

GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement.



DIVINE PERCEPTION OF THIS **WORLD**



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DIVINE PERCEPTION OF THIS WORLD



By Nelson Thomas

“What is happening to the world”, asked a distraught man pointing out the latest developments in central Asia. He is not alone; many from around the globe express the same feeling. On one side, the world is reeling under an unparalleled pandemic of the recent times with a death toll of more than 45 lakh already. Along with that the natural calamities like hurricanes, wildfires and the political instability in many nations are playing havoc in the society. Even in such a difficult situation, certain groups of people do not hesitate to unleash terror in the name of their faith! Can man be so hard-hearted and cruel?

Another disastrous reality that we seldom notice is that the international community is concerned about the sufferings of certain groups of people, but ignores the pain and horror of many others. Many bloodbaths in the African nations go unnoticed. Sad to notice that most media is biased; politicians and even governments are not transparent. No wonder the common man feels helpless and hopeless looking at the world at large.

As Bible believing Christians, what should our perspective be of this rapidly changing world scenario? As we are bombarded with such painful and disturbing news through various mediums, what should our response be?

Let us briefly consider how the Lord Jesus Christ viewed the world when He was on earth. Remember the Lord Jesus referred to the world number of times in different contexts. Sometimes He meant the age or dispensation; or it was a reference to the earth, inhabited world, humanity or even the standard of living of this world. We

will focus on Christ’s view of the world in a general sense without going into the details of those different connotations, yet highlighting the ethical aspect.

1. THE PRESENT WORLD SYSTEM IS TEMPORARY, MATTHEW 24:21; 25:34 CF. 24:25

The world has a beginning and it will have a sure end too. Apostle John wisely puts it, “And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (1John 2: 17). The deterioration of the world system has already begun. That’s not just an assumption. Anyone who carefully considers the world events knows it well that as the days go by more than developments, we would see declensions only.

Yes, there may be claims of progress in many areas, but the overall condition of the world at large is pathetic. Is it not the reason why many try to flee from their own countries even risking their lives? As they see the ever deteriorating quality of lifestyle in their land, they are worried about their future and of their children.

The scripture reveals that no politician or government can really fix the issue of the world. They may make tall claims to make a better world, and even try for it, but they cannot. The creator Himself spoke of the end of the world, and so that must be true. (cf. James 1: 10, 11; 2Peter 3: 10)

That’s why godly men with spiritual outlook refused to live for this vanishing world, but sacrificed everything for eternity. Of course we should sympathise with the suffering ones and

do whatever we can to help them. However, the foremost charitable work for the helpless one is to point out the reality of this world and prepare them for eternity.

William MacDonald has put it wisely, “When a bank is breaking, smart people do not deposit in it. When the foundation is tottering, intelligent builders do not proceed. Concentrating on this world is like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.”

The well-known words of Jim Elliot is noteworthy in this aspect; “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.”

2. THE PRESENT WORLD SYSTEM IS CONTROLLED BY THE WICKED ONE, JOHN 12: 31; 14: 30; 16: 11

The Lord Jesus repeatedly referred to a ‘ruler of the world’ who is Satan himself. Earlier, the devil had claimed the ownership of the whole world. (Matthew 4: 9) Paul calls him the “god of this age”. (2Corinthians 4: 4) John writes, “The whole world lies in the power of the evil one.” (1John 5: 19b) All these and several other scripture portions reveal the satanic influence upon the world system. No wonder he is called the “prince of the kingdom of Persia” in Daniel 10: 13.

The practical implications that emerge from this reality are threefold:

a) We cannot expect anything better from such a world system.

In spite of the enormous efforts by various agencies and spending of massive resources, the end result is chaos. Look around and notice the confusion prevailing in almost every country whether in the political realm or in any other aspect. Each one is using all kinds of falsehood for their own survival and ultimately the common man is struggling.

Why is it so?

The underlying factor is, when the driving force behind natural man is not divine, it is bound to

fail sooner or later.

b) We should have the discernment to see satanic traps. Cf. Matthew 18: 7

The world has enough ways to seduce and snare a God-fearing child of God. The inherent sinful nature within us and the never-satisfied cravings of our eyes along with the ever present ego are some of the fallen natures of man being used by Satan to trap us. (1John 2: 16; 1Timothy 3: 6)

As mentioned earlier, in spite of the progress in various fields, the moral state of the world deteriorates day by day. That’s the reason why the shameful things of yesterday have become today’s honourable things. (Philippians 3: 19). Sad, many born again Christians fail to discern this deception and fall into the trap of the world by adopting the immoral worldly style without any shame.

The result of such a wrong influence is an unfruitful spiritual life. The word of God is not effective in their lives. Apart from that, the joy and freshness of spiritual life is lost. (cf. Matthew 13: 22; 16: 26; Mark 8: 36). The adverse effect of adopting worldly fashion is not confined to one’s own life, but it will definitely alter even the life of generations. What a pity; gaining the whole world and losing the generation!

c) We should not be surprised at the hostilities. John 15: 18, 19

When the value system and lifestyle of Christian believers are intrinsically contrary to the world, conflict is bound to happen. That’s why Christ warned, “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” (John 15: 18, 19)

It’s impossible for a believer to stay true to the word of God and be a friend of this world. James makes it very clear, “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4: 4)

What strong words James the brother of Jesus Christ is using to describe a professing Christian's affection for a worldly pattern of life. A true born again child of God cannot love that which God hates. It is in response to such an uncompromising stand of a Christian the world is unleashing antagonism and hatred against believers.

As the Lord Jesus warned in advance, if the world hated and crucified Him, what more shall we expect from this evil world. (cf. 1Peter 4: 12) Down through the centuries, millions of godly men and women have sacrificed their lives holding on to their faith in Christ. It's foolishness to expect an easy path today.

3. GOD HAS A DEFINITE PLAN FOR THIS WORLD.

There are some who think, God created the world but He has failed to keep it in order, so He has abandoned it to fend for itself! No, that is not true. Even though God has permitted the evil one to have his way, God is still on the throne. (Isaiah 40: 22, 23; Daniel 2: 21; 4: 17) He has a well-designed program in connection with the redemption and the restoration of His creation.

We read that "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (John 3: 16, 17). Amazing indeed, God loves the inhabitants of this world irrespective of their spiritual, moral condition. In His grace and mercy God wants to save them from their sinful life and its consequences.

The incarnation of Christ and His work on the cross of Calvary was part of this eternal program. (Galatians 4: 4) Every born again Christian should have a clear idea of these divine purposes for the world so that we invest our time and resources wisely for eternal benefits. Consider carefully the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was very much sure of His priorities; hence He avoided activities that were not part of His mission.

Even though the society He lived in had enough issues under a foreign rule, He never interfered

with those matters. He made no efforts to topple the government or even called for an agitation. Even when the public wanted Him to be their king, He avoided it. (John 6: 15) The Lord made it clear to Pilate the Roman governor, "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world." (John 18: 36) We need such clarity on our relationship and responsibilities in connection with this world.

A careful study of the scripture is necessary to discover these divine programs in an orderly manner. (Matthew 22: 29) Notice few things regarding this:

- a. Testifying truth to the world, John 18: 37
- b. Enlightening the world, John 8: 12; Matt 5: 14
- c. Saving the world, John 3: 17; 12: 47
- d. Preaching the gospel, Mark 16: 15-16
- e. Separating a people for Himself, John 17: 6 (Acts 15: 14; 1Peter 2: 9)

These are some of those major programs God is involved in this world today. The prince of the world has already been judged. Yet there awaits a series of judgments on this world. (John 16: 11; Acts 17: 31) One day God will set up a new heaven and new earth. (Isaiah 65: 17; 2Peter 3: 10; Revelation 21: 1)

Apostle Peter says that the awareness of such a plan of God should motivate us to live a holy and separated life in this uncertain world. (2Peter 3: 9 – 13) Rapid changes, whether political, economic or environmental, should not trouble a believer on the contrary it should remind us of the true state of this world.

Let us be conscious of the perilous days, the brevity of our time and the vastness of our responsibilities. Before it's too late, let us involve ourselves in those things in which God has a concern.

(NTK)

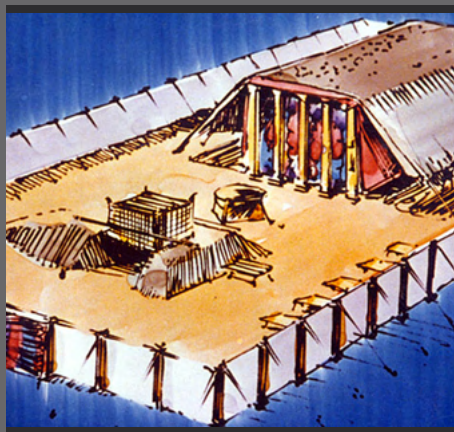
BRIEF NOTES ON TABERNACLE – 3



By Charles .E. Wigg , Australia

THE COURT OF THE TABERNACLE.

When God gives us the details of the Tabernacle, He begins with the ark and the Holy of Holies, and then works out. But for the purpose of our studies, we are going to go the other way, that is to approach the matter as one would who was coming to God in His house. The first thing that such would see is the court of the Tabernacle.



THE SIZE OF THE COURT

We notice that the court was very large, much larger than the Tabernacle itself, this would remind us of the largeness of God's heart, and the provision that He has made in the sacrifice of Christ, so that "whosoever will", may come and take freely of the "water of life", Rev. 22;17, that God desires that "All "men may be saved" 1Tim. 2: 4

God gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish", John 3; 16. It brings to mind the parable which the Lord Jesus told in Luke 14; 15-24, where the one who prepared the feast told the servants, after they had told him, "yet there is room", "That my house may be filled".

“As the love of the heavens makes us heavenly, the love of virtue virtuous, so doth the love of the world make one become worldly.”

THE FENCING

None can see over. The court was made of a linen fence 5 cubits, (about 8 feet) high. Because of its height, none could see over it, so that to know what went on inside, or to draw near to God, all must come through the gate. The Lord Jesus said, that "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God", John 3: 3

This explains why so many who fill important posts in "liberal" bible colleges etc., teach error, and sometimes destroy the faith of their students, they have never been born again, and thus the Kingdom of God remains a mystery to them. None can climb over. Because it was made of linen, none could climb over, like the thief and the robber of John 10: 1, and 8, to enter into salvation, one must enter by the "Door of the sheep", the Lord Jesus, the gate of the court.

“

The true man of God is heartsick, grieved at the worldliness of the Church, grieved at the toleration of sin in the Church, grieved at the prayerlessness in the Church.

- Leonard Ravenhill

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“

Christians should live in the world, but not be filled with it. A ship lives in the water; but if the water gets into the ship, she goes to the bottom.

- Dwight L. Moody

”

STICKING WITH GOD



By Alice John Ashapogu, Mumbai

Trials are not obstacles in Christian life, but a spark to stir us up in our spiritual growth. Many situations might come where we would fall over and scrape our knees and then complain and question God about it. “Life’s trials are not easy. But in God’s will, each has a purpose”, as Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe beautifully states.

One thing we know to be true is that we have a God who sees us going through all of it and still loves us. In the midst of all our difficulties and trials, He is with us. Even when we give Him innumerable reasons to not love us, yet nothing changes His nature; His love is steadfast. He is right there with us.

But sometimes, maybe we get a little too accustomed to it. I suppose that’s what the disciples felt when their boat was tossed with waves and they started to panic (Mark 4:35-41). This led me to conjecture that why did the disciples have to panic when the Lord Jesus was right there with them? Perhaps, they did not expect the storm to take place in the first place because Jesus was in the boat with them.

Likewise, we think if God is by our side, our life must be free of trials; however, God never promised a life free of trials here on earth. We will have to face trials. But what God promised is His divine peace to get us through the trials in our lives. As and when we experience trials in our lives, let us also continue to experience the promised peace from God.

God in His steadfast love and mercy surely will direct everything, whether good or bad, towards the good for His children (Romans 8:28). Sticking with God is surely one of the most beautiful experiences. “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.” (Hebrews 10:23) May the Lord’s name be glorified.

SERMON OUTLINE:

CHRISTIAN AND THE WORLD

- | | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| i. | Sent in to the world. | John 17:18 |
| ii. | Preaching to the world. | Mark 16:15 |
| iii. | Not conformed to the world. | Romans 12:2 |
| iv. | The light of the world. | Philippians 2:15 |
| v. | Live godly in the world. | Titus 2:12 |
| vi. | No friendship with the world. | James 4:4 |
| vii. | Love not the world. | 1John 2:16 |
| viii. | Passing through the world. | 1Peter 2:11 |



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LIGHT ALONE PREVENTS DARKNESS



By Joy Murickal Issac, Kerala

As God's people, how blessed we are in Christ and what a wonderful freedom we possess. We experience unspeakable joy and great peace in the Lord. But when we look around, the world is groaning due to the bondage of sin and the activities of evil forces. Many have no idea of what is the root cause for all these troubles and who is behind all these destruction and chaos.

The Bible says, the whole world is under the yoke of Satan. But God in His grace delivered us, all glory to Him. Many religions and their leaders failed to retain their folk's faith because they don't allow light to lead them. Remember, darkness can only be prevented by light. Wherever light is present, there is no room for darkness.

Believer's Duty

Let's consider few words about

light. Apostle John writes, "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." (John 1:5) In this passage, we further see about John the Baptist. (John 1:6) He came to witness and testify of the light. This is exactly the duty of each chosen one; to witness and testify about the light to this dark world.

Many people and nations are under bondage and in all kinds of wickedness due to lack of enlightenment. But our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is the light of the world. He can enlighten those who seek light. Today, our responsibility is to reflect this divine light by our works, attitude, expressions and writings. May the Lord help us to enlighten many as our Master has done when He was in this world. (Matthew 5: 14 – 16)

We have lot of reasons to worship and give thanks to the Father. One

of the main reasons is that He has given us a share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son. (Colo. 1: 12 – 14)

Value our Privilege

I don't want to explain this great privilege we share now. But let me remind believers this, 40% of humanity have no freedom to think and receive the word of God in their countries. Around 70% of the population don't bother or even have the time to listen to the precious message of the gospel owing to many earthly reasons.

Do not forget, today we don't know much about the value of what Christ has done for us. But in eternity everything will be revealed. Let us peruse its deep meaning and praise God always even as we give out the light of life to people around us.

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Link for August Issue:

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SPIRITUAL LESSONS FROM COVID-19



By Sajeet Samuel, Thiruvalla

King Solomon wrote, “To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven.” (Ecclesiastes 3:1) The Bible is very clear about everything happening in this world and its purpose. The verse explains the season, the time and the purpose, all are measured and planned.

The Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.” John 4:23

Notice, what does the Father seek?

Yes, true worshipers; His children worshipping Him in spirit and in truth. That’s the ultimate purpose of our creation and existence. God wants His blood bought people to come together and lift His name on high, exalt Him and worship Him.

But what’s happening for the past 2 years?

First time in the history of the church, God’s people are unable to gather together to worship Him for such a long duration. Why is God allowing this? Why such a situation is prevalent? Dear brethren, God wants us to rethink, retrospect and repent, wherever required.

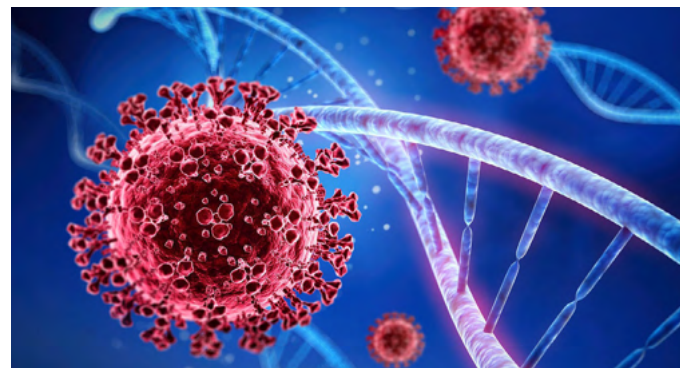
As you guessed it right, I’m referring to the Covid19 pandemic and the consequences.

Let us try to understand God’s purpose behind such a historical event / pandemic. More importantly, the purpose in relation to His children.

For that it’s important to analyze Covid-19 and its stages in detail. We’ll try to derive some spiritual learning’s out of the same.

Stages of Covid:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|------------------------|
| 1. Prevention Stage | : | SMS |
| 2. Probing Stage | : | Quarantine |
| 3. Positive Stage | : | Quarantine + Treatment |
| 4. Post Covid Stage | : | After effects |



THE SPIRITUAL COVID

S.No.	STAGES	MEASURES	SPIRITUAL INSIGHT
1	PREVENTION	a) Soap	Titus 3:5; Psalm 51:2, 7 ; 2 Thess 2:13 ; 1Pet 1:2; John 17:17; 1 Tim 4:5 ✓ Sanctification of the Holy Spirit ✓ Sanctification through the Word ✓ Sanctification through Prayer
		b) Mask	Psalm 12:3,4 ; Acts 19:36 ; 1 Thess 4:11 ; 1 Pet 3:4 ; Phil 1:21; Gal 2:20 ✓ Flattering Tongue would be quieted ✓ Study to be quiet ✓ Mask your identity ✓ Let Christ be seen
		c) Social Distancing	John 15:19 ; John 17:14,15,16 ✓ Not of the world ✓ Out of the world though in
2	PROBING	a) Self quarantine	Mark 1:35; 14:39 Deliberate effort towards isolation- Individual Prayer: Jesus' example ✓ Self-Isolation ✓ Constant Prayer
		b) Immunity Boosters	Eph 6:11-18 Vitamins, nutrients: Word of God ; Put on the whole armor of God ✓ Breastplate of Righteousness ✓ Shield of Faith ✓ Helmet of Salvation ✓ Sword of Spirit: Word of God ✓ Shoes: gospel of peace
		c) All Points In Stage 1	
3	POSITIVE	a) Treatment	Quarantine at home; Treatment by self or family/ by the qualified and chosen men of God.
		b) Medication	Word of God ; Prayer
		c) All Points In Stage 1 & 2	
4	POST COVID	a) Side Effects	Mark 14:38 Tired spiritual life, lack of energy, loss of earlier health ✓ Flesh is weak ✓ Watch and Pray ✓ Keep the Spirit Alive and ready
		b) Back To Prevention Stage	
		c) All Points In Stage 1, 2 & 3	

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear”! Matthew 11:15

FORSAKING WORLDLINESS: NOT A LOSS, BUT GAIN

A worldly, Christ-less young man used to visit his aunt who was a born again lady. She took every opportunity to impress upon her nephew the need of receiving Christ.

“Oh,” he replied one day in answer to a remark from her, “Christianity and religion are all very good no doubt, when one comes to a certain time in life; but it is not the thing for a young fellow 22 years of age. How could I give up the pleasures of the world and wear a long face? When one is old it may be all very well then.”

“Why George!” gently asked his aunt, “who asked you to give up the pleasures of the world? I am sure I never did. I only asked you to accept Christ’s gospel.”

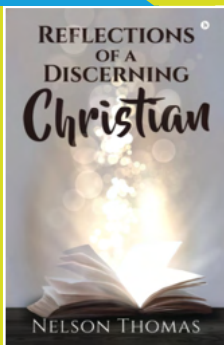
“Oh, is that it?” he replied; “I always thought I had to give up a lot. Well, if I become a Christian, I would not be as tight-laced as some folk I know—for instance, I would go in for many jolly things you do not.”

“Never mind that,” answered his aunt; “accept the Lord Jesus first, and see about all that in the future.”

Shortly afterwards the young man did accept Christ as his Lord, and when next he saw his aunt, as they returned to their former conversation he remarked: “Do you know, aunt, I find I have given up far more than I ever dreamed I should be willing to; and yet I don’t count it a loss but positive gain.”

Source : Gospel Herald

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For further details contact:- gracepeaceu@gmail.com

Prepared, and posted by Nelson Thomas Kumaramparampil (NTK) for the Glory of God & the Joy of the saints.

Editorial assistance : Tom Jacob

Design & Layout : Jiju Mathew

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