth of Jesus from the pages of the Old Testament scriptures, or if some attempts are made, by the liberals who wish to deny the wonder of Divine prophesy or some Jews who justify their rejection of messianic fulfilment in Jesus, then all these attempts will become futile, and impotent.

So, for own clear understanding we can say that if Jesus was not born of a virgin then he would not have died on the cross for the sin of the world. In the first letter to the Corinthians apostle Paul, provides one of the clearest statements of the gospel. He wrote

For I delivered unto you first of all
That which I also received how that
Christ died for our sins according to
The scripture, and that he was buried
And that he raised again the third
Day according to the scriptures (1 Corinthians 5.3-4)

Finally it is better for the readers to come to an understanding that the death of Christ the burial of Christ, and its resurrection of Christ, are the central points of the gospel (good news). Again if Jesus was not virgin born, the good news will be bad news. Let us hope that the following saying will be loved by everybody. It is like this. Jesus came to this world to pay a debt he did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay I am hopeful and confident that every reader will agree and love the above saying whole heartedly. As a matter of fact, it is a wonderful theology and these words must be accepted by one and all; that Jesus died in my place, as my substitute for my benefits. For the conformation of the above said points justice demanded the once and for all sacrifice of the son of GOD, became a cruel necessity to satisfy fully and eternally the holiness of GOD. Without the virgin birth of Jesus sacrifice of himself for the sin of humanity would not have been completed. For this confirmation his father raised him from the grave otherwise we will be dying in our sins.

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ (which is just like his second coming) is crucial at the same time glorious part of the body of truth, we call the gospel. Those people who have been exposed to the principle of virgin birth can be born again through faith, accept death burial and resurrection of Christ. They believe in everything that is quoted. Let us hope that men must say and believe that Jesus died for the sake of their sin. At the same time let us hope that people should not reject, but whole heartedly accept the virgin birth of our saviour Jesus Christ. People must have faith on scriptures what they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16.31). To believe on Jesus Christ means believe on his virgin birth. As the son of GOD he came to this world to sacrifice himself for the sake of sinners.

- 1) In anutshell, the bible teaches clearly the virgin birth
- 2) Without virgin birth the death of Christ on the cross would not have paid the price to redeem man from the shackles of sin.
- 3) The virgin birth is a critical doctrine and most important point of gospel message. So it must be boldly proclaimed by all those who have faith in the Lord and his word.

CONCLUSION: the virgin birth of Jesus is not a myth but it is a miracle.

2. CHRISTIANITY AND IT'S INFLUENCE

Christ after suffering on the cross was buried and resurrected. After that He gave many proofs that He was alive. He appeared before His disciples during His forty days stay on the Earth. Before He went to His father He spoke with His disciples about the Kingdom of God. One day while He was eating with them gave His command. Do not leave Jerusalem but wait for the gift my father promised which you have heard me speak about John Baptized with water but in a few days he will be baptized with Holy Spirit. On some other occasion when they met together they asked Christ "Lord will you at this time going to receive the Kingdom to Israel". For that question He answered. It is not for you to know the time of the days the Lord has set by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth. After He said all to His disciples He was taken up before their very eyes and a cloud hid them from their sight.

After Jesus went to His Father Peter started to preach the word of God. And many people came from different places to hear the Gospel. Prior to this all the disciples were interested to remain together on the day of Pentecost. A sound came all of a sudden like the blowing of a violent wind. It came from heaven and filled the whole house in which they were sitting. The beginning of Christianity symbolized the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. One such example can be seen in the church of St. Peters in Rome. Peter was also one of the members of the inner circle of Jesus Christ. His Parabolic addresses showed that he was leader of the young Jerusalem community. He was a devoted Jew and a convinced follower of Jesus Christ, the Messiah and an able interpreter of the Scriptures.

But the earliest pictures did not show the traditional portrait of a cock to his chin to show that he was guilty knowingly looking at Jesus. It remained as one of the most astonishing faiths of the early church that a man like Peter inspite of all his drawbacks and failures could become leader

from an unknown community and even from an unfriendly society. As a result of the powerful speeches of Peter the first Christian community was established by his preaching's in Jerusalem. Added to that there was an immediate impact in Jerusalem that thousands of them were repented and baptized and also they gave away all their properties to the poor and needy. They broke the bread in their houses and praised God. Since then common meal became a trademark that reminded the Lord supper. This common meal they took in those days was treated as love feast in some churches at present.

There was some scandal spread for some time regarding the authority of the cross. But even the cross has been the symbol of Christian faith and preaching. Because of its importance it can be our daily life like lamps and Christian meeting places still the scandal reminded at Christian places where the word of God is not correctly understood. The remarks of some believers no way disturbed the faith of the people. The believers would understand that it was the scandalous remarks of some disgruntled family members. As a matter of fact cross is a major element that gives life to Christian faith.

Christianity began as an obscured sect of religion in a distant corner of the Roman Empire and developed into the most powerful religion in the world. So to say it remained as the largest religion of the world today with about 2 billion believers. The founder of this religion was of course Jesus Christ. And after Him it developed rapidly and influenced other civilizations also. The roots of this Christianity were originated in Jerusalem. Apart from that the messages of Jesus Christ the emphasis on education also helped for the spreading of Christianity. Jerusalem has strong enough traditions of instructions and for this purpose the Jewish synagogues served as major centres for worship for teaching and for scriptural studies for Jewish children and adults as well.

Jesus Christ was not only the founder of Christianity but also He was from Jewish origin. He was portrayed as the most powerful teacher of all times. The readers of the scriptures would encounter Jesus again and again among friends as well as enemies with dialogues parables and examples of

real life. In his messages He explained to the multitudes the theological concepts of God which were difficult. The life after death the condition of human soul sin the redemption etc. Jesus Christ with His contributions to humanity remained as the greatest teacher of all times. His exemplary life caused profound influence on the educational theory. He told His disciples before he went to His father to take the example of His life and behaviour while teaching to others.

Greek influence on Christianity:

The influence of Christianity came through the conquest of Palestine by Alexander the Great in the last of the fourth century before Christ. This Macedonian soldier (Alexander the Great) marched into every part of the known world and spread his tremendous culture and civilization. But after his sudden death at the age of about 32 years only the four military generals distributed the Kingdom among themselves did not take much care for the spreading of the Greek language and culture. But still the influence of Christianity continued. The philosophy of good and bad was spread everywhere and God used both to prepare for the coming of Jesus Christ. The authentic and sceptical philosophy of the Greeks turned many gentiles from their superficial worship of false gods and intensified their heart hunger for real God in the first place. So to say the Greek philosophy itself on the other hand prepared the world for the coming of Christ the Messiah by magnifying the worth of human spirit and by putting high values on the spiritual and moral truth. In the second place the Greek language became a common tongue throughout the Mediterranean world. Even the good Jews were forced to learn Greek in Palestine to their business. This fact appeared to be more important at the first glance. And also the missionaries of Christ could continue their work without waiting to learn a new language for that purpose. Furthermore the presence of a common language caused a unity among different people. Finally this Greek language became a wonderful thing for everybody to understand everything. The Greeks at last developed a language that made people to express finally the great truth of the Christian revelation. And another advantage was that Greek

happened to be language of New Testament. The point is that Greek spirit made its contribution to the Christian movement.

Roman influence on Christianity:

Apostle Paul suggested what the Roman Empire had contributed its mite for the Christian movement and its faith. Basing on history the Greeks ruled Palestine in about 167 B.C. Then the Jewish patriarchs under Judas Maccabees defeated them In 63 B.C. After about a century of Jewish independence the soldiers of Rome took possession of Palestine. If we look into the New Testament we can have the idea of Roman rule. It speaks about centurions of Roman guards, Roman jailers, Roman castles, Roman generals etc. On one occasion a Pharisee happened to question Jesus whether a Jew would have God, who was surviving under Roman rule. It is a reference to Apostle Matthew who served as a tax collector under Roman rule.

When Jesus was born it was called Roman world. But the impact of their rule was neither too good nor too bad. On Christianity the central Government of Rome was very strong and it provided peace and protection. The Government did not allow any kind of violence to take place in the empire and also people were afraid of the punishment for any untoward incident. This situation allowed the missionaries to seize the opportunity to spread the word of God freely in the Mediterranean world as far as possible. But at the end of the first century the central government changed its attitude toward Christianity why because it did not correctly understand the value of the individual soul and also religiously. The Roman armies simply accepted the false gods of the nations they conquered. As a result the other nations which were already accepted those gods including the emperor worship. In such circumstances when the Christians refused to worship the emperor they were persecuted. This inhuman treatment to innocent Christians continued for about three centuries.

Jewish influence on Christianity:

The third racial influence upon the Christian movement was most significant. The Jewish nations provided the immediate background of Christ and all His early disciples. The history of Jews as recorded in the Old Testament need not to be repeated in detail. According to History God chose a family of faith which later under Divine care developed into a nation. And it was the family of Abraham chosen by God. The nation was named after his grandson Jacob (Israel). But in 1922 BC, the nation was divided into two as the Northern Kingdom of Israel with the capital Samaria and the southern kingdom of Judah with Jerusalem as its capital. Again in 722 B.C. the northern Kingdom was taken into captivity by the Assyrians the first heathen rulers who were according to genealogy of strings of Abraham.

But the southern Kingdom of Judah stood firm up to 587 B.C. This was also attacked by the Babylonians. And as a result Jerusalem was completely destroyed. They almost looted the God's temple and they took everything from it. They also took thousands of Jews as captives including Daniel when he was just 13 years old. They remained in Babylon as captives for seventy years. Then the Persians came to power after defeating the Babylonians. These Persians were kind enough who returned everything that was taken by Babylonians. After Persians Greeks came to power and finally Romans in 63 B.C. which brought the history of the Jewish people and the New Testament.

During this long period the Jewish people unknowingly prepared for the coming of Jesus Christ. They carefully preserved the Revelation which God had given to them. As a result they realized two things during that time. There is only one God for man and the relationship of God to man is purely personal. Prior to the Babylonian captivity the Jews often fell into idolatry and polytheism. But after they returned to Palestine they realized the truth that God was one (Monotheism). That is to say the captive Jews realized and repented. There might be very few who were reluctant to accept the oneness of God like Jonah the rebellious prophet. The Jewish

instructions and parties that formed so much a part of New Testament story and had their background in their historical experiences. The synagogue was developed as a place of teaching and worshipping during Babylonian captivity.

Then the contact between the Jews and the Persian religious ideas helped to produce the party known as the Essenes which arose in 150 B.C. It was considered the most rigorous orthodoxy quite against animal sacrifice at the time of worship. Then the Pharisees grew with separate tendency. In the New Testament they were labeled as narrow minded bigoted and hypocrites. They were many and became popular. The Sadducees were there during the second century B.C. friendly to Greek and Roman culture. They represented political and religious freedom. Their rationalism led them to deny resurrection Divine providence and tried for the freedom of human will. The Samaritans were born to Jews in the inter marriages between them and the gentiles in Palestine after many of them were taken as captives to Babylon.

Jesus Christ 4 B.C. to 30 A.D.

When the world was with believers and non believers Jesus was born. And all His life study can be found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Matthew and Luke described the human geneology of Christ. It is better if we say that Matthew said about the geneology of Joseph. Whereas Luke dealt with the geneology of Mary. John described the eternal matters and pre incarnate existence of Jesus. According to the historical background the birth of Christ took place in 4th B.C. This means Christ began His public ministry in about 27 A.D. and He was crucified in about 30 A.D. His ministry for our understanding was divided into seven stages.

1. His early Judean ministry which was primarily described in John's Gospel, and during that time He called for His first disciples and cleaning of the Temple.
2. The great Galilean ministry that covered the main work and it continued for 1 ½ years. During that only Jesus was rejected in His

native place Nazareth. And as a result He moved to Capernaum. Then He chose His twelve disciples (Apostles) and His sermon on the mount was important. In this period only He happened to visit Galilee three times.

3. His several withdrawals from the press of the crowds gave Him the opportunity for special instructions to His disciples for securing the great confession at caesareas, Philippi and for the transfiguration experience.
4. His later Judean ministry which continued for about three months and it was described by Luke and John. The note worthy point in this time was the attending of Jesus with His disciples to be feast of Tabernacles and to the dedication in Jerusalem.
5. His brief Persian ministry and this was mentioned by four Gospels writers. They also said about His final miracles, parables and prophecy about His resurrection.
6. His last week in Jerusalem was treated in full details by John's Gospel. It began with triumphal entry into Jerusalem and ended with His crucifixion.
7. His post resurrection ministry was for about forty days before His ascension to His father that was the close of the Gospels accounts.

The teachings of Jesus were remarkable both in method and contents. He explained to the believers the truth through parables questions discourses and doubts. That is the person of God and purpose were revealed through the life of Jesus Christ and His teachings. In all His examples love was the dominating theme which is a must in the life of a true Christian. Because God loved mankind Christ died on the cross for the sins of humanity and redeemed them for eternal life. The conquering power of the cross and the ultimate triumph of the Kingdom of God were the salient points in the teachings of Jesus Christ. He established His church a local autonomous body where there was two or three gather together in prayer and they could find His presence and power. After the death and ascension of Jesus

His disciples who were entrusted in the work of spreading the word of God set out to take part in the impossible task. Though there were other religions working for their progress Christianity began growing like a mustard seed. From the human point of view there must be some reasons for the tremendous improvement. The following must be reasons for the rapid growth.

1. Atheism became bankrupt and could not answer the call of hungry hearts.
2. The so called leaders of other religions claiming for more devotees could not compete with God's revelation in Christ.
3. Every Christian became missionary in sacred fire leaped from friend to friend with a message.
4. The Christians had a strong conviction that Christ alone could save the lost world and since the return of Jesus was sure and certain there was no time to be lost.

Again the seventy year period of the growth of Christianity can be divided into three stages. It was from the time of the death of Jesus Christ to the last Apostle.

Local witnesses (30 to 45 A.D.)

The first 12 chapters of the book of Acts describe the history of the Christian movement during the first fifteen years. After the death of Christ and resurrection, the disciples received the Holy Spirit and with the power witnessed even in the places of some enemies with that power. They could bring the presence of Christ for their fellowship, on the day of Pentecost many were saved. They went back to their places and established churches. The persecution and martyrdom of Stephen made many Christians leave Jerusalem and go into Judea and Samaria to witness. This incident wonderfully worked among people especially persons like Saul who was one of the persecutors of Stephen. The pervading impact of Peter was more on the gentiles and even a church was built for them in Antioch.

Then there was another martyrdom of James son of Zebedee. The conversion of Saul who later became Paul his preparation to serve Christ and his wonderful ministry at Antioch were beyond comprehension and gave more scope for rapid development of Christianity.

Period of missionary Expansion: (45 to 65 A.D.)

With the support of the Holy Spirit and under the leadership of Paul those missionary tours took place for the expansion of Christianity. This time Paul wrote 14 books called Epistles to different churches. Paul the persecutor of Christians once now became a faithful follower of Christ, made the Roman authorities to imprison him two times and finally he was killed by the most cruel Roman emperor Nero. So to say Paul was responsible for the rise of all Christian centres during the first century churches were established through his efforts in some of the strongest cities of the empire. A noted theologian complemented that without the epistles of Apostle Paul there is no New Testament.

Period of outward growth (68 to 100 A.D.)

After the death of Paul the centre for Christianity moved toward western section of the Mediterranean area. In 66 A.D. Jewish war broke out and it resulted in complete destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple. In 70 A.D. by Romans under Titus. The Christian church was uprooted and people were forced to flee to save themselves. It is said John happened to go to Ephesus at the time of the destruction. Apostle John wrote his five books at this time. Actually John was exiled to the isle of Patmos from Ephesus when the persecution was rampant. Just at that time the book revelation was written in which he denied the efforts of the Roman emperor to force Christians to worship the Roman emperor. It was almost the end of apostolic period. It is believed that Apostle John was the longest lived among the disciples of Christ.

3. FOUR CRUCIAL COVENANTS OF GOD

1. People speak about the covenants now a days. But in the olden days they spoke of cutting as a covenant because blood which was the essence of life had to be spilled. If we look into history people entered into an agreement by using different methods to finalize their issues. Some of such methods were formal and legal, whereas other were informal and personal. Accordingly those methods used to seal the deal and they were called, treaties, accords, Contract, compacts, promises, pledges, and covenants. Among those methods the heavenly father God selected covenants to enter into a special relationship with man. So, God particularly entered into four major covenants committed by himself with the most prominent Personalities in the holy bible. And those covenants were not simply over statements, but people must try to understand their meaning, how they would work in them.
2. God himself committed those covenants as they possessed certain things concerning to the life man.
3. That is, those covenants would have direct impact on the life of every human being on earth.
4. Those covenants used to be in operation whether men are aware of them or not
5. Those are the covenants that if people embrace them they would bring joy, peace, blessing and eternal life with God
6. Those covenants are so valuable and if people reject them they would bring sadness curse, turmoil, and eternal separation from God. Among those four covenants, of God the first one was with patriarch Abraham. God committed and it was called Abrahamic. It was made with him as the father of Jewish nation (Israel) the second covenant was committed by God with Moses, and it was called mosaic covenant. Moses was also called the law giver of Israel. The third covenant was commitment

by God with David, and it was called Davidic covenant and he was also called man after God's own heart. The fourth covenant was called New Testament. It was called so because the son of God Jesus Christ himself started first. The first two, Abrahamic and mosaic covenants were already discussed in my previous book (my 10th book) with the title "Jerusalem city of peace". And in my eleventh book I am writing about the third and fourth covenants. They are Davidic and New Testament covenants.

Davidic covenant:

The third major but crucial biblical covenant was Davidic covenant. And this was concerned to the 12 tribes of Israel into a nation king David happened to defeat the war like tribe called Jebusites who dwelt in the middle of the land of Israel. He then fortified the Jebusite city and finally it was called the city of David then he made it his capital which later became Jerusalem. King David took the help of Hiram king of Tyre who helped him with most precious and valuable wood called cedar wood. He also sent efficient carpenters and masons for the construction of the Royal palace. for the king who gave credit to his emerging kingdom. The king then directed his attention for the recovery of the Ark of the Covenant which was taken away by the Philistines during the time of the high priest Eli, and it remained for a long time in the house of abandon.

The defeat of Israel army by the Philistines and the loss of the Ark of the Covenant clearly indicated that the presence of God and his blessings were completely withdrawn from Israel. But now with great military power king David became victorious and established his kingdom. As a result, he received the blessing of God for the nation. After he settled properly, he planned to bring back the Ark of the Covenant. Which remained with the heathen kings at that time? And also as long as the Ark was with them they experienced all draw backs. But finally King David was able to get it and he brought with all pomp and glory to the city. He thought to keep the Ark of the Covenant; the safest place would be only the tabernacle, because originally it remained in the tabernacle only. This tabernacle was the first

mobile Temple of God. It was prepared by some efficient work men of Israel on the instigation of Prophet Moses. It was done at the foot of Mount Sinai, while Moses was bringing Israelites from Egypt to Canaan; a seed of concept began to develop in the mind and heart of King David.

And it came to pass when the king sat in his house, and the Lord had given him rest roundabout from all his enemies. Then the king said unto Nathan the prophet, see now I dwell in an house of cedar (a posh palace) but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains in the tabernacle- a portable temporary house (2 Samuel 7.1-2)

Actually King David wanted to build a beautiful temple to God so that he would dwell in it. With that intention he had seen a good number of the surrounding temples of different models with magnificent structures for the heathen Gods. As a matter of fact those Gods could not speak, nor help the worshippers in times of need. They could not see also, but only wicked and indicative. They were without life, and would not do anything to their believers. So King David realized that truth. He felt whole heartedly that his God was the only God, the holy one of Israel the true and living God and who was from everlasting to everlasting. His aim was always to deliver, when his people's cause was genuine. Till the time of King David, there was no permanent house (temple) for his God except the tabernacle a mobile temple. He correctly understood that he was the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and the God had blessed him and gave him wonderful victory in the battles he fought.

The king sincerely felt it necessary to build a temple so that his God would dwell permanently in it among his chosen people. But all his hopes and plans become futile because he was advised by God through the prophet Nathan. The prophet told the king that his hands had been soaked with the blood of wars. So it was not appropriate for him to build the temple of God, with those blood wet hands. And finally building of Gods temple was entrusted to his son Solomon. Though David was not permitted to build the house of God amazingly God declared he would build a house for David more than an eternal kingly dynasty.

GOD said:

And when thy days be fulfilled and
Thou shalt sleep with thy fathers I will
Set up thy seed after thee, which shall
Proceed out of thy bowels and I will
Establish his kingdom. He shall build an
House for my name and I will establish
The throne of his kingdom forever. I
Will be his father and he shall be my
Son. If he commits iniquity I will chasten
Him with the rod of men and with
The stripes of the children of men. But
My mercy shall not depart away from
Him as I took it, from Saul whom I put
Away before the and thine house and
Thy kingdom shall be established for
Ever before the, they throne shall be
Established forever. (2 Samuel 7.12-16)

This amazing Promise from God included the following facts.

- 1) Solomon the son of David would succeed him to sit on the throne and establish his kingdom (v.12)
- 2) Solomon the son of David would build the temple of God (v.13)
- 3) The throne of Solomon would be established forever
- 4) If the king Solomon appeared to commit sin he would naturally receive appropriate punishment but the mercy of God and loyal love would endure forever
- 5) The house of David, his kingdom and his throne would be established forever (v.16)

However, this agreement did not of the dynasty for a period of time. And while there is no clear mention of blood those promises of King David were specially framed with the scriptures as a covenant. So it was written in the psalms. "I have made a covenant with my chosen. I have sworn unto David my servant. Thy seed will I establish forever and building up thy throne for generations" (psalms 89.3-4). The ultimate fulfillment of the promise to David regarding the house kingdom and throne will be lost forever. And they will find their fulfillment only at the end of the age with the second coming of Jesus Christ and his millennial (1000 years) kingdom. In the mean time king Solomon built the house of God on the mount Moraiah in Jerusalem and God lived happily in his permanent house. And King Solomon dedicated the temple with pomp and gory, by spending so much money and sacrificing so many animals.

It was really auspicious occasion for Israelites because they could have the presence (schekinah) of God in their midst. As a result of the effort of King Solomon in building God's temple the nation became a blessed one in Jewish history. But it was most unfortunate in the character of King Solomon. He forgot the blessings of God who made him the richest man and the cleverest man on earth. He forgot all those things and he committed sin by having so many heathen wives. It is said he had 700 wives and 300 concubines. In addition to that he built even heathen temples to please his heathen wives at a place called Baal Beck. God became angry at his character and punished him by dividing his kingdom into two parts and the 12 tribes were also divided into two groups. They were the northern kingdom of Israel with 10 tribes and their capital was Samaria and the king to them was Jeroboam. The second one is the southern kingdom of Judah with two tribes and their capital was Jerusalem. And their king was Rehoboam these twelve tribes were the children of Jacob (Israel) and this division took place in 922 B.C.

After two hundred years that is in 722 B.C. the northern kingdom was taken into captivity by the Assyrians the first heathen rulers. After that there was no more northern kingdom because Many Israelites were taken

as captives to different places and the remaining were mixed and mingled with the Assyrians who settled in Samaria. As a result they lost their identity. Regarding the southern kingdom it continued for another 136 years. During that period about 19 kings of Davidic dynastic rulers ruled the southern kingdom. But out of 19 only 8 kings happened to rule, who were is right in the sight of God and the remaining kings proved themselves as the most wicked and unscrupulous in the sight of God. So, in the year 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon conquered Egypt in the battle of Carchemish and came to Jerusalem to show his authority on Judah and Davidic kings. These were called second heathen rulers that ruled Jewish nation.

At that time, he looted the temple of God and went with vessels and other costly things. In addition to that he took thousands of Jews as captives to Babylon. Prophet Daniel, a thirteen year old boy was one of them. Finally in 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar put an end to the Davidic dynastic rulers in Jerusalem. According to the bible also it was the time of gentie rulers. The first one was Assyrians and the second one was Babylonians and this was clearly depicted in the giant colosses (statues) of Prophet Daniel chapter 2. It is really most astonishing to know from that day onwards to this day the period of about 2600 years no divinely appointed Jewish king of the tribe of Judah and the family of David has ruled over Israel. There was a brief respite from the gentile rule for 102 years (165 to 63) D.C. during that time the dynasty of the Maccabaeus which was of priestly lineage ruled though it had no right to rule particularly Jerusalem. However Israel got independence in the year 1948 and its sovereignty was re established.

The nation remained in unbelief and ungodly. The rulers have been neither divinity appointed, nor Davidic dynasty. And the fate of Jerusalem is still under defeat by different nations of the world. In spite of that God is faithful to his covenant promises to his chosen people. Even though the Middle East as been causing some troubles now and then God is always protecting them in times of need. From the point of view, the world is out

of control, but gradually convulsing but from the divine perspective all is being prepared for the coming of one who is from the tribe of Judah (Genesis 49.10) and the family of David (2 Samuel 7.12-16), and that one is mighty God and everlasting father and “prince of peace” (Isaiah 9.6)

He will one day end the times of the gentiles (nations) and bring peace and blessing to the earth. In the book of revelation apostle John wrote. And one of the elders saith unto me weep not behold the lion of the tribe of Judah the root of David hath prevailed to open the book and to loose the seven seals thereof (Revelation 7.5). The person who is capable of loosing the seals and opens the scroll is no other than who has possessed the title deed of the planet earth. And Jesus Christ in the last chapter of the Bible said of himself, I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and offspring of David and the bright and Morning star (revelation 22.16).

The fourth covenant the New Testament:

Jesus was sitting in the upper room on mount Zion on the night before, he was arrested and crucified. It was the time of pass over and all the Jews were seriously observing it. And Jesus also assembled with his followers to commemorate the pass over Luke in his book described that event in the following manner. And when the hour was come, he sat down and the twelve apostles were with him and he said unto them with desire, I have desire to eat this pass over with you before I suffer (Luke 22.14-15). The statement with desire I have desired is a strong idiom literally it means with great desire. As a matter of fact, this expression of Jesus Christ carried as with his deep emotion and pathos. Here we can understand the words of the Lord in this way, with great desire. I have desired to eat the pass over before I suffer that is, “before I become the pass over”

The lambs that were slain in Egypt during the first pass over did not die in vain. With extreme faith the Israelites applied the blood of those slain lambs to the doorposts and lintels the result of that was the first born

male child in those families was redeemed. But the first born male child in the families of heathens including the first born son in the house of king Pharaoh died. This historical reflection provided to the Lord the most vivid reminder and testimony that his suffering and death that took place, the next day did not become a waste. With the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, on the cross many sons and daughters of Adam and Eve could have the experience of redemption. By preparing himself to face the task of death before him, he gave great comfort to all humanity in redeeming them. That is the reason why he said, with desire I have desired to eat this pass over with you. (Which reflects on his redeeming significance) before I suffers (became the pass over)

It was during that meal Jesus took bread blessed it broke it and than gave it to his disciples. And he said take eat this is my body (Matthew 26.26) it was a Bread along with the pass over lamb and the bitter herbs. These three were the essential items that comprised of the ancient pass over. For about 1500 years (from the time of Moses until the coming of Jesus the Jews people killed and ete the pass over lamb as a memorial of the first pass over. Jesus and unleavened bread realized this truth and on it's the next day. He died on the cross as the Lamb of God, who takes it way the sin of all humanity from this land. Hence there was no need of sacrificing four legged animals (lambs). So, the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ is no doubt would be infinite in worth and eternal in duration with this wonderful event; there is no need of any more animal sacrifices.

So, Jesus took the unleavened bread that was found on the pass over table blessed it broke it and gave it to his disciples and said "take eat this is my body" since then sacrifice of the lamb was no more required instead of that unleavened bread which was sinless became the perfect replacement. Here the real idea was this. Take eat this unleavened bread that would replace the pass over lamb and represent my sinless body which would be broken for you. Since pass over was specifically said to be memorial (Exodus 13.9) so all so the unleavened bread was given as a memorial. However,

the idea of keeping the unleavened bread as a substitute, which becomes the literal body of Jesus Christ, has no warrant in the scriptures. Since thinking is like the corrupted fruit which comes from an attempt to interpret the new covenant (testament) in isolation from the Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants.

But the Lord did not stop with that, he directed his attention to the red wine that was before him and which the traditional beverage of the pass over (Seder) meal. And he took the cup gave thanks and gave it to them saying drink all of it (Matthew 26.27). According to Jewish history four cups of wine are the major part of the pass over observance. Their importance was very closely related to the Exodus from Egypt. God spoke to the nation through Moses and said, I will bring you out under the burdens of the Egyptians and I will rid you out their bondage and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgment. And I will take you to me for a people and I will be to you a God (Exodus 6.6-7)

The four I wills mentioned in this connection are, “I will bring you out, I will rid you I will redeem you, and I will take you” these four usages are with some inner meaning concerned to the rabbinic four cups of wine used in the pass over Seder ceremony. And they are called in sequence.

- (1) The cup of sanctification I will bring you out or separate you
- (2) The cup of praises I will red you
- (3) The cup of redemption I will redeem you
- (4) The cup of acceptance, I will take you. If we look into those four cups

It seems the fourth cup which acceptance is basing on the statement of Matthew he said in his book.

And he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying drink ye all of it. For this is my blood of the New Testament (covenant) which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you I will not drink hence forth of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it with you in my father’s kingdom (Matthew 26.27.29)

This new covenant like the earlier covenants of Abrahamic, Mosaic and Davidic covenants were made with Israel (Jeremiah 31.31) but the blood of Jesus was shed for many “going beyond the boundaries of the Jews to the entire world. And then it fulfilled the promise of God to Abraham that thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. (Genesis 22.18). The truth here is that Jesus himself did not drink the fourth cup why because it was the cup of acceptance, and at that time his nation (Israel) did not accept Him as their messiah. But only at the later days that is at the end of the age and that is when he comes for the second time and when the Israelites recognize him, who he is and enter into the provision of the new covenant then the Lord will drink the fourth cup.

The main point to understand the concept of the New covenant is found in a brief statement in the book of Hebrews, “For a Testament (covenant) is in force after men are dead if not it has no strength at all when the testator liveth” (Hebrews 9.17). The central point of this important text is that the victim (Jesus in the New Testament, represents the parties of the covenant God and man) and they can represent together in the victim (Jesus) only by means of his death (Jesus). So with the death of Christ on the cross (the new covenant in my blood) both man and God are eternally united. Following are some of the important truths that come out of the understanding of the covenants of God.

1. The law covenant was a shadow of things that are going to happen, whereas the new covenant is the substance. The outcome of the law covenant is that the payment for sin was anticipated under the new covenant. It is realized and under the law covenant the sacrifices were provisional. And recurring with new covenant the sacrifice of the death of Jesus on the cross is eternal and totally sufficient. Through the law covenant the lambs of men could only cover sin (Hebrews 10.4). But through the new covenant the Lamb of God (Jesus) is able to take away sin (John 1.29)

2. The new covenant has completing and forever superseded the old covenant (Mosaic Law) that is the law covenant need not be equated with the word of what humanity has chosen to call the Old Testament scripture. The Abraham and mosaic and Davidic covenants are so to say unconditional and still in effect. The new covenants were in no way superseded the Abraham and Davidic covenants. But they have continued in full saving. The common idea that the Old Testament was for Israel and has no direct implication for biblical Christianity is really great error. That has robbed the church; of crucial truth and also biblical balances. The fact is that to understand the major part of the New Testament requires first the understanding of the Old Testament. That is to say there is link between the Old Testament and the New Testament. Thereby we can understand the fact that a sincere pastor will certainly preach from old and New Testaments. Jesus is the true seed from the loins of Abrahamic, who brings blessings to all men and women of faith. Jesus is also called the son of Davidic in whom the covenant promise of a throne and a kingdom forever will be literally fulfilled.
3. In the present days believers are not under a law system of life, and also our life has become easy going and we are not restricted to a Sabbath day's journey (probably three fourth of a mile) nobody is bringing the animal to the temple to sacrifice like olden days on pass over time. And also there is no high priest in the temple to sacrifice a goat on our behalf on the Day of Atonement, stoning of adulterous women to death as per the Mosaic Law was completely stopped. People are not treated as servants according to law system, but give cheerfully and willingly as sons and daughters under mercy of the New Testament since the law was a total package men could not chose correctly. It was all nothing but a conditional covenant. As Israelites could not keep the condition of the law, Christ has become an end to that law, so at present men and women are not under any obligation to observe the Sabbath as required by law.

The new covenant has a better priesthood (melchizedec). It has a better high priest like Jesus Christ himself. It has a permanent sacrifice (the Lamb of God Jesus Christ himself) and finally rests upon better promises. The new covenant is embodied with a perfect righteousness. The new covenant will perfectly and eternally unlike men with God. The law appears to be unbiblical and illegal and also unfruitful. Which goes down to the land of beggarly elements. Apostle John while speaking in the context of the law heralded the greatest of all messages with only 13 words. If the son therefore shall make ye free ye shall be free indeed (John 8.36)

The true church is the body of Christ which is quite different from the nation of Israel. And the promises given to the nation will be fulfilled undoubtedly through the believing remnants of the Jews, at the end of the age. And so there will be continuous relationship between Israel and the church. However, we must realize and the respect the fact that every blessing the true church experiences is only from the Abraham covenant. So all the believers are the spiritual sons and daughters of Abraham and therefore spiritual Israelites. As Abraham was accepted by God men and women must keep their faith in his word. But it is said the New Testament believers cannot stand in the place of Israelites because the church does not inherit the promises of blessing given to the nation of Israel for obedience.

And also it does not receive the promises of cursing for disobedience. In nut shall we can see the church is the church and Israel is Israel. They are entitiled in a different way. But at the end both will be blessed by God. Therefore, to understand the covenant is nothing but understanding of the human history correctly. By faith we must enter into the provision of the new covenant through Christ alone. It is a true experience of life with God eternally and nothing is better than this.

4. SHOULD CHRISTIANS OBSERVE MOSAIC LAW?

It is said some believers of God have advised their fellow believers to observe the principles of Mosaic Law, with the exception of animal sacrifices. Those laws are clearly mentioned in the first five books of the Old Testament called Pentateuch. The Evangelistic church members have been also trying to convince the fellow believers to practice the Mosaic Law. If that is the case, they must become one Jewish to practice like eating kosher (clean food) observing Jewish Sabbath which requires to attend synagogue or church either on Friday night or Saturday before sunset. But undoing circumcision and observing all these principles means one must become Jewish in the name of Jesus into Hebrew as Joshua and names of both Joseph and Mary as Joseph and Miriam In addition to that the believers have to observe two Jewish high holy Jewish holidays. They are Rosh Hashanah (the New Year) and yonkippur (the Day of Atonement)

One thing is more important in this context. The teaching that Christian should follow the Mosaic Law is being done by the Jewish believers of Jesus and also propagated by gentile believers such teaching was upheld by the Denominations primarily by seventh day Adventists. The church members of this set observe not only the Sabbath (Jewish) but also Christmas and The ten commandants. There are some more churches also tried to follow the life of Jewish people. But they totally oppose the teaching of the New Testament scriptures.

Then we have to question ourselves how far it is necessary to follow Mosaic Law. To understand this properly it is better to look into some passages from the New Testament. It is a fact there is nothing new about the issue of the church because it was as old as the truth of church itself in the first century. So, whether to follow Mosaic Law or not became a burning issue among the church members of Galatia. There is a common word used for such people who must on observing the Law are called Judayeres. Some false teachers polluted the church atmosphere and the congregation without peace. Though this problem caused some conflict among the church goers. Apostle Paul taught them that salvation would come only through

faith but not through work. And to provide his salvation to all mankind Jesus came to this world. He declared that he achieved that salvation by his death burial resurrection and finally ascendance to his father. Paul wrote a letter to the Church of Rome saying "But now righteousness of God without Law is manifested being witnessed by the Law and the prophets (Romans 3.21) Paul taught Mosaic Law was insufficient to being men and women to God. What he actually wanted to say was instead of the Mosaic Law the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ would be sufficient. Instead of following the rules of the law for the acceptance of God Paul further said the permanent sacrifice of Christ on the cross for the sin of mankind would be enough for atonement and acceptance of God for salvation. In essence Christ became the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law. So what was going on in the church of Galatia became a burning problem to Paul He showed his disinclination towards the foul teaching of some selfish believers in the church here, Paul was referring to the false teaching of Judayers as another gospel. As condemned their teaching and said it was foreign to the truth upon which the church of Jesus was built. Added to that the judayers were misleading the church and the church and the gospel.

Paul became antagonistic towards them and dumb founded at the congregation which was feasting on their foul teaching. He tried to bring them back and put them on the correct track. He wrote to the believers of Galatia "O foolish Galatians who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you"? (Galatians 3.1). He appeared to be rude and intolerant toward the judaisers but it was wrong. He was frustrated at their attitude. He was like a loving father whose son had gone astray. Paul used to grab the children of Galatia by their shoulders and shake them vigorously, trying to awake them from their deep slumber. He tried his best to put them on the right track or the correct logical ground. He called them foolish Galatians and passionately requested them to come to normal position and reminded them that the Mosaic Law is nonsense. He politely asked them to think about the Law reasonably and logically. Paul hallowed this with simple direct and without any argument. He wrote this only would be

learning of you” Received ye the spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing of faith. The Galatians should have known the answer to this question. The answer is quite clear. We are saved by faith through the spirit. Paul really loved the Galatian church and did not want to hurt them anymore. The only thing he was surprised at their foolish thinking and disappointed at their lack of correct Judgment. His impression about the Galatians was that they were saved by the grace of God, a work of the Holy Spirit and in such condition they need not turn round a line of salvation by their physical work successfully.

Paul then began to question them in this way. Is circumcision going to save you? Is eating of kosher (clean food) going to save you? The answer is no. He called Galatians my beloved Christians stop all that nonsense and return to the basic teaching. Paul had strong faith that the Galatians would certainly abandon the Mosaic Law and look for salvation. According to him if anyone would suggest the Mosaic Law as the grace of salvation, it is deadly and curse. Paul said no man is justified by law in the sight of God and it is quite evident. The justice shall live by faith. He stressed more that salvation is through faith and it is unquestionable and undisputed faith. It is only through faith on Jesus Christ salvation can be achieved, but not through the observation of the Mosaic Law.

What must be the opinion of Jesus Christ regarding Mosaic Law? Once Jesus was travelling in his ministry through towns and villages in the region of Galilee. He came to the area of mountains and sat at a higher place. It was a customary to a Jewish rabbi to sit at a higher place, before the audience or students. Jesus also did the same before His disciples and others that gathered there. He had the wonderful attention of a group of Jewish humble fishermen, silversmiths, farmers, bakers, carpenters, and housewives etc. There were some Roman soldiers also probably to maintain peace. The crowd had finally settled and all their attention was drawn toward Jesus Christ. As he understood the pulse of the audience, he began through speak. He said that those who were poor in spirit would be blessed for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. He said those who mourned were

assured of comfort. He promised them that they would inherit earth. He assured to those who were seeking righteousness would certainly find it. He told the merciful that they would receive mercy in return. He said the faithful who followed him and suffered, for such people the earth would become hostile and heaven temporarily because the people always sinned and this sacrifice was to continue and the permanent solution was found finally that you himself provided a permanent alternative. He offered his only begotten son Jesus Christ as he lived a flawless life with virgin birth and with sinless existence.

Jesus possessed all the criteria to be human permanent sacrifice for sin. So, we must accept him as our saviour and Lord as he pardoned our sins and assured eternal life. So, from the time Jesus was sacrificed, dead, buried, and resurrected for the sins of humanity. We have to remember one point in this connection. God never declared regarding blood sacrifices were no longer required. As we see in the bible this blood sacrifice had been continued from the time of Adam and Eve till the time of the coming of Jesus Christ and his death on the cross. Jesus by shedding his blood on the cross provided blood requirement for the sacrifice. Then the only required is that all men and women should accept Christ as their savior. It is a technical point further believers to understand the moral value of the Mosaic Law even though it was explained by Jesus Christ. The fact is Jesus Christ had fulfilled all the technical points of the laws and asked us to stop the practice of that Law.

The technical points in that law were, the sacrificial system, deadly laws observing of Jewish holidays undergoing of circumcision, eating of Kosher (clean food) etc. Though the Jews practiced the law they were far away from love. Hence the law was like school master that led the Jewish people to Christ so that they might be justified by faith. Jesus Christ protected the humanity from the practice of the Mosaic Law principles. So, we are no way bound to keep the physical requirement, though the moral principles continue. For the fulfillment of things like to sacrifice dietary system holidays observance, kosher food circumcision all those things are to be followed.

But all those things are accomplished in the life sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through his resurrection. By accepting Jesus as our savior and lord as our final sacrifice for sin takes the place of the Mosaic Law, what Paul wrote in this regard “for Christ is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone that believe” (Romans 10.4)

The final result is that the believers must forget about the Mosaic Law because whatever was needed for salvation Jesus Christ fulfilled that. Regarding Sabbath day observance there were still some believer who wanted to follow the correct time of the Sabbath that would start on Friday after sunset and ends before Saturday sunset, we have to study whether they were right in their thinking. We have to look into the New Testament also if it is encouraging to Christians to observe Sabbath day like Jews. Jesus in his ministry on the eve of his Sermon on the Mount happened to go into green fields with his disciples on Sabbath day. He plucked some green and Pharisees. Some pharoses saw that and accused Jesus and his followers for breaking the Mosaic Law. They said behold thy disciples for that which is not Lawful to do on Sabbath day. (Matthew 12.2) if Jesus was unmindful of the situation and breaks the law of God then we can say he committed sin and did not lead a perfect life. As a result Jesus would have been considered disqualified as a sacrifice for sin.

Before concluding about the remarks of Pharisees, let us think for a while about the period in which they lived. In these days the Pharisees revolved bed some Laws of their own even without giving priority to the moral values. The Jews during the time of Jesus in Jerusalem had very peculiar traditions. For example, the Pharisees said the Jews should not carry any burden on the Sabbath day. The burden was like carrying the pieces of roper horse hair wax, a piece of broken earth ware, animal food, dead fig etc. If any one of the Jews carries any one of the above mentioned items, he would be treated as committed sin against the God of Israel. In addition to that the Israelites should eat only food specially made for Sabbath day. If a hen laid egg on Sabbath day accidentally, it should not be eaten by them. However, if the hen was kept for becoming fat then the egg of such hen might be eaten.

Healing the person was permitted only when the person was in life and death condition. But making of a discourse on the Sabbath day caused the Pharisees to attack Jesus. So, every event like that made the Pharisees to attack Jesus. For eating the green also made them to attack. Then he made their mouths shut by telling the story of king David, Which occurred about 1000 years ago David ran from the presence of king Soul and all the tabernacles and shew bread” which was meant for the priests. When he was disparately hungry Jesus reminded to Pharisees how the priests in the temple polluted the Sabbath and are blameless. According to Jesus the priests in the temple works like sacrifices, lighting insence on the Sabbath day.

Jesus then told the Pharisees if he had known what this meant, I will have mercy and not sacrifice we would not have condemned the guiltless. Jesus addressed again in the Sermon on the Mount not about the artificial, physical aspect of the Law that concerned, to the moral objections. His compassionate aspect of the Mosaic Law in their blindness condemned the one who was even greater than the temple. Jesus affirmed his lordship and fulfillment of the mosaic laws assured the son of man is lord even on the Sabbath day. To say more clearly, the Mosaic Law is nothing but the shadow of good things to come but not the image of things. A shadow as we see is nothing but an image created by some objects.

So, we can draw a conclusion that the Mosaic Law is only shadow of Jesus Christ. The shadow was real but not a permanent one and this Mosaic Law was an indicator of the real objects and here coming savior Jesus. He came to this world and replaced the shadow and fulfilled his work. So, giving away the life of Jesus means fulfilling the requirement of Sabbath. We can put this in some other way briefly. To trust in Christ means fulfilling the requirement of the Sabbath this particular point might cause the readers to have another genuine doubt. How can a man trust in Jesus by observing the Sabbath?

According to the Bible God created everything in six days and took rest on the seventh day. But the Israelites declared Saturday as Sabbath day

and seventh day. God also took rest on that seventh day after the creation. It means men and women have to take rest from their regular work and devote their time to the loving God whether the work involves physical sense or meditation on him. As a result there would be peace of soul and sharing of goodness. And for the confirmation the writer quoted the following words there are meant therefore you rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest he also hath rest from his own works as God did from His own. What is the nature of the rest according to the writer? The write was speaking about the rest one needed theologically by a searching soul continuously striving to find out acceptance from God. As soon as striving soul reaches Jesus Christ the labour is over. Then Jesus would say “take my yoke upon you and learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11.29-30)

In fact no striking of soul is coming to Christ and also there are no works to be accomplished in order to secure the salvation of God. It is also said salvation is obtained by people in a very simple way. So, we confess with our mouths, then the Lord Jesus Christ believes our hearts, that God would rescue us from the dead, those shall be saved. In the promise of salvation in Christ there is rest for the soul. Since the body needed physical rest, from his labour on the Sabbath day, the soul would find spiritual Sabbath, rest in Christ. In nut shell Christ is our Sabbath and Christ is our rest. The believers can understand now that Christ is their spiritual Sabbath and satisfy all their requirements.

Apostle Paul gave an explanation of Christ regarding Sabbath. “Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of holiday or of a new moon or of the Sabbath day” (Colossians 2.1-6) what must have made Israel to say these words because the judayers were interested on the church members of Colossians who desired some Mosaic law practice like some requirements, holiday celebration and the Sabbath. Paul attacked them boldly and said Jesus by dying on the cross and rising from the dead blotted out the handwriting of the Mosaic Law. In other words the law of Judaism and tradition that led to salvation according to them, were dead

and buried. So, the only thing we have to do is that we must have sincere faith in Christ since that was the outcome of the Mosaic Law Christians need not doubt as Christ is the embodiment of Sabbath and every day observances.

Eating of kosher (clean foods):

It is really unfortunate because many Christians wished to eat kosher and observe dietary systems which were the customs of ancient Israelites. Other believers used to think about these believers who would never sustain their claim.

They should question among themselves whether the New Testament is demanding them to eat kosher. The Pharisees confronted with Jesus again in Galilee when he halted with disciples. They went to Jesus with some teachers of law, and questioned him why his disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders by not washing hands before eating. The system of washing hands was created by some rulers and in course of time became regular. But Apostle Mark pointed out that this practice was probably the tradition of the elders. For the question of Pharisees concerning the washing of hands Jesus answered them in the following lines. Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded saying. Honor the fathers and mothers and he that curset father and mother let him die the death, but ye shall say to his father and mother, it is proper to method honor, not his father, or his mother he shall be forced. This have ye made the commandment of God not effect by your tradition "some of the Jewish leaders hatched a plan to circumvent the law of God like the fifth command honor thy father and mother. They declared a precious item as a dedication to the lord and kept it in their houses instead of turning it over to their parents. Jesus confirmed this action as adious and regarding this remark Jesus took the Pharisees to task. He contrasted the physical observance of the law, and tradition with far more significant with moral and compassionated necessities of the laws while the argument was going on a good number of people gathered around them

and watched them. Then Jesus turned toward the mob and said not that defileth but that which cometh out of the mouth defileth a man”

Mark added to the above said statement purging all meal or purging all foods, in the modern version of the bible is in this way. Jesus declared all foods clean. Jesus took the opportunity and proclaimed that there were no unclean foods with the abolishing of the Mosaic Law. And Jesus said no food would defile the human soul. To understand this clearly whatever was eaten by anyone would not reflect one’s character or spirit or soul with all the explanation, if became for the Jewish people of the time of Jesus; Particularly promises to understand the revolutionary changes the fanatic attitude of those people towards the Mosaic Law did not allow them for effective thinking regarding the teaching of Jesus. The main reason was most of the ancient Israelites refused to know the true identify of Jesus that he was the messiah of the Jews and the son of God.

Any way all the teachings of Jesus were recorded in the bible for the future guidance of the believers. They would become free from the future of dietary requirements of ancient Israelites. That was not the only occasion God declared all the foods were clean. In the book of Acts chapter 10 the bible readers can find the story of vision Peter got. According to the vision Peter saw the heaven was opened, and a big vessel descended towards him. It was a big sheet with four corners and full of different beasts and fowls. “Then a voice came from heaven rise peter kill and eat” But as a Jew peter was the close observer of Mosaic Law. So he replied Not so lord. I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean. For that God replied, what God hath cleansed that could not become a common food. It is said the vision was repeated two times to peter became he could not comprehend the exact meaning of it.

The vision of Peter was for two purposes it was confirmed that Israelites dietary law was stopped The Jews were eating now freely. They began to treat the gentiles equally and understand that they were in no way inferior to them. And Peter also made this point clear before some gentile believers. As confessed that God showed him not to look down upon others, calling anyone unclean.

Apostle Paul also confessed and declared that all the food is clean for the people of God. He said this in the book of Romans. Paul humbly requested the believers not to judge one another because God is the judge of all.

According to him all are equal and foods are clean all the worlds of Jesus touched hearts of the believers. They began to eat whatever is available. They kept the Mosaic Law aside and no way concern to kosher. Regarding the made of the idols was also proved null and void because the idols had no life and vision manmade objects. Paul was more concerned about the strong believers unto might try to harm and check the weak believers in faith. The strong believers who were following Mosaic Law regarding the dietary system, we cannot take it for granted, that they did not correctly understand the bible and the teachings of Christ.

The impact of circumcision:

In Romans 2.28 Apostle Paul clearly pointed out that it is faith and obedience to God for the identification as the children of God but not the Mosaic Law. Regarding the circumcision Paul said it was an act of spiritual purification. He quoted for he is not a Jew who is out word in flesh that is though a Jewish man is physically circumcised that act does not make him believer in God by faith and righteousness. If a man undergoes circumcision when he was only eight days old.

It is no doubt the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law, and the act would make him to identify himself as a Jew. But this act would not serve the purpose of salvation. Here Paul worked different types of circumcision that is pure heart called spiritual circumcision Paul continue his idea in verse 29 about circumcision. "But he is a Jew which is one inwardly and circumcision is that of the least in the spirit and not in the letter. He added an Israelite was asked at the time of Jesus he would have said that a Jew was a physical descendant of first patriarch Abraham an observer of Mosaic Law and circumcision his opinion about a Jew was that he would have to obey him in everything as he was a descendant of Abraham. Circumcision for him spiritually purified in heart the seed of human emotion and conscience

and Paul emphasized true circumcision was not concerned to the body but springs from the soul in faith, Love and obedience toward Almighty God.

The outcome of this is that man required only spiritual circumcision and physical action was not at all a requirement for salvation. He further said circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing but keeping in mind and honoring the Ten Commandments of the Law and not the physical aspects. If the Jews still unable to understand the aspect of circumcision and mosaic law Paul advised to such people to look into Galatians 5.6 "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth Anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love". If anybody thought of circumcision even after salvation through Christ it is nothing but laughing at the grace of God. It entangles in such unfortunate souls, Paul somehow brought the topic of circumcision for discussion and in his address to church members in Galatia told them whether one was a Jew or gentile God would live in anybody and people will have everything they needed in Christ for salvation. This is what Paul wanted to tell the believers. He further explained clearly that circumcision had a symbol of believers' new spiritual entry into the eternal life with Christ.

Conclusion:

Paul put every big question here to the believers of Galatians church. The question was whether they would get the salvation through the deeds they accomplish. From the Mosaic Law or through the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. The answer is crystal clear. All have saved through faith but not works. So the law had nothing to do and no way concern to the modern Christianity. Yet with all pros and cons the Mosaic Law had its own importance why because it was initiated by God himself. It was meant for redemption of humanity from their sin.

But this Mosaic Law could not provide salvation as people were unable to believe and practice it perfectly. So Paul said but before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards

be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (Galatians 3:23-25)

In the above said passage the Pharisees like “keep under and shut up” are used to describe the life of Mosaic Law. To its credit the law would work as our school master or as our road map to reach our goal. Now that goal provided some means and showed redemption. As the goal showed some means there is no necessity of following the law, which acted like the school master. That was the appeal of Paul. The fact is that law in the Old Testament or covenant, appeared to be good, understanding and which achieved, the good faithfully and effectively. But the new covenant or testament was replaced by the grace of God. For detailed truth one can look into the book of Hebrews. There is one more point people have to understand from the law. On one occasion Jesus was talking with Pharisees and Sadducees. Just at that time a lawyer came and asked Jesus, what the great commandment was in the Law. The lawyer actually wanted to know what the greatest of the law was. Jesus replied “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, this is the first great commandment. And the second is thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self and these two commandments hang all the laws and prophets. But Paul quoted a similar law “bear ye one another burdens to fulfill the law of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:2)

All the believers must walk with Jesus with faith, love and humble submission to the Mosaic Law. By doing so, they would become closer to the law. Paul’s final answer to this controversial issue was mentioned in the book of Romans 8:3-4

For what the law could not do in that is was weak. Through the flesh God sent his own son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us. Who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

5. THE HOME OF YOUR HEART

‘I only ask one thing from our Lord. This is what I want, let me live in the Lord’s house all my life” (psalms 27:4).

This topic I am discussing now is purely concerned to the spiritual matters of the house here is not about the home made of stones, or wood, or straw with proper plan but it is concerned to the invisible home called the spiritual home. Just as a physical house that exists for our bodily welfare a spiritual home is also necessary to take care of our soul. We always think about a beautiful house with maximum facilities for our mortal body only. But we rarely think about the house for our soul that leads us finally to our salvation.

We sometimes forget that our body is mortal and our soul is immortal. With that idea in our minds, we should not give more importance to bodily things in this world. Our earthly body remains in a beautiful house where as our immortal soul will be wandering like a lonely cloud aimlessly over hills and valleys against the wishes of our God Almighty.

God has His own plan for our soul to live in peace and harmony; He does not want our soul to roam about thoughtlessly. He wants us to live with Him in His house because we are His children. We are part and parcel of our merciful God. As apostle Paul said, “For in him we live and move, and have our being”(Acts 17:28). Since He is a spirit, He remains next to us. God Himself is our roof, walls to our house and a true foundation. He wants to be our mailing address and a reference for anything so that we can completely depend upon Him and live peacefully.

The promise of His son is “If my people love me, they will obey my teaching. My father will love them and we will come to them and finally make our home with them”. For many people this might be a new thought, because they always take God as a deity and never to dwell with him. We might think God as a mysterious and miracle maker and not easily approachable.

When Jehovah led the children of Israel in the wilderness He stayed with them night and day. He stayed with them as a cloud during the day time and as a pillar of light during the night time. So, our merciful God never leaves us alone. And He promised this in (Mathew 28:20) "I will be with you always". Our God is always dependable as He will provide us perpetual peace. He will be our fire of night and cloud of day. He will never desert us who believe Him with our faith.

God in heaven does not have any difference between Sunday morning or Thursday evening. We can approach Him at any time on any day with our prayer. Prayer is the only weapon by which we can become closer and more intimate with our God. He desires to talk with us always, irrespective of time and place. Sometimes, we may neglect and even Forget Him but He remembers us forever. Therefore through prayer, we can improve our relationship with God. Apostle Paul advised us to "pray without ceasing", then "be constant in prayers "and "pray in the spirit at all times".

David the man after God's own heart said "I am asking Yehovah "for one thing to live with him in his house my whole life long. I will contemplate his beauty. I will study at his feet. That is the only quiet secure place in a noisy world.(Psalms 27: 4-5). Then what type of house of God David was looking for. That means David was yearning to be in the presence of God. He was longing to be in the house of God. He was a great poet among the Biblical writers, a great king and also a great killer.

Prayer would bring us ultimate joy. Even Jesus Christ being the son of God used to pray to His father by going to a lonely place. Through prayer we can talk with God our father face to face. Some people who are not habituated to pray might find it difficult to pray in the initial stage. Then they can mug up the Lord's Prayer and recite it as and when prayer is required. And that

Lord's Prayer is as follows:

Our father, who are in heaven Hallowed be thy name:.....

For thine are the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever Amen. (Matthew 6: 9-13)

“Our father who is in heaven?” with these words Jesus Christ is leading and inviting us into the house of our Lord, shall all of us follow him?, Let us walk behind him, so that He will lead us into God’s living room since our hearts need a father. After sitting comfortably in the chair in our God’s living room and if we look at some of the portraits, hanging on the walls, we will certainly come across the portrait of father and son called the story of prodigal son.

This is one of the moral stories from the New Testament called the prodigal son. According to the story, the younger son took the share of his property and went out of the house. He wandered into different places till all the money was exhausted. He suffered without food for some days. His last days were so pathetic he even began to eat bran that was given to the pigs in somebody’s house. He finally repented and decided to go back to his father’s house not as his son but as one of his servants. He offered his father not any gift nor explanation but only the smell of pigs and a rehearsal apology. So, what he said was “Father, I have sinned against God, and done wrong to you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son”. (Luke 15:21). And added, he was unworthy of his birth right.

He did not like to stay in his father’s house in the capacity of his second son. So he said demote me, punish me and take my name off the mail box and my initials off family tree. I am willing to give up my place at your table. The prodigal son acted his part very well. Though the boy wanted to stop being his son the father is not willing to stop being a father. When the father was found the lost son his joy knew no bounds. In his extreme happiness he even shed tears. Then the father ordered best clothes a gold ring and shoes immediately for his son. Father also asked his servants to find out a fat calf to celebrate that happy occasion of the return of that prodigal son.

The father said, my son was dead but now he is alive again. He was lost but now he is found. This young man must have stunned at these words especially

“My son was dead”. The child might be out of his house but he was not out of his father’s heart. He must have left the table but he never left the family. Let us not forget the heart breaking message here. We may be willing to be called ourselves the children of God. But God is always willing to call us his children. Basing on this moral story, we may conclude that God is our merciful father and we are His prodigal sons.

God is addressed by people with different names in the Bible. And the most familiar name is Father. He also likes to be called so. Even Jesus called Him father don’t you know that I must be with my father in His house. Jesus in His prayer said Father I will give you my life. In the gospel of John alone Jesus repeated this name about 156 times. So, God loves to be called Father by us. It is beyond our understanding when Jesus called Jehovah ABBA. What is a common practice today was unheard of during the days of Jesus Christ.

“Abba” was an everyday word or homely or a word used in the family. But it is very strange no Jew was dared enough to use that word in the family. They never addressed God as Abba. And Jesus Christ also authorized His disciples to use that word Abba after Him. And also it seemed Jesus gave them a share in His son ship. Even in our Lord’s Prayer the starting words are “our father”, reminds us. We are welcomed into the house of God as we have been adopted by the owner of that house. When we think about Jesus, He not only forgives us but also adopts us. It must be perhaps God’s plan to adopt whoever wishes to go to Him.

He would accept us as His sons and then take us into His house and provide all our needs without our asking. After experiencing all the hospitality we feel like calling Him “Holy”. We can also call Him “King”. But when we want to touch Him or pray for our needs we must address Him “Father”.

In the Old Testament God is addressed with many names. Let us try to understand at least some of His names. If we study carefully, we can find at least eighty names mentioned in the Bible. Which were given by the Biblical heroes out of their faith? In the beginning God was known as

“Elohim”. It is a Hebrew word which means “a strong one or creator”. This name was repeated at least thirty one times in the first chapter of Genesis alone. As God revealed Himself to his children, they saw in Him more than a mighty force. They saw in Him a loving “Father”, when he met them at the cross roads of their lives.

The next example is about Jacob, who came to see God as “Jehovah Raah”. Which means a caring shepherd. Jacob told his family members as he was talking with God, “You had led me all my life”. This is no doubt a compliment about God. Because Jacob was a less than comparative sheep. God blessed him and finally his children were taken as God’s chosen people called Israelites. Jacob was not at all a well behaved man and a worthy candidate to the comparison of the other Biblical heroes in order to give him a good shepherd awarded yet God gave him food at the time of famine and forgiveness. If anybody questions him how God was, he would simply say ‘Jehovah raah’ which means “a caring shepherd”.

Regarding Abraham, God blessed him plentifully than all other Bible heroes. Yet he called God “Jehovah Jireh”, which means “God will provide”. Actually, his life was quite peaceful in “Ur”. But God asked him to leave that place and go to Canaan, the land of milk and honey that God promised to his descendants. When people questioned him, how he could live in that strange place, he simply answered, God will provide. Such strong faith and belief Abraham had towards God. His family members seemed to have worried about him, but he was never disturbed.

The final test of Abraham’s faith was the sacrifice of his son Isaac. One day God asked Abraham, to sacrifice his only son for Him on the Mount Moriah. Without any feeling or doubt he went to the spot with all the necessary things. Then Abraham asked his son Isaac to lean on the sacrificial altar. And when he was about to cut Isaac, God asked him to stop and provided a lamb for that sacrificial purpose. Abraham did the sacrifice and saved his only begotten son from the death. That was the faith of Abraham.

So, to his credit Abraham had some titles. He was called father of many nations. He was called the father of circumcision. He was called the father of righteousness. He was called the father of faithful etc.

When his son enquired about the lamb for the sacrifice, Abraham replied “Jehovah Jireh “. That means “God is the provider”.

The next man God wanted to bring to the lime light from Bible was the most insignificant fellow “Gideon”. One day, God sent His angel to Gideon with a message. He was asked by the angel to save Israelites from the cruel lands of Medianites. Because they became a constant threat to them. God wanted to use this common man to achieve His goal. Then Gideon made some troublesome sacrifice at the place where he met the angel and called that place “Jehovah Shalom” which means “peace be unto you”. He thought for some time that he would die because he had seen God face to face. But God gave him confidence he would not die, as He was with him.

This example gives the idea that we can do anything and everything as long as God is at our back and push us forward. God will always encourage us to do that kind of impossible things possible, by putting in us confidence that leads us to improve faith on Him. Thus He gives us a wonderful gift the gift of peace at all times and on all occasions including peace of good understanding. The same peace God gave to David after he showed him the giant Goliath for fighting. God gave the same peace to Saul who became Paul later by showing him the Gospel. God gave peace to Jesus Christ also by showing Him the cross. Now He gave the same peace to Gideon after he won the war and brought peace to Israel from the enemy.

And much might be said about the faithful servant of God called Moses. He carved the name of God as Jehovah Rophe. For this we can find the English translation in Exodus 15.26 as “I am the Lord who heals you”. About one and half million Israelites followed Moses into the desert land. Their jubilation over liberation soon became their frustration, due to their condition of dehydration.

These Israelites walked for a few days in that barren desert and came to a lake. The water in it appeared to be dirty, blackened bitter and dangerous.

Moses saw the situation that they were grumbling among themselves for water. And he cried unto God. But God showed him a tree nearby when he begged for water. He must have thrown away the tree into the water out of curiosity. The water became pure and perfect. All of them drank that water and quenched their thirst and the Almighty was glorified. In this case God Himself revealed his name I am the Lord Who heals you. He is also called Jehovah Nisei. Which means the Lord is my banner. The banner in the battle field has its own importance. When the battle was going on seriously and when a soldier was left alone in helpless condition, he would raise his banner to indicate the position.

In the same way when the Amalekites attacked Israelites on their way to the Promised Land, Moses went up to the top of the mountain and prayed to God. As long as Moses raised his hands, Israelites were in success. Whenever he put his hands down the Amalekites won the battle. He understood the situation. He was not an ordinary man and God was with him. He kept his hands raised continuously and the Amalekites ran away from the battle field.

After that Moses built an altar and chiseled a name of God on a stone. It was called Jehovah Nisei which means the Lord is my banner. These few names are mentioned here to understand His character. And let us see how far these names are applicable to our daily life.

Elohim the great one creator. We can depend upon Him for anything in our life. When you are anxious about provision, then talk to Jehovah Jireh, He will provide you what is needed in critical conditions.

If the challenges are too big for you to tackle then seek the help of Jehovah Shalom. The Lord will give you the peace.

If your body is sick of something which is unbearable then Jehovah

rapha. The Lord will heal you and take care of you. If you are a soldier struck up in a dangerous situation look at Jehovah Nisei. The Lord is your banner; you can take shelter in Him.

So God is the shepherd, who guides you, the Lord who brings peace, in the storm, the physician who heals the sick and the banner that guides the soldier. Let us understand how God wants to reveal Himself in His blessings. Two heavy hearted disciples were on their way to Emmaus. It was the resurrection Sunday. Jesus's body was still in grave. They were lamenting that Jesus would save Israel from the Roman rule and also from the taxes. Though the disciples moved with Him for three years they did not correctly understand Him and the purpose of His coming into this world. He had come to deal with the people regarding the sin and death but not to deal and free Israel from the Roman rule.

Both were wrong in their thinking. They missed the main purpose of His coming into this world and His death. That Sunday would have been the happiest day for them, had they understood the real purpose of His death and the resurrection. They did not understand the will of God. So they were in despair. God has a will for us. He said "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you; I will give you a hope and good future" (Jeremiah 29.11). He is willing to receive you into His house and discuss with you certain important matters concerning eternal life or salvation etc.

God is asking you to meet Him sit with Him and clarify all your doubts that are hiding in your heart. God has plenty of time at His disposal. You come and seek the will of God. In our prayer, if you say They will be done, it means we are seeking the heart of God. The word "will" means a strong desire. The study is what we can learn and what God wants us to learn. Our God is the God with open mind and with open heart. He is not the God of confusion. That is what He was doing on the road of Emmaus with the two disciples. They witnessed the process of the death of Jesus for some time and left that place with empty heads. Then they packed their

bag and baggage and left that place. They headed towards Emmaus and Jesus met them on the road.

It is really wonderful that Jesus met the disciples on the same road. How does he reveal His will to us. You may be surprised at this simple process; God wants to reveal His will through the believers. Jesus spoke to women on the first Easter and in turn they spoke to us. He spoke to believers through believers. He wanted to reveal Himself and His will through the people of God.

One day God Himself reveals to you through the church. He will reveal to you through the word of God. In spite of their continuous touch with Jesus the disciples disregarded his word. It was their second mistake. They did not care to look into the Scripture. They listened to their fears only. But Jesus appeared to them after resurrection and corrected them with the Bible. He warned them that they were foolish enough in not believing what is said by the prophets in the scripture.

In the words of the prophets Jesus must suffer persecution, then He must be crucified and then on the third day He must raise from the grave. This is all written in the Bible but the disciples were not aware of it. "Through the words of prophets, He used scripture to reveal His will. This is the Gods will that I should raise up those who have given me" (John 6.39).

It is Gods will that you be born again that you be born not of the will of flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1.13). It is not God's will that one little one perish. (Matthew 18.14). It is my father's will that everyone who sees the son and believes on Him at the Last day.(John 6.40). It is God's will that all people of the world should be saved when you come across two roads you must think wisely which road would lead to the kingdom of God. His general will provides us with guidelines which help us to understand His specific will for our individual life.

The disciples at last begged Jesus to stay with them because it was already night and Jesus stayed with them. We can also understand the will

of God by spending more time in his presence. The key to knowing the heart of God is by having relationship with Him, a personal relationship as God spoke to Moses through the burning bush. That does not mean all of us should go to a bush nearby and wait for God to come out of that bush and speak with us. God used a fish to correct Jonah who was asked by God to go to Nineveh city with a message. But Jonah was reluctant to go to that city and planned to go to Joppa. Finally he was thrown into the sea and a fish was arranged to swallow Jonah. That does not mean all of us should go to a sea shore and wait for a fish to come out of water and swallow us. Jesus followed the disciples up to Emmaus but pretended as if He had to go further. That does not mean Jesus was not willing to stay with people who would not invite Him at all with their hearts. Our Lord would be waiting for our invitation always.

Please remember one technical point in this context. Jesus allowed them to recognize Him only after He was properly invited to stay with them that night. There is one final way God would reveal Himself. That IS THROUGH THE FIRE OF God. When they saw who He was and recognized Him. He disappeared. They felt like a fire burning in their hearts, when Jesus talked with them on the road and explained the scripture to them. They knew they had been with Him because of the fire with in them.

God reveals His will by setting a torch to your soul. He gave Jeremiah a fire for hard hearts. He gave Nehemiah a fire for a forgotten city. He set Abraham on fire for a land he had never seen. He set Isaiah on fire with a vision he could not resist. Forty years of wilderness wanderings did not douse the passion of Moses.

Jericho city could not slow Joshua and Goliath did not deter David. There was a fire burning within all of them. "What is the fire that consumes you then?."

God walks like a torch from heart to heart warming the cold, and thawing the chilled, and stirring the ashes. He is at once a Galilean, welfare and welcome candle. He will come to purge infection and illuminate your

direction. So the fire of your heart is the light of your path. And those who are without that fire will mock at it. Those who know it and those who know Jesus will understand it correctly. Therefore to meet the savior means to be set aflame. To discover His flame is to accept a world like you have seen.

“ And lead us not into temptation But deliver us from the evil one”.

Satan was God’s servant as long as he was allowed to remain in heaven; he was most handsome and most powerful among the Arch angels. As pride goes before one’s fall he became proud of himself for his qualifications and rebelled against God for equal rights in heaven. And to God he became like a bee in the bonnet. So, God was disgusted with his behavior and necked him out of heaven into the bottomless pit. He came to the earth with one third of the angel population. According to Bible history the population of angels is about one hundred crores. As long as he was in heaven his name was Lucifer. But the moment he was thrown out of heaven his name was changed to satan, evil, devil etc.

Even after coming to the earth Satan continued his rebellious activities not directly on God but on his creation of people. For his revenge against God. Adam and Eve became his victims. Let us consider some of the persons in the Bible, how this satan tried to influence them by his cunning nature. God promised Sara wife of Abraham a child and that could not be fulfilled for a good number of years. In such conditions satan arranged a crib to tempt Sara against God’s promise. Yet Sara got a son Isaac, when she was about to lose all her hopes because of her age. So God saves all the best to the last.

In the case of Moses king pharaoh permitted Israel to go out of his country. When they were going he followed them with some soldiers to bring them back, satan who had been watching all that felt happy, pharaoh reached the red sea to the spot where the Israelites were about to cross the red sea. But he was shocked to see the safe crossing of the red sea by all Israel and the drowning scene of all soldiers of pharaoh and their miserable

death. The Satan did not understand the power of God. Even then God's power is more powerful than the power of king Pharaoh.

The next man to be considered was Prophet Daniel. Many young and energetic men were taken as captives from Jerusalem to Babylon. Satan thought by taking all intelligent people of Jews, God was defeated and he became successful. But to his surprise Daniel enjoyed all top most positions in that kingdom next to the king. Daniel with other three young Jews Shedrack, Meshack and Abednego made the king to praise their God by saying that there was no other God greater than our God. As a matter of fact the king used Daniel for his extra-ordinary intelligence he was praised by the king and also the king praised the God of Daniel.

At every attempt Satan received a rebuff and became a fool. So as Satan proposed one thing God disposed another thing. Regarding Paul, when he was imprisoned, Satan thought his prison life would silence the pulpit and felt happy. That was done of course, but the most wonderful thing was he could write letters to the churches of Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians. While he was in the prison. Those letters became so important in the New Testament that, some Biblical commentators said, without the letters of Apostle Paul there is no New Testament.

Apostle Peter was another example Satan tried to discredit Jesus by providing Peter to deny Him. But Satan's plan was fired back and Peter set an example of how God's grace can extend, "Deliver us from the evil ones". The meaning of these words in our prayer is that we needed always the protection of God from Satan, the evil one.

What must be the main reason for Satan to become the trouble suitor to the people of God? He was originally one of the Arch angels not satisfied with the status he was given in heaven by God. He claimed equal position with God. He was not happy to worship God like other angels. He wished for equal throne with God. In the words of Prophet Ezekiel both Satan's beauty and evil were unequalled among angels. The angels were

asked to worship God like other human beings.

Prophet Isaiah and prophet Ezekiel both narrated the character of an angel. They said, the angel was more powerful than any other human being and more beautiful than any other human beings, yet more foolish than any other human being who has ever lived. His pride was main reason for his down fall.

Lucifer, even with his pure and perfect heart was inferior to God. All angels are inferior to God and even today Satan is the servant of God Almighty.

He was also called by some critics as “The servant of paradise”. The spirit of God which is in you undoubtedly greater than the evil which is in this world. But God used Satan always for this purpose, and after the work is done he was fooled and sent out. Satan was only an instrument in the hands of God to advance his activities. Let us see some examples how God is using the devil for the fulfillment of heavenly issues.

God will use Satan to refine the faithful. Apostle Paul was a Chosen author of the Bible by God. He wrote about fourteen letters which became very famous in the New Testament. The other Biblical writers worried a lot over his death, because they lost such a great man. He penned some historical documents. He healed the sick and travelled into many places in spreading the word of God. He loved Paul very much but God hated pride in him. And so He used Satan to do that. Three times I pleaded with God to take it away from me. but God said to Paul “ My grace is sufficient for you, My power is made perfect in weakness”.

Satan and his powers are simply tools in the hands of God. Of all examples, the most touching is the incident of Job. God used Satan to test the faith of Job on Him. God gave him full permission to Satan on Job but not on his body. Satan tried his best to change Job against God but in vain. Job passed this test and received double blessing from God. But Satan

grumbled over in himself and said, Job would have fallen if he had been forced some pain to his body. Satan has no power to use on anybody except that God gives him.

Satan tried even to control Jesus Christ at one stage. But the later simply warned him and sent away. Christ said the first century church Smyrna “Do not be afraid of what you are about, to suffer, I tell you the devil will put some of you in prison to test you and you will suffer ten days. But be faithful even if you have to die and I will give you a crown of life”. (Revelation 2.10). Jesus tells about the persecution in the church and the duration of suffering is just ten days. The outcome of ten days persecution is a crown of life.

Here God used Satan as a tool to persecute a faithful. He could bear it patiently for ten days and received the award of the crown of life. God also used Satan to awaken the sleeping. About one thousand years ago, before Apostle Paul another Jewish leader Saul became the first king of Israel. Unfortunately he became jealous of David the next king for his abilities. As time passed on Saul became insanely hostile to David. Now God wanted to awaken him from the fog of jealousy and looked for the unwilling service of Satan. Then an evil spirit was sent upon Saul and he prophesied in his own house.

If Soul would not drink the cup of God’s kindness, let him drink despair and cup of hell’s fury. The New Testament also gives some references, where deception is administered. Apostle Paul tried to check the church in Corinth for their tolerance towards immorality. He spoke about an adulterer in church, and then handed that man over to Satan. With that act his sinful life would have been destroyed and his spirit saved on the day of the Lord.

Apostle Paul gave proper instructions to Timothy a young Evangelist. He was dealing with two disciples who had shipwrecked faith and who tried to influence other members negatively. After locating those who worshiped the creation rather than the creator, Paul said, “God left and let them do the shameful things they wanted to do. We have seen so far some

examples, how God used Satan for testing and changing some people, as His personal achievements.

Though Satan plans something he has to get the permission from God "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me".. Jesus said, this is the proof, the wolf cannot get the sheep without permission from shepherd, and the shepherd will only permit the attack, if it is worth in the long run. You intended evil against me, but you meant it for good.(Genesis 50.20). We must always remember one thing; Satan can never enter into the walls of the "Great House of God".

Following are some of the names addressed to God out of about 80 in number

- 1) Elohim (Hebrew) a strong one, or creator. This word Elohim is repeated about 31 times in Genesis 1 chapter itself.
- 2) Jehovah rohi - a caring shepherd.
- 3) Jehovah Jureh - God will provide.
- 4) Jehovah raphe - I am the Lord Who heals you.
- 5) Jehovah Nisei - The Lord is my banner.
- 6) Jehovah shalom - The Lord will give peace.
- 7) El Shaddai - God of mountain.
- 8) ABBA - Father.
- 9) Shekinah - Glory of God.
- 10) Rabbonie - My great one.
- 11) Yahweh - My Lord.

6. CHRISTIAN ANGELOLOGY

According to Christian faith, angels are the agents as well as messengers of God, as mentioned in Judaism. It is also said that they always move among people and help them what they needed, without their knowledge. The most influential Christian angelic hierarchy was put forward by pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the fourth or fifth century in his book *The Celestial Hierarchy*. During the Middle Ages many schemes were proposed and some of them were drawn for the expansion on pseudo-Dionysius, and others suggested completely different clarifications. But according to Medieval Christian theologians, the angels are organized into several orders, or angelic choirs.

Pseudo-Dionysius (on *The Celestial Hierarchy*) and Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologia*) drew a good number of passages from the New Testament, especially Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16 to develop a scheme of their hierarchies, or order of angels, with each hierarchy containing their orders. Although both the authors gave their opinions based on the New Testament, the Biblical canon is relatively silent on the subject, and their hierarchies are less definitive than the Biblical material. According to historical background, the angels are divided into three important categories for our understanding during the Medieval period. They are:

First Cadre

Seraphim

Cherubim

Thrones

Dominions or Lordships

Virtues or Strongholds

Powers or Authorities

Third Cadre

Principalities or Rulers

Archangels

Angels

Personal Guardian angels

Choirs in Medieval Theology

What does the Bible say about these Angels? According to texts, the first type of angels serve as the heavenly servants to God, the Son incarnated, are called Seraphim. The singular word for Seraphim is Seraph, meaning (when translated) "Burning ones." The word Seraph is normally a synonym

for serpents when it is used in Hebrew Bible. It is mentioned in the Book of Isaiah 6:1-7 that Seraphim are the “highest angelic class” and serve as the caretakers of the throne of God, continuously shouting and praising Him by singing “Holy, Holy, Holy.” As said in Isaiah 6:1-8, the Seraphim angels are described as fairy, six-winged beings. Out of those six wings, they use the first two to cover their faces. The second two are used to cover their feet, while the next two are used to cover their eyes.

Their main duty is to fly over the throne of God and glorify Him by singing Eternal Hymn. They are otherwise known as personal attendants of God. They sing this eternal song, “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord Almighty, the whole Earth is full of His Glory.” This same hymn was sung by Jews and Christians for thousands of years. In Hebrew, people would use the same words three times to describe when a person is completely leaving the world. And so, calling God three times means God is really and perfectly Holy. In Jewish folklore and in later Christian works, the **Seraphim** are said to be the highest rank of angels, perhaps due to their close movements with God. In art, **Seraphim** are often read as “Burning ones,” and shown holding a flaming sword with the words “Holy, Holy, Holy” on the blade. The coal according to prophet Isaiah’s version is that it touches his lips. As a result, Isaiah is now purified and fit to be called a prophet. The coal came from the altar of Heaven, and so it would be very powerful. Fire is used in many religions and faiths as a symbol of purifying and cleaning something.

Cherubim or Cherubs

According to history, Cherubims have four faces: the face of man, the head of an ox, the head of a lion, and the head of an eagle (they were later adopted as the symbols of four Evangelists). They have four conjoined wings covered with eyes, but appear in Revelation 4:8 with six wings like Seraphim. The Cherubim with the head of a lion, body, and feet are used to guard the way to the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:2) and the throne of God (Ezekiel 10:12-14, Exodus 23:17-22, Chronicles 3:7-14, and Kings 6:23-28). But in Modern English usage, Cherubim are

confused between themselves and Putti. It is said that Putti are with and without wings, toddler-like beings traditionally used in figurative art. Saint Thomas Aquinas imagined Satan as a fallen Cherub. When most people think of Cherubim, they must also think of pudgy, little, baby-like creatures with two little wings who appear rather cuti. But it is doubtful how these baby creatures are compared to Cherubs in the Bible. It is said the correct plural for Cherub is Cherubim. We can find these Cherubim in two books, of the Holy Bible: Genesis & Ezekiel. In the Book of Genesis, these Cherubim guard the Garden of Eden after Adam and Eve were banished. Cherubim were described as holding flaming swords. The prophet Ezekiel had a clear vision of Heaven where he happened to see many angelic beings. According to his description, these Cherubim angels are most powerful and frightening; they are not simply always cuti, little angels, but also powerful heavenly beings with four faces and four wings.

Those Cherubim are also described in connection with the construction of the Ark of Covenant. The Ark of Covenant was the dwelling place of God, prepared by efficient Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai when they were on their way to the promised land, Canaan. The Ark of the Covenant was one of the items kept in the Tabernacle, the mobile temple of God and Jewish people. For some time, it was misplaced by heathen rulers, but finally brought back by King David. The Tabernacle was considered most sacred for the Jews till King Solomon built the permanent temple on Mount Moriah. In his vision, Ezekiel saw another type of angelic beings that seem to be associated with Cherubim, a description that appeared to be even more strange to readers of the Bible. So to say, the vision of Ezekiel seemed to be really strange and amazing to the human eye, and we can understand the great wonder of Heaven. The Bible does not say how many Cherubim angels are in heaven, but Ezekiel saw in his vision just four of them, and there must be more than that figure. The prime duty of Cherubim is to guard the Holy Domain of God and prevent it from any sin and corruption. They are sometimes addressed as “Throne angels” because they always move around the throne of God”.

In Jewish folklore, throne angels are known as Merkabah, with four faces on four sides of their heads, arranged in a square - allowing them to go in any direction they like without taking any turn. The Cherub might have come from a term "to God," which is quite suitable to their role in the Bible. Therefore, nowhere 'nthe Bible the Cherubim are called angels. So far, from being cuti, cuddly creatures. The Cherubim became mighty and powerful guardians of God.

The Four Living Creatures

In the last book of the Bible, called Revelation, there is a description of these four living creatures. These amazing creatures have features in common with both Seraphim (in having six wings and continuously praising God) and Cherubim (of which there are only four in population). They cover their eyes and look like a lion, an ox, a man, and an eagle. Whether those creatures are called Seraphim or Cherubim, or some other angelic being of Heaven, nobody so far has given any authentic information about these four creatures. But, one thing is certain; they are also very powerful and amazing creatures.

Thrones

The Thrones (Greek Thronoe, plural of Thrones, or "Elders") are a class of celestial beings mentioned by Apostle Paul in Colossians 1:16 in the New Testament. They are the living symbols of God's justice and authority, and one of those symbols is Thrones. It is not unusual to find out that the Thrones are associated with the Ophamim, or Ereliam. from the Jewish angelic hierarchies, but there is very little evidence, if any, to sustain this idea. The word Ophamim in Hebrew comes from the vision of Daniel 7:9. The Ophamim is unusual-looking, even compared to the celestial beings, and 1s said to be moved by the spirit of other beings. Then the question is raised whether the Ophamim are spiritual beings at all or possibly material beings? They appear as Obyrele-colored, wheel within wheel, that rions colored with hundreds of eyes. They are closely connected with Cherubim, instead when they moved others, they moved; when they

stopped others, they stopped; when they were raised from the earth, the wheels raised along with them. Since the spirit of living creatures (Cherubim) were with the wheels (Ezekiel 10:17). The Christian theologians include Thrones as one of the choirs. They are not described as wheels, but as adorable elder men who will listen to God's will and present the prayers of men. The twenty four elders in the Book of Revelation are thought to be generally part of this group of angels.

Angels of Second Cadre

Angels of this cadre are considered to be heavenly governors of the Creation. They will guide and rule the spirits. Among this set of angels, one part is called Dominions or Lordships.

Dominions or Lordships

We hear about these angels in Ephesians 1:21 and Colossians 1:16. In Latin, it is said *Dominatio* and its plural *Dominations*. But here, they are presented as the hierarchy of celestial beings and leaderships in some English translations. It's only with extreme unity that the angelic Lords make themselves physically known to humans. The Dominions are believed to look like divinely beautiful humans with a pair of feathered-wings, much like common representations of angels, but they appear to be different from other groups of angels by wielding orbs of light fastened to the head of their scepters or on the pommel of their swords.

Virtues or Strongholds

It is said that these angels are responsible for the signs and miracles made in the world. The term appears to be linked to the attribute of 'might' from the Greek root 'dynanes', whose plural is 'dynamis', (this reference can be found in Ephesians 1:21) which is translated as virtues or power. They are presented as the celestial choir virtues in the *Summa Theologia*. The name of the holy virtues signifies a certain powerful and unshakeable virility willing forth into all their God-like energies; being weak and feeble for any reception of the divine illuminations upwards in fullness of power.

to an assimilation with God and it never falls away from the Divine life. In spite of its own weaknesses, it is ascending unwaveringly to that super essential virtues, which are the source of virtue fastening itself as far as it may in, virtue perfectly tuned towards the source of virtue and flowing forth providentially to those blow it abundantly filling them with virtue. –

Powers and Authorities

The most important duty of these powers is to supervise the movements of the heavenly bodies. As they are warrior angels, they even try to suppress the evil. They check and take it for granted that the cosmos remain in perfect order. With their power, they often cast the evil spirits to places of detention. These angels are generally represented as soldiers wearing full suits of armor. They also possess offensive and defensive weapons such as shields, spears, or chains, respectively in order to save themselves from any danger. The powers are the bearers of conscience and the keepers of history. They are considered warrior angels, simply remaining as most loyal to God. Some believe that no power has ever fallen from grace. Their prime duty is to oversee that distribution of power among mankind. Therefore, the name is quite appropriate to their power and duty.

Angels of Third Cadre

Angels of this cadre function as heavenly protectors and messengers to human beings. In this cadre, the first one is Principalities or Rulers.

Principalities or Rulers

The word principality in Latin is called ‘principaties’ translated as principedoms and rulers. These angels used to guide and protect nations or groups of peoples, institutions like churches. They used to preside over the bands of angels and charge them with fulfilling the divine ministry. There are some who administer others to assist them. The principalities are shown wearing a crown and carrying a scepter. They carry out the orders given to them by the upper cadre angels and bequeath blessings to the material

world in addition to the task of overseeing the people. They are the educators and guardians of the realm of earth-like beings relegated to the world of germinated ideas. They are said to inspire living things to do many things such as art or science. Apostle Paul used the terms 'rule and authority' in Ephesians 1:21 and 'rulers and authorities' in Ephesians 3:10.

Archangels

The word archangel comes from the Greek 'archangelos' which means 'chief angels' or to be first in rank or power. They are also called messengers or envoys. This word is used in the New Testament only two times: the first time in Thessaionians 4:6 and the second time in Jude 1:9. It is also said that only the Archangel Michael is used in most of the Christian traditions. Gabriel is considered an Archangel, but there is no direct literary support for this assumption. Then we come across another Archangel, namely Raphael, in the book of "Tobit" or 'Tobias'. This book is considered deuterocanonical by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and Anglicans. The Book of Tobit, however, is not acknowledged by a majority of the Protestant denominations. The best example of this are reformed Christian churches like Baptist. According to the Book of Tobit, Raphael was one of the seven archangels who stand before the Lord. It is also believed that Michael and Gabriel are two of the remaining six. The name of the fourth Archangel is Uriel, whose name means literally 'light of God'. But the name of this archangel is not mentioned in the Western Christian Bible, even though he plays a prominent role in an apocryphal read by Anglican and Russian Orthodox Christians. Esdras happened to write four books in Latin Vulgate, and in the second book he unveils seven prophecies to the prophet Ezra, after whom the book is named. He also plays a prominent role in the apocryphal book of Enoch, which is considered by both the Ethiopian Orthodox and Eastern Orthodox Church.

Jophiel

According to historical information, God used this Archangel to drive away Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden after they committed sin by

eating the Forbidden fruit. He was the symbol of the flaming sword, and used to guard the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden.

Chamuel

It was Chamuel who wrestled with Jacob that was mentioned in the Book of Genesis. Also it was He who comforted Jesus Christ when He was in deep agony while praying in the garden of Gethsemane before He was arrested by the Roman soldiers and later crucified. A magnificent church was built at this place by 16 nations, called "The Church of All Nations", and it is considered the most beautiful church.

Common Angels

The angels, or the Malakhim, are called the plain angels of the lowest cadre of angels, but they are the most recognized group of angels. They are concerned more with the affairs of living things within the category of angels. There are many different kinds with different functions. The angels in their regular duty used to be sent as messengers to humanity. It is said with many examples that the personal guardian angels would come from this class, but not from any other order. They come and move among us without our knowledge, and help us in our needs. It is a common belief that every human being is assigned with one guardian angel, but there is no authentic information whether these angels guard multiple human beings during their existence. Different Types of Angels - According to historical background, God created about 100 crores of angels. When we are talking about the angels, we must keep in mind that there are good and bad angels, starting with the highest, which include the following:

- 1) Jesus Christ - called the angel of God (Hebrews 1:5, 2:16)
- 2) Cherubim - known for their power and beauty (Genesis 3:24, Ezekiel 11:5)
- 3) Seraphim - known to perform priestly duties (Isaiah 6:1-7)

- 4) Living Creatures - mentioned in the Revelation as worshipping God (Revelations 1:6-8)
- 5) Common Angels - they are called 'heavenly spirit beings' (Matthew 1:20-29)
- 6) Guardian angels - they are given the charge over us lest we step over toes (Psalms 91:2)
- 7) Ministering angels - they are like the one who cooked a hot meal for Elijah when he was running away from the angry Jazebel (1 King 9:5-7)
- 8) Avenging angels - they carry out God's judgement upon mankind for their wicked deeds (Genesis 19:1-29)
- 9) Death angels - they bring a kind of judgment upon people who persecute innocent people (Exodus 12:23)

We have all sinned and deserve the judgment of God. Jesus the Creator and the Eternal Son of God. died for our sins. He was buried and raised from the dead. If we believe this and take Jesus into our hearts, we will be saved from the judgment and become the citizens of Heaven.

7. THE SEVEN ARCHANGELS

The archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Selaphiel, Raguel, and Barachiel. These seven angels are described as related to the seven days of the week:

1. Michael - Sunday
2. Gabriel - Monday
3. Raphael - Tuesday
4. Uriel - Wednesday
5. Selaphiel - Thursday
6. Raguel - Friday
7. Barachiel - Saturday

Archangel Michael

Archangel Michael is also known as St. Michael the Archangel. serves on the first ray of protection, faith and the will of God. The guardian angels serve under Archangel Michael. He is the Prince of the Archangels and of the Angelic Hosts, the Defender of the Faith, the Angel of Deliverance and his divine complement is Archeia Faith. In the Book of Daniel he is called “the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people.” Archangel Michael is the sponsor of police departments and law enforcement agencies around the world.

Archangel Michael has figured as the greatest and most revered of angels in many scriptures and spiritual traditions. In Muslim lore, he is the angel of nature who provides both food and knowledge to man. Archangel Michael is identified with the angel who wrestled with Jacob, destroyed the armies of Sennacherib and saved the three Hebrew boys in the fiery furnace in Jewish mystical tradition. Archangel Michael also appears in the Bible as the angel who appeared to Joshua as he prepared to lead the Israelites in battle at Jericho.

The keynote of Archangel Michael's retreat is the Soldiers' Chorus from the opera *Faust*, by Charles Gounod. He also has a focus of light over Central Europe.

Archangel Michael is the only angel who is mentioned by name in all three of the major sacred texts of the world's religions that place the most emphasis on angels: the Torah (Judaism), the Bible (Christianity), and the Qur'an (Islam). In all of those faiths, believers consider Michael a leading angel who fights evil with the power of God.

Michael is an exceptionally strong angel who protects and defends people who love God. He is powerfully concerned about truth and justice. Believers say that Michael communicates boldly with people when he helps and guides them. Here's how to recognize signs of Michael's possible presence with you:

Archangel Michael is Sent to Help During a Crisis

God often sends Michael to help people who are facing urgent needs during a crisis, believers say. "You can call on Michael in an emergency and receive instant help," writes Richard Webster in his book **AEHHEE Communicating With The Archangel For Guidance and Protection.** "No matter what type of protection you need, Michael is ready and willing to provide it. ... No matter what sort of situation you find yourself in, Michael will give you the necessary courage and strength to deal with it."

In her book, "The Miracles of Archangel Michael," Doreen Virtue writes that people may see Michael's aura nearby or hear his voice audibly speaking to them during a crisis: "Archangel Michael's aura color is a royal purple that's so bright, it looks like cobalt blue."

Many people report seeing Michael's blue lights in a crisis. During crises, people hear Michael's voice as loudly and clearly as if another person was talking. But no matter how Michael chooses to manifest, he usually announces his presence clearly, writes Virtue: "More than seeing the actual angel, most people see evidence of Michael's presence, He's a very clear

communicator, and you're likely to hear his guidance in your mind or sense it as a gut feeling."

Reassurance That God and the Angels Are Caring for You

Michael may visit you when you need encouragement to make faithful decisions, to reassure you that God and the angels are really watching over you, say believers.

"Michael is concerned chiefly with protection, truth, integrity, courage, and strength. If you are having difficulty in any of these areas, Michael is the angel to summon," writes Webster in, "Michael: Communicating With The Archangel For Guidance and Protection." He writes that When Michael is close to you, "you may get a clear picture of Michael in your mind" or "you might experience a sense of comfort or warmth."

Michael will be glad to give you comforting signs of his protection that you can recognize, writes Virtue in "The Miracles of Archangel Michael:" "Since Archangel Michael is a protector, his signs are designed to comfort and reassure. He wants you to know that he's with you and that he hears your prayers and questions. If you don't trust or notice the signs that he sends, he'll communicate his message in different ways ... The archangel appreciates your candor with him, and he's happy to help you recognize the signs.

The comfort that Michael Provides is especially helpful for dying people, and some people (such as Catholics) believe that Michael is the angel of death who escorts the souls of faithful people into the afterlife.

Help Fulfilling God's Purposes for Your Life

Michael wants to motivate you to become more organized and productive to fulfill God's good purposes for your life, writes Ambika Wauters in her book , "The Healing Power of Angels: How They Guide and Protect Us," so such guidance that you receive in your mind may be signs of Michael's presence with you. "Michael helps us develop the skills and talents we need that will Se, support us, and benefit our communities and the

world,” Wauters writes. “Michael asks that we be organized, find a simple, rhythmic, orderly routine in our everyday life.

He encourages us to create constancy, dependability, and trust in order to thrive. He is the spiritual force that helps us create a healthy foundation that gives stability and strength.”

Relationship Rather Than Spectacle

Like other angels, Michael may choose to show you flashes of light when he’s around, but Michael will combine that spectacle with substantial guidance that he gives you (such as through your dreams), writes Chantel Lysette in her book, “The Angel Code: Your Interactive Guide to Angelic Communication.” She writes that a “way to discern whether unexplained phenomena somehow indicates an angelic presence is the question of consistency. Michael, for example, will give off small flashes of light to let you know he’s around, but he will also let you know by using connections that you’ve already established with him, be it clairaudience, dreams, etc. It is much better to foster this kind of relationship with your angels, seeking out connection through personal, intimate experiences every day, rather than relying on spectacle.”

Lysette cautions readers to “make sure you’re grounded before you form any conclusions about what you saw” and to approach signs from Michael (and other any other angel) with an open mind: “... look for signs casually, with an open mind, and not become obsessed with trying to find them and dissect what they mean. At the very foundation, they really only mean one thing that your angels are walking beside you every step of the way as you journey through life.”

Archangel Gabriel

Archangel Gabriel is known as the angel of revelation or announcement. He plays a significant role in Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and many other faiths, acting as the messenger from God.

In the Bible, Gabriel can be found in the books of Luke and Daniel. He is also called the “Christmas Angel” because he announced to Mary and the shepherds of the upcoming birth of Jesus. It is believed that Gabriel can be recognized by a white or copper light and that he often delivers his messages to people in dreams.

Archangel Gabriel and Guidance for the Future

When you get sudden insights that give you valuable guidance for the future, it may be Gabriel sending you a message. As the angel of water, one of Gabriel’s specialties is sending clarity.

Doreen Virtue’s book, “Archangels 101: How to Connect Closely with Archangels Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Gabriel and Others for Healing, Protection, and Guidance,” offers a glimpse into this. She writes, “Gabriel, as the archangel of communication, often announces what’s on the horizon, and acts like a manager or agent in orchestrating new ventures related to one’s soul purpose.”

Author Richard Webster writes in his book, “Gabriel: Communicating with the Archangel for Inspiration and Reconciliation,” that, “Gabriel aids visions, and can also help you get glimpses of the future.” Webster adds, “If you feel trapped, locked in, or are simply in a rut, call on Gabriel to help you change and start moving ahead again...The gift of prophecy can be yours, if you ask Gabriel to help.”

Help Solving Problems

If an idea about how to solve a challenging problem comes to your mind (especially after praying for a solution), it may be a sign that Gabriel is with you.

In “Gabriel,” Webster writes that Gabriel sometimes offers ideas for solutions while people are meditating and asking Gabriel what to do about their problems.

“The most usual form of communication is for thoughts and insights to come into your conscious mind. Ask Gabriel to clarify anything you do

not understand. By the end of the conversation, you should know exactly what to do.”

Gabriel Sends Messages through Dreams

Gabriel often visits people while they’re dreaming. For example, Christian tradition says that Gabriel is the angel in the Bible story about an angel telling Joseph in a dream that he would serve as the father of Jesus Christ on Earth.

In their book, “Dreaming With the Archangels: A Spiritual Guide to Dream Journeying,” Linda and Peter Miller-Russo write that Archangel Gabriel and other archangels may work during your dreams to help you solve problems if you invite them to do so before going to sleep.

“You should awaken with a dream-world memory that contains the solution (or a seed to the solution) to your problem. Sometimes you will not remember having a dream at all. Yet the answer to the problem will come to your conscious awareness later in the day.”

Gabriel often hopes that his appearances in people’s dreams will inspire them to pursue greater purity in their lives, write the Miller-Russos in “Dreaming With the Archangels.” They write that “Gabriel has appeared to people as both a male angel and a female angel.

When meeting him, one can sense the purpose that emanates from him.” The Miller-Russos quote a message that they say archangel Gabriel gave them for that purpose.

“Purification of the self builds strength and opens the citealet communication between you and the beings on the higher planes. The wisdom of your guardian angel, the archangels, and your spirit guides is more easily understood and integrated by those who devote themselves to the purification of their heart and mind.”

Feeling Challenged When Receiving a Message

Many people say that they feel challenged to take on a great responsibility when Gabriel communicates with them. Historically, the messages that Gabriel delivers often ask people to do something for God. Religious texts record that the people whom Gabriel visits have felt troubled when they ponder his message to them.

The Qur'an says that it was Gabriel who miraculously revealed its entire content to the prophet Muhammad. He wrote that Gabriel's visits to him were stressful and challenging.

George W. Braswell illustrates this in his book, "What You Need to Know about Islam and Muslims." He writes, "There was physical and psychological stress upon Muhammad as he encountered the angel Gabriel, who gave him the words to recite."

In his book "In the Footsteps of the Prophet: Lessons from the Life of Muhammad" Tariq Ramadan describes Gabriel's challenging visits to Muhammad.

"The angel Gabriel appeared to him several times. The prophet was later to report that the angel sometimes appeared to him in his angelic personality and sometimes as a human being. At other times, the prophet would hear a bell-like sound and revelation would come suddenly, requiring of him such extreme concentration that he came close to asphyxiation."

When Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary to announce that she would serve as Jesus Christ's mother on Earth, the Bible records that Mary was troubled at first. "Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be" (Luke 1:29).

In her book, "Women in the New Testament," Mary Ann Getty-Sullivan describes this encounter.

"The angel Gabriel appears unexpectedly...After greeting Mary, the angel begins the message from God, saying 'Do not be afraid.' The attitude

of awe or reverence, expressed as fear, is typical for those who experience an epiphany. ...Mary is troubled at hearing the greeting of the angel. Her confusion is based on both the appearance of the angel and on what the angel has said.”

Archangel Raphael

Archangel Raphael is known as the angel of healing. He works in people’s minds, spirits, and bodies so they can enjoy peace and good health to the fullest extent of God’s will for them.

When Raphael is around, you may experience many different signs of his compassionate care for you. Here are some signs of Raphael’s presence when he is nearby:

Raphael Brings New Information or Ideas that Promote Healing

Raphael often brings to mind fresh information or new ideas that you can use as valuable tools to pursue healing from whatever is ailing you, believers say.

In their book, “The Complete Idiot’s Guide to Connecting with Your Angels,” Cecily Channer and Damon Brown write: “Except in situations where a person’s death or illness is part of their overall divine plan, Archangel Raphael will energetically promote healing. Look for him to inspire you with sudden insights giving you just the right information to help the healing.”

“Archangel Raphael frequently answers prayers by whispering suggestions that you hear as thoughts, feelings, dreams, and visions,” writes Doreen Virtue in her book, “The Healing Miracles of Archangel Raphael.” When you get a strong hunch to take positive action, know that this is an answered prayer. Follow your hunches and they will lead you to renewed peace.”

Mary LaSota and Harriet Sternberg write in their book, “Archangel Raphael: Loving Messages of Joy, Love, and Healing for Ourselves and Our Earth,” “Raphael is known to grant process.

If the healing is for you, watch for some sign: a thought, idea, or inner message, is there is an underlying reason for the illness, such as hatred, for example, Raphael will in some way point petitions quite expeditiously and he will guide you through the healing process.

Ac this out to you. It may then be transmitted to love, thereby speeding up your recovery time.” Not only will Raphael help 700 figure out how best to pursue healing for yourself, but he will also guide medical professionals to make the right decisions about your care or the care of a loved one you are supporting in prayer, write LaSota and Sternberg in, “Archangel Raphael: Loving Messages of Joy, Love, and Healing for Ourselves and Our Earth,” “Raphael feels partial to those in all healing professions and will in some way guide those individuals who are unsure about what directions to take for appropriate health care for their patients.

He will offer ideas for speedy healing and assist in a medical crisis by getting together the perfect team of professionals to work together.”

Raphael has a sense of humor that people often notice when he communicates with them about healing insights, writes Virtue in, “The Healing Miracles of Archangel Raphael,” “Raphael also shows a brilliant sense of humor in his display of help. An example that always brings a smile to my face is his habit of pushing books off shelves. Many people report finding healing books in their homes that they never bought, or discovering ones in their shopping carts that they didn’t place there.”

A Fresh Appreciation of Nature

Whenever you notice the beauty of God’s natural creation around you and sense an urge to take good care of it, Raphael may be nearby, say believers. Raphael is passionate about convincing people to pursue healing not only for themselves but also for the Earth’s environment.

Richard Webster writes in his book, “Raphael: Communicating With the Archangel For Healing and Creativity,” “Whenever you see anything particularly beautiful or striking in nature, you can thank Raphael for looking

after the planet. Tell him that you will do your part to make the world a better place for the present inhabitants, and also for future generations.

You might choose to do this by picking up some of the rubbish left behind by previous visitors, or by tidying up an area that has been disturbed. You will feel Raphael's presence around you as you do this, and you will also feel good about doing something positive for the environment."

Help Healing Broken Relationships

Another sign of Raphael's presence with you is guidance that you receive about how to heal and restore relationships you have with others that have become broken, believers say.

"Raphael heals rifts in relationships and mental and emotional issues as well as physical ill health," writes Christine Astell in her book, "Gifts from Angels: An Uplifting Collection of Real-Life Angel Encounters." "More and more we are awakening to the understanding of how closely linked emotional issues are to disease in the body, and that working on the spiritual levels will almost definitely help with all types of illness."

The way that Raphael often chooses to help heal your relationships is by encouraging you to communicate your feelings fully to other people, write Linda and Peter Miller-Russo in their book, "Dreaming With the Archangels: A Spiritual Guide to Dream Journeying." "Raphael will help you move from repression of your feelings to the full, honest, and complete expression of your reactions to life. Until you allow yourself to unwind your repressions, you will be unable to connect to your deeper feeling nature. Raphael will assist you with this by gently nudging you to express your true feelings to yourself and those around you. This will increase the level of communication within your relationships, bringing you closer to those you love, to God and to yourself."

Archangel Uriel

Archangel Uriel is known as the angel of wisdom. He shines the Tight of God's truth into the darkness of confusion. Uriel means "God is

my light” or “fire of God.” Other spellings of his name include Usiel, Uzziel, Oriel, Auriel, Suriel, Urian and Uryan.

The faithful turn to Uriel for help seeking God’s will before making decisions, learning new information, solving problems and resolving conflicts.

They also turn to him for help letting go of destructive emotions such as anxiety and anger, which can prevent believers from discerning wisdom or recognizing dangerous situations.

Symbols of Uriel

In art, Uriel is often depicted carrying either a book or a scroll, both of which represent wisdom. Another symbol connected with Uriel is an open hand holding a flame or the sun, which represents God’s truth. Like his fellow archangels, Uriel has an angelic energy color, in this case. Red, which represents him and the work he performs. Some sources also attribute the color yellow or gold to Uriel. AM Ws ‘ake

Uriel’s Role in Religious Texts

Uriel isn’t mentioned in canonical religious texts from the world’s major religions, but he is mentioned significantly in major religious apocryphal texts. Apocryphal texts are religious works that were included in some early versions of the Bible but today are considered to be secondary in importance to the scripture of the Old and New Testaments.

The Book of Enoch (part of the Jewish and Christian Apocrypha) describes Uriel as one of seven archangels who preside over the world. Uriel warns the prophet Noah about the upcoming flood in Enoch chapter 10. In Enoch chapters 19 and 21, Uriel reveals that the fallen angels who rebelled against God will be judged and shows Enoch a vision of where they are “bound until the infinite number of the days of their crimes be completed.” (Enoch 21 :3)

In the Jewish and Christian apocryphal text 2 eke sends Uriel to answer a series of questions that the prophet Ezra asks God. When answering

Ezra's questions, Uriel tells him that God has permitted him to describe signs about good and evil at work in the world, but it will still be difficult for Ezra to understand from his limited human perspective.

In 2 Esdras 4:10-11, Uriel asks Ezra: "You cannot understand the things with which you have grown up; how then can your mind comprehend the way of the Most High? And how can one who is already worn out by the corrupt world understand incorruption?" When Ezra asks questions about his personal life, such as how long he'll live, Uriel replies: "Concerning the signs about which you ask me, I can tell you in part; but I was not sent to tell you concerning your life, for I do not know." (2 Esdras 4:52)

In various Christian apocryphal gospels, Uriel rescues John the Baptist from being murdered by King Herod's order to massacre young boys around the time of Jesus Christ's birth. Uriel carries both John and his mother Elizabeth to join Jesus and his parents in Egypt. The Apocalypse of Peter describes Uriel as the angel of repentance.

In Jewish tradition, Uriel is the one who checks the doors of homes throughout Egypt for lamb's blood (representing faithfulness to God) during Passover, when a deadly plague strikes first-born children as a judgment for sin but spares the children of faithful families,

Other Religious Roles

Some Christians (such as those who worship in the Anglican and Eastern Orthodox churches) consider Uriel a saint. He serves as the patron saint of the arts and sciences for his ability to inspire and awaken the intellect.

In some Catholic traditions, the archangels also have patronage over the seven sacraments of the church. For these Catholics, Uriel is the patron of confirmation, guiding the faithful as they reflect on the holy nature of the sacrament.

Uriel's Role in Popular Culture

Like many other figures in Judaism and Christianity, the archangels have been a source of inspiration in popular culture. John Milton included *Christian Angelology*

him in “Paradise Lost,” where he serves as the eyes of God, while Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a poem about the archangel that describes him as a young god in Paradise.

Archangel Selaphiel

Selaphiel means “the prayer of God” or “one who prays to God.” Other spellings include Zerachiel, Selapheal, Salathiel, Selathiel, Sealteal, Seraphiel, Sarakiel, Sariel, Suriel, Suriyel, and Saragael. Archangel Selaphiel is known as the angel of prayer. He helps people connect to God through prayer, giving them the focus they need to block out distractions and concentrate on praying. Selaphiel motivates people to express their deepest thoughts and feelings to God in prayer, and to listen carefully for God’s responses.

Symbols

In art, Selaphiel is usually depicted in one of two ways. Icons of Selaphiel from the Orthodox Church show him looking downward with his hands crossed over his chest as an expression of both the humility and concentration that he encourages people to have when praying to God. Catholic art usually shows Selaphiel holding a water container and two fish, which represents God’s provision through prayer.

Role in Religious Texts

In the ancient text 2 Esdras, which is part of the Jewish and Christian apocrypha, the prophet Ezra (the great-grandfather of Noah, who built an ark to save the planet’s animals from the worldwide flood) describes how his mind had become troubled from thinking about how much pain people’s sins cause them, and when he was despairing, archangel Selaphiel “held me, comforted me, and set me up upon my feet” (verse 15), and then talked with Ezra about what was troubling him.

Selaphiel also appears in verse 31:6 of the apocryphal Jewish and Christian text The Conflict of Adam and Eve, which describes how God sends him to help rescue Adam and Eve from Satan’s deception,

commanding Selaphiel “to bring them down from the top of the high mountain and to take them to the Cave of Treasures.”

Christian tradition names Selaphiel as the angel in Revelation 8:3-4 of the Bible who presents the prayers of people on Earth to God in heaven: “Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God’s people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God’s people, went up before God from the angel’s hand.”

Other Religious Roles

Selaphiel serves as the official saint of prayer for members of the Eastern Orthodox Church. The folk traditions of the Roman Catholic Church also venerate Selaphiel as the patron saint of prayer. In astrology, Selaphiel is the angel of the sun, and he works with the archangel Jehudiel to rule the movement of the planets. Selaphiel is also said to help people understand and interpret their dreams, help heal people from addiction, protect children. Preside over exorcisms on Earth and rule over music in heaven - including leading the heavenly choir that sings praises to God.

Archangel Raguel

Archangel Raguel is known as the angel of justice and harmony. He works for God’s will to be done among people, and also among his fellow angels and archangels. Raguel wants you to experience the best life possible - the life God wants for you. Here are some signs of Raguel’s presence when he is nearby:

Archangel Raguel Helps to Bring Justice to Unjust Situations

Since Raguel is very concerned about justice, he often delivers strength to people who are working to fight injustice.

If you notice answers to your prayers about unjust situations - whether in your own life or in the lives of other people - Raguel may be at work

around you, believers say. In her book *Soul Angels*, Jenny Smedley writes that Raguel “is said to dispense judgment and justice should the other angels not be able to agree on a fair course of action. Raguel is also the angel to pray to if you feel that no one else will listen and that you’re being treated unfairly, either at work or in the home.”

Raguel may communicate with you by guiding you to direct your anger at injustice toward coming up with constructive solutions to unjust situations you encounter personally. Another way that Raguel may help bring justice to unjust situations in your life is by helping you overcome apathy about those situations and urging you to take action to do what’s right whenever you can. So if you notice wake-up calls to do something about problems like dishonesty, oppression, gossip, or slander, be aware that it may be Raguel who is bringing those problems to your attention.

When it comes to dealing with unjust situations in the world around you - such as crime, poverty, human rights, and taking care of the earth’s environment - Raguel may lead you to get involved in certain causes to become a force for justice in the world, doing your part to help make it a better place.

Archangel Raguel’s Role in New Ideas for Creating Order

If some new ideas for creating order in your life come into your mind, Raguel may be delivering them, say believers.

Raguel is a leader within the group of angels known as principalities. The principalities are famous for helping people create order in their lives, such as by inspiring them to practice spiritual disciplines on a regular basis so they can develop habits that will help them grow closer to God. Some of those disciplines include praying, meditating, reading sacred texts, attending worship services, spending time in nature, and serving people in need.

Principality angels such as Raguel also give people who are in charge of others (such as government leaders wisdom to know how best organize their programs. So if you’re a leader within your sphere of influence (such

as a parent raising children or a team leader at your job or in your volunteer work), Raguel may send you messages containing fresh ideas for how to lead well. Raguel may communicate with you in a variety of different ways - from speaking to you or sending you a vision in a dream, to sending you creative thoughts while you're awake.

Archangel Raguel's Guidance for Repairing Relationships

Another sign of Raguel's presence in your life is receiving guidance about how to repair a broken or estranged relationship.

Doreen Virtue writes in her book *Archangels 101: How to Connect Closely with Archangels Michael, Raphael, Uriel, Gabriel and Others for Healing, Protection, and Guidance*: "Archangel Raguel brings harmony to all relationships, including those of friendship, romance, family, and business. Sometimes he'll instantly heal the relationship, and other times he'll send intuitive guidance to you. You'll recognize this guidance as repetitive gut feelings, thoughts, visions, or signs that lead you to take healthful action steps in your relationships."

If you get help resolving conflicts in your relationships with other people, especially if you'd prayed for that help, Raguel is one of the angels whom God may assign to provide that help to you.

Archangel Barachiel

Barachiel is an archangel known as the angel of hindeetaas angel is also the chief of all of the guardian angels. Barachiel (who is also often known as "Barakiel" means "God's blessings." Other spellings include Barchiel, Baraqiel, Barkiel, Barbiel, Barakel, Baragel, Pachriel, and Varachiel.

Barachiel intercedes in prayer before God for people in need, asking God to give them blessings in all areas of their lives, from their relationships with family and friends to their Work, People ask for Barachiel's help pursuing success in their pursuits. Since Barachiel is also the chief of all guardian angels, people sometimes ask for Barachiel's help delivering a blessing through one of their personal guardian angels.

Symbols of Archangel Barachiel

In art, Barachiel is usually depicted scattering rose petals that represent God's sweet blessings showering down on people, or holding a white rose (which also symbolizes blessings) to his chest. However, sometimes images of Barachiel show him holding either a basket that's overflowing with bread, or a staff, both of which symbolize the blessings of producing children that God bestows on parents. Barachiel sometimes appears in feminine form in paintings that emphasize Barachiel's nurturing work delivering blessings. Like all archangels, Barachiel doesn't have a specific gender and can manifest as either a male or a female, according to what works best in a given situation.

Role in Religious Texts

The third Book of Enoch, an ancient Jewish text, describes archangel Barachiel as one of the angels who serve as great and honored angelic princes in heaven. The text mentions that Barachiel leads 496,000 other angels who work with him. Barachiel is part of the seraphim rank of angels who guard God's throne, as well as the leader of all the guardian angels who work with humans during their earthly lifetimes.

Other Religious Roles

Barachiel is an official saint in the Eastern Orthodox Church, and he is also venerated as a saint by some members of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholic tradition says that Barachiel is the patron saint of marriage and family life. He may be shown carrying a book representing the Bible and Papal encyclicals that direct the faithful on how to conduct their marital and family life. He also traditionally has dominion over lightning and storms and also sees to the needs of converts.

Barachiel is one of the few angels that made it into the Lutheran liturgical calendar. In astrology, Barachiel rules the planet Jupiter and is linked to the Pisces and Scorpio zodiacal signs. Barachiel is traditionally said to inspire a sense of humor in people who encounter God's blessings through him. Barachiel is mentioned in the *Almadel of Solomon*, a book dating from the middle Ages on how to contact angels by means of a wax tablet. "

8. THIRTEEN PRINCIPLES OF JEWISH FAITH

In the beginning the world principal must have been referred to the chief official of a school and also the chief of the college is called principal. The world principal was used in the sense of plural to main persons in a business. It was also used in connection with the basic amount of money excluding the interest or fees in the monthly mortgage payment that helps to reduce the amount on the property. Again this world principal on the other hand is principal referred to a fundamental truth and also on the ethical rule of conduct. Finally the world principal is used for the fundamental truth of science. This meaning may be taken for granted for the present crucial topic thirteen principles of Jewish Faith. And it is going to be discussed in the following way.

Before discussing the thirteen principles in detail, it is better to know the Bio data of the author of that famous topic. And the period in which he lived and also under what circumstances he was forced to wrote on such topic. The name of that author was “Rambam” he composed this doctrinal declaration during twelveth century. So to say he was one of the most influential Rabbis in Jewish history. Even today he is remembered by the affectionate and reverential aerogym Rambam. This name was actually the combination of the Hebrew letters “Resh Mem Bet Mem” (RAMBAM) and this is described in this way rabbi Moses ben Maimnides, it was said in his ease that only highly respected rabbis used to be called and known by such acronym. There is even today Rambam synagogue in the Jewish colony of the old city of Jerusalem, which has been memorising His name and teaching.

He was born in 1135 A.D. in the province of Cordova in Spain and lived up to 1204. It was the beginning of the 13th century the most crucial period known as the heights of medieval papal power. Rambam was will know as a physician, philosophy a rabbi and also known as a man of renaissance. He worsted with the physical body, the human souls, its ideas on the spiritual theology of his time. The geography of his hard work could

be found in Cordova and even today at Andalusia in Spain. His writing was kept in the places like south Morocco, in Egypt Andalusia, and they became great learning centres because of his work. And finally it happened to be a reference to the Islamic, southern part of Spain. The province of Cordova in the days of Maimonides allowed Christians, Jews and Muslims to leave together peacefully. But after some time the Muslim armies happened to conquer that vision in 711 A.D. and after them crusaders continued throughout the life time of Maimonides.

Maimonides grew up well educated by begin to track in a multi religious centre. At that time a huge crusader ceramics lower battling with the Muslims, so critically even to the death in the name of their faith towards Almighty God. At the same time in the papal influence of the vicar of St. Peter in Rome was ascending above the earthly kings Europe. In the means time the Christian, Muslim clash of arms took place not only in the Holy land but also simultaneously in Spain and North Africa. So, this religious based turmoil prompted publishing a manifesto concerning the belief of the Jewish people. That so called manifesto was not only for the realization and unity of his own people and also the Jews who were living in the troubled medieval period but also it was to inform both Christians and as Jews. The reasons might be more informed even more surprised while reading the thirteen principles of Jewish faith.

These principles were penned at about 1200 A.D. almost 600 years after the Muslims started troubling the Jews. And also it was after twelve centuries that Jesus Christ ministered to those people in Galilee and Judea. Those principles where actually meant for the present action of traditional Jewish beliefs. The thirteen principles are as follows.

1. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name. He is the Author and guide of everything that has been created and that He alone has made does make and will make all things.
2. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name is a unity and that there is no unity in any manner like unto His and that He alone is our God, who was is and will be.

3. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name is not a body and that He is free from all accidents of the matter and that He has not any from whatsoever.
4. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed is His name and He is the first and the last.
5. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name and to Him alone. It is right to pray and that it is not right to pray anything in addition to the God Almighty.
6. I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.
7. I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher peace be unto him was true and that he might be called the chief of the prophets both of the that were before him and those that would come after him.
8. I believe with perfect faith that the whole law in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher peace be unto him.
9. I believe with perfect faith that the law will not be changed and that there will never be any other law from the creator blessed be His name.
10. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name knows every deed of the children and all their thoughts as it is said it is He that fashions the hearts of them all who will listen to all their deeds.
11. I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name He would give rewards to those that keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them.
12. I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah and through History. I will wait daily for His coming.
13. I believe with perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the deed at the time when it shall please the creator blessed be His name and exalted be the remembrance of Him forever and ever. The Hebrew lit lees "Shelash Asser, Aherim its literal meaning is three ten roots" or this can be more correctly translated as the thirteen principles following is the detailed description of each principle.

ONE – I believe with perfect faith the creator blessed be His name He is the author and guide of everything that has been created that He alone has made does make and will make all things. This principle is really wonderful and good. It speaks early about Darwinistic evolution which is concerned to the millions of animals on the planet. The life sustaining atmosphere and their harmony with the sun to the blind. The unguided chance of making millions of them to move earthly in proper direction. As there believes it is better to look into the book Gospel of John 1:1-3 with regard to the first principle that is In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. The doctrine of trinity or the tri-unity was revealed biblically that that the Lord Jesus is eternal living and had participation in all the creation.

And in the book of revelation in 4:11 it is said how the host of heavenly bodies have been worshipping God the father as creator and declare thou art worthy O Lord to receive glory and honour and power for thou hast eternal all things and for thy pleasure they are and were created. In addition to the there is another example from Revelation in 5:12 it is said that the heavenly bodies worship the son (Jesus) with those words of majesty worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength. And honour and glory and blessings let us also see the references in the Genesis 1:2 “and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the earth”

TWO – I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name. He is a unity that there is no unity in any manner like unto His and that He alone is our God, who was is and will be.

This is actually most suitable to the New Testament revelation of Trinity most suitable to the New Testament Revelation of “Trinity”. The well noted theologians during all the centuries starting from Augustine up to the present day. They have spoken humanity and by means of God head. Even the prophecy of the minor prophet (Micah 5:2) who spoke seven centuries before the birth of Christ and His coming as Messiah from

Bethlehem or Ephratha). The same point was mentioned in the Old Testament, seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ the Messiah. His birth was informed to the humanity by the revelation of the eternal existence of the Messiah.

THREE – I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name is not a body and that He is free from all accident of the matter and that He has not any from whatsoever. Jesus spoke at the supper among the disciples as mentioned in John 14:7-9

“If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

Philip one of the disciples of Jesus Christ became anxious regarding the arrest of his masters life burst out what he had, in his mind. He asked Jesus to show them His father. Philip had personally witnessed the healing and curing many people and also speaking holy and wonderful words. But now he wished to His father God. Who is unseen and His activities. And now all the Christians would certainly agree with Rambam’s basic. Principle that God is a spirit. He made a physical world and not made eternity. Jesus said to the woman at the well of Jacob in Samaria that God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship in Him spirit and truth (John 4:24). Jesus the son however became a human with a true body at the incarnation (in flesh). In this context Apostle Paul whom we may even call Rabbi wrote to the believers in Philippi explaining to them most of the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus. He wrote who being in the form of God thought it not rabbai to be equal with God but mode himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death on the cross. (Philippians 2:6-8)

Four - I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed is His name and He is the first and the last.

Jesus declares in Revelation 1:11 I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: it is His clear declaration of His duty. As alpha is first letter in the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last word. Christ wants to affirm Apostle John at the else of Patmos and also all the believers that He was first alpha hence creator but not created. And His identity was more emphasized by saying that He is eternal and nothing will be there to come after Him or beyond Him. "I believe with perfect faith that to the creator blessed be His name and to him alone if it is right to pray and that it is not right to pray any being besides Him"

With this principle the entire Bible will agree as we find in Revelation 19:10 "And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." It is clearly said in the New Testament that Christians should pray to the father in the name of the son through the Holy Spirit. So, according to John 14:13-14 Jesus said in the last supper "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" That the father may be glorified in the son. It ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it. In the same way in the mystery of the trinity in the New Testament Jesus at times forgives and does healings in direct answer to the agreement of the believers. Jesus does not like even to hear when we pray to His Father. The quotation from the book of John 4:41-43 can throw more light on this information. "Then they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

This passage clearly tells us that there is continuous spiritual connection between the father and the son. Here Jesus need not repeat the words of His request but only express some words for the hearing of

the crowds so that it would be clear to the believers to understand that Christ raised Lazarus according to the will of His Father but He did not do it independently. There is more to say here that is Jesus and the New Testament stress more the spirit of prayer than putting everything in correct formal wording. So, to say the opinion of the writer was that praying to God or to His divine son is more needed. What we can read in Luke 7:48-50 "And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace"

Six - I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.

This is really good statement of the penman. It is quite appropriate to look into the words of one of the greatest Jewish prophets Isaiah. In Isaiah 52:13, 55:12 and also this passage is known generally Isaiah 53

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Isaiah 53:5-6

Apart from this let us look into another passage written by the prophet Zechariah 9:9 in the Old Testament. This passage speaks about the entrance of the Messiah into Jerusalem on a donkey and that took place on Palm Sunday. As mentioned in the Bible the birth of Jesus took place in Bethlehem. And that was clearly said in Micah 5:2. And it is also said in Isaiah 7:11 about His holiness, gentleness, righteousness and goodness. Regarding the suffering of Jesus for our sins is mentioned in psalms 22. Blessing on the above said passages let us join our hands with author Rambam and declare that all the words of the prophets are true. And these words spoken by Rambam many centuries ago.

SEVEN: I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher peace be unto him was true and that he might be called the chief of the prophets both of the that were before him and those that would come

after him. We find here how to Rambam praised the noble qualities of prophet of God. Moses was also called the servant of God. Some theologians expressed their opinion that through Moses did the work of God it is not proper to call him "Chief" why because according to their opening God is the only Chief Moses was a human being likes any other and confirmed to the Old Testament only. So, the statement of Rambam about calling of Prophet Moses as chief of the prophets appears to be improper. It appears as it He was superior even to Jesus Christ of 1st century Prophet Mohammed of 7th century. Probably a several war was going on between the crusaders and Muslims and killing each other in his time. The situation must have prompted Rambam to use that chief to Moses in his writings And Apostle Paul in his letter to the Hebrews gave a suitable answer.

"And Moses verily faithful in all his house as a servant but chief as a son over his own house" (Hebrew 3:5-6)

"But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead'" (Luke 16:31)

Jesus affirmed that Moses prophesied about the coming of the Messiah and who was no other than Jesus Himself. But the non acceptance of Jesus (who is the Passover lame the yom Kippur goat who died for our sins the first fruit of them that sleep still actually gave the idea a day of the teachings of Moses.

EIGHT - I believe with perfect faith that the whole law in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher peace be unto him.

This is also a fine affirmation of the inspiration and veracity of the Old Testament. But we cannot whole heartedly accept this as whole Law without including the New Testament which is also called the fourth covenant of God. We may take it for granted the whole Mosaic Law called "Torah" which is really wonderful. The five books of Moses were also called Pentateuch of the Bible. But weeping prophet, Jeremiah spoke the truth about the New Testament, which is called new covenant of or fourth covenant or New law is to come.

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people”. (Jeremiah 31:31-33)

NINE – I believe with perfect faith that the law will not be changed and that there will never be any other law from the creator blessed be His name.

As per statement said above it seems Rambam is going against the saying prophet Jeremiah in 31:31-33. He is making a declaration and the meaning of it is that he denied what God said Apostle Paul in the book of Hebrews emphasized that the Jewish nation was not under Joshua at that time nor completely entered into God’s final rest. Ram bam must have realized this fact in addition to the war that was going on between the crusaders and Muslims throughout His life. During that time the Jews were in minority in Cordova and in the war many were killed from both sides apart from that the Israel had not yet reached anything like approaching the millennial or heavily state of peace prosperity, security etc. Which God prophesized in (Isaiah 11:1-13, 66:5-24, Zechariah 12:14)

Let us to put together and consider the words of Isaiah in 11:6 it is said “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb”. But the fact is this has not happened and also did not happen at the time of Rambam except the war between the crusaders and Muslims all these events must have proper Rambam to pen his thirteen principles the external point is something has to be done or to happen in God’s ecclesiastical government of these words. Unfortunately such memorable events had not taken place during the life time of Rambam according to history it was the crucial time of the crusaders from 1096 to 1300 A.D. So, the suitable answer at this denature is that the believers have to keep in mind about Jesus, he is Messaiah and he is going to come again to anytime.

TEN - I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name knows every deed of the children and all their thoughts as it is said it is He that fashions the hearts of them all who will listen to all their deeds.

In the book of Matthew 10:29-30 it is said that every sparrow falls and the even the hairs of our head are numbered before God here Rambam is quite correct in His statement but the problem is here is God knows everything like the doing of Children and men. In this concept a paul wrote in Romans 3:20 therefore by the needs of the law there shall know flesh be justified in His light for by the law is it knowledge of sign. He got who knows all things sees us as sinners and our limited good works and good needs cannot make us righteous before good. This is not new teaching but it is the plain teaching of the Old Testament for all who like sheep have gone astray. We have between everyone to his own way and the Lord hath laid on him inequity of us all and all our righteousness are like filthy rags (Isaiah 55:6, 64:6)

Here Apostle Paul agreed with the statement of prophet Isaiah and He said in Romans 2:13 for not the hearers of the law are justified doers of before God but the law shall be justified and also in Galatians 3:25 he explains therefore the law was our school master to bring us unto Christ that we be justified by faith.

ELEVEN - "I believe with perfect faith that the creator blessed be His name He would give rewards to those that keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them".

This is true but different scholars gave them opinion on this topic according to the principle we are all sinners and be must to Jesus Christ the one who paid for sin by dying on the cross. There by we are made free from external damnation.

TWELVE - I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah and through History. I will wait daily for His coming.

As maintained in the above passage must remain our Jewish friends that they must have faith in the words of the twelfth principle and in the

words of their own memorable master. Rambam in the book John 1:41 Andrews called his brother Simon Peter and declared we have found the Messiah. Having found the Messiah indicated they were looking for search a Messiah as fore told by the propherts. It is just some kind of Jewish tradition the enlightened modern tag rag people thoughts about the Rabbi Menacham Schmeeson was possibly the Messiah. He lived from 1092 to 1994 and he was the seventh Rabbi of the chabed lubaviter movement He born in Ukraine and after migration through Russia, Poland, Jermamy and France due to Nazi persecution in 1941 and finally he immigrated to America tried maximum efforts for the unity of Jews worldwide and emphasized an aggressive movement to establish day, schools and synagogues throughout the world. He did many things to the honouring principle service to humanity is service to divinity. He was given memorable memories medals and citations and finally his name was put into the invited United States congressional records for his charitable works and world leadership.

THIRTEEN - I believe with perfect faith that there will be a resurrection of the deed at the time when it shall please the creator blessed be His name and exalted be the remembrance of Him forever and ever.

Jesus Christ in his earthly ministrey affirmed many times regarding resurrection from the dead of event took place 1200 years after Rambam that is the resurrection and death.

Jesus consoled Martha and Mary when they were in grief over the death as their brother Lazurus. This incident made all the believers to have more faith on Him. Jesus loved that family too much and he was with them like one of the member of the family so when the sisters were crying Jesus also cried along with them He cried two times in His life when he looked Jerusalem he recollected that it would be destroyed in 70 A.D. by the Romans King Titus. That would take place about 40 years after death of Jesus Christ and He cried second time over the death of Lazarus. He thought it to be most appropriate occasion and proclaimed I am the resurrection and the life he that believeth in me though he covered yet shall he live that whoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die (John 12: 25-26)

9. REFORMERS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

The Catholic Church was scandalized during 1500 AD. The main reason was the church had been granting indulgences (forgiving punishment for sin) in exchange for money. A huge amount of money was received by the church through this method. The result of this was, it reflected very badly and also the image and sacredness of the church was damaged. In such circumstances some reformers like Martin Luther, and after him John Calvin and William Cary came to limelight for the reestablishment and save the integrity of the churches, during their times. Among such people Martin Luther was the first one.

Martin Luther:

He was working as a priest in 1507 but later appointed as the professor of theology in the University of Wittenberg. He prepared some lectures and concluded that only God would give proper Justice to the sins of the people but not the church authorities. His belief was that only faith in Christ would save people from their sins. This understanding of God made him to interfere in the affairs of church and proclaim that the sins of the people would be forgotten only when they follow the rules of the church. In confirmation of this fact, Martin Luther nailed his famous Ninety Five Theses on the door of Wittenberg Church because of the invention of movable type printing press, His written message spread through Europe in a short time.

His Ninety Five Theses are as follows:

- 1) Our Lord and master Jesus Christ when He said pormitenteamajite willed that the whole life of believers should be repentance
- 2) This word cannot be understood to mean sacramental penance, i.e. confession and satisfaction which is administered by the priests

- 3) Yet it means inward repentance only, were there is no inward repentance which does not outwardly work divers' mortifications of the flesh.
- 4) The penalty (of sin) therefore, continues So long as hatred of self continues, for this is the true inward repentance and continues until our entrance into the kingdom of heaven.
- 5) The pope does not intend to remit and cannot remit any penalties other than those, which he has imposed either by his own authority or that of by the canons.
- 6) The pope cannot remit any guilt except by declaring that it has been remitted by God and assenting to God's remission. Though to be sure he may grant, remission in cases, he reserved to his judgment. It is right to grant remission in such cases were despised, the guilt would remain entirely unforgiven.
- 7) God remits guilt to no one, whom he does not at the same time humble in all things and being subject to his vicar the priest.
- 8) The penitential canons are imposed only on the living and according to them nothing should be imposed on the dying.
- 9) Therefore the Holy Spirit in the pope is kind to us because in his degrees he always makes exception of the article of death and of necessity.
- 10) Ignorant and wicked are the doings of those who in case of dying reserve canonical penances varagatory.
- 11) The changing of canonical penalty to the penalty of purgatory is quite evidently one of the tares that were sown when the bishops slept.
- 12) In former times the canonical penalties were imposed not after but after absolution as test of true condition.
- 13) The dying are freed by death from all penalties they are already died to canonical rules and have right to be released from them.

- 14) The imperfect health (of soul) that is to say the imperfect love of the dying brings with it the necessity of great fear, and smaller the love the greatest is the fear.
- 15) This fear and horror is sufficient of itself alone (to say nothing of other things) to constitute the penalty of purgatory since it is very near to the horror of despair.
- 16) Hell, purgatory and heaven seem to differ as do despair almost despair and assurance of safety
- 17) With souls in purgatory it seems necessary that horror should grow less and love increase.
- 18) It seems unproved either by reason or scriptures that they are outside the state of merit that is to say of increasing love.
- 19) Again it seems unproved that they are at best that all of them are certain or assured of their own blessing, though we may quite certain of it
- 20) Therefore, by full remission of all penalties pope means actually of all, but only of those imposed by himself.
- 21) Therefore those preachers of indulgences are in errors, who say that by the pope's indulgences a man is freed from every penalty and saved.
- 22) Whereas he remits souls in purgatory, no penalty which according to the canons they would have had to pray in this life.
- 23) If it is at all possible to grant anyone the remission of all penalties whatever it is certain that remission will be granted only to the most perfect that is to the fewest.
- 24) Therefore it must be needed that the greater part of the peoples are deceived by that indiscriminate and high sounding promise of release from penalty

- 25) The power which the pope has in a general way over purgatory is just like the power which way bishop or curate has in a general way within his own daises' or parish.
- 26) The pope does will wean he grants remission to souls, in purgatory not by the power of the kings (which he does not possess) but by the way of intercession
- 27) They preach man who said that also soon as the penny jingles into the money box. The soul flees out (of purgatory)
- 28) It is certain that when the penny jingles into the money box gain and avarice can be increased but the result of the intercession of the church is in the power of God alone.
- 29) Who knows whether all the souls in purgatory which to be brought out of it as in the legend of STS seven times and paschal.
- 30) No one is sure that his own condition is sincere much less he has attained full remission.
- 31) Rare is the man that is truly penitent and also rare is the man who buys indulgences such men are most rare.
- 32) They will be condemned eternally together with their teachers who believe themselves sure of their salvation because they have letters of pardon.
- 33) Men must be on their guard against those who say that the letters of pope's pardon are in estimate gifts of God; by which man is reconciled with him.
- 34) For those graces of pardon; concern only the penalty of sacramental satisfaction, and those are appointed by men.
- 35) They preach no Christian doctrines who teach that contribution is not necessary in those who buy souls out of purgatory or to buy confessionalia.

- 36) Every truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt even without letter of pardon.
- 37) Every true Christian whether living or dead has part in all the blessings of Christ and the church and it is granted to him by God, even without the letters of pardon.
- 38) Nevertheless the remission and the participation (in the blessings of the church) which are granted by the pope are in no way despised for they are as I have said the decay despised for they are as I have said the declaration of Divine remission.
- 39) It is most difficult, even for the keenest theologians at once and at the same time to commend to the people, the abundance of pardons and (the need of) true contribution.
- 40) The contribution seeks and loves penalty, but liberal pardons only relax penalty and cause them to be hatred or at least furnish an occasion (for healing them).
- 41) Apostolic pardons are to be preached with caution but people may falsely think about them preferable from other good works of love.
- 42) Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better work than buying pardons.
- 43) Christians are to be taught that the people do not intend the buying of pardons to be composed in any way the works of mercy.
- 44) Because love grows by works of love and becomes better and by pardons man does not grow better only more free from penalty.
- 45) Christians are to be taught that he who sees a man in need and passes him by and gives (his money) for pardons purchases not the indulgence of the people but indignation of God.
- 46) Christians are to be taught that unless they have more than they need they are bound to keep back what is necessary for their own families and by no means to squander it on pardons

- 47) Christians are to be taught that the buying of pardons is a matter of free will and not of commandment.
- 48) Christian are to be taught that the pope in granting pardons needs and therefore desires their prayers for him more than the money they bring.
- 49) Christians are to be taught that the pope's pardons are useful if they do not put their trust in them but altogether harmful if through them they lose their fear of God.
- 50) Christians are to be taught that if the pope knew the exactions of the pardon preachers he would rather that St. Peters church should go to ashes than that it shall be built up with skin flash and bones of his sheep.
- 51) Christians are to be taught that it would be the popes wish as it is his duty to give his own money to many of these from when certain haufeerers of pardons cazols money even though the church of St. peters might have to be sold.
- 52) The assurance of salvation by letter of pardon is vain even though the commissioner may, even though the pope himself to stake his soul upon it.
- 53) There are enemies of Christ and of the pope who bid the word of God be altogether silent in some churches in order that pardons may be preached in others.
- 54) Injury is done to the word of God when in the same sermon an equal or a longer time is spent on pardons rather than on the worship of God.
- 55) It must be the intention of the pope that if pardons which are very small things are celebrated with one bill, with single procession and ceremony then the gospel which is the greatest thing and which shall be preached with hundred bills, a hundred processions and hundred ceremonies

- 56) The treasure of the church out of which the pope grants indulgences are not sufficiently named or known among the people of Christ
- 57) It is certain that they are not temporal treasures because many of the vendors do not pier out such treasures so easily but only gather them.
- 58) They are not the merits of Christ and the saints for even without pope these always work grace for the inner man and the cross death and hell for the outward man.
- 59) St. Laurence said that the treasures of the church were the church's poor, but he spoke according to the usage of the world in his own times
- 60) Without rashness we say that the keys of the church given by Christ's merit are that treasure
- 61) For it is clear that for the remission of penalty and of reserved cases the power of the pope itself is sufficient
- 62) The true treasure of the church is the most holy gospel of the glory and of the grace of God.
- 63) But this treasure is naturally most odious for it makes the first to be last.
- 64) On the other hand, the treasure of the indulgence is naturally most acceptable for it makes the last to be first.
- 65) Therefore the treasures of the gospels are nets with which they now fish for men of riches
- 66) The treasures of the indulgence are nets with which they now fish for the riches of men.
- 67) The indulgences which the preachers cry as the greatest graces are known to be tardy such in so far as they promote gain.
- 68) Yet, you are in truth, the smallest graces compared with the grace of God ,and the piety of the cross

- 69) Bishops and curates are bound to admit the commission arises of apostolic pardons with all reference
- 70) But still more are bound to strain all their eyes and attend with their ears lest they must preach their own dreams instead of the commission of the pope.
- 71) He who speaks against the truth of apostolic pardons let him be anathema and accursed
- 72) But he who guards against the last and license of the pardon preaches let him be blessed.
- 73) The pope justify thunders against those who by any art continue the injury of the traffic in pardons
- 74) But much more does he intend to thunder against those who use to protect pardons to continue the injury of holy love and truth
- 75) To think the papal pardons so great that they could absolve a man even if he had committed an impossible sin, and violated the mother of God that is madness.
- 76) We say on the contrary that the papal pardons are not able to remove very least of the venereal sins so far as its guilt is concerned.
- 77) It is said that even St. Peter, if he were now pope could not bestow greater graces, this is blasphemy against St. Peter and against the papal
- 78) We say on the contrary that even the present pope and any pope at all has greater graces at his disposal to wit the gospel powers, gifts of healing etc as it is in the 1 Corinthian
- 79) To say that the cross emblazoned with papal arms which are set up (by the preachers of indulgences) is of equal worth with the cross of Christ is blasphemy.

- 80) The bishop's curates, and theologians, who allow such talk to be spread among people, who have an account to render.
- 81) This unbridled preaching of pardons makes it no easy matter even for learned man to rescue the reverence due to the pope from slander or even from the shrewd questionings of the laity.
- 82) To wit, why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and of the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church? The former reasons would be most just the latter is most trivial
- 83) Again why are mortuary and anniversary masses for the dead continued and why does he not return and permit the withdrawal of the endowment on their behalf since it is wrong to pray for the redeemed.
- 84) Again what is new piety of God and the pope that for money they allow a man who is impious and their enemy to buy out of purgatory the pious soul of a friend of God and does not rather it purchase sake?
- 85) Again why are the penitential canons long since in actual fact and through disuse abrogated and dead now satisfied by the gratin of indulgences as though they were still alive and in force?
- 86) Again why does not the pope whose wealth is to day greater than the richest build this just one church of St. Peter with his money rather than with the money of the poor believers?
- 87) Again what is that the pope remits and what participation does he grant to those who by perfect condition have a right to full remission and participation.
- 88) Again what greater blessing would come to the church, than if the pope were to do a hundred times a day, what he now does once and bestow on every believer those remissions and participations

- 89) Since the pope by his pardons seeks the salvation of souls rather than money, why should he suspend the indulgences and pardons granted here to fore since these have equal efficacy?
- 90) To repress those arguments and scruples of the laity by force alone and not to resolve them by giving reasons is to expose the church and the pope to the reeducate of their enemies and to make Christians unhappy
- 91) If therefore pardons were preached according to the spirit and mind of the pope, all these doubts would be readily resolved may they would not exist
- 92) Away then with all those prophets, who say to the people of Christ “peace peace” and there is no peace
- 93) Blessed be all those prophets who say to the people of Christ “cross cross” and there is no cross.
- 94) Christians are to be exhorted that they be diligent in following Christ they had through penalties death and hell.
- 95) And thus be confident of entering into heaven rather through money tribulations than through the assurance of peace.

Martin Luther never said that his contribution was for the modern nationalism but he wished to point out the way of the life of Germans. He said they were selfish drunk, self centered and stupid. He tried to unite the Germans politically and culturally including language; the two hundred to three hundred little German states Luther contributed his mite for the breaking up of the Holy Roman Empire and the rule of the nationalism.

Secondly Luther did his best for the anti-Semitism because he was frustrated by the behavior of some Jews who did not accept the gospel. He attacked them by writing “Burn the synagogue and drive them out”. Yet this statement did not influence them much for two centuries. But in 1800 A.D. this anti- Semitism increased more and more. He unintentionally tried

for the raising of social status for women in the society, especially at the time of marriage. He married a woman and he was proud of her because, she happened to be the treasurer, manager and administrator of a complex business.

Luther remained as a protector of music and singing of songs in the churches. It is only because of Luther using of musical instruments in the churches came into existence in all protestant churches particularly. And we hear this music in Lutheran churches today. Luther finally said that music is next to theology.

John Calvin:

He was the second important person to defend the faith of Protestantism and Martin Luther's reformation issue. His famous book "Institute of the Christian religion" was the systematic presentation of faith held by the Protestants. Regarding the contents of the book the writer has dealt with four major aspects of the faith. They were, God the father, son Jesus Christ the Holy Spirit and the church. His strong belief was that even before creation God chose some people to be saved. His contribution for the Protestantism made him to be called "Father of Democracy"

The sixteenth century was a period of some radical changes in the church affairs. That was the retrospective effect of the medieval period churches and society and also political conditions. All these things joined together and proved the way to Martin Luther to work for reformation. Calvin understood Christianity as the embodiment of faith. He emphasized that the everyday activity of the ordinary Christian has deep religious significance it is really strange that those who wished to listen to him also wished to learn from him

William Carey:

It was he who launched the modern Christian missionary movement Christian churches of various denominations today had their own historical back ground; how missionaries from different countries went to other

countries where there was no Christianity and established their churches, with their own denominations. But all those wonderful changes took place only after the devoted efforts of William Carey. He launched this modern missionary movement in 1790s. So to say this was one of the most extensive religious movements in human history, which transformed Christianity from local western European church to true world religions. His ability to establish broad program of Christian social educational and evangelistic activities in non Christian lands which brought him the title “father of modern mission”.

William Carey was born in a poor weaver’s family in 1761 in a village of Paulerspury. He was almost self educated. Then he became an apprentice shoemaker and under the influence of a fellow apprentice abandoned the Anglican family background and identified himself with the non-conformists. He was baptized in 1783 and two years later became a pastor of a small Baptist church. As the church income was very small, he worked as a school teacher and also as journey non shoemakers. From his boyhood Carey was a voracious reader. In his study room there was a world-map and at times he used to look at the map and mark the countries which have not heard the word of God. And his future plan was to send the word of God through some means or other. It is said, “His heart burned incessantly with a desire for the salvation of the heathens”. But only a few friends could share that burning zeal of William Carey, concerning the faith of the people who never heard of Jesus Christ

Then in 1788 Carey hatched a plan of publishing or printing pamphlet setting out his conviction as another means to preach the gospel to every creature so, he declared it as the bounden duty of the church in his time to bring the message of salvation in Christ to the whole world. His argument was that if the command of Christ to spread the gospel into every nook and corner of the world, then it is binding on the part of every believer to do his best. And also, if biblical prophecies were true who spoke about the purpose of God to extend the kingdom of His son among men and then all Christians must agree with God in promoting his glorious plan.

He desired that those faithful Christians who were caught with missionary vision must organize themselves into a society to send missionaries and support them in their evangelistic work. Carey had a lurking desire to win the hearts and minds of true believers to serve his purpose. He studied the parallel between the centuries old plight of the extended nation of Israel which was completely forgotten by God and the unproductive and the desolate condition of the church of his own days. He insisted that the promise of God was also his command. God would do good things always by extending the kingdom of Jesus Christ throughout all nations and so Christians must try to do great things by taking the gospel into their hands and work hard for its spreading. That is to say, if people expect great things from God, they must do great things to God.

Finally William Carey came to India on his mission in 1793 with his wife and four children and settled in Calcutta. In a short time he found some Hindus showed some interest in his preaching about Christ. At the same time, he realized that the people in India were bounded with strong chains of castism that is, he understood how Indians would give so much importance to caste system in every walk of life. In the beginning he found it difficult to convert a Hindu into Christian's faith. Added to that within one year of his coming to India he had to face some hurdles. His wife became mentally sick, which continued till the end of her life. In addition to that his third son died due to dysentery and he was short of money even, to meet the initial expenditure. Another pitiable thing was that he was receiving some financial support from England and now that was also stopped. So, he had to plan some other way to get some financial help for his survival.

By God's grace he got a job as the manager in the "indigo factory". The income through that job helped him to meet the family expenditure and also to some extent his missionary work. Carey became a dependent increasingly upon the promises' of the bible. Yet, it is our encouragement the power of God is sufficient to accomplish everything which he had promised and his promises were exceedingly great and precious respecting

the conversion of heathens. Carey waited seven years for the promise of God to become fruitful in his trial for the first converts. Finally four Hindus from Serampore came to faith in Christ. With this wonderful beginning the door of faith was opened and nobody could close it.

Two more friends joined Carey in his effort of conversion and by 1821 about 1407 converts were baptized. It is said William Carey never returned to his home land Finally he died in India only in 1834. After his death the missionary movement had increased rapidly. But one should not forget the man behind that wonderful progress was the incessant hard work of William Carey. In course of time missionary education in India and Africa showed a good result which carry never expected. And finally though Carey died, his other two friends added, his name as three started a missionary educational college in Serampore.

The prime aim of that step was to train Indians in theology to become missionaries for their own people. Yet the educational opportunities were open to all. The real ambition of the founders of the institution was for the reformation of India. But it is important to hear in terms of the exalted ideals of the founders Serampore missionary educational institution was a failure.

Evangelism - through Locals:

Carey believed that evangelism in India would be successful only through local evangelism and he was correct in his statement. So, he wished for the grace of God upon some Indians, so, that they would be inspired to go for training and then preach among the local Hindu. He was really correct in his estimation that only through native evangelists more and effective work could be possible. Accordingly the first Hindu convert Krishna pal. Who was baptized in 1800 became the first popular evangelist among his own country people. He started his work first in Calcutta and then in Assam. By 1834 Serampore mission has founded nineteen mission stations manned by fifty missionaries.

William Carey expressed his opinion that missionaries must make use of every opportunity to the people to whom they were entrusted and he was as good as his word. He happened to take part in India in activities like translations to Hindus literature educational work medical care and agricultural matters Carey's advanced conception of missionary work, probably contributed for the indifference between serampore missionaries and the Baptist mission society. Whatever work Carey did he thought it was direct response to the command of Christ. His independent spirit in India alarmed the timid souls in England, who did not understand the real missionary work established by him. Yet Carey was responsible for the spiritual awakening of millions of protestant Christians all over the world, who never heard of Jesus Christ. That was undoubtedly a wonderful thing and a great compliment on the achievement of a humble Northampton shire shoemaker what all he did was for the spreading of the word of God throughout the world was due to his confidence on God that he would do great things. Many of the countries where the Christian churches are strongest and alive today are a real witness to the missionary activities of nineteenth century and the confidence of William Carey, regarding the progress of Christianity and the churches was not misplaced.

10. SIGN OF THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS

Jesus conquered death and wished to go to His father by leaving this world and His disciples. His decision was final and the destiny of Israel was sealed which was brought by herself. Jesus in His three years ministry sincerely pleaded for the repentance of Israelites for their sin and also accepts His messianic claim to rule them. For this His credentials were wonderful His lineage from which He came the village in which He was brought up, the compassion He exhibited, the courage He displayed, the wisdom He showed all those things were really extraordinary. He practised His message and proclaimed His authority. He exhibited (never any man spoke like this man" (John 7.46) all the above mentioned qualification to prove His authority. For His messiah ship.

With this His disciples thought that Jesus was going to become as the king of Israel. They also finally hoped the Roman persecution would go permanently and Israelites would know the greatness and glory of Jesus Christ. which had been their hope almost 1000 years earlier under the mighty king David and His son Solomon. But their hopes became futile because for centuries the Jewish leadership became corrupted. As a matter of fact the inspired writings of Moses the oral law of the prophets of their time remained as vain traditions. According to Jesus many of the Pharisees were corrupt hypocrites and white washed sepulcheres (Matthew 23.27). They had become blind leaders of the blind (Matthew 15.14). But Jesus having understood their crooked nature condemned their sin and the truth of Jesus rebuked their error. They misled the Jewish people with false distortion manipulation and false witness.

Then at the appointed time Jesus was taken to a hill outside the Northern wall of the city of Jerusalem to Golgotha, the place of the skull. At last the purpose of His coming was fulfilled. He would as the true Passover lamb taste death for every man (Hebrews 2.9) Jesus knew intimately what was going to happen to him in less than a week at Calvary. He perfectly knew how He was going to be humiliated by keeping him on the cross and final death. His tragic end was not for himself but for the entire humanity

and for His beloved nation (Israel). So He said ye shall not see me Hence forth till ye shall say blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23.39) But to His beloved disciples He said these words “and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you into myself that where I am there you may be also” (John 14.3) Above all there is one top most question lingering in the minds of the disciples. At the same time all the hopes of Israelites were linked with the promised Messiah. But the national leadership bluntly rejected His messianic claims and so He was leaving to return again one day. All the above said information somehow perturbed the minds of the disciples so they boldly asked Jesus when these things shall be?” and what shall be the sign of the coming and of the end of the world (age) (Matthew 24.3)

What would be the sign?

The disciples asked their master a sign regarding His second coming for and the end of the world They were Jewish people their customs and traditions and training were based on the law of prophet Moses and prophets of their time. Their history unto other nations was studied with direct Divine intervention on their behalf. When God sent Moses to Egypt to liberate Israelites from the bondage. He gave His servant a rod. Then He said to Moses and thou shalt take this rod into thine hand wherewith thou shalt do signs (Exodus 4.17). As instructed Moses used that rod in the court of Pharaoh of Egypt to perform signs which were miraculous and supernatural.

They were confirmed that it was the God of Hebrews, who had sent Moses into the court of Pharaoh to redeem the children of Israelites Moses Elijah the premier prophet of God, was also a miracle worker. He happened to withhold rain and also call down fire from Heaven. The Jewish people were always for that kind of History and looked for signs to authenticate Divine involvement on their behalf. Why Because the Jewish people had this kind of peculiar mental set up Apostle Paul was prompted to write about them. He wrote for the Jews require a sign” (1 Corinthians 1.22). The word sign can be found in old and new testaments for about 119 times. Men were called to see, to look at, and to be hold signs. These Signs

have been intended to be conspicuous. By their very nature signs were made to be public.

Signs were closely related to the concept of miraculous happenings and frequently they would become the translators and they translate the word sign as a miracle with the announcement of the Lord that He was leaving His disciples. They became eager to know what sign would be to allow them to recognize His return and the end of the age. They did not ask him correct indication of time like a day or a month or year indicator of something miraculous or supernatural (which would authenticate and substantiate His return and the end of the (age). They did not require signs but only one sign. That is His disciple's required only one sign. Which would indicate His return and the end of the age?

For the true believers the return of Jesus is the blessed hope of the church (Titus 2.13) It is also said as "living hope" (1 peter 1.3) that is to say His sure and certain. This living hope made the disciples to confront even the impossible things. They courageously went forward with the God given task of Evangelism. In their task they were not objected either by physical problem or by spiritual opposition. They believed totally that the Lord is coming and anxiously looking for that glorious day. In spite of the fact that the coming of Christ for the believers this mortality would become immortality and this corruptive would become incorruptive. For the believers even death itself is swallowed in victory.

There are four different words used in the New Testament in connection with the coming of Jesus Christ. And understanding these words correctly is important in this context because the question the disciples put regarding the sign of His coming came of those four Greek words. The first word is **ERCHOMIC** this word is continuously used and translated with the meaning "coming" according to Authorized Version. The Lord regularly used this word whenever He spoke with His disciples.

The Lord instructed verily I say unto you there be some standing Here which shall not taste of death till they see the son of man coming (ERCHOMIC) in His kingdom (Matthew 16.28)

The second world has become a discussion in connection with the return of Christ it is APOCALYPSIS This Greek word is translated in the Authorized Version as “coming or revelation”. The idea conveyed in the use of that word is to disclose or bring to light in the word of God there is a disclosure or bringing to light” of the person of the Lord Jesus by men who were under the controlling influence of the Holy Spirit. That is in marked contrast of His coming apocalypses He will reveal himself or bring himself to light. In this connection Apostle Paul wrote to the humble Corinthian believers. So that ye came behind in no gift waiting for the coming apocalypses or self disclosure of our Lord Jesus Christ (1CorincHeans 1.7)

The third Greek word is linked with the return of Jesus and it is **EPIPHANIES**. “This word is translated as “appearing”. This religious term **EPIPHANIES** indicate a clear manifestation of hidden deity either in person or by some great act by which His presence is revealed. At this point Apostle Paul said I charge thee therefore before the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall Judge the quick and the dead at His appearing epiphanies and His kingdom (2 Timothy 4.1) The fourth Greek word particularly used by His disciples was EPIPHANIES. It was translated as “coming or presence” And this word is used 24 times in the Greek New Testament during the first three centuries of the church Age. The major emphasis of the word **PAROUSIA** was on presence rather than coming.

The coming **PAROUSIA** of Christ in the Heaven will be for the purpose of rapture the church. As that time there will be a continuous presence of Christ in the clouds (that is the manifestation of His SHEKINAH GLORY not His physical bodily form.) for the purpose of judging the wicked before He is visible physically and return to the earth in order to establish His MILLENNIAL KINGDOM and rule. So, the coming PAROUSIA of Christ and the rapture of the church are to be fulfilled immediately with no time between them. The second coming of Christ is continuously portrayed as a singular event. In the bible also it is repeated a good number of times by different authors.

And what shall be the time of thy coming (Matthew 24.3)

So shall also the coming of the son of men be (Matthew 24.27)

Now we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Thessalonians 2.1)

Be patient therefore brethren unto the coming our Lord (James 5.7)

Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of the Lord (2 Peter 3.12)

We may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at His coming (1John2.28) and we have many more examples of this type.

Here if we observe carefully there is not even a hint anywhere regarding two separate comings of Jesus Christ. This is a simple adorned biblical truth. The suggestion mentioned often as Christ will come first for the rapture of the church and then return to the earth for the second time seven years later. The fact is that Christ is coming only one time but the events will take place immediately one after another. At the first glance upon considering the very big question of the disciples what shall be the sign of the coming and of the end of the world the phrase the end of the world mislaid people in meaning in the Authorized Version. It would have been better if it is translated as the end of the age" The Jewish people have another important book after the bible and it is called "Talmud". It is a record of inspired traditional rabbinic teaching. According to that Talmud there will be two ages of History. They are the present age and the age to come. Then between these two ages there will be a period of Divine judgment as per the Jewish theology. (called in the Word of God," the day of the Lord "(Joel 2:1-2). When the disciples asked him, when is the sign of thy coming (arousia) and the end of the age (aion)(Matthew 24:5).Since they were Jews, they understood the statement as coming of Christ would end the era (the present age) and after a brief period of judgment, starts another .(the Millennial age)

In the Bible, a synonym for the "end of the age" is the phrase, "until the harvest". This phrase can be found in the parable of the Lord, the wheat and the tares. In the gospel of Matthew, probably the direct answer

for their question. Jesus told the following parable to His disciples. He first put forth unto them saying. The kingdom of Heaven is comparable to the men which showed good seeds in His fields. But while men slept, His enemy came and showed tares among the wheat and went His way. I would say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them but gather the wheat unto my barn (Matthew 13.24-30)

Then the disciples requested the Lord to explain to them the parable and He began to say in details. He that showeth the good seed is the son of man, the field is the world, the good seeds are the children of the kingdom but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world and the reapers are the angels. The tares are finally gathered and burned, it means the end of the world. The earthly part of the parable is quite simple. The wheat and the weeds are to grow together. The wheat and the weeds can be separated only at the time of the harvest. The wheat can be safely put in the barn whereas weeds can be burnt.

The spiritual truth of this parable is quite clear. The fact is the righteous and the unrighteous people live together in this material world. Then at the time of the harvest which is the end of the age (Matthew 13.43). Then the righteous and the unrighteous will be separated. The wicked will be cast into hell. And the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father. The Lord Jesus Christ taught them in an understandable way that the final harvest is the separation of righteous and the unrighteous and also the final harvest is the end of the age. This absolute identification is made by the Lord himself the harvest is the end of the age. There are two facts quite conspicuous in this connection. The events that are mentioned from the book of Matthew from the chapter 24.4 must have been properly understood by the overwhelming majority of the people. The Lord said, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, see that ye be not troubled for all those things must come to pass but the end is not yet".

The final harvest (The separation of the righteous and the unrighteous) had not yet commenced within the seventh week. Again in verse 13 the Lord taught. But He that shall endure unto the end the same shall be saved" even further within the seventh week there is still no harvest no separation of the wheat and the tares. The second point is in direct response to the inquiry of the disciples concerning "the end of the age" The Lord taught this truth and this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end comes" (Mathew 24.14). At the same time the end has not yet come even though the contact is put correctly in its seventh week of Daniel It is clearly mentioned that the gospel must be preached all over the world then only the end would come.

At this stage a major problem has come that is the pre tribulation, the great commission of the church. And Jesus came and spoke unto them saying all power is given unto me in Heaven and in earth. Ye therefore and teach all nations baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commended you I am with you always even unto the end of the world (Age) Amen (Matthew 28.18.20). The promise of the Lord in the great commission includes the truth that ye would be with His disciples unto the end of the world (Age). If the end of the age according to the reference of Matthew is inside seventh week, then "The end of the age" in Matthew 28.20 must also be inside the seventh week. To understand more clearly the commission of the church must evangelize the world till the end of the age, and the missionary conferences must have to be Heralded Then only this happy news can be spread throughout the century and beyond. As a result, the Christ will enter seventh week of the book of Daniel in order to fulfill its holy calling With the above said acts the church will be raptured before the Day of the Lord The church the bride of Christ is not appointed unto the bridegroom's wrath. The wrath of God will be directed only towards the unrepentant world. Which has refused His grace and love as a matter of fact the sequence of those events is clearly mentioned. Paul wrote the Corinthians. So that we come behind in no gift waiting for His coming (PARARUSIA) of our Lord Jesus Christ who shall also confirm

(Galatians) you unto the end that we may be blameless in the day our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 1.7-8).

Finally we can distinguish three truths in the following way

- 1) The Corinthian believers are waiting for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ
- 2) He will keep them unto the end (The final harvest, When the righteous and unrighteous are separated as wheat and tares) and then.
- 3) They will be found blameless and therefore escape the day of the Lord judgment and become qualified to enter the millennial kingdom and age. The disciples asked the Lord for a sign, which is something unique in its character distinct supernatural and that question indicates His coming and the end of the age they did not ask for two signs. They asked only one question regarding the end of the age. They correctly understood that His second coming will end this present age (with the rapture of the righteous and the judgment of the wicked).

After this a new age called the millennial kingdom will be inaugurated. So far we have understood that the coming of Jesus and the end of the age are inseparable. These two events are linked together as one the sovereign. Lord graciously answered their question. He told them about the events that indicate His coming and then the sign of His coming itself. Then He warned about the false Christ's and false prophets. He equated His coming to the days of Noah and gave appropriate action for the righteous to take. As said about a group of believers who would be raptured and the unprepared world would be taken as unrepentant and subject to His wrath. So, in His response to His disciples the omnipotent Lord answered, some of the most important and perplexing questions of human History. He did all that so perfectly clearly logically and fully.

11. HISTORY OF THE SEVEN CHURCHES

1. EPHEBUS

The term “Ephemi” came from the word “Ephesis” which means a discarded one. The Ephesians believed that it was the name of a beautiful Amazonian queen, “Ephesia” who founded the city. The Amazonians were very powerful warrior women. Even the origin of their name, how it came was not known to them. According to some historical information, those people originally came from the north east of “Anatolia” and their capital was “Fatora and Order.”

As per the mythological information Amazons were the children of the god of war “Ares” The amazon women were more powerful than men. They used bows and arrows in times of need. For the purpose of sex and children they used men from other cities for mating and after that they would kill them. It is said; they even cut the private parts and offered them to their mother goddess. The most hateful thing for women was nothing but men and so to say men were treated like slaves by women.

“Zeus” the main reason for killing men was because the king “Zeus” was becoming more powerful day by day, and thereby men also became more powerful. The women did not like that, as they wanted to feel superiority over men always. The women even burnt one of their breasts so as to handle bow and arrow freely and forcefully.

According to another mythological story the founder of “Ephesus” was Androkilos, the son of “Kodros”, king of Athens. Whatever it might be the original people that lived in Ephesus were overshadowed by the important discoveries made during modern archeological excavations around Ephesus in 1869. The most ancient settlement brought to lime light was the commercial “Agora”. Near that place the remains of architecture were found dating 8th and 9th centuries B.C. They were found 8 meters below the surface of the earth. Then it was officially considered to be the correct location of “Archaic Ephesus”.

It is also said Androkilos came to that place after Trojan war and settled in Antolia. He then occupied Ephesus and the surrounding places. He expelled the native people and population decreased in course of time.

In spite of many wars and invasions for many years by different dynasties, there was a radical change among people in Ephesus, especially their social life. Just at that time came the Romans and occupied the place. It was Octavious Ceasar who changed his name into Augustus Ceasar. Then the first step he took was to make Ephesus as the capital city to Asia province. Prior to that Pergamas was the capital to Roman Empire.

With that change, Ephesus became one of the five big cities in Roman Empire. It also became the permanent residence of the governor. It was again treated as the second biggest city after Alexandria. During their rule, the style of social life of the people of Ephesus was completely changed. The Romans introduced their heathen gods, and some Egyptian gods to the people. That was the religious policy in their rule.

In Ephesus there were already Monotheistic Jews who were trying to spread their own religion called Christianity. At that time Jesus was in Jerusalem. He was teaching and preaching to people and mobilizing them in different places. After the crucifixion of Christ, the disciples went to different places to preach the good news. That was the most significant period in the history of Ephesus.

It was St. John, who came first to Ephesus along with holy Virgin Mary. John was able to gather good number of people by his preaching in "Aegean" region and changed many people into Christianity. He even became a leader of the churches. Virgin Mary spent rest of her life there and died there only. We can see her tomb even today.

John reached Ephesus in 53 A.D. and continued his preaching. The Christian population increased gradually. Then there was a man who disturbed the spreading of Christianity. His name was "Demetrius". He used to do silver business. He would make statues of "Artemis" with silver and sold them. As heathens were becoming Christians because of John, he

wanted to take revenge for his business. So Demetrius could influence many people, especially from Ephesus within a short time. But the authorities controlled the situation somehow.

Apostle Paul was also there at that time. He studied the situation. He left that place and went to Macedonia. That period was really called "The golden age of Ephesus in architecture". But an earth quake came in 17 B.C. and disturbed the city. After this calamity, new structures came including the temples, and the city looked more beautiful than before with new constructions.

Though temporary disturbance took place in the city due to the increase of Christian population, after suffering for some time they gained the acceptance of the empire during 4th Century A.D. Again some discouragement took place among Christians themselves because of "Nestorius of Antioch". He claimed that virgin Mary was not the mother of God but Christ (that is of human being). He could convince many people with that statement and under such circumstances he became a patriarch of Constantinople (Istanbul).

Then he tried for the acceptance of his thesis throughout the church. But there was some opposition for him also. The Council meeting took place in Ephesus during 431 A.D. in the church of virgin Mary. The Council members were about 200 bishops. They accepted only the thesis of "Cyril" who was the bishop of Alexandria. In that meeting, they decided that mother Mary was the mother of God. With that result, "Nestorius" was exiled to Egypt as a punishment.

Even after that incident, the argument went on among the bishops for about 18 years. Then another Council meeting took place wherein the thesis of someone was accepted by force and that was called a historical event. It was also mentioned in the minutes of Council that both the churches, the church of St. John and the church of St Mary as permanent meeting places.

Due to political disturbance the Roman Empire was divided into parts and Ephesus happened to fall in the eastern side. This part was finally occupied by Arabs who made the people of that city to scatter away. And after Arabs came the Turkish Empire which made Ephesus prospers well in their rule. The city was decorated with Turkish “Edifies” such as Mosques, greater or smaller and with different architecture.

The first Christians of Ephesus had suffered more brutal persecution. Therefore, they bore a grudge against the protectors of the city and its temples. The city became always an important place for religious activities especially for Christianity.

CHURCH OF ST. MARY

The remains of this ancient city of Ephesus were found in the valley between the mount “Beerbiel and Panearayor” and it was in the south of “Silquik” valley where the river Minor flows into the Aegean sea. The name of that city in their language was “Aphayee” which means the city of streams. And this name later changed into Ephesus.

It was a very big city in those days in Turkey. It was in existence in the 1st century. The city was also called Maya Bazaar or Magic Bazaar. Its a big business centre and also became one of the seven wonders of the world with the temple of “Diana”. The height of the temple was about 560 feet, and it was built on 110 pillars. This goddess was famous for fertility.

According to some historical evidences the founder of the place was “Appolo”, the disciple of “St. John the Baptist”. Apostle Paul came to this place and instructed the church people. He worked there for 3 ½ years only. The main person here was Jesus Christ with

The History of the Seven Churches

Seven stars searched and found a dangerous defect in spite of all positive things. That is love among people. First, this was to tell the truth and develop love. But now it was turned into cold conditions. In the

beginning it was rooted in love, then grew in knowledge about the love of Christ and the unity in Spirit.

Jesus said in all his preaching that love was greater than anything in the world. Love sets the flames of love, which is not artificial. The real love is stronger than even death. The church too must love Jesus. Due to self-righteousness and lack of oneness, love is diminished among people. If they are found in the same position, they must turn to God and confess for salvation. We must have a good heart to love God. We must plead for those who are perishing in darkness. And finally love and service must go hand in hand.

The House of St. Mary –

Christians were always wondered about the residence of St. Mary. Ancient travelers say she lived, died and buried in Ephesus. The “Ecumenical Church” Council of 431 A.D. determined that she came to that place with John Both lived and died in Ephesus only.

A German nun by name Catherina Emmerich happened to get vision and confirmed by the tradition. The site was also found exactly. Regarding her life, the nun never left her cell. In her old age, she was considered to be holy. It is really uncommon to call anyone ‘Holy’ when one was alive.

In 1818 the nun again received the visions of virgin Mary which were sketched by C.Brantino. Catherina Emmerich gave a statement about the house of virgin Mary. When Christians faced increasing persecution, Virgin May along with John fled from Jerusalem and came to Ephesus.

In 1891 Eugen Paulen the director of a college and a superior to Lazarets decided to investigate the vision of the nun. He appointed a committee also with a priest and some monks. After a good number of investigations, they found the house on “Bielbeldoge”. As Soon as the news about the house was announced, they spread all over the world and the archbishop “Temori” allowed to commemorate the services to be held in the house of Mary.

Pope John XXIII declared the house site of St. Mary for pilgrimage in 1961 and hundreds of Christians visited the place including Muslims who believed on virgin Mary as the mother of prophet Jesus Christ. During the period of Byzantine rule, the house was converted into “Crucifomi Basilica” from which the relics were found.

The structure was restored according to the plan of legend. A red line was marked on the walls and the deignal shape was given. The statue was installed later. There was a compound wall with three gates. In the garden there are a good number of vessels with water and that water has the power of healing.

ABOUT ST. JOHN Quest for the Living God

John was one of the disciples of Jesus Christ. When he came to Jesus for the first time, he looked at his face and prophesied that John would see visions in his old age and write the last book of the Bible called “The Revelation”. John means “the grace of God’. The Roman government was in power in his time. On some reason, once he was caught and put in the prison in “Patmos”. Prior to that incident, he was put in the pan of hot oil but God saved him and he was freed. After the crucifixion all the disciples were scattered into different places because of the persecution by the Romans and John with Virgin Mary went to Ephesus.

At the time of crucifixion and death, Christ asked John to take care of his mother. So, both fled to Ephesus because of the constant persecution in Jerusalem. In that city John became a leader to the church also. In his old age as Christ prophesied, he wrote the book of Revelation. If we read it carefully, we can find that John used number seven about 36 times. So, some scholars proposed another title for the book called “The Book of Number Seven”. He lived for about 100 years and died in Ephesus only. In his book of Revelation, he gave a wonderful description of seven churches, wherein he saw Christ was moving among the seven churches called Seven Golden Columns, which represent seven churches.

The wonderful and heartfelt messages given to the seven churches would certainly change our way of life, clean our souls and lead us to eternal life. Let us all hope and pray to our God Almighty for our everlasting life in His Kingdom. St. John really gave us a wonderful picture of the seven churches as Christ guided him to write that book.

CHURCH OF ST. JOHN

According to the tradition there, John became the leader to the church after Paul died. When he was alive he had a strong desire that when he died he wished to be buried in Ephesus only on a hill called "Aryasulluk". Then after hundred years of his death a small Basilica was built on his tomb.

In the sixth century A.D. it was the hay day of Byzantine empire. The emperor Justinian wished to honour St. John the evangelist in a proper way. So he built an imposing Basilica in the area of the old one (Basilica means 'Church').

But the Byzantine Empire became weak day by day and the neighboring powerful people began to occupy the land. In addition to that the importance of Ephesus also decreased. Then came the powerful Arabs during the seventh century. They annexed even the church of St. John and converted that into a mosque.

Many people gave their testimonies that the dust came from St. John's tomb had healing power and they were healed of their diseases. This happy news was spread and pilgrimages continued to his tomb.

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After a long time, Greeks became the rulers of Ephesus almost at the end of 1st world war. During their reign, a team of archeologists, started excavations and that continued for some years on the hill of "Ayasulik".

They located the correct church campus of St. John. Then a wall with three gates was constructed for the protection of the church. In front of the church, on some of the columns, the visitors can see the monogram

of emperor “Justinean” and his wife “Theodora”. Their sign indicated. They financed the construction of St. John’s Church. The church had a crucifome plan with six columns and four columns at its end carried a dome on them.

The Grotto of Seven sleepers

In the year 250 A.D. seven young Christian people were forced to leave Ephesus because they refused to pay offerings to the “Imperial Temple”. Then they anticipated some danger from the authorities and the punishment might be persecution. So, the seven members fled from the city Ephesus and hid themselves in a cave. There they slept a long sleep as nobody bothered about them.

Then, after two hundred years, they suddenly woke up from their deep sleep and found themselves in good condition. They came back to the city and lived with others as usual. This strange incident boosted up the image of Christianity in that city. These seven members requested their kith and kin that they should be buried in the same cave only after they died. Hearing all this story, many young men took a decision as they too must be buried in the same cave after they died. So when the excavation took place in 1927-28 to their great surprise, they found hundreds of tombs in that cave.

John wrote the book of Revelation or “The book of Number Seven” when he was in Ephesus (Turkey). In that book he described the impressions of Jesus Christ about the seven churches and indifferent behaviour of the congregation. In the Bible, it is said, the seven churches were in Asia. Asia is a big continent with many countries and Turkey is one of those.

Originally, it was Constantinople of Byzantine Empire and later it was changed into Istambul during Ottomon empire and again that is changed into modern Turkey. St. John concluded that the spirits of the seven churches were before God’s throne.

2. SMYRNA

Smyrna was called the suffering church. It means “myrrh” which was given to Jesus mixing it with wine. The chief priest used this for the worship of “Tabernacle”. Myrrh represents suffering and sadness. It is believed that the church was in existence in between 120 and 130 A.D. The city is situated when trade became prominent with many people.

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When the city was in prosperous position, it was destroyed by the Indians and remained desolate for about 400 years.

The Greek emperor Alexander the Great tried to rebuild the city but he died without fulfilling that. In that city there were science and medical colleges. Then came the Roman rule. They built some temples for their use and worship. At the same time a Christian church was also built and one third of the total population became Christians. Jesus revealed to John about Smyrna that he preserved and had patience and not become weary.

Jesus told John as in Revelation 1:18, “I am He who lives and was dead and behold I am alive forever more. I have the keys of Hades and of death”

Jesus appreciated the members of that church and said I know you suffer. All their wealth was stolen. Yet they stood firm in their suffering. Then Jesus assured them not to be afraid of anything or trials.

Satan disturbed the church by destroying the activities of Jesus and the outsiders began to persecute them. But Jesus promised the members of the church.

Do not fear anyone of their things which you are about to suffer. Indeed the devil is about to throw you into the prison and you may be tested and you will have tribulation for 10days. But be faithful until death. I will give you the crown of life. So Jesus promised to give us life.

The city of Smyrna was famous for its history of great martyrs like “Policorp”. He was the first bishop who worshiped Jesus faithfully. He refused

to worship Ceasar and even ready to die for Jesus. The Romans even threatened to kill him if he did not stop to love Jesus.

Then the bishop gave a suitable reply, “now I am 86 years old. My Jesus did not leave my hand. How can I deny Him now?” The bishop did not care their words and remained faithful to Jesus.

In 1600 A.D. many earthquakes came and destroyed the city. In 1724 many places were burnt and perished. But still the church built in memory of Polycorp remained undisturbed and firm. Even today many pilgrims visit that place and worship Jesus. Many sick people with long suffering of more than 10 years come to that place and take dip in hot springs for healing themselves. So that place became famous for suffering Christians. This example and faith of bishop Polycorp would certainly encourage us to be stronger in our faith and wait for eternal glory.

3. PERGAMUM

The present name of Pergamum roots back to the ancient Pergamum named after Pergamos the son of mythological hero namely “Neoptoumos and Andramakkhe” But

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According to the mythology the foundation of ancient Pergamum and the first settlement had been formed by “Telephos” who was the heroic son of “Hercules and Ange”.

After a long time “Telephos” grew up to be a young man and came to Greece. According to mythology, this Telephos took part in Trojan wars and proved himself the embodiment of all heroic qualities. After the war was over, he returned to his motherland with his army and became the king of Mysia and established his kingdom with the first settlement of Pergamum. So the Attalos the founders of Pergamum kingdom believed that they were the roots of Telephos, Hercules and finally “Zeus” the god of gods.

Recently, the history of Pergamum was established to be 5th century B.C. but the continuation of the research work in that area, showed that the archeological excavation with a strong evidence provided that the history of this Pergamum city began in about 8th century B.C. So at that time, there was no clear cut idea of the existence of Pergamum. But it was called “the Archoic Age”.

The research scholars further indicated that the first and most concrete findings of Pergamum’s history belonged to the period after Hellenistic Age. So Pergamum was one of the rare cities that preserved, the characteristic structural inheritance of Hellenistic period until today. If we want to visit Pergamum in order to understand its history thoroughly we have to plan our trip in three different stages. The important places we have to see after Aeropolis are “Crimson Basilikah” and the “Museums which are located in the present living area.

The next important place is “Askupieion” which was one of the main health centres of ancient period. And the third place is the Tumules of Maltipe” which is said to be one of the strongest area around ‘Anatolia”. After seeing all these important touring centres. One can see the importances of “Roman Era” in the protected area around Acropolis. Apart from all these things, some of the residential quarters in that place show the authentic qualities of the typical characteristics of Greeks, Turkish, and Jewish architectures. Finally we can also find the most sacred buildings of these three religious temples or places foundations and they are one after other in that place.

The acropolis of Pergamum is no doubt one of the most important and highest acropolis of ancient period. The kings like Alexander the Great who ruled the populations founded on that hill area as Pergamum’s “Eagles Nest”. The first excavations on this acropolis of Pergamum, were done during 1878 and 1886 with a team guided by a German engineer and a researcher “Carl Uman” and thereby Alexander Conye on behalf of Berlin Musium.

The information people gathered had enlightened and they were also inspired by the historical importance of acropolis of Pergamum. Since then, the excavations continued until today, by different organizations. Their regular effort unearthed important buildings such as

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“Zeus”, “Aliah”, “Athena” Temple, gora, adalos dynasties places and Traianuem, had been brought to limelight. But due to the accurances of first and second world wars, there was a disturbance in the excavations.

Again the regular activities started in the year 1972 and they were supported by the German and Turkish governments and the efforts had been continued by the modern technologists. The excavated places of Pergamum found during the last century had been exhibited today in Berlin Pergamum.

As mentioned already the history of Pergamum will go back to the Hellenistic period. In the beginning of 4th century B.C. a small settlement was established and later the acropolis of Pergamum was conquered by Persians and they gave it to the reign of Demaratos the Spartan king. That is to say the age of Pergamum kingdom or Attolos kingdom was ended and Pergamum became one of the Asian province of Roman empire.

The Romans maintained their period by establishing wonderful buildings in Pergamum and made the city looked more beautiful than previous appearances. It is also very strange to hear that the Romans did not limit the independence of the people or collected any taxes from them and above all they assigned a local man as the governor of the city. By this we can understand that Pergamum was one of the popular cities of little Asia of the Roman empire as well.

The artistic and cultural activities were also not at all interpreted by them. Pergamum library became famous for its contents. It is said the concerned authorities of the library happened to send about 2, 00,000 manuscripts to the library of Alexandria in Egypt as a gift from Marcus Antonius to Cleopatra.

As far as art and culture were concerned ancient Pergamum proved one of the most celebrated cities of western Anatolia. When we compare this to the contemporary cities, great artists and scientists like Mallos of Crates preferred to settle in Pergamum only than any other city. The city had a very good reputation for its parchment and also of the emperors in addition to trade between east and west.

The people of Pergamum made their living through agriculture and cattle feeding. They used to keep sheep, goats, pigs and horses and olive oil production was also the source of their income.

When Metriolaths king of Pontius kingdom captured the lands of Anatolia in 88 B.C., Ephesus and Pergamum participated in the war. In the meantime, many Romans living in Pergamum were punished with death penalty. When the Roman general "Sulla" retook the city of Pergamum the loyalty of the people increased a lot.

There are many places yet to be excavated around the city, anxiously awaiting the future

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Explores Even today if we look towards the west, from Acropolis, we can see at a distance, ruins of two theatres built by Romans which were in good condition during that time, one theatre accommodated about 50,000 people and the other 30,000 people at a time. They remained even today as insignia of Roman rule.

Byzantine Period

When one of the seven churches of the last judgment in near east Asia was discovered in Pergamum, the city became first important place for Christians in west Anatolia. It is said in the 4th century A.D. a small group of Christians was formed in Pergamum. According to the letters of St. John the prophet, the first bishop of Christian society, in Pergamum was Gaius. Then Gaius was succeeded by Antipos who was a dentist and he was burnt and killed later by the pagans. Then the Roman emperor "Desius" punished

the Pergamum Christians by death and also the Roman general wished to crucify the bishop Pirnius in Ephesus in 250 A.D. In Byzantine rule the city was affiliated to the Archbishop of Ephesus. During this period the city walls of Acropolis were altered and restored with bricks, rocks, dust and lime mortar. In addition to all that some new churches were built in Acropolis, though we can see only ruins of them today.

But the most important church built during the Byzantine rule was “Crimson Courtyard” of Serapis Temple sacrificed to St. John. As a result of Arabic invasions in 7th and 8th Centuries Pergamum was burnt and ruined. Then it was conquered by Karesiogullean in 1306 and became one of the centres of this principality. Finally in 1320 A.D. Ottomans took the city.

The Asklepieion of Pergamum

While going from Pergamum before reaching the “Izmir Canakkale” road and turn left you will see the road sign Asklepieion. Then a few kilometers further, you will find yourself in front of the entrance of Asklepieion of Pergamum. It was renowned as one of the three main centers of ancient period. The other centers were “Epidauras” and “Kos”. Most of the ruins we find today in Asklepieion of Pergamum belonged to the first half of the second century B.C.

In spite of all that, the continued researches revealed the Asklepieion of Pergamum had been founded in 9th century B.C. Pausanias the historian wrote that the temple at Asklepias was built in 4th century B.C. Pausanias also wrote according to mythological stories and the cult of Asklepios was brought to that place by a hero who was wounded on his foot while hunting in the mount of Madra in north of Pergamum.

As found in the mythological story “Archeos” who was wounded on foot went to the temple of Asklepieion in Epidauras Morler to regain his health. In course of time the Romans lost their importance and Christianity began to gain its popularity. The main reason why the

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Buildings on the holy area of Asklepiuon were preserved particularly because the hallow area was filled with the soil brought by rain water for centuries. The priests incharge of Asklepiou of Pergamum were originated from the noble families of Pergamum.

The job of the priesthood was by inheritance that is if the father were to be a priest, after him his son would automatically become the priest. There was a chief priest also. Among the priests there were some physicians that treated the incoming patients by inspiration and the drugs they used were made from different plants. The patients used healing water and then mud baths too. They took part in sports also. The drugs used by the physicians to the patients and the methods like mud bath to the patients, all these things were inscribed and found in the excavations.

The Columned Street or Holy Road

This holy street lie just in front of this entrance and it is called “via Tecta”. It was formed with part of 820 meters long holy road. It connected the Asklepieion to the lower city during the Roman period. The part that belonged to Column Street is still seen today. It was about 140 meters long and it was exposed during Pergamum’s excavations. The pieces of some columns which have been replaced by new ones and the ground stones made up of stone blocks gave the true pictures of that ancient period. We can see in the southern part of the street the remains of a cylindrical grave memorial supposed to have been built in the era of Emperor Augustus (31 B.C. to 14 A.D.).

Beautiful examples of Hellenistic and Roman statues and sculptures were found when the streets excavated. Some of these art works are exhibited in the Pergamum museum.

Holy Tunnel

As it was constructed as a heath centre the Asklepieion contained various wonderful buildings. The city authorities built many attractive

structures and one among them was 80 meter long Holy tunnel. It was connected to the temple of Telesphoros and perfectly preserved over the centuries. But it is buried under the soil and it is a great surprise to a visitor. The tunnel ceiling was decorated with holes in full length in order to allow the sunlight and air. It was constructed with walls intended to protect from cold. The patients would get out of healing water and mud baths and then go to the treatment centre again. The tunnel also healed the patients that entered into it in hot condition.

According to the descriptions that were found in the excavations it was a kind of treatment given to the patients using inspiration and the sound of water that comes from the Holy Spring.

Serapis Temple

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We can locate Pergamum at the end of acropolis excavation area and at the entrance of Centrum. We can find partially serviced remains, with its red bricks. It remains to the inside of the temple constructed in the name of the god of Serapis. This ruined building today identified as that “red courtyard” or the red Basilica. It was constructed with red bricks in an area of 200 X 100 meters. It had also wide courtyard in front of that Basilica. In ancient terms the town part was surrounded by columns and the other parts covered by marble pieces. And also in the olden days, the pavement of the temple was completely covered with marble.

This temple had changed its name during the era of Byzantine reign into a church. This structure needed some alterations, especially in the asis part. If we look at the remains of the Church, today we can understand the architectural structure reminds us that it is like the Basilica type church.

There are two symmetrical buildings on the eastern side of the temple courtyard which are the reminiscent of a church. During the Roman rule in Pergamum the temples and the chapel shaped cult rooms were constructed inside. The entrance of the temple is known as crimson courtyard in Pergamum. It faces towards the west that symbolizes death. People say it

was vowed to Serapis the god of hell or underground. It is also identified with the Greeks Hades. This temple was amended during Byzantine rule and functioned as a church named to St. Jonnes that is St. Jean (John).

4. THYATIRA

This was called “immoral church”. Thyatira means ‘traditional activities’ (Rev 2:18-29). This church was bigger than all the other six churches. This place was situated 45 miles away from Ephesus and Smyrna. A message was given to this church where in a few truths were mentioned.

1. God is advising not to entertain baseless and diluted faith.
2. He said one must be holy and clean in his heart.
3. Basing on some Bible truths and vedas some writings were found in the Basilica during 2nd and 6th centuries when it was excavated. It was an old construction actually, and all the synagogues that were built in that area were facing Jerusalem only.

Thyatira became very famous for trade and business in those days. The people became experts in tanning and colouring cloths. They used to sell powders also. A woman by name Lydia became very famous for setting purple colour from that city. As the city became popular for all kinds of business, people from different places came and settled there. At present the city is called with a different name “Akissar”.

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God’s eyes are always on the faithful and righteous people. Regarding the name given to that church is really wonderful. God said, “I am searching the mind and heart. I will reward you according to your work. I will give power over the nations, who can love and follow me.” All of us must have faith and hope to seek the life of eternity, waiting patiently with pure and holy life.

5. SARDIS

The church of Sardis was called “the dead church”. The word Sardis came from ‘Stalin’ which means information. It was situated in the kingdom

of Lydia and 50 miles east of Smyrna. It is famous for great trees, cloths, industries and jewelry business. There are gold mines also in that place. In olden days it was considered to be a rich area. It was conquered by Alexandar the Great and then king Koresh.

In 1710 that place was destroyed by an earthquake. But the Romans rebuilt it. During that period many people were converted into Christianity. In 1909, Professor H.C. Butler of Princeton University happened to dig the tunnels with the help of some other people. After excavation many interesting things were found like coins, jewelry, pots, brass lamps, medieval jars, written papers etc., In their digging 270 X 60 ft. synagogue was also found.

But the people of that place became impure due to their sinful activities like adultery. The spirituality was completely dead. The angel of the church of Sardis explained to them with seven spirits of God and the seven stars, "I know your works and you have a name that you are alive but you are dead. Be watchful and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die for I have not found your woks perfect before God."

There was appreciation for this church as a few members were holy who did not defile the garments. They shall walk with Jesus in white for they are worthy. God will keep their names in the book of life. Therefore we must live our short life in this world with faith and action so that we reap the reward in the next world. Jesus will certainly confess the names that are holy before God and the angels. We must live as practical Christians. In this context Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 5:14, "Awake you who sleep arise from the dead and Christ will give you light". According to him one must recall perfection in continuous prayers and in faith and repentance. We must be active spiritually and wait for a reward God wants to give us.

6. PHILADELPHIA

This was called a "Faithful church". Philadelphia means brotherly love. This city was situated 28 miles away from Sardis and there was also a nearby village called Lydia. In that

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Place there were many wine gardens, from which they get pure wine. It was a hilly area. The city was built by the king "Antalous" which was called second Philadelphia. At present that place is called Allasker.

This place became popular for Christianity as the doors were opened for preaching the gospel. So the Angel of the church of Philadelphia wrote, "He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens no one shuts and shuts no one can open it."

"I will keep you from the hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world and advised to hold fast what you have and no other man takes your crown. The overcomers will have rewards and they will be made pillars in the temple of God. Their names and the name of that city will be also mentioned, as new name shall be written." So the message reminds all of us to be careful about false doctrine. We must have patience and faith and pray more.

God's promises are clear, because He will keep us as pillars and if Christ wants to keep us in high places nothing can stop Him from that as He got the keys for different blessings. We have to claim our promises and try hard to achieve our inheritance that God kept for us. Five good promises were given to the past church and they are still alive for us to receive. So as to receive all the above said promises we must try to live a pure and holy life.

7. LAODICEA

This was called "Lukewarm" church. This was established by Antiochus II through his wife "Layodia" in 250 B.C. The meaning of the church of Laodicea was righteousness and justice of people. It was a rich city with fertile lands and beautiful gardens. The cattle were fed and the fur of sheep was used to prepare beautiful carpets or shawls etc.,

The city was famous for Greek culture, art, industries, medical centers, and other activities. It is 22 miles away to Colossi. And in their regular

excavations some remains of prayer cells were found. In 62 A.D., a big earth quake occurred and there was a total destruction of the city.

This church was not with sinners like the sinners of other churches and added to that it was not following false doctrines. Apostle Paul never visited this church, but wrote a letter to them. He said in Colossians 4:16, "...see that it is read in the church of Laodicea and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea". "I know your work that you are neither cold nor hot. I would with you were cold or hot. "According to Paul, faith must be exposed through deeds. We must understand that our deeds have no connection with the fear of God or love for God. He was speaking

To the church for they need to be careful about their behaviour and respect. If a person is hot he can ignite another one and it pleases God. If he is lukewarm God will hate such people because they will be carefree and have no hunger or thirst for spiritual matters. These lukewarm people will oppose the Lord. They will lose to power of God and the result is spiritual decay. The lukewarmness in the heart of people will cause deceitfulness and spiritual decay. Such people appear to be normal inside but there is "sin" in their hearts.

The church members who are lukewarm can see but they are blind to the spiritual vision. They are naked in the sight of God and He gave warning to such people, "I counsel you to buy gold from me that is refined in the fire that you may be rich that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed..."

The word of God is like sweet honey as Jeremiah ate the book and felt it was sweet. We must also use the word of God and meditate both day and night, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him and he with me." With all that God's mercy will be with us and forgive us so that we can open our door of heart to allow Jesus to stay forever and ever, Amen.

12. A SCROLL WITH SEVEN SEALS

The title “A scroll with 7 seals” is a key to watching the chronology of the last days. In this context the readers are advised to look into three major issues which are like foundations for a proper understanding of the last days.

As the first point it is clearly indicated in the bible that there will be a climate in the seven year period of time during which God is going to bring history to a proper and righteous consummation. This valuable piece of information has been provided to us through the scriptures of beloved prophet Daniel while Daniel was in captivity in Babylon; he felt he was more concerned to the destiny of his people (the Jews) and the holy city Jerusalem; which was totally destroyed by the king of Babylon. At that time Daniel was called by the Lord through his prayers. This man of God was given a prophetic vision, which revealed the destiny of his people and their holy city. Prophet Daniel also saw in his vision the plan of God to bring history to an epic conclusion in future final seven year period of time.

The second issue is that we must throw more Light on the crucial importance over the reference to this seven year period of its proper.

Biblical Name: It is the 70th week of the book of Daniel. This future period of time is common but according to some eminent Scholars incorrectly referred to as the tribulation. This name tribulation has been superimposed upon this seven year period without biblical justification. Here the readers must try to understand the correct designation. So that they would not be misled regarding the understanding of the timings of rapture and the events connected to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Names of seven seals and their importance:

The anti Christ signs covenant with Jews for 3 ½ years – it is the beginning of sorrows

1st seal White Horse: The anti Christ increases his world dominion through subtle and false diplomacy.

Christian Angelology

2nd seal Red Horse: The anti Christ in increases his power through war.

3rd seal Black Horse: The war results in great destruction and curses, devastation and famine.

4th seal Pale Horse: famine and pestilence result in disease and death.

5th seal Martyrs under the altar: Martyrdom of believing remnant (especially among Jewish believers in Israel) who will not worship the anti- Christ.

6th seal cosmic disturbance: sign in the sun, moon and stars (Beginning at mid point and cut short by cosmic disturbance)

7th seal the wrath of God: (The day of the Lord and his second coming) Judgement follows immediately. Then rapture that includes the blowing of the trumpets, and pouring of the bowls.

According to the third important issue we are touching the biblical truth which will not be experienced by the true believer that is the wrath of God. This promise was given to the believers in the scripture by apostle Paul. He gave us an assurance through scriptures that the almighty God will not consider the believers as victims for his vengeance like wicked people, but rescue them by rapture prior to the unleashing of his fury. Most of the bible believing Christians would certainly agree on this point and all the believers whole heartedly concern.

But it is only at this point in the process where unbiblical assumptions can arise. If it is referred to the future seven year period (Daniels 70th week) by its incorrect name the tribulation it is only a small jump to reason. This flawed reasoning results in a faulty conclusion; that Christians will be raptured pre-tribulationally “that is before the final seven year so called tribulation period. This has become a popular view held by many faithful churches and godly Christians today and unfortunately it cannot be substantiated from scriptures. The Old Testament prophets, the Lord Jesus himself and the Apostle John all clearly pointed out that God’s wrath will not begin until inside this final seven year period of time. It is also clearly said the duration will be significantly less than seven years.

Basing on the reality, let us try to seek the answers to these questions. If the Christians are not destined to be recipients of God's wrath then (1) when will the wrath of God really begin? What will be the sign indicating its arrival? Answers to these two questions are essential to give a proper understanding of the timing of the rapture of the church and the second coming of Christ. There are some clear indicators that revealed in the word of God; significantly the start of his wrath which is known as biblically "The day of the Lord". It is our strong faith from the teaching of scriptures that these indicators will not appear until sometime in the last half of Daniels 70th week that is the second 3 1/2 years time.

At present in order to witness the larger context and see the logical progression of events within this future seven year period. Let us take a step back to explore the chronological sequence of major events within the 70th week which led to the rapture of the church and the time of God's wrath.

Importance of the seals:

In the 5th chapter of the book of revelation, Apostle John saw a scroll with seven seals in the hand of God who was sitting upon his throne in heaven. The scroll was in the right hand of God and it became a focal point of the chapter like the most powerful laser beam", which brought John into its light. First John was intrigued by the fact that a universal search was made to find out a man worthy to open the scroll by breaking its seven seals. He was utterly disappointed when he did not find a worthy man. John felt and realized that if no worthy man was to be found then everything would be lost. Apostle John confessed that he could not find a suitable man to open the seals and then began to weep uncontrollably. He stopped weeping only when an angel came suddenly and commanded John to stop weeping and look again at the throne. He saw the Lord the lion of the tribe of Judah a direct descendant of King David is worthy to break the seven seals and open the scroll. John looked again and this time he saw a standing lamb. It appeared of God's son). The lamb came and seated on the throne beside. His heavenly father, and took the scroll from his right hand. It was

not an ordinary scroll. It was not only sealed with seven seals, in practical terms, but it was also the title deed of planet earth.

It contained on both sides of the smoothed surface, of a rolled up animal skin the prophetic record of the events that occurred and which are mentioned in the book of revelation. If the scroll could not be opened, by breaking the seal, then the redemption of man and the earth over which man was destined to rule would not be possible. In such circumstances Satan would become the winner and God in disadvantageous position thereby the believers would be dying in their sins. But among all the mankind one man was found worthy to come forward to open the scroll by breaking the seals; He was worthy because he redeemed man to God by his blood as the price of redemption from every kindred tongue and tribe. The name of such a man is Jesus He is very great and its simple meaning is saviour, as the 5th chapter of revelation is coming to a close, a universal choir proclaims.

“Blessing and honour and glory and power be unto him that sitting upon the throne (God the father because He created all things) and unto the Lamb (because with the breaking of the seals around the scroll he is about to redeem that fallen creation) forever and ever” (revelation 5.1-3)

Significance of the seals:

According to the 6th chapter of revelation the lamb (Jesus Christ) took the scroll with seven seals from his father and began to break the seals, in anticipation of unrolling the scroll and bring out the events that contained His will lead to the total defeat of every evil of every kind

And then the outcome is coming of a new perfect heaven and earth. But before examining the seals of the revelation of the 6th chapter let the believers observe some crucial points in the book.

- 1) It is said for centuries among all the books of the bible, the book of revelation has become a hard nut to crack to the readers. That is the readers find difficulty in understanding the correct meaning here and there. But one thing is crystal clear in this context, what back bone is to the body, the seals are to the book of revelation and it is considered the

greatest treasure to the humanity. Added to that, the book of Revelation educates the believers how this age would end how to be prepared for it.

- 2) The breaking of the seals has not yet begun, so the events they depict will only occur at a future time, when the seals are broken during the 70th week of Daniel. To explain this more clearly the events depicted in the seals, have not been fulfilled in the early church nor even have they been fulfilled throughout church history as suggested by some commentator. Basing on the information of the elite the believers may take it for granted that breaking of the seals is still in future and how much time in future nobody can predict. At the same time other scholars suggested that events happening frequently remind people the time of the breaking of the seals is fast approaching.
- 3) Apart from the seven seals, around the scroll the book revelation also introduces the seven trumpets and seven bowels. These elements will extend the chronological frame works and depict the events after the seals are opened. It is better to discuss regarding the trumpets and bowels later because these two elements and the opening of the seals will not occur together. Again in this context, some other commentators suggested that breaking of seals blowing of trumpets and pouring of bowls will occur at the same time because some of the events exhibit by trumpets and bowels are similar. So, with the above said information the readers can understand, the breaking of the seals, the blowing of the trumpets and the pouring out of the bowels are not concurrent but they are consecutive. They occur one after another but they are consequences. They occur one after another but not side by side. The scroll itself cannot be opened until seven seals are broken. The seals are set on the outside of the skin of the scroll and it is kept under lock and key until the worthy man is found to open it. As a matter of fact the trumpets will be blown in succession after the seventh seal is opened and the seven bowels are poured in sequence after the seventh trumpets is blown.

- 4) This is most important because, the 6 seals of the revelation 6th chapter precisely parallel to the Lord's teaching to his disciples in his Olivet Discourse on the mount of olives. And this is popularly known as Olivet discourse. It is during this sermon.

Jesus gave his fullest teaching with regard to his second coming. The breaking of the first four seals (revelation 6.1-8) are parallel to the Lords teaching in his Olivet Discourse and are called by the Lord the beginning of sorrows. Breaking of the 5th seal is also parallel to the Olivet Discourse teaching and it is called by the Lord, the great tribulation, a serious discussion begins on great tribulation in verse 9 but not at 15 as some commentators suggested. The sixth seal also parallel the teaching of the Lord in the Olivet Discourse.

It is in this stage, the Lord spoke about the sun being darkened the moon withdrawing its light the stars falling down from heaven and the powers of heaven being shaken. This cosmic disturbance is the clear indicator that God is about to go to war during a period of time at the end of the age. This is referred to time and again in the bible as the Day of the Lord that is to say, breaking of the six seals lead to the coming of Jesus Christ (Mathew 24.29-31). These events that come out of the breaking of the six seals would answer the questions posed by the disciples in the Olivet Discourse. They asked the Lord, what must be the sign of the coming and the end of the world (age)? He began to answer their question referring to three events which must precede his coming.

The first event must be the beginning of sorrows". This is the result of the opening of the first four seals. The second event must be the great tribulation." It will be the result of the opening of the 5th seal. The third event is concerned to the cosmic disturbance. This will be the result of the sixth seal opening and it also reminds the believers about the "Day of the Lord", that would begin. It is even said that the day of the Lord is directly associated with the second coming of Jesus Christ and his judgment on earth. These six seals of the book of revelation chapter six very clearly follow the Lord's Olivet Discourse and this should not be a surprise to the

believers. Both speak of the last days and the second coming of Jesus Christ apostle John the human author of the book of revelation was among the apostles on the mount of Olives, when the Lord taught the Olivet Discourse.

While describing the events which are going to take place before his second coming. Jesus began his teaching by focusing on the four issues.

- 1) He said there would be false Christ's not men, who claim to be Jesus the men who Claim the office of the messiah. Thereby promote this among themselves as if, they would solve all the problems or ills of the society.
- 2) He said there would be wars and rumours of wars the outcome of this is the nation would rise against nations and kingdom against kingdoms.
- 3) He said there would be wars.
- 4) He spoke of pestilence or disease, which the Old Testament associated with death. He also spoke about earthquakes, which would occur at many places. All the above said events indicate the devastating condition of the nations. So the Lord Jesus Christ specifically said about them the beginning of sorrows. Here Jesus gave a vivid picture of what is going to happen. All these events indicate clearly the second coming of Jesus at the earliest.

The great tribulation and the 5th seal: according to (Mathew 24.9) the Lord spoke to his disciples about the great tribulation. He said during that time the birth pangs would become harder and occur more rapidly. This will be the clear indication of his coming and the end of the age. The Lord, while he was describing about the great tribulation, to his disciples, in the Olivet Discourse he foretold about the events that will happen upon his followers, he said

- 1) They will be afflicted, slain and hated by all nations (v.5)
- 2) There will be an offense, betrayal and hated by one another (v.10)
- 3) Many false prophets will arise and deceive many (v.11)
- 4) Since iniquity will flourish the love of man for goods (v.12)
- 5) Those who stand firm or endure the end of the age will be saved (v.13)

- 6) Of the souls of the believers who endure persecution but to his deliverance of the Lords return
- 7) The Lord said finally that the gospel of the kingdom will be preached through the world and then the end of the age comes (v.14)

The disciples wished to know the sign of his coming and the end of the age for that the Lord replied about the “beginning of sorrows” great tribulation etc. And when he opened the 5th seal apostle John saw under the altar the souls of some that were slain for the word of God and for the testimony which they hold.

The cosmic disturbance and the 6th seal:

The event God will use for shortening the great tribulation is cosmic disturbance. During this event the sun and the moon will stop their normal and critical light. Added to that the stars will fall from heaven so, the cosmic disturbance not only cut short the great tribulation, but also it serves as the immediate announcement of the coming of the son of God. Then the believers will be raptured immediately prior to the over pouring of the wrath of God; during the Day of the Lord. Finally the Lord described the event to his followers with these words.

Immediately after the tribulation of those days (the hard labour pangs) shall the sun be darkened and the Moon shall not give her light and the stars shall fall from heaven and the Powers of the heaven shall be shaken; and then shall appear the Sign of the son of man in heaven and then shall tribes of the earth mourn and they shall see the son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds from one end of heaven to the other (Mathew 24.29-31)

Contrary to the popular belief of many Christians today, the church will not be exempted from the great tribulation, which is coming soon upon the earth. However, it will be exempted from the wrath of God, because it will be raptured before the Day of the Lord begins.

13. A NEW HEAVEN AND NEW EARTH

Robert Browning an English poet wrote "God is in His heaven, All is right with the world" Some commentators pointed out that he needs some drastic correction regarding his saying. We all know that God is in heaven. But it is not true all is well with the world. As a matter of fact when we watch TV, read the news paper, talk with our friends or read a letter from our relatives about some unhappy news or deaths, then we cannot say with confidence that all is right in the public life and with the world. So, we have to realize that something is wrong for the unrest of the people. Following are some of the points for our clear understanding.

- 1) The philosophers of the world are flawed
- 2) The Governments of the world are corrupt
- 3) The glories of the world are fading
- 4) The pleasures of the world are fleeting
- 5) And the destiny of the world is destruction

If we look at the world with our naked eye, we find only corruption, wickedness, and persecution pervading. Some great people tried their best to set. People needed only wealth, power, prosperity etc.. to enjoy life. But they never think how is going on. In such circumstances, all is well with the world will not be applicable to the present day society.

- 1) The ascetic, who by self denial tries to resist the wicked currents of the world.
- 2) The monk who by solitude tries to withdraw from the seductive influence of the world
- 3) The epicurean by indulgence tries to saturate himself with the carnal pleasures of the world

One thing is common in the world. People lose battles, but the world beats them every time. Let us study about one top most man in the bible. His name was King Solomon; the richest and the wisest king with one thousand wives. During his time anything in this world was his. So to say

the world itself lavished on King Solomon. After enjoying everything in this world he became a philosopher and wrote in his book of ecclesiastes vanity of vanities saith the preacher The words of the king can be translated in the following way. "Soap bubbles of soap bubbles all is bubbles"

The soap bubble floats away leisurely as if is colourful and appealing. The soap bubble makes many promises. But before man tries to grasp something from it the beautiful bubble vanishes; that is the present position of the world without God. The world is really colourful, very attractive and magnetic with its promises yet, when man tries to reach the things of the world will vanish.

The son of God while speaking to his disciples said for what shall if profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and loss his own (mark 8.30). We can put it in some other way" the soul of a man is worth more than the whole world. The word "world" (cosmos in Greek) appears more than two hundred times in the New Testament this world is described as both alienated from God and something in opposition to God. That is really a bad thing Jesus told his disciples the world cannot have you but me it hate them because I testify of it that the works there of are evil (John Jesus while speaking to corrupt religious teachers said we are from beneath, I am from above we are of this world, I am not of this world"(John 8.23) apostle Paul wrote for what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him even to the things of God. Knoweth no man but the spirit which is of God that we might know the things that are forely given to us of God (1 Corinthians 2.1-12). Secular written define the world (cosmos) in a different way. Can we written wrote the world (cosmos) is the orderly systematic universe. Another person wrote the world (cosmos) refers to a universe that is complete harmonious and orderly system. And a third writer wrote the world (cosmos) is the embodiment of order and harmony's as distinguished from chaos a complete harmonious system So the outcome of the three written is that the world is and orderly system which is headed by Satan. In the Templeton of the told Jesus in the wildness if is according high maintain and sheruth him all the kingdom of the world and the glory of them and saith into him all these things will I give there if there will fall

down and worship me. (Mathews 4.8-9) If the Satan did not have his world to given there would have been no temptation of Christ why it happened so because the God himself called Satan the prince of the world” What he said here after I will not talk much with you, for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me” (John 14.30)

In this world we shall have tribulation (problems and pressure) but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world” (John 14.33)

But godliness with contentment is great gain for we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out” (1 timothy 6.6-7). And we know that we are of God and the whole world beneath in wickedness (or literally in the wicked one) (John 5.18)

God is in his heaven but all is not right with the world. It is like the true Christian is called upon to swim upstream against the powerful currents of this treacherous reptile of this world until the lord comes. The Christian must not be shocked when he faces some problems sometimes sudden changes in the world in the way of lining; He should not be perturbed because Satan is the prince Christians and theologians have been punished but still through the spreading of gospel, they can salvage the world God never called the church to salvage a last world which has to come one day under divine judgement but it is necessary to preach a saving gospel to last man. The truth behind is that the church cannot bring the everlasting kingdom of God but Christ will alone accomplish after his coming.

The world in its original condition:

The book of genesis gives the complete picture of the creation of the world God created it into existence out of nothing. But regarding divine commending on his creation was that it was way good six times once for each of the six days of creation God said it was good(genesis1.4,10,12,18, 25). And then the creator of the world summed up his creation with these words. And God saw everything that he made and behold it was very good (genesis1.31) So we are faced with reality on one hand the world God created was very good and on the other hand the world in which we live

and breathe and have being is accordingly bad what major are must have transformed the world which was is very good once into the world which is very bad now.

The world in its fallen Estate:

According to the written report in the bible man was created in sixth day of his creation. He was created last in time but first in importance and God created man in his own image. And man was supposed to have domination over the world as a vice regent under his sovereign lord. That was called the theocracy rule by God through man. But God put one condition that is man should not eat the fruit of the forbidden tree that was in the middle of the punishment would be physical and spiritual death.

Lucifer the highest of all angelic beings after he was unknown down to the earth tried to take revenge against God through the first human beings Adam and EVE. This Lucifer was called Satan after he was thrown down to the earth. He tempted the first parents to eat that forbidden fruit and caused them to commit sin So Adam and Eve brought sin into the world and planted the seed of death. Because of Sin man forfeited the scepter of kingship over the world. Satan irrupted man's right to the throne. So, Satan is now the God of this age and the prince of this world. As a result man became enslaved to the God of this world all time with a being they would be forced. As estimated the reality of future is ultimate tragedy of human history. The fact is that Satan made man blind and so he is under the impression that the world is good but after the fact the world has been under the satanic influence.

The role of the Christian:

The true Christian has been called "regenerated" or born again born from the above or saved. It means the believer had changed his citizenship. He is now through faith alone became a citizen of heaven living temporarily in a hostile environment. Therefore those men no longer submit themselves to Satan Christians empowered by the holy spirit of God should live righteously and godly in this present evil world. God is giving option to the

believer whether he should yield to him or submit himself to the world and unsaved. It is good no doubt if the believers are not to function in this evil world or enjoy life or things which are not suitable for believers worldliness can be described as participating in this ordered world system headed by Satan. The believers must be light and salt in this world. They have to tell men that they are once beggars and now fowned the one who is the bread of life. In reality it is only where the righteousness of Christ is manifested through believers. Historically groups of believers like the first century church the Anabaptists wordiness, reformers and purities brought light to parts of Europe for a time. But when the light was rejected darkness returned in spite of that some missionaries defying Satan precede the darkness and again brought light to many parts of the world. Let all their effort was only for a short time.

Coming of a New World:

He beloved and aged apostle John reached the final end of climatic section of the book of Revelation (Revelation 21:22) and in many respects, he wrote the apex of human history in that And I saw a new heaven and new earth for the joint heaven and the first earth wire passed away and there was no more sea(Revelation 2.1). These New heaven and new earth John described were not new once beet presently they were cleaned completely regenerated and absolutely made perfect. John behold heaven and earth in their pristine beauty as Adam and Eve saw in the garden of Eden before the ad sent of sin and consequent of curse upon all creation. He saw them with Satan the former prince of this world and the God of this age in chains (Revelation 20.2)

In the upper room the lord instituted the new (Kainor) covenant. But it also convey the primary idea of being qualitating superior to the old or mosaic covenant. The apostle Paul taught a believer in Christ is a new (kainor) creation (2corinthians5.1-71) once again the idea is that he is the same person beet qualitatively surprised and he was in his ingenerated state in Adam. When John speaks of the New Heaven and New earth he used the Greek word "kainor" and is emphasising the qualities of the new

heaven and new earth. It is the same heaven and the same earth. Which will be purged during the day of the lord the day of judgement of the earth. During this end of the age .Henry mores in his commentary “The revelation records” said that the new cosmos not a novel cosmos (world) is a renewed cosmos. It is just like the first except that all its age long ravages of decay have been expunged and it is made fresh and new again. The present heaven and earth have net blotted out. Nor swept into nothingness. But they are totally purged cleansed and regenerated. All their old disorders and imperfection will be gone.

Joseph series in his commentary on revelation said that it was written more than one hundred years ago. Which spoke about new heaven and new earth? The words of Joseph series which are beautiful and with insight warned the believers to give second reading with thoughtful meditation. It is nothing but a description of our future duelling places. So to say the illustration is not suffering since we are sinful beings our purging is not perfect when God purges the cosmos by fire and regenerated the earth planet will be qualitatively perfect which will be a new heaven and a new earth. The son of God on the day of his crucification stood before roman procurator Pontius Pilate. In the midst of questioning Jesus Pilate asked Art there the King of the Jesus?” (John 18.33)for that the sin God answered in the following words My kingdom is not of this world. That fact is that the kingdom of Christ is the spiritual kingdom in the hearts of men and women but not a physical kingdom upon the earth” the bible readers totally misunderstanding the teaching of Jesus Christ. He was not denying the physical visible literal kingdom on the earth over which he will rule. When he said my kingdom is not of this world” he was stating that he will not rule over the present heaven and the present earth which are totally defined by Satan and sinful man a that was corrupt everywhere.

He will purge the world completely then he will rule over the heaven and earth which are made perfect for a thousand years. The lord himself spoke of that day while he was conversing with his disciples. “He taught them verify I say unto you that we which have followed me in the regeneration when the son of man sit in the throne of his glory shall also sit

upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Mathew 19.20). The word regeneration means new birth and this is used by Apostle Paul to describe the believers new birth (Titus 3.5)

Some people have suggested the terms used by apostle peter who described the annihilation of the present heaven and earth cannot be associated with the new heaven and the new earth; while speaking of the Noah flood Peter wrote where by the world was being over flowed with water perished Peter also argued that similar fate to the world is in store to the earth. In the next time it is only through the judgement of God the earth may be destroyed by fire but not water. Due to the flood of Noah they perished but the earth remained. The world perished but eight souls, Noah his wife his three sons and three daughters in law survived. The world perished but the animals representing all species of life two by two disembarked from the ark jointly God blessed Noah and said be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth (genesis 9.1). It is quite clear the old heaven and earth remained after the world said to have been perished. Peter also spoke of the elements in heaven melting with percent heat and the works of earth (all of man’s accomplishments in every area of endower) being burned up (2peter 3.10)

The teaching of the word of God is because of the fall of man the present condition of the creation is in a position of cap lively tied down bound (Romans 8.9-23) the dissolving of everything that is peter spoke is not in the words of Joseph series the destruction of them but the breaking of their bonds the housing of them the sitting of them free again to became what they were originally meant to be the dissolving of the present heaven and earth is not a annihilation. It is a long an intend deliverance and loosing from the bonds of sin. To say briefly it is the resolution of all things. During his secretion God created the universe on the second day and on the third day he created earth. He Devine commentary on all That God created in this God saw everything. He had created and behold it was very good. But soon Adam and Eve disobeyed God and because of disobedience curse was put on them (man) and the dominion of heaven earth and rex on which he was authorised to reign. The heaven and earth were created very

good now became bad why because our first parents Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. Where there was no death disease famine, war, natural eat a strophe etc; that pledged man at least for six thousand years according to history. As a result of sin under Satan's reign man has polluted the oceans raped the earth and poisoned the whole sphere that God committed to man to control it. If is that really surprising then the present heaven and earth must be dissolved (That is purged by fire to lose it from the bondage of sin) to clear is way for a new heaven and earth.

When the new world comes:

For the people who are unsaved a new heaven and new earth are terrifying prospects what are it unsaved people possess (including their lives) is associated with the present heaven and present earth which will be one day burned up with fire. In this contact peter wrote. But the day of the lord will come as a thief in the night in which heaven shall pass away with a great noise and the element shall melt with percent heat the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up (peter 3.10).

It is no wonder, if they are able to understand the basic fact. For those people who are made righteous in Christ a new heaven and a new earth are glorious prospects. For those righteous people in Christ everything that has brought sadness and tears will be dissolved and completely replaced with joy and everlasting peace. When can we expect new heaven and new earth into force? Some great people who have strong faith on the pre millennial return of Christ will feel that the new heaven and new earth commence at the end of the coming of the lord for one thousand years reign. That reign is otherwise known as the messianic or millennial age. First of all those people who hold this view that John's beholding of a new heaven and new earth in his vision follow continuously on the heat of discussion of the millennium for a reference in the previous chapter. So all those teachers who set for an agreement must come to a favourable conclusion that the new heaven and new earth must be occur at the end of the millennium. However, people need not follow the above said statement. John pointed out that Satan was bounded with chains for thousand year's

duration. He wrote in the book of (Revelation chapter 20.2) and he laid hold on the dragon that old serpent.

Which is the devil and Satan and bound him a thousand years?

Whatever may happen to Satan at the end of the thousand years, it becomes naturally a crucial issue. And for that doubt also John gave the answer. He said that the Satan would be loosed for a season to deceive the nations and finally he would be cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20.3). And John calls the attention of the people to the fact, that the faithful martyrs of the great tribulation are going to be resurrected at the beginning of the millennium as part of the first resurrection into life." And I saw thrones and they sat upon them and judgement was given into them and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God and which had not worshipped the beast nor his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads nor (foreheads) in their hands and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (Revelation 20.4)

It is the policy of the nation to decide about the status of unfaithful who had died before the millennium. The impact of the resurrection upon the unfaithful is that they will participate in the second resurrection at the end of the millennium. Then there will be eternally consigned to hell at the great white throne judgment. John in his vision saw the decide small and great who were standing before God. He opened the books one after another it was the book of life and the dead were judged according to their works and the unfaithful would be east into the lake of fire. This is called the second death for such people that is to say whose over was not found written in the book of life would be east into the take of fire and regarding the Satan and the weekend died their position at the end of the millennium is given in revelation 20.11,14,15.

The discussion about the new heaven and new earth are freely discussed in revelation chapter 21 can be quite natural. So it will focus more in the beginning of the millennium but not on its end. The second point is that it has been argued again and again and come to a conclusion regarding the new heaven and new earth and there will be no sea. Apostle

John also wrote about this in the following way. For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away and there was no more sea but the bible indicates that there will be a sea during the millennium. Based on the above said information the elite are under the impression that the new heaven and the new earth must occur only after the millennium and this will like its course so, the only solution for the complicated issue is to have a closer look at revelation chapter 21.1. At the same time it is affirmed that there are so many people who can say negatively about the existence of the sea in the new heaven and the new earth. That means the heaven and earth passed away and a sea as part of man's dominion must be also cleansed from defilement of sin to pass into the new age.

Regarding the pouring out of the second vial a bowl during the day of the lord is written that the second angel poured out his vial upon the sea and it became blood which is like that of a dead man and every living thing died in the sea at that time and were the rivers must have been purged of defilement. And the third angel poured out his (bowl) upon the rivers and foundations of waters and all became blood. Generally the heaven and the earth spoken of for that entire God has created, this new heaven and new earth would include a new sea. Apostle Peter linked his teaching on the "Day of the lord" with the new heaven and the new earth. He encouraged his readers with these words. Nevertheless we according to his promise look for his new heaven and new earth wherever we derive the righteousness (2 Peter). The outcome of the day of the lord, according to some prophets, reveals that the day of the lord will be as follows.

- 1) A time of destruction from the almighty (Isaiah 13.6)
- 2) A time of divine wrath and fierce anger (Isaiah 13.13)
- 3) A time when God arises to shake terribly the earth (Isaiah 2.19)
- 4) A time when God will punish the world for its evil and the wicked for their iniquity (Isaiah 13.11)
- 5) A time when God's indignation and fury will be directed against the nations (Isaiah 34.1-2)
- 6) A time when God's vengeance will be revealed (Isaiah 34.8)
- 7) A time of darkness in the heavens (Isaiah 13.9)

8) A time fire from the lord (Joel 1.23)

The above mentioned verses from the book of prophet Isaiah are related to the judgment of the Lord at his second coming. It will be before the commencement of the millennium reign. If the teaching of Peter from 2nd and 3rd chapters are understood properly and placing the day of the lord at the end of the millennium is impossible then they follow his logic in his important discourse.

- 1) In the last days there would be scoffers walking after their own lusts (v-3)
- 2) They would ridicule the promise of Christ's return (v-4a)
- 3) The reasoning of the false teachers was based on their presumption of an unimpeded history things would continue as they always had (v-4b)
- 4) Contrary to the philosophy of the scoffers, Peter noticed that God in fact did intervene in the course of human events with judgment through the Noahic flood
- 5) The present heavens and earth are reserved for the judgment once again. The next time it will not be by water (flood) but by fire (v.7)
- 6) Judgment has been withheld by a long suffering God giving man the opportunity to repent (v 8-9)
- 7) The day of the lord will come as a thief in the night and the heavens and the earth will be judged by fire (v-10)
- 8) In the light of certain facts of the coming judgment men are to live holy lives looking for the coming of Christ (v.11-12)
- 9) His coming will be followed by new heaven and new earth (v-13)

The entire argument of Peter revolves around the fact, that God entered the flow of human history for judgment with Noahic flood. But now God will enter human history for judgment for the second time during the day of the lord. Then the lord's second coming and during that time only He will imprison Satan execute the Christ people the earth destroy the false religion and judge the wicked. Then only he will bring a thousand year

messianic age. Which cannot be seen as a divine intervention in history we see clearly here how Peter linked the new heaven and new earth with the day of the lord and since the day of the lord occur in connection with the second coming of Christ the new heaven and the new earth must be associate with the beginning of the millennium not the end. There are some additional facts from some writers that the new heaven and new earth will start at the beginning of the millennium but not at the ends. The new heaven and new earth of which prophet.

Isaiah spoke are the renovated heaven and earth" they will commence at the beginning of the millennium but not at the end. In addition to Isaiah confirmation there are light more prophets from the New Testament plus Dr. Luke, Paul and Peter in the New Testament gave some information about the facts concerning the day of the lord.

A New World:

In the life of man a new day will be coming. It would be really pitiable in the future of man's life. But heaven and earth are destined to be purged, cleansed and restored to the perfections that were there before the advent of sin. That new age will be really glorious and the occupants of that new world would be abundantly blessed. But who are those blessed people? And who are going to occupy the renovated new heaven and new earth? Then the rapture of the church will take place. And the rapture will take place immediately prior to the opening of the sentence seal. Then the wrath of God will commence. This wrath will be for the purpose of purging the cosmos (world) of everything that has been defiled by sin even then during that time the grace of God which continues to be manifested.

In this connection there are two witnesses who will continue to prophecy centre the end of the seventieth week (revelation 11.3). The result of the prophecy is that there will be 1,44,000 men from the twelve tribes sealed for protection in order o prove their fidelity to God next there will be an angelic being having the everlasting gospel to preach into them that dwell on the earth (Revelation 14.6-7) As a result, of the avidness there will be a gathering of the precious souls at Christ's physical appearance

to the earth at the end at the end of the seventh week of Daniel and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our lord and Jesus Christ (revelation 11.15). Among all those people who have survived physically at that time will be designated as sheep and goats”.

And before him all the nations shall be gathers and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd (Mathew 25.32). Then the goats will be sent into everlasting punishment and sheep into eternal life. This later group in mortal bodies will be cleansed through faith in Christ will enter new heaven and new earth. Keeping in mind the events that are mentioned in the book of revelation and the events that are described in the article, we can make an assortment that they only a small number of men and women from the earth that is about six billion people will survive the seventieth week. Those that are purged will be called sheep and they enter the millennial kingdom. Then the blessed people will have an extended life with the absence of death, war, disease and famine which were called natural catastrophic incidents Another surprising thing is they will have the gift of child bearing and quickly repopulate the new heaven and new earth. And then what will happen to those who were resurrected or raptured with the Christ who at present possess glorified immortal bodies? And also we have to think about them how they are related to the new heaven and new earth.

A New capital:

Apostle John saw not only a new heaven and new earth, but also he saw a city Solomon the holy city coming down from God out of heaven. She was prepared as a bride and decorated for her husband. Jesus Christ in the bible the joint reference to Jerusalem was the occasion when Abraham happened to meet melchizedek, who was otherwise known as king of Salem. Abraham happened to take Past in a battle in order to rescue his nephew Lot and while returning he met the king of righteousness called melchizedek. He was also a priest of ELE on the most high God. It was he who built the city called it Salem and became king to that the same city later it was called Jesus Salem. Melchizedek was recently appointed priest of Jerusalem. To

the same city Abraham came to sacrifice his son Isaac, when God asked him to test his faith.

It was the same Jerusalem which was under the control of Jebusites tribes and they called it Jebus. But later king David happened to defeat those Jebusite and made their fortress his capital. The first patriarch Abraham tried to sacrifice his son on the mount Moriah on the same mountain king Solomon built a temple called the house of God to live among his chosen people on earth. It was the same Jesus Salem where in the Lamb of God Jesus Christ died on the cross for the sake of the sinners of the world. To this same Jerusalem Jesus will come for his coronation as the lion of the tribe of Judah to become the king of kings and lord of lords.

Jerusalem:

- 1) Jerusalem is the centre and the capital city of human history.
- 2) New Jerusalem will be the centre and capital of Christ's millennial kingdom.
- 3) New Jerusalem is the city father Abraham looked for which fath foundations whose builder and maker is God.
- 4) New Jerusalem is the city built for the church, the bride of Christ (Revelation 21.9)
- 5) New Jerusalem is the city which will descend out of heaven like a chandelier and rest upon the earth (Revelation 3.12:21.20)
- 6) New Jerusalem is a city in which God himself will dwell (Revelation 21.11:22.23)
- 7) New Jerusalem is a city constructed with the most precious material (Revelation 21.18.21)
- 8) New Jerusalem is a city of safety and perpetual day (Revelation 21.25)
- 9) New Jerusalem is a city where nothing that defiles can enter (Revelation 21.27)
- 10) New Jerusalem is a city whose inhabitants will know only good and endless life (Revelation 22.1)

11) New Jerusalem is a city of unending obedience and provision (Revelation 22.2)

12) New Jerusalem is a city whose inhabitants have intimate access to the same (Revelation 22.3-4)

New Jerusalem is a city of spectacular dimension. It may be in the shape of pyramid or in the form of a great mountain. The bible also describes that it must be twelve thousand furlongs in each direction and equivalent of 1500 thousand miles wide deep and high. It is composed of floors at one side intervals and there would be 1500 levels. There would be no other city to compare with this New Jerusalem. This will be home of all those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God. There are two words that might elude and from them only one will survive. The world that will survive has to be ruled by the son of God and saviour of men and women for a thousand years in the new heaven and new earth.

- 1) The new heaven and new earth are the present heaven and earth. They are purged by fire and made the people perfect through regeneration.
- 2) The new heaven and new earth commences from the beginning of the millennial but not at the end.
- 3) After rapture of the church those left on the earth who survive the day of the Lord and exhibit faith in Christ after His return are the sheep who will enter the new heaven and new earth.
- 4) The New Jerusalem after its coming down from heaven as the capital city of new heaven and new earth it will be the dwelling place of the true Christ and the New Jerusalem shall be the bride of Jesus Christ.

14. THE RELIGION OF ISLAM

Theological colleges and seminaries are regularly offering answers on non-Christian religions. So, student's particularly future missionaries can better understand what others believe. Here, this article is written with the purpose and with biblical perception. As a matter of fact it must be said regarding some defects of the teaching of Islam the knowledge of it that has been followed and believed by the people of the world. But this can help us more effectively regarding the Christian faith. Islam is a religion which became more prominent and came into forefront in American news because of politics and military struggle in the Middle East when some people are interested in historical background of the religion and the belief others are interested in questions and their ---first question is --who are the Sunnis and Shiites? Let us try to find out some clue about the difference between these two divisions in Islam

Sunnis and Shiites':

The name Sunnites or Sunnis refers to majority of those (groups) who practice Islam and differentiate themselves from the Shiites or Shias. Sunnis are those who follow the Sunna practices of the prophet Mohammed and who are loyal to the majority of the community. Sunnis Muslims see Sunna practices as being in harmony with the Koran in its elaboration of Islamic laws. Shiites is (derived from Shi'at Ali party of Ali) make up the second largest branch of Islam. After the death of Mohammed a split took place concerning encouraging the leadership of Islam. The Shiites insisted that only the members of Mohammad's family especially the descendants of his daughter Fatima and her husband Ali should be the next caliph.

Christianity and Islam are mutually exclusive

To understand briefly Christianity and Islam are theologically and mutually exclusive let us see what must be the difference between them

1. Christianity teaches grace through faith to get salvation whereas Islam requires certain things such as praying five times each day by turning their faces toward Mecca in order to fulfill the requirements such as studying the Koran (the Islamic scripture) then only their men or women would become righteous Christianity in the New Testament makes it aware that an individual can be saved and the sins of his or her be forgotten and also each individual shall be justified by believing in Christ and a sinners forgiveness provide a place in heaven so it is declared in Ephesians 2-8-9 “for by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God not of works lest any man should boast”.
2. Christianity teaches that Jesus is Gods only begotten son, the messiah as promised in the Old Testament prophecies. The prophecy teaches us that he died on the cross voluntarily as a substitute for our atonement. Then on the third day he rose from the dead and ascended to his father. As he himself said he would come again to judge the quick and the dead but Islam religion denies all the above said facts and believe that they are the errors of the New Testament. They believe it was Judas Iscariot who was put on the cross but not Jesus Christ and also Jesus did not raise from the dead. The Muslim leaders finally concluded that Jesus was only the tenth prophet out of fourteen prophets.
3. Christianity speaks about Jesus as the promised messiah and the only savior sent from God (acts 4.12). But Islam rejects this fact also and tells people that Mohammad superseded Jesus. They tried to correct various errors according to them taught in the Christian New Testament.
4. Christianity has a theistic theology and in that God will answer all the prayer of the believers if they are satisfied to the will of God. The prayers are so powerful, that they can change things wonderfully where as Islam requires submission to Allah will understand in a manner wearing all things are written and settled and must be so accepted .
5. One of the fundamental principles of Christianity is that they must forgive their enemies and pray for them. In this context Jesus said “but

I say unto you love your enemies bless them that curse you do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you” (Matthew 5.34). Here this is not to advocate national pacifism but it shows how Christianity is always striving to establish peace, while history speaks about the sad accounts of Christian’s religious wars after the reformation the fact is that this is not the ideal nor in the direction of our Lord’s teachings. These teachings of our Lord however stand in opposition to Islam or to any radical extremist. Such people would promise heavenly reward to those by terrorism plant bombs, that kill innocent men women and children

Beginning of Islam and the Koran:

Koran (Quran) is a sacred book of Islam religion. It is divided into 114 suras (sections chapter’s recitations). It was proclaimed for the first time during the seventh century AD. It is the Muslim belief that in the year 610 A.D. in the month of Ramadan Allah (the name of the Muslim God in Arabic language) revealed his words to Mohammad through the archangel Gabriel it appears like Judaism and Christianity are non atheistic but traces its roots back to Abraham through Ishmael. This Muslim revelation said to have begun with the words. In the name of God this compassionates the merciful In the Koran it is said that each chapter begins with prayers. The theme of that is there will be only one God (Allah) that he is great (Akbar). That is above all beings and beyond all human reasoning the introduction by the translator shows his reverence for it when he writes

The Koran is the earliest and by far
The finest work of classical Arabic
Prose for Muslims it is the infallible
Word of God a transcript of a tablet
Preserved in heaven revealed to the
Prophet Mohammad by the angel
Gabriel except in the opening verses
And some few passages in which the
Prophet or the angel speaks in the

First person the speaker throughout is God

The Koran regularly distinguish between what is called “people of the book” (this is Christians and Jews, who were to be lived cautiously in peace and harmony although taxed) and infidels atheistic unbelievers or idol worshippers who were not to be tolerated. Following are some of the lines from Koran.

Say people of the book you will attain
Nothing until you observe the torah
And the gospel and that which has
Been revealed to you from your lord
Believers Jews Saharans and
Christians whoever believes in God?
And the last days and does what is
Right shall have nothing to fear or
Regret (Koran surah the table 568-69)

Islam certainly welcomes converts but those who leave the faith of Islam are severally looked down upon. This was all the more true in geographical areas where there was no person of another faith in the town and where the language was only Arabic why because it was the language of Koran. So to say without Arabic bible translations conversion of a Muslim into Christianity or Judaism would find himself dealing with a foreign language. It may be Hebrew in which the Old Testament was written or Greek language in which the New Testament was written.

Unfortunately some Muslims who want to embrace Christianity have to face some problems while contemplating on the biblical truth especially with Christian missionaries who sometimes pose as western foreigners. As a matter of fact Muslims were taught from their early age to hate Christian crusaders because of their invasion of Arab lands. Added to that the western society has become more ungodly and more secularized. But this crossing of language and culture made it more difficult for an isolated Muslim to consider other faiths and hear the good news of Jesus Christ. The Muslim community in a close observation and association expressed their fear about

Christianity, they also declared that if any family wished to embrace Christianity such family would forego some benefits like social standing educational opportunities and even safety from any untoward events. So to say their impression about Jesus was very pathetic. They used to think that Jesus was only a prophet. They elevated Mohammad by saying that he was the last and greatest of the prophets where as their idea about Jesus was that he was a true prophet of God but not divine and he was never crucified. Regarding Mary (Jesus mother) she was taken to be model of woman and of purity (Koran 4.155-59; 66.12)

Muslim view point is that the Koran would correct and explain as well as adding to the past revelations given to Prophet Moses and Jesus. They used to think about Koran as the book of which would prescribe to practice (prayer pilgrimage etc.). The faithful Muslims used to observe their prayers pilgrimage to Mecca in order to please their God. Their religion is called Islam which means submission it is peace (1 salaam) a true Muslim is he who submits himself the will of God thereby have peace of mind (me salaam). As the readers of the bible the believers can understand the similarity between Arabic and Hebrew words; salaam and shalom. Both the words are spelled with the consonants SLM some years ago the common saying used by the westerners was moslim, but today Muslim is preferred.

Mahammad was a prosperous leader in the western part of the Arabian Peninsula. He happened to marry a rich widow at the age of 25 and her name was khadijah. Islamic text says he received revelations when he was about 40 years old. Since then he was known as the prophets. And the Muslims accepted him as the last and final prophet in the list of prophets including Abraham and Jesus. As it is written in their traditions Mohammad had a vision and according to that he was lifted up to heaven on his horse. It is said he used to pray upon which now encased inside haram alsharif the Dome of the rock in Jerusalem. Due to this Jerusalem is also considered the third holiest place (city) the first and second being Mecca and medina.

During the middle ages when the Muslim rule was at its peak and the influence over Middle East was also at the highest, Bagdad was

considered the greatest city among the Muslim cities for a long time. The Muslim calendar began in the year 622 AD. When Mohammad made his "flight" (Arabic Hegira) from Mecca to Medina where he started the Muslim religion. Mohammed happened to flee from Mecca due to persecution in the city of Yathrib which is about 273 miles. The city (received him with honor) it was called Medina. So, the Muslims have finally three important pilgrimage cities and they are called Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem. Mohammed died in 632 AD at the age of 63. After his death Abu Bakr was chosen as his successor of the next Caliph (the chief Muslim civic and religious ruler)

The teachings of Islam:

In Medina the first revelation of SHARIAH (religious based law or tradition) is said to have come out with its prophecies of URRNA which means friendship with fellow Muslims Justice including right sentence in criminal cases; compassion especially toward slaves who were to be freed if they accepted Islam right to life particularly against the practice at the time of killing unwanted female babies; then **ADDAN** which means the call to prayer five times daily **QEBIA** which means prayer should not be done while facing **JERUSALEM**; but any person while praying must look at Mecca only. In addition to the above said important points the Muslims should show their tolerance toward the people of the book called Jews and Christians.

According to the principles of Islamic religion Muslims are prohibited from drinking alcohol gambling and eating of pork. They also hold among other things like status and pictures are a violation of the second commandment. They should not keep any images either in their houses or any important places. The five pillars of Islam the principal duties are:

SHADADAH: which means witnessing to their faith?

SARAT: means prayer of adoration and submission and also praying five times daily by turning the face toward Mecca

ZAKAR: giving alms to the poor.

SAWN: means fasting during the day light in the entire month of Ramadan.

HAJE: means taking a pilgrimage to Mecca. This has to be accomplished at least once in their life time. There the religion or Haji performs various traditional ceremonies around the kaba (Arabic for lube) which has been the central shrine of Islam from the beginning.

Jerusalem and the Dome of the rock:

The Dome of the rock in Jerusalem was built on the summit of Mount Moriah according to the Bible Genesis 22 chapter it was the same place to which patriarch Abraham happened to take his only son Isaac to sacrifice when God asked him to do so. God did all that just to test the faith of Abraham. And also it was the same places king Solomon built a wonderful temple of God after one thousand years of this event unfortunately this glorious temple was miserably destroyed in 586 BC by the Babylonian army. Then the second temple was built on the same foundations between 536-516 BC and that was also destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD

Caliph Abdal Malik an eminent Muslim leader built the octagonal domed shrine known today as the Dome of the rock between 689-691 A.D. and at that time the Dome was covered with lead only. And finally that Dome of the rock became a holy site in Jerusalem because the Muslim believe that (1) Abraham took Ishmael to that to sacrifice, but according to the bible it was Isaac not Ishmael (2) Abraham was called father of faith (3) that place was identified as the location and basing on the tradition they believe that Mohammad prayed in that place and was taken to heaven either bodily or in a vision. Then under Suleiman the magnificent of (1520-1566) AD the ottoman Turk empire reached its pinnacle and Suleiman built the walls of Jerusalem which remained till today. He retained the eastern and western walls and moved old south wall line to the north. He also moved part of the southwest hill of mount Zion outside the city.

During his time only the Dome of the rock was covered with gold. It is said in the recent years that golden Dome was regarded with even more gold. Every believer must remember that the holiest place to Muslims in

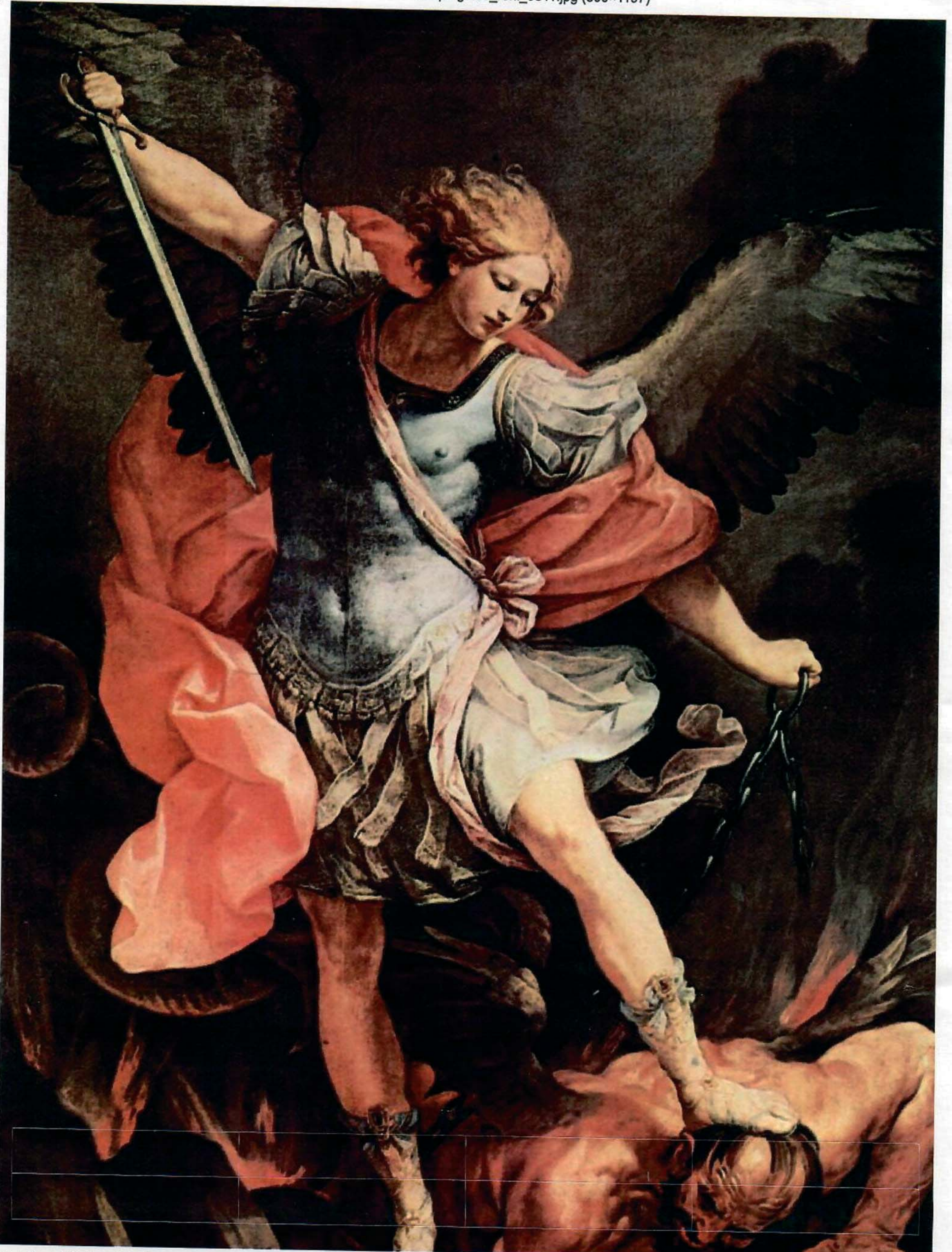
Jerusalem is the “**Dome of the Rock**”. The holiest site for the Jews is the western wall or waiting wall and for many Christians the holiest site is the holy sepulcher church and for some believer is the golden tomb. The western wall and the church of the holy sepulcher are located in the Christian colony.

In 1917 British general along with some allied forces fought against the Turks and with their other supporters conquered Jerusalem. Then it was held by the British under mandate by the League of Nations from 1917-1947, until the United Nations voted for the partition. As a result the sovereign state of Israel was created. Jerusalem and the dome of the rock were cut out of the land which was given to the young country Jordan. Then in 1967 June 6-11 Israel had to fight six day war knowing that it was going to be attacked by the surrounding Arab nations. So Israel launched a pre emptive strike and conquered the territory of the west bank. It was controlled by Jerusalem in spite of controversies both external and internal. Since the dome of the rock is a holy site for Muslims, Israel gave it to the local management and security over the Muslims authorities. For centuries, Muslims, Christian and Jesus have had varying relationship and lived in peace and harmony with mutual tolerance. In other times the Muslims armies ran across Europe and North Africa conquering Christian lands. The crusaders of 12th and 13th centuries saw Christian’s armies on the march and tried to recover those lands and the holy sites in Israel

Some Muslim today would like to see saria (Muslim law) the law over different nations. They seemed to be too western or too moderate by not making Islamic law concerned to religion, the official legal law of their countries. They have taken violence and terrorism as the only means to undermine those governments. At the same time there are some moderate Muslims who always prefer peace, but they too are warned of attacks and threats by the world terrorist. So far the believers can understand through this article that there is no peace and harmony between Christians and Muslims on any occasion. They have been living as perpetual enemies. Basing on the above said information regarding the relationship between the Christians and Muslims the readers can make it clear that it is the desire

of the Christians to see the Muslims to be evangelized toward the fulfillment of (revelation 7.9-10) which God will surely bring about.

“After this I be held and to a great
Multitude which no man could
Number of all nations and kindred’s
And people and tongues stand before
The throne and before the Lamb
Clothed with white robes and palms in
Their hands and cried with a loud
Voice saying salvation to over God
Which sitteth upon the throne and
Unto the lamb (Revelation 7.9-10)
Say ye not there are yet four
Months and then cometh harvest
Behold I say unto you lift up your
Eyes and look on the fields for they
Are white already to harvest” (John 4.35)



Gabriel

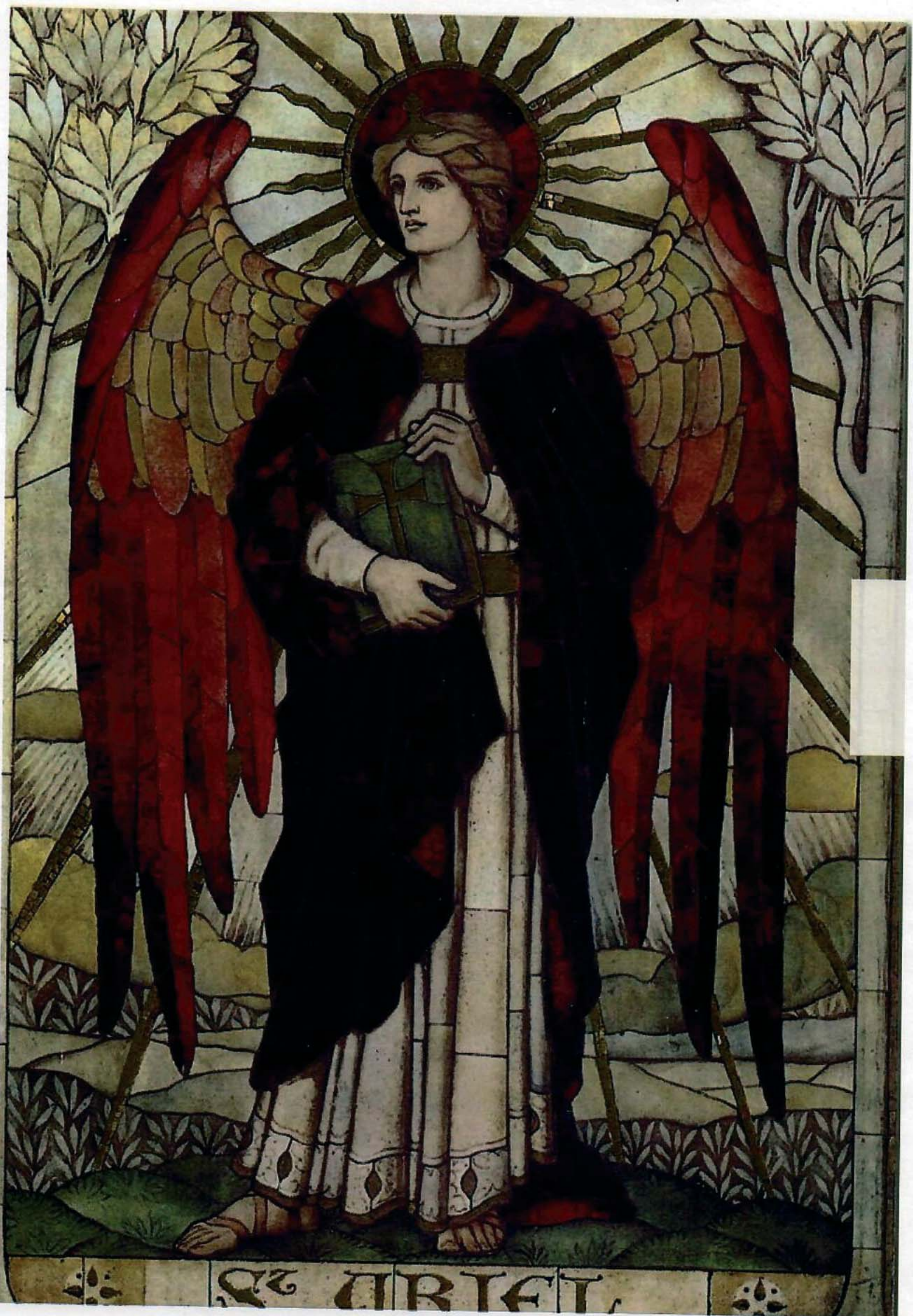
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GAVRIL

2







S. GABRIEL



Archangel Raguel







The Importance of the Scroll

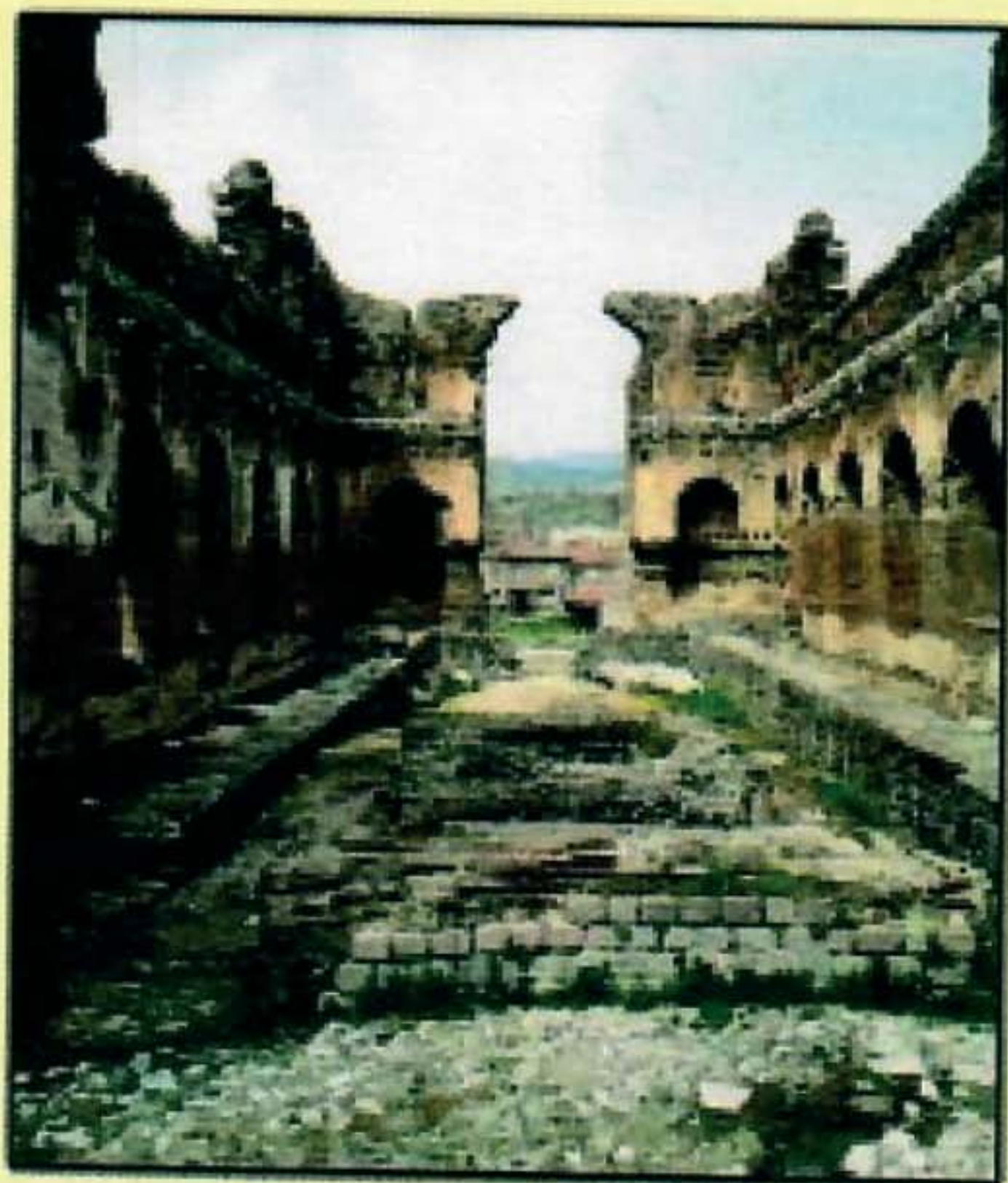


In the fifth chapter of the Book of Revelation, John saw a scroll with seven seals in the hand of God who was seated upon His throne in Heaven.

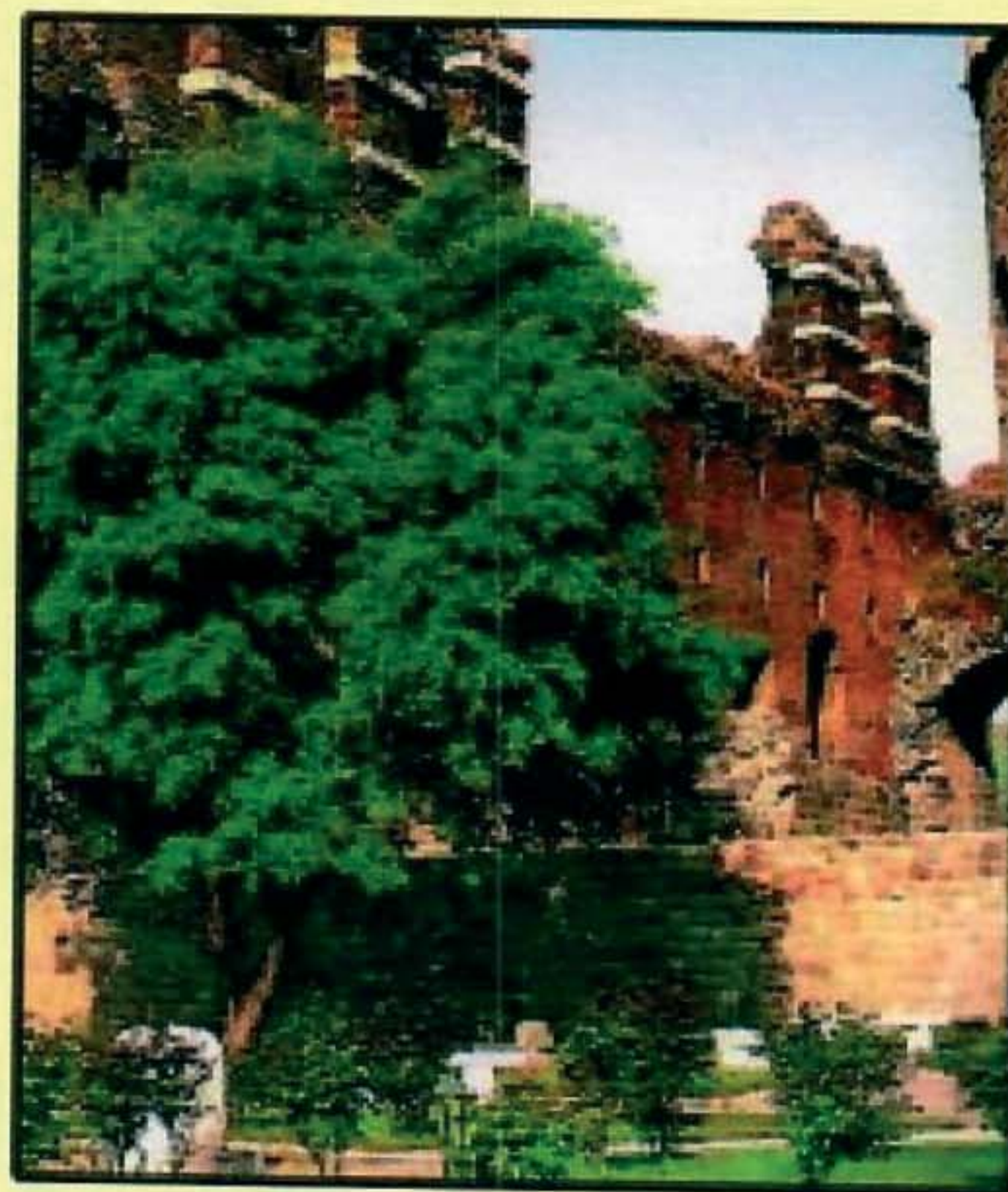
THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM



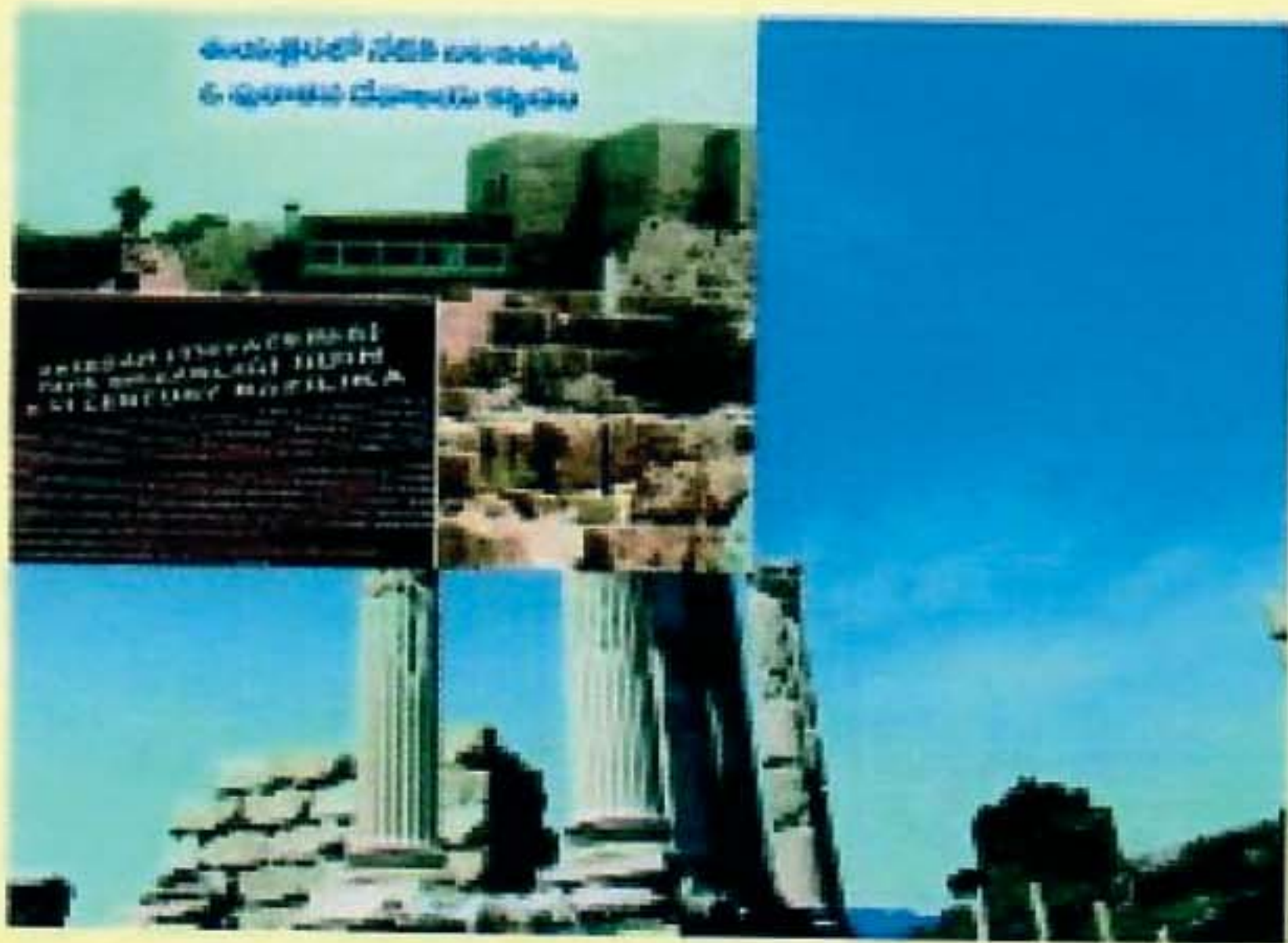
A church decoraton in Byzantine age



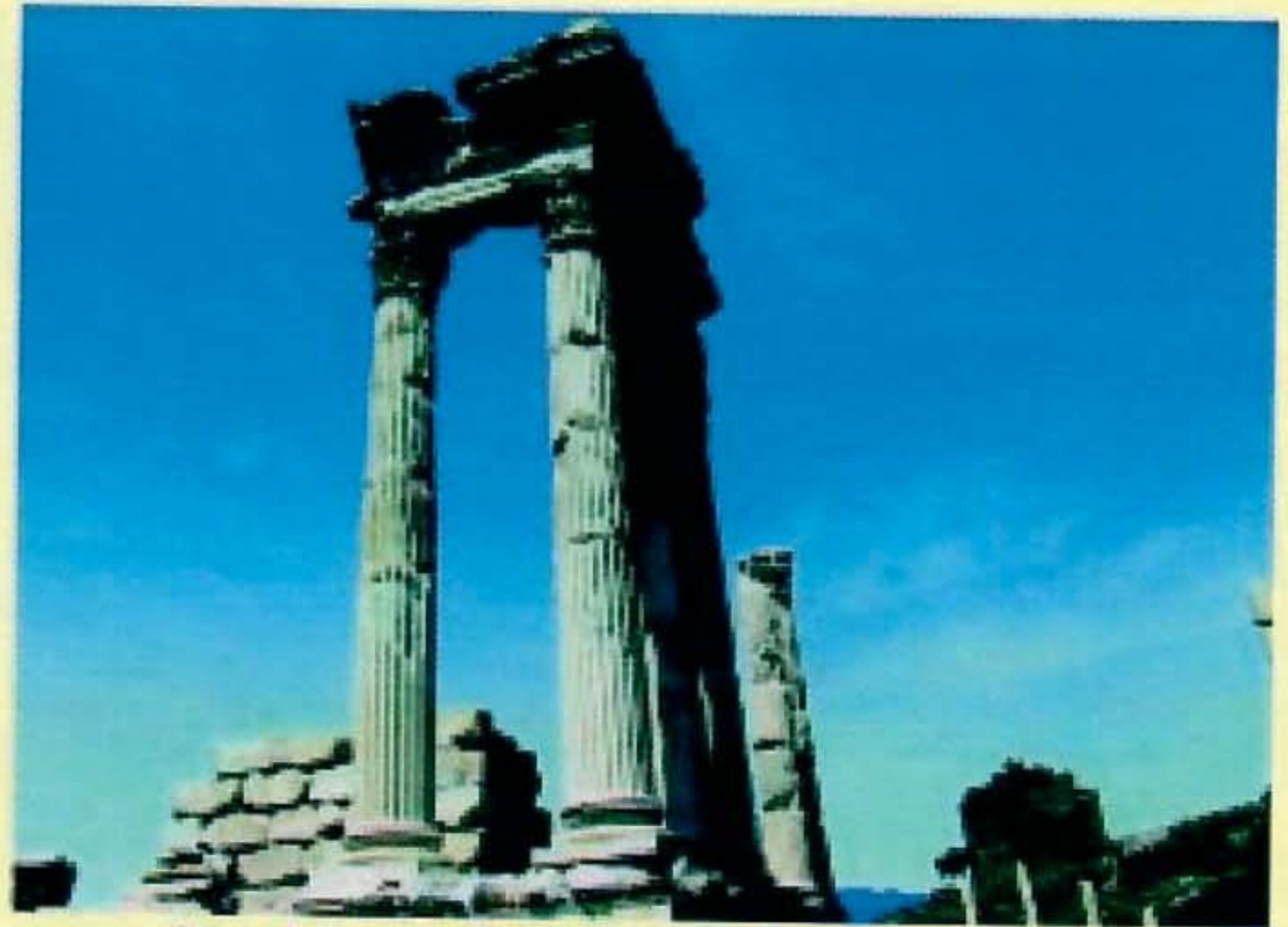
The red bricks of the
St. Ioannes Church



The Crimson Basilica



An old ruin in Thyatira

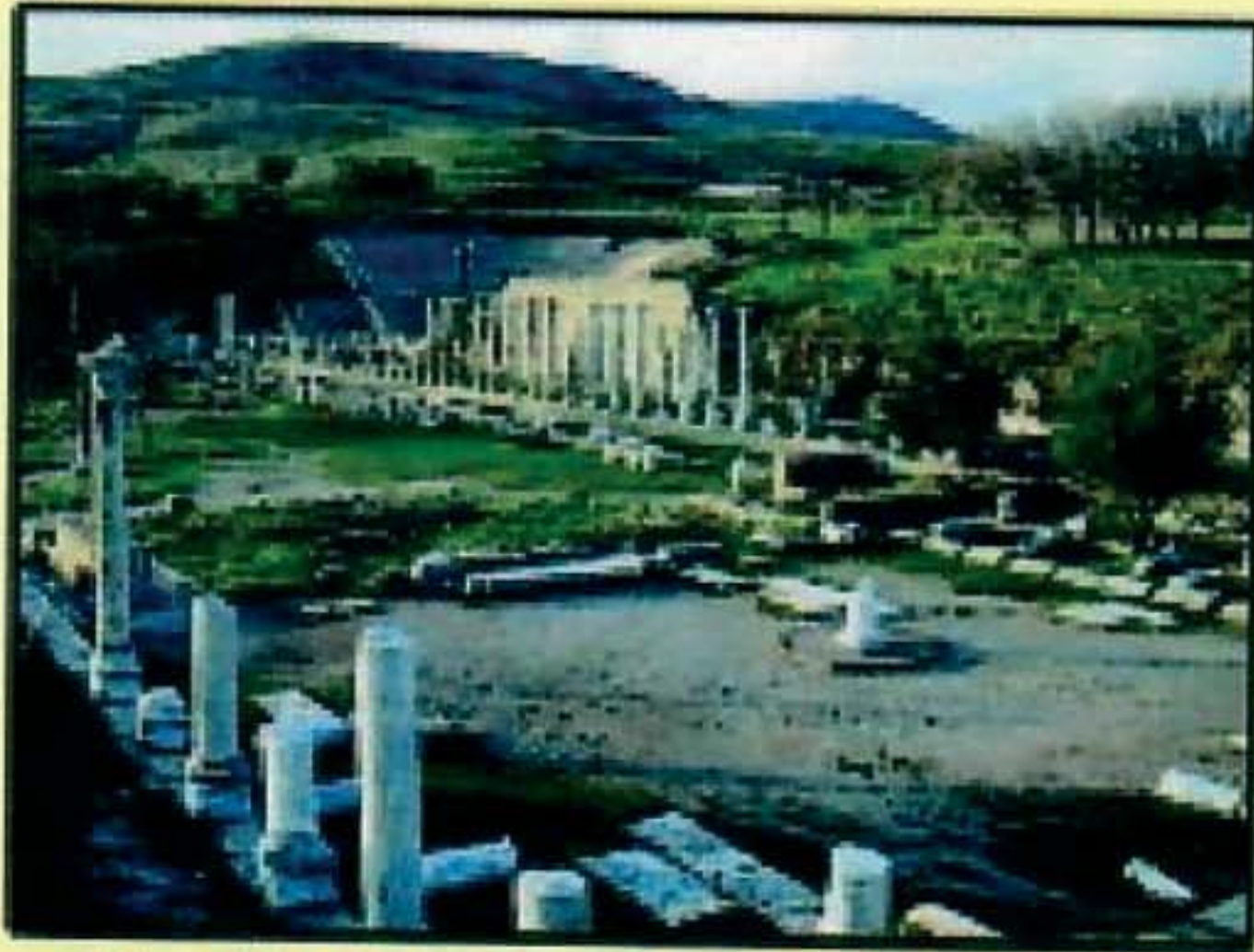


An old construction in Pergamum

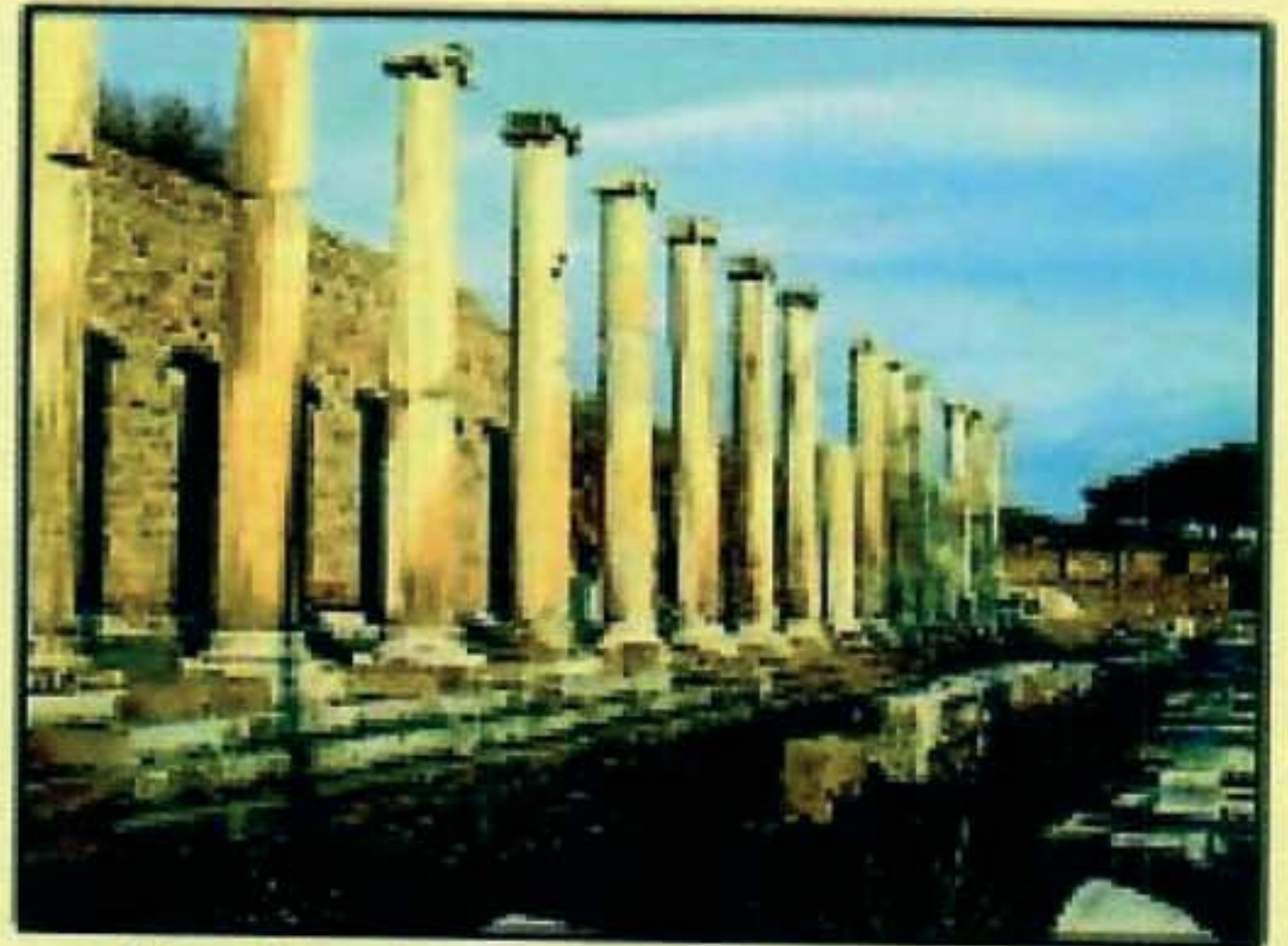


Polikarp, a famous martyr in Smirna

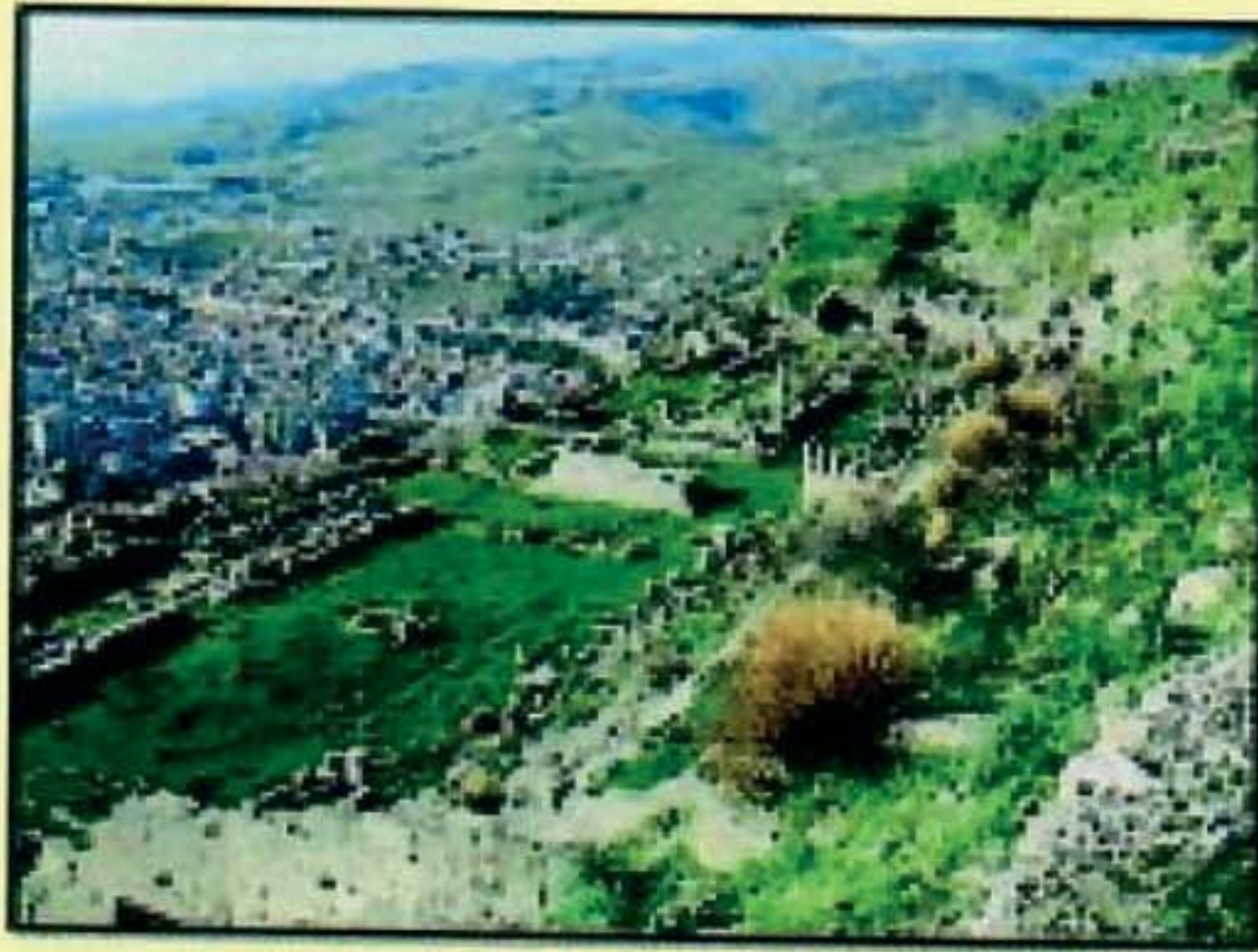
THE CHURCH AT PERGAMUM



North side of the Asklepieum
and the Stadium



North side of the Asklepieum



The holy place of Demeter



The Acropolis remains

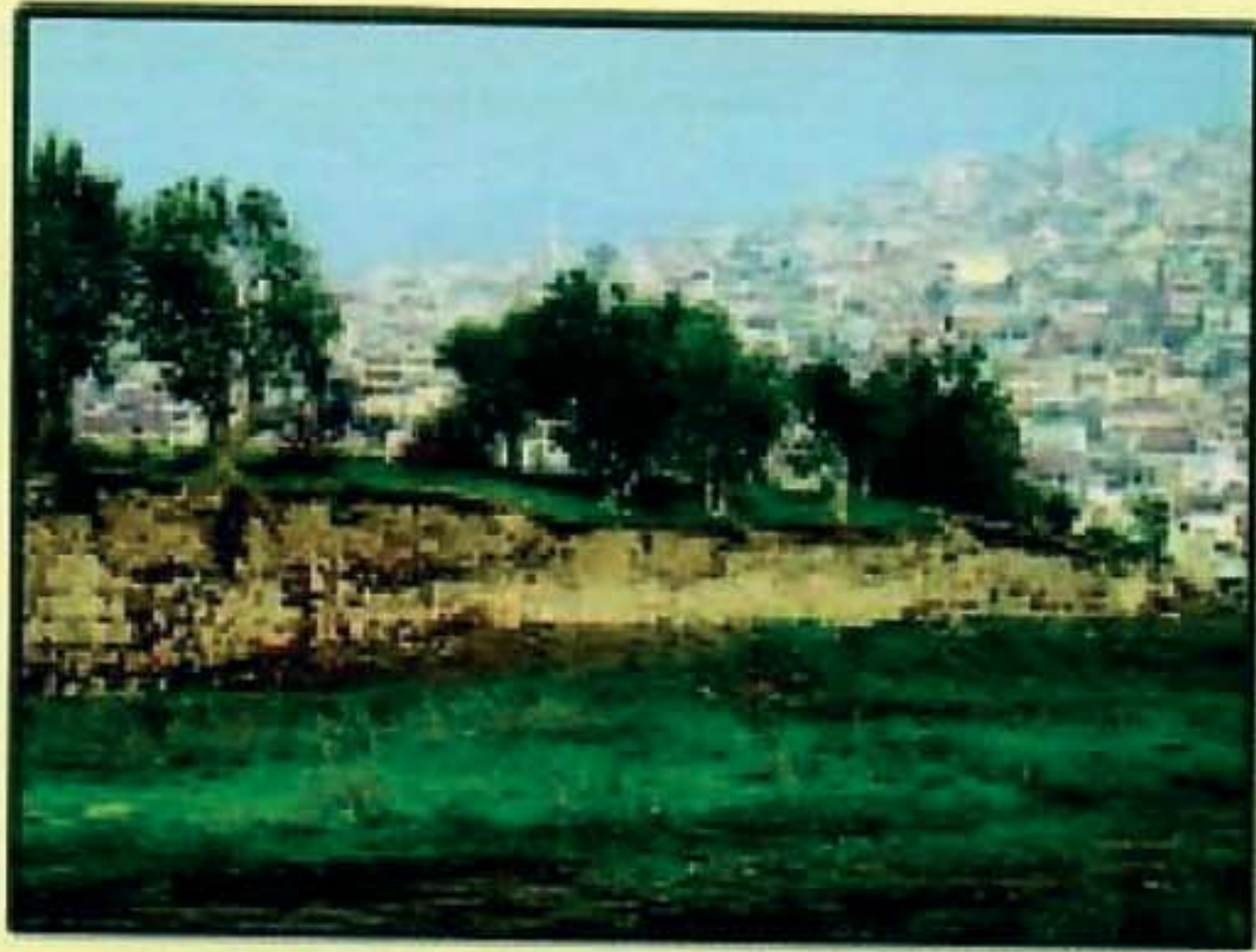


The town looking westward of
the Acropolis



Way to the Asklepieum

THE CHURCH AT SMYRNA



East side of Smyrna



The Temple of Athena



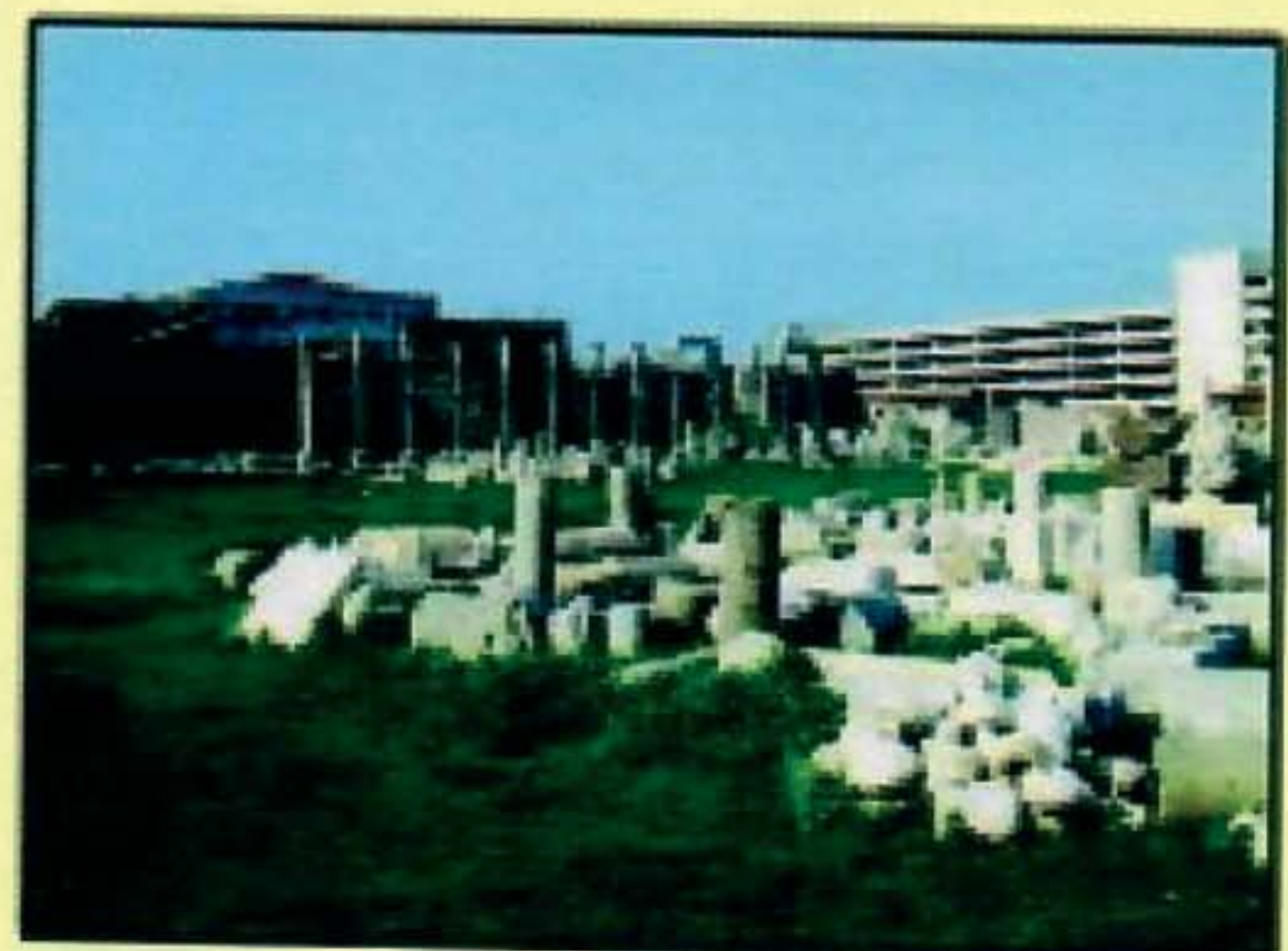
Acropolis Ssystem



Agora Arches



Agora



Agora

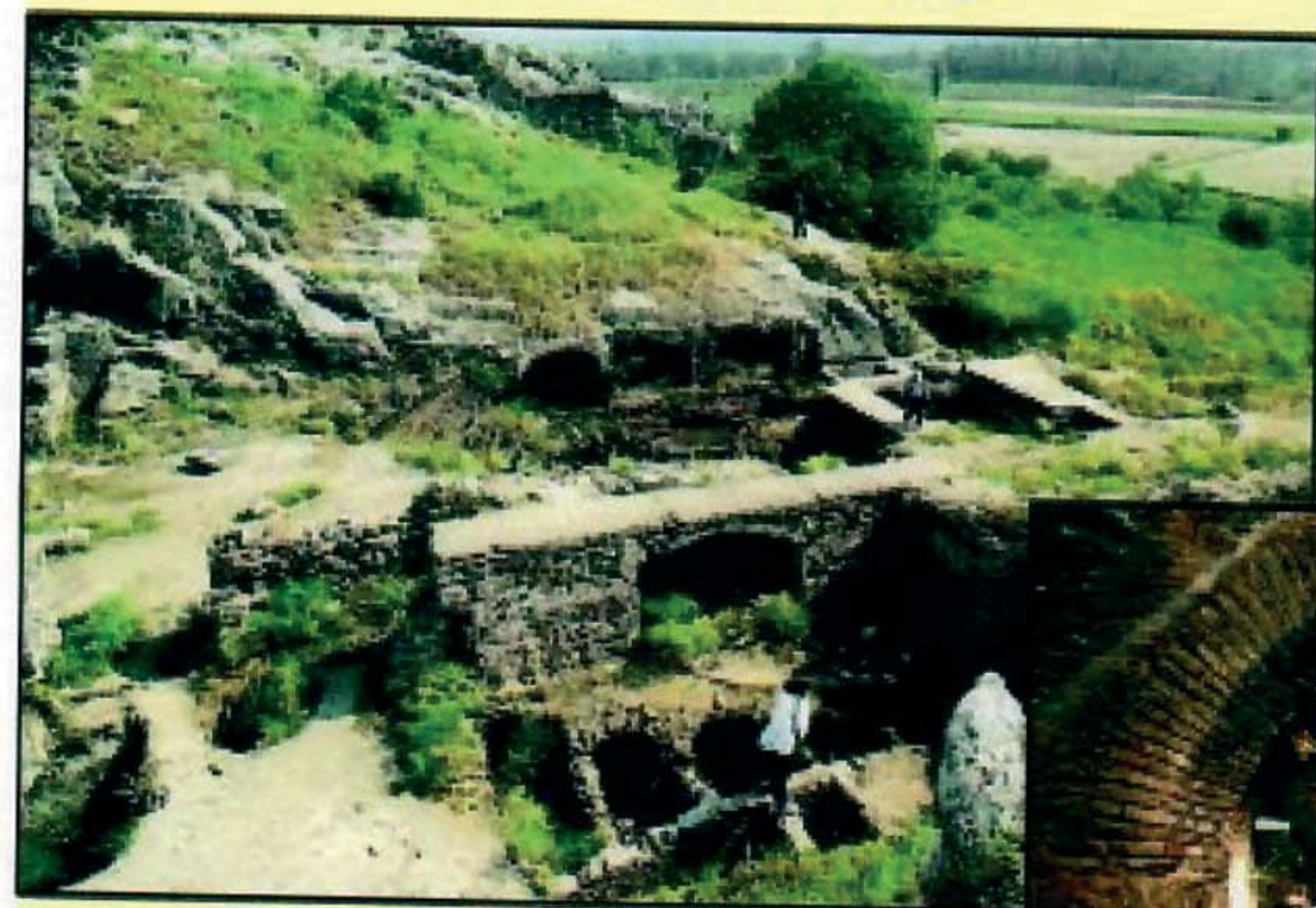
THE CHURCH AT EPHESUS



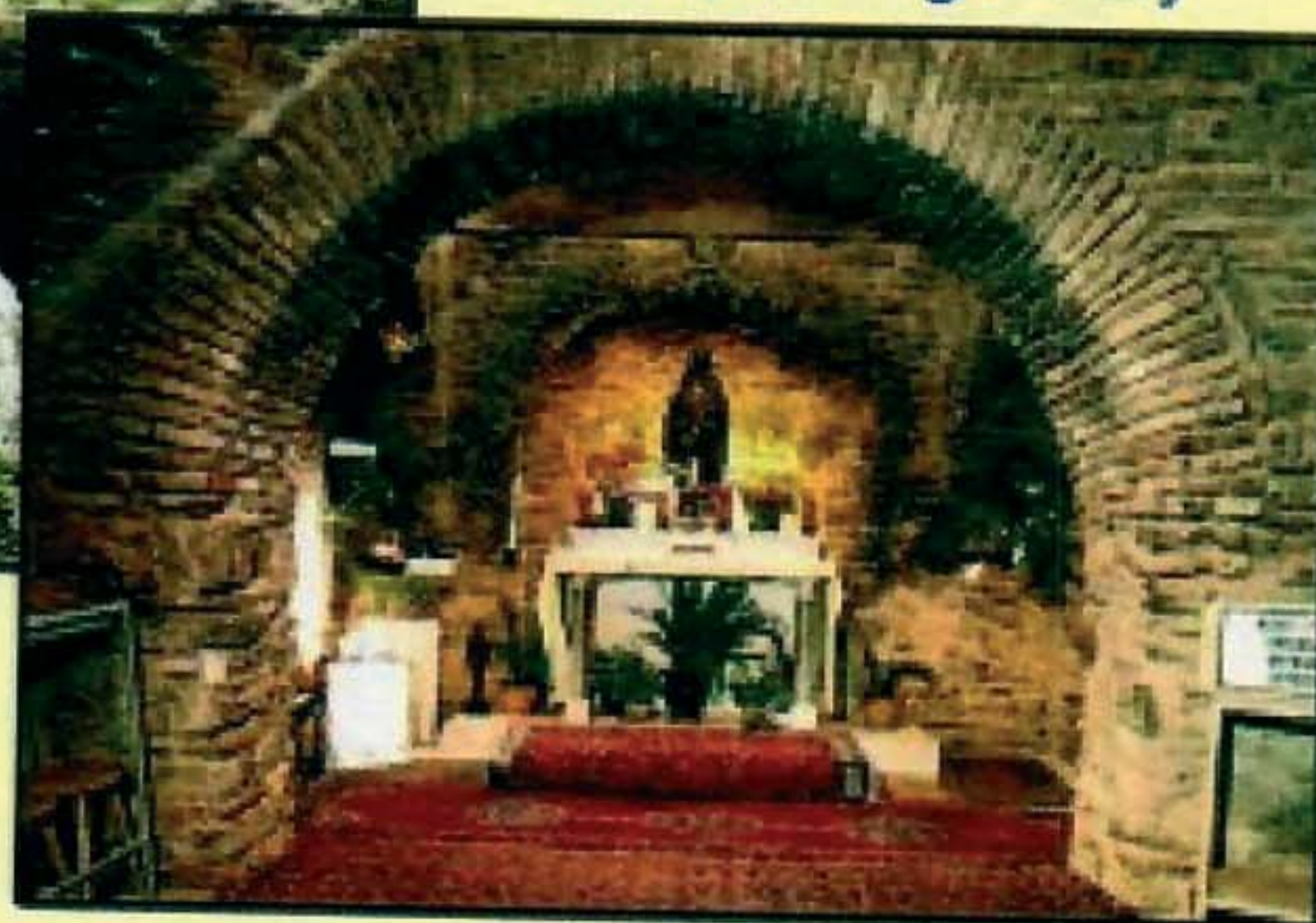
Statue of the Blessed Virgin



The Church of St. John



Grotto of the Seven Sleepers



House of Virgin Mary

THE CHURCH AT PHILADELPHIA



St. Johns Church remains



City view from the Acropolis



South view from Acropolis



The river of Herme near Philadelphia

THE CHURCH AT LAODICIA



The street near Nephime



The Stadium on the east side



Bathrooms and the Zymnaseum



Bridge on the river Lycia



Life is a function and thinking is functionary. People think or imagine so many things but they cannot put them into black and white, unless they are awarded with the gift of writing from the Heavenly Father. God blessed me with that gift of writing and I started at the age of seventy. So far, I wrote Ten Books and “Christian Angelology” is the Eleventh book. The theme of all those books is historical background of the Bible, regarding the events and personalities.

I studied so many books on the Biblical History in America and excited to find new information. I wished to share what all I know with other Bible readers primarily with theological students. So that they too can make use of my books in future as the servants of God. In this connection, “I would like to mention what Francis Bacon said,” Reading maketh a full man conference a ready man and writing an exact man”.

Rev. Dr. Sundara Rao Tsappidi; M.A., D.Litt.
Author

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D.No. 47-2-7, Lourdunagar, Gunadala, Vijayawada - 520004
A.P., India. Ph. 0866 - 2451783