

Through the Bible

# MATTHEW-I

Zac Poonen



Illustrations by Vinay Kuruvilla

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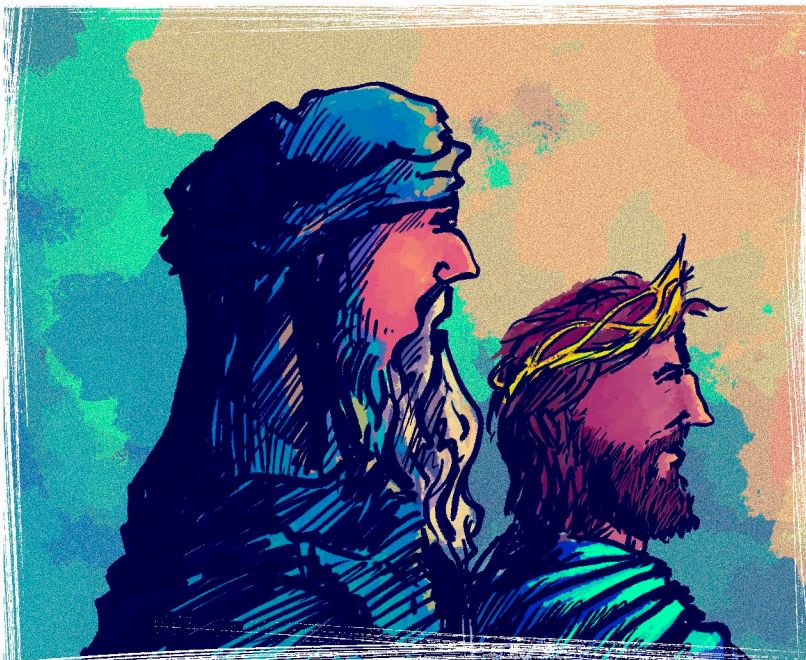
## **CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP CHURCH**

**69 PARADISE ENCLAVE, BELAHALLI  
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INDIA**

# Matthew



## WE NOW COME TO THE NEW TESTAMENT



THE VERY FIRST THING WE READ HERE IS THE **GENEALOGY** OF CHRIST. IT **DOESN'T** GO ALL THE WAY TO **ADAM** (AS IN LUKE 3:23--38). HERE IT GOES ONLY AS FAR AS **ABRAHAM**. JESUS IS CALLED THE SON OF DAVID AND THE SON OF **ABRAHAM** -- INDICATING THAT MATTHEW WAS WRITING HIS GOSPEL PRIMARILY FOR THE **JEWISH** PEOPLE OF HIS TIME, SEEKING TO **CONVINCE** THEM THAT JESUS WAS THE **PROMISED MESSIAH**. THAT'S WHY THERE ARE MORE THAN **40** QUOTATIONS FROM THE **OLD TESTAMENT** HERE TO PROVE THAT JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH.

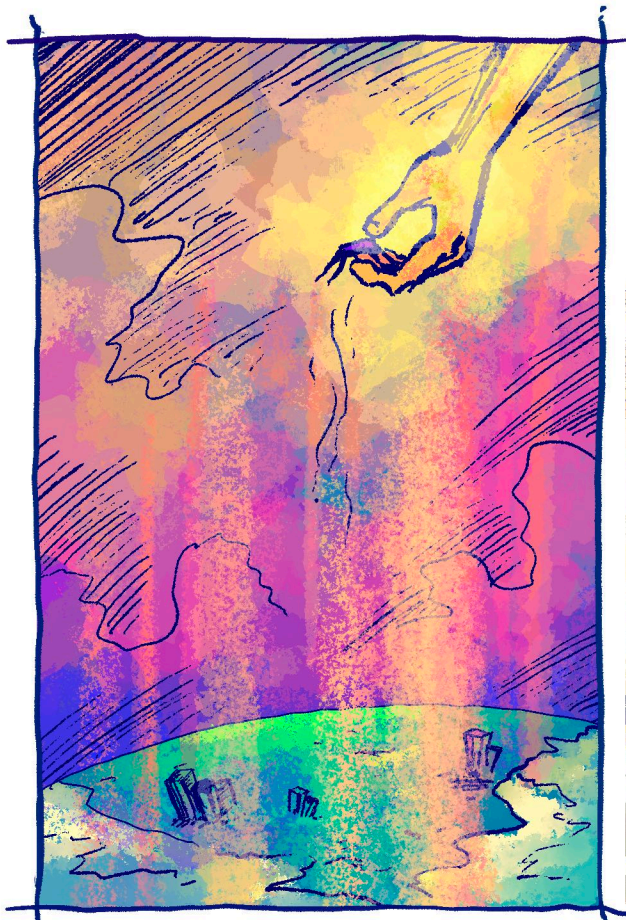


WE SEE A PHRASE IN THIS GOSPEL THAT DOES NOT OCCUR ANYWHERE ELSE -- "THE **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**." IT OCCURS **31** TIMES IN THIS GOSPEL. **JOHN THE BAPTIST** CAME PREACHING, SAYING, "**REPENT, FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND**" (3:2). AFTER HIS TIME, **JESUS** PREACHED EXACTLY THE SAME MESSAGE IN 4:17. WHEN HE BEGAN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, THE VERY FIRST WORDS HE SAID WERE, "**BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN**"



THE **OLD COVENANT** WHICH GOD MADE WITH ISRAEL RELATED TO A **KINGDOM** ON THIS **EARTH**. ISRAEL WAS GIVEN **CANAAN'S LAND** AND PROMISED **MATERIAL** PROSPERITY, PHYSICAL HEALING AND OTHER **EARTHLY** BENEFITS. LATER, THEY HAD AN **EARTHLY** KING, **EARTHLY** RICHES AND OTHER EARTHLY BLESSINGS. BUT JESUS CAME TO LIFT MAN TO ANOTHER **REALM ALTOGETHER** -- TO HEAVEN. SO WHEN WE READ THE NEW TESTAMENT, WE MUST REMEMBER THAT THE GOOD NEWS HERE IS PRIMARILY ABOUT **HEAVEN** AND **NOT** ABOUT THIS **EARTH**.





WE SAY WE ARE "**SAVED**". THAT IS A VERY **COMMON** EXPRESSION AMONG BELIEVERS, BUT **WHAT** ARE WE "SAVED" **FROM**? HAVE WE BEEN SAVED FROM **EARTHLY WAYS**, OR HAVE WE JUST HAD OUR SINS FORGIVEN? HAVE WE BEEN SAVED FROM AN **INTEREST IN EARTHLY THINGS**, FROM AN **EARTHLY WAY OF VIEWING PEOPLE AND CIRCUMSTANCES**, AND FROM **EARTHLY WAYS OF BEHAVING**?

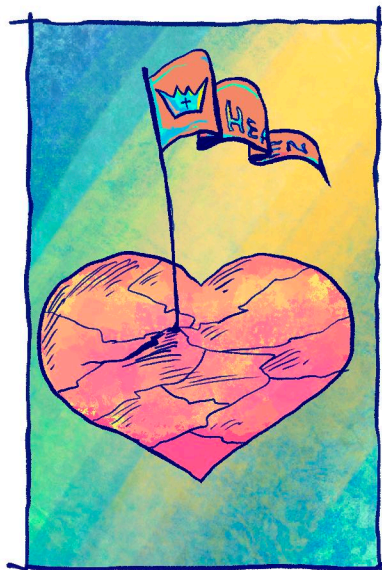


THE WORD 'KINGDOM' IS NOT A WORD THAT WE UNDERSTAND CLEARLY TODAY, BECAUSE WE HAVE VERY FEW KINGS RULING KINGDOMS NOW, UNLIKE AS IN THE FIRST CENTURY. THE EQUIVALENT WORD WE USE TODAY IS '**GOVERNMENT**'. THAT'S WHAT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN MEANS -- THE **GOVERNMENT OF HEAVEN**. IT MEANS **GOD GOVERNING YOUR LIFE**.

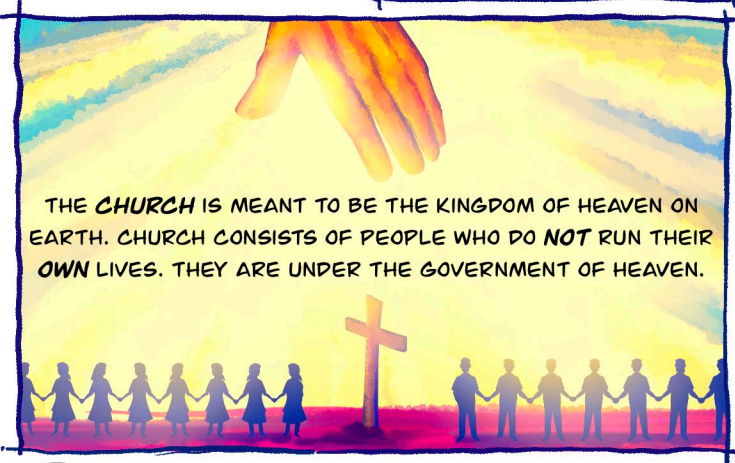


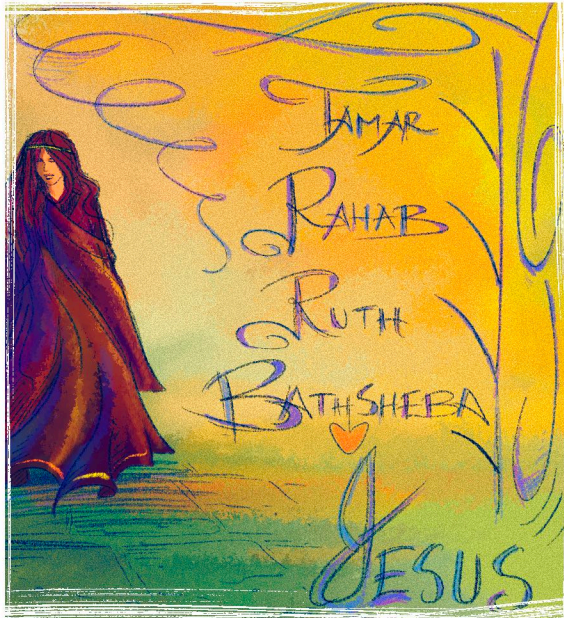
MANY PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD ARE EAGER TO BECOME **CITIZENS** OF A **RICH ATTRACTIVE** COUNTRY, NOT SOME **BACKWARD** COUNTRY.. WHY IS IT THEN THAT SO **FEW** IN THIS WORLD ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING CITIZENS OF THE **MOST ATTRACTIVE** PLACE OF ALL -- **HEAVEN**? BECAUSE THEY HAVE NOT **SEEN** THE **REAL GLORY** OF **HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP**. AND THIS IS BECAUSE THE **GOSPEL** HAS NOT BEEN **PREACHED PROPERLY**. AND SO WE FIND A MULTITUDE OF "SO-CALLED BELIEVERS" SITTING IN THE CHURCH WHO ARE **NOT** INTERESTED IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. THEY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY DIE, BUT THEY DON'T WANT THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN NOW.

IF YOU COME INTO THE GOVERNMENT OF HEAVEN, YOU HAVE TO LIVE UNDER THE **RULES** OF THE GOVERNMENT OF **HEAVEN**. BUT THE SALVATION OF MANY BELIEVERS HAS NOT GONE THAT FAR. THEY WANT TO GO TO HEAVEN WHEN THEY **DIE**. BUT THEY DON'T WANT THE RULE OF HEAVEN IN THEIR LIVES **NOW**. THEY WANT TO LIVE NOW AS FULL CITIZENS OF THIS **EARTH**. THAT IS WHY THEIR **CHRISTIAN LIFE** IS SO **SHALLOW**.



THE **CHURCH** IS MEANT TO BE THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN ON EARTH. CHURCH CONSISTS OF PEOPLE WHO DO **NOT** RUN THEIR **OWN LIVES**. THEY ARE UNDER THE GOVERNMENT OF HEAVEN.

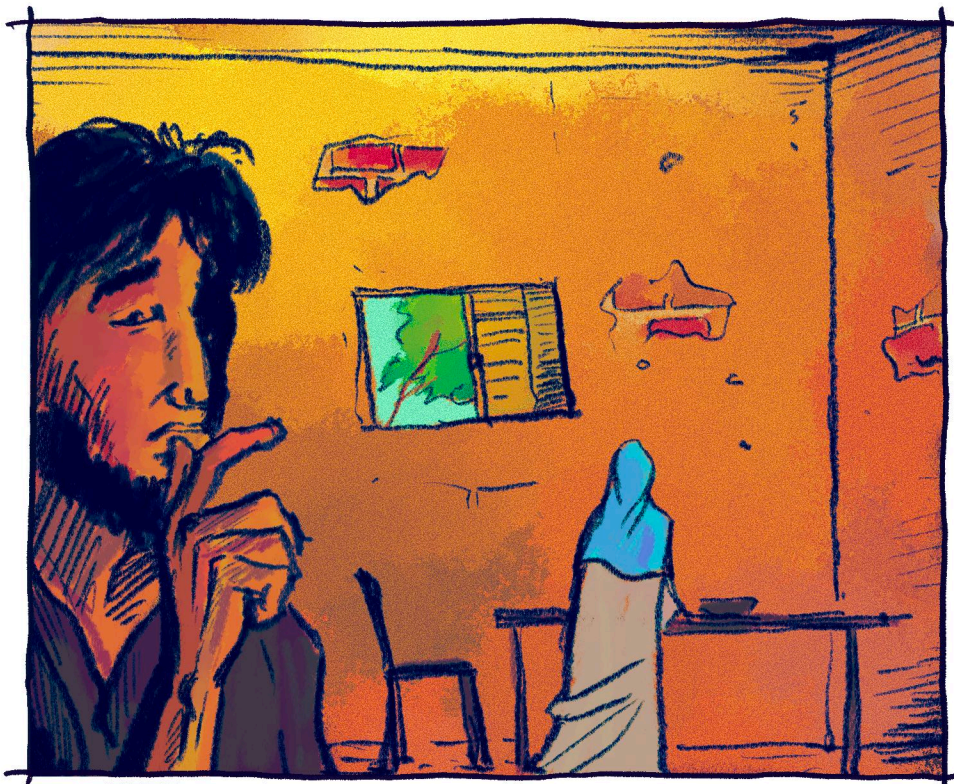




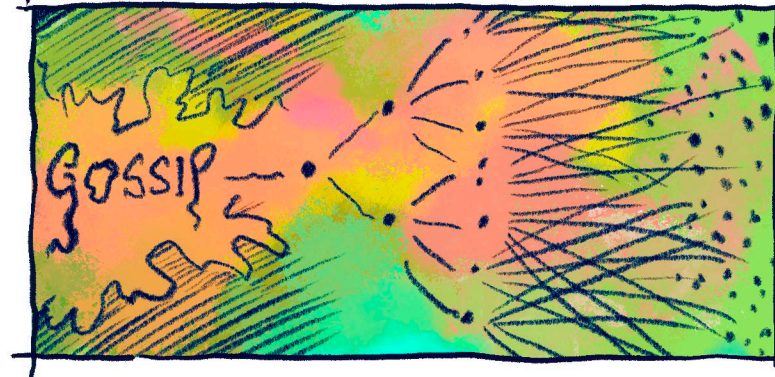
CHAPTER 1 GIVES THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS CHRIST. THE JEWS MENTIONED THE NAMES OF MEN ONLY IN THEIR GENEALOGIES. HOWEVER, HERE WE FIND FOUR **WOMEN** MENTIONED AS WELL -- TEACHING US THAT JESUS HAD COME TO **RAISE** THE LEVEL OF WOMEN FROM THE **LOW** POSITION THAT JEWISH AND HEATHEN **SOCIETY** HAD GIVEN THEM. FURTHER, THESE FOUR WOMEN HAD A **SINFUL** HISTORY, TEACHING US THAT JESUS CAME TO SAVE THE **WORST** OF SINNERS. FIRST, WAS **TAMAR**, WHO COMMITTED **INCEST** WITH HER FATHER IN LAW, JUDAH. SECOND WAS **RAHAB**, A **PROSTITUTE** FROM JERICHO. THIRD WAS **RUTH**, A **MOABITESS** WHO DESCENDED FROM THE INCESTUOUS RELATIONSHIP LOT HAD WITH HIS DAUGHTER. THE FOURTH WAS **BATHSHEBA**, WITH WHOM DAVID COMMITTED **ADULTERY** AND LATER MARRIED. WHY DID JESUS CHOOSE SUCH A **SINFUL** FAMILY-LINE? TO SHOW HIS **IDENTIFICATION** WITH THE RACE OF SINFUL MEN AND TO MAKE IT MANIFEST THAT HE HAD COME, NOT TO CALL THE RIGHTEOUS, BUT SINNERS TO REPENTANCE. SO WE SEE THAT NO-ONE NEEDS TO BE ASHAMED OF HIS/HER FAMILY LINE.



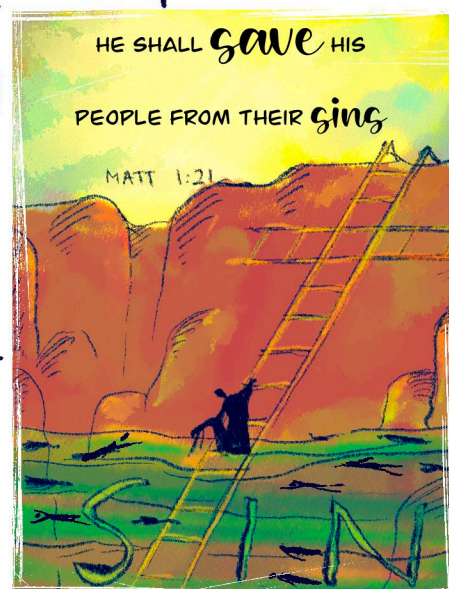
**JOSEPH** WAS OF THE **ROYAL** LINE OF **DAVID**, AND **MATTHEW** WAS **PROVING** THROUGH THIS GENEALOGY THAT **JESUS** WAS **RIGHTFULLY** THE **TRUE KING** OF ISRAEL.



WHEN **JOSEPH** HEARD ABOUT **MARY** BEING **PREGNANT**, AND NOT KNOWING THAT THIS WAS A **SUPERNATURAL** WORK OF **GOD** IN HER **WOMB**, IT SAYS THAT SINCE HE WAS A **RIGHTEOUS** MAN, HE DID NOT WANT TO **DISGRACE** HER BUT WANTED TO **COVER** WHAT HE **THOUGHT** WAS HER **SIN** (1:19). THERE IS SOMETHING WE CAN ALL LEARN HERE ABOUT **RIGHTEOUSNESS**. THE FIRST PERSON TO BE CALLED A **RIGHTEOUS** MAN IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS **JOSEPH**. AND HIS **RIGHTEOUSNESS** IS MENTIONED IN CONNECTION WITH WANTING TO **COVER** ANOTHER PERSON'S **SIN** AND NOT **SHAME** THAT PERSON. THIS IS THE SPIRIT OF A **TRULY RIGHTEOUS** MAN. THANK **GOD** HE NEVER **SCANDALISED** **MARY**. FOR IF HE HAD, CAN YOU IMAGINE THE **REGRET** AND **REMORSE** HE WOULD HAVE HAD, WHEN HE **DISCOVERED** THE **TRUTH**



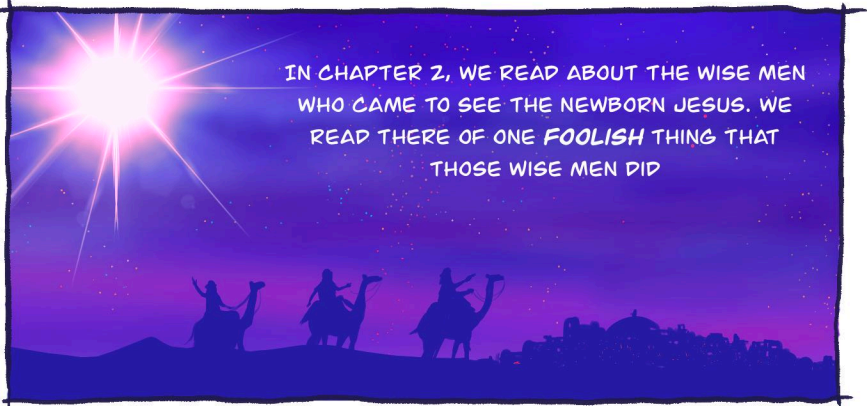
HOW CAN WE **TAKE BACK** STORIES THAT WE HAVE **CIRCULATED** ABOUT OTHERS IF WE LATER **DISCOVER** THEM TO BE **FALSE**. FOR THE ONE WE TOLD THEM TO WOULD HAVE **CIRCULATED** IT FURTHER TO PERHAPS **TEN** OTHER PEOPLE WHO IN TURN WOULD HAVE **SPREAD** IT EVEN **FURTHER**. SO HERE IS A **WARNING** AND AN **EXAMPLE** FOR US.



IN 1:21, WE READ THE VERY FIRST **PROMISE** IN THE **NEW TESTAMENT**: "HE SHALL **SAVE** (NOT JUST **FORGIVE**) HIS **PEOPLE** FROM THEIR **SINS**". THIS IS THE **MEANING** OF THE **NAME, "JESUS"**. IT MEANS THAT HE WILL **SAVE** US FROM BEING **ENSLAVED** TO **SIN**.



THE SECOND PROMISE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS FOUND IN 3:11: "HE SHALL **BAPTIZE** YOU IN THE **HOLY SPIRIT** AND IN **FIRE**." THESE ARE THE FIRST TWO PROMISES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT -- AND IN THESE, THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL IS SUMMED UP. WE NEED TO BE **SAVED** FROM OUR **SINS** AND WE NEED TO BE **BAPTISED** IN THE **HOLY SPIRIT** AND **FIRE**.



IN CHAPTER 2, WE READ ABOUT THE WISE MEN WHO CAME TO SEE THE NEWBORN JESUS. WE READ THERE OF ONE **FOOLISH** THING THAT THOSE WISE MEN DID

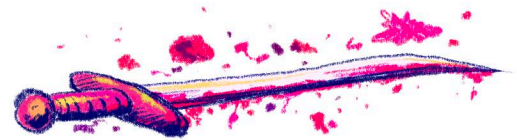


THEY HAD FOLLOWED THE STAR FOR MANY **HUNDREDS** OF MILES FROM THEIR EASTERN LANDS ALL THE WAY UP TO **JERUSALEM**. THAT STAR IS A PICTURE OF THE **WORD** OF GOD THAT LEADS US ALWAYS TO JESUS. BUT ONCE THEY REACHED JERUSALEM, WHERE THE KING'S PALACE WAS LOCATED, THEY BECAME **FOOLISH**. THEY ASSUMED THAT THE KING OF THE JEWS WOULD NATURALLY BE BORN IN THE **PALACE** -- AND THEY **STOPPED FOLLOWING THE STAR**. SO THEY WENT TO KING **HEROD'S** PALACE TO SEE THE NEWBORN KING!! BUT THE PEOPLE IN THE PALACE KNEW **NOTHING** ABOUT ANY NEWBORN KING.



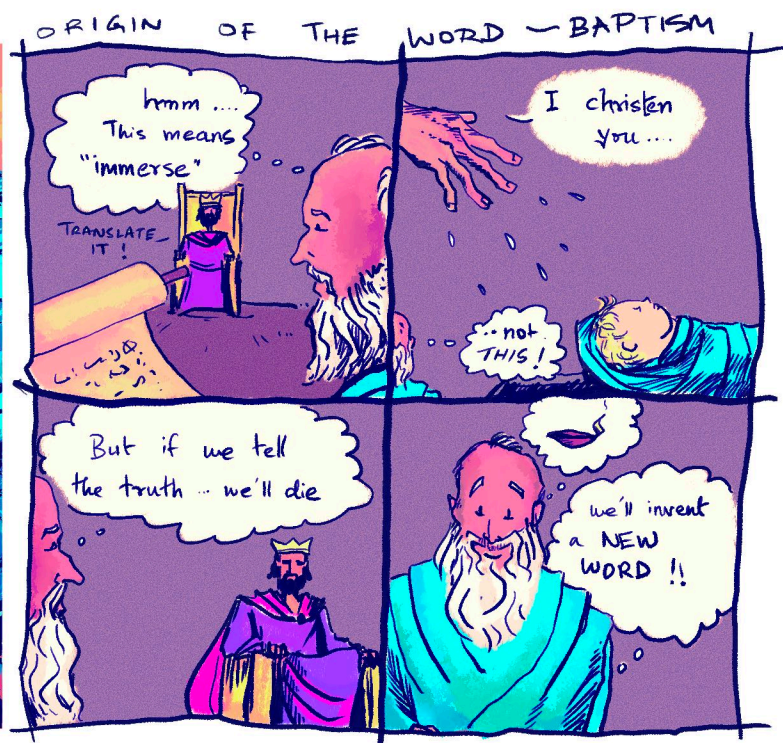
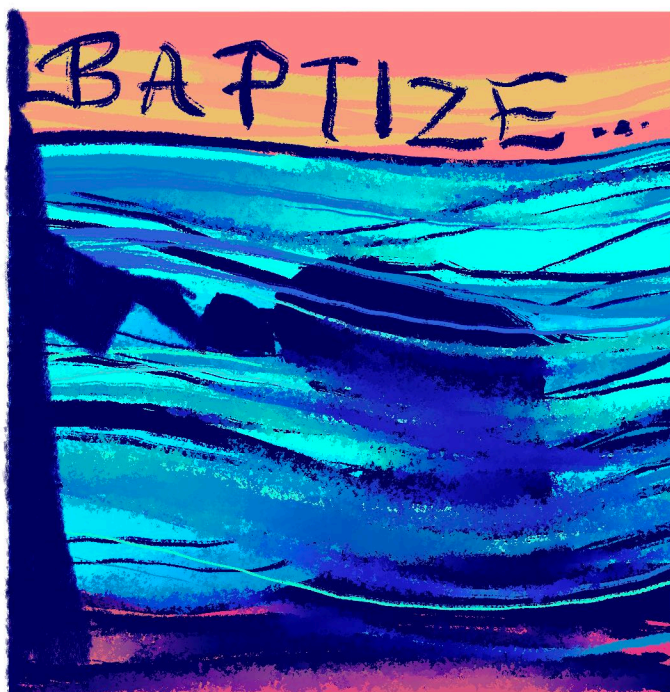
THE STAR FINALLY LED THEM, NOT TO A PALACE BUT TO A LITTLE **HUT** -- AND THE KING WAS THERE. IF YOU FOLLOW THE WORD OF GOD, IT WILL **ALWAYS** LEAD YOU TO **JESUS**. EVEN TODAY, GOD CAN LEAD YOU TO A **CHURCH** WHERE JESUS IS FOUND. HE WON'T BE FOUND IN THE **PALACES** OF THE **HIGH** AND THE **MIGHTY**, BUT IN THE **SIMPLE** DWELLINGS OF THOSE WHO **LOVE** HIM AND **WANT TO FOLLOW** HIM.

AN ANGEL THEN SPOKE TO THOSE WISE MEN IN A **DREAM** AND TOLD THEM **NOT** TO GO BACK TO HEROD, BUT TO GO BACK HOME BY **ANOTHER** ROUTE. THANK GOD THEY OBEYED THE ANGEL **THIS TIME!!** **JOSEPH** ALSO WAS **LED** BY A **DREAM** TO GO TO EGYPT, AND LATER BY ANOTHER **DREAM** TO RETURN TO ISRAEL. GUIDANCE THROUGH DREAMS OCCURS A NUMBER OF TIMES IN THE FIRST TWO CHAPTERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT. **GOD GUIDES** THUS, **OCCASIONALLY**, TODAY TOO.



BUT SEE WHAT GREAT **HARM** THESE **WISE** MEN DID TO **HUNDREDS** OF PEOPLE BY THEIR **ONE** MISTAKE. BECAUSE THEY TOLD HEROD ABOUT THE BIRTH OF A KING, HE SENT SOLDIERS TO BETHLEHEM WHO **MASSACRED** ALL THE BABY BOYS THAT WERE UNDER TWO YEARS OF AGE THERE. WHEN WE **DO NOT OBEY** **GOD'S WORD**, A SINGLE ACT OF **FOOLISHNESS** OF OURS CAN CAUSE MUCH **HARM** TO MANY OTHERS.





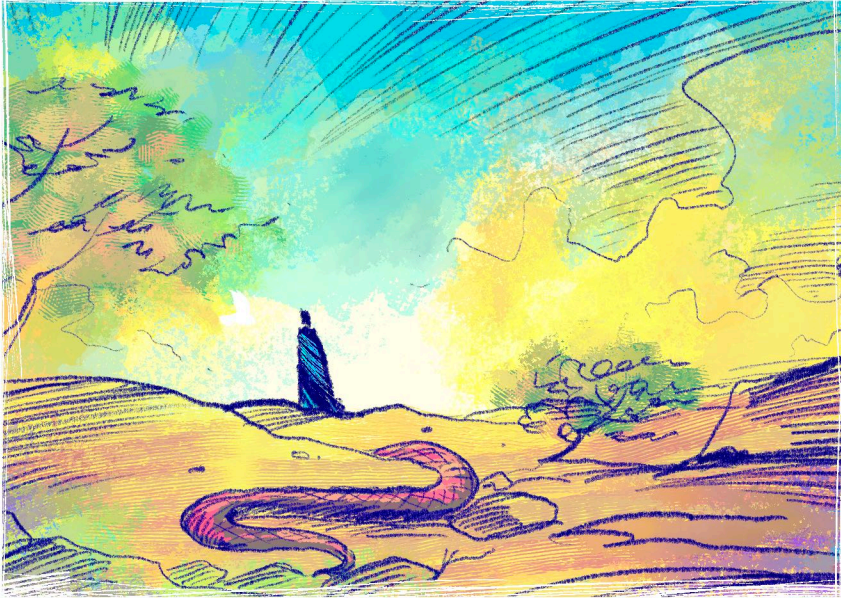
IN CHAPTER 3, WE COME TO THE MINISTRY OF JOHN THE BAPTIST. THE WORD '**BAPTISM**' IS A WORD THAT WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY THE TRANSLATORS OF THE KING JAMES VERSION OF THE BIBLE (KJV) IN 1611. WHEN THE TRANSLATORS CAME TO THIS GREEK WORD 'BAPTIZO' (OR 'BAPTO') IN CHAPTER 3 HERE, THEY FACED A **DILEMMA**. THE WORD MEANT "**IMMERSE**" IN GREEK AND THAT IS HOW THEY SHOULD HAVE TRANSLATED IT. BUT THEY REALISED THAT IF THEY TRANSLATED IT **ACCURATELY**, IT WOULD DISTURB THE **EXISTING CHURCH TRADITION** OF **CHRISTENING** SPRINKLING WATER-- AND THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE BEHEADED BY KING JAMES! AT THE SAME TIME, THEY COULD NOT, IN ALL **HONESTY**, TRANSLATE THE WORD AS "CHRISTEN" OR "SPRINKLE". SO THEY (VERY CLEVERLY) INTRODUCED A **NEW WORD** INTO THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE -- '**BAPTISM**.'



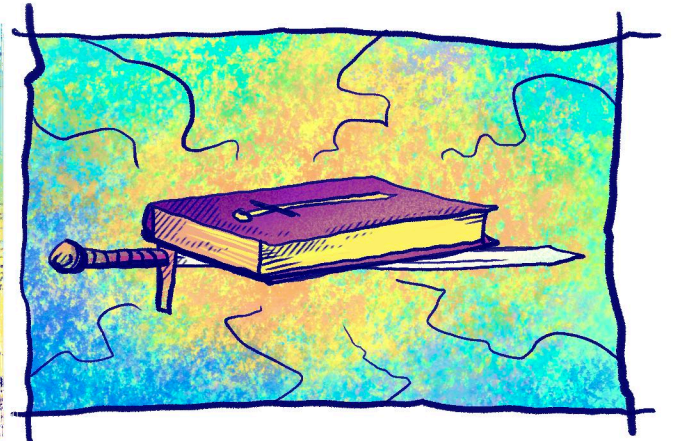
WHEN JESUS CAME TO JOHN FOR BAPTISM, JOHN SAID, "I CAN'T BAPTISE YOU. **YOU** NEED TO BAPTISE **ME**." JESUS DID NOT NEED TO BE BAPTISED -- BECAUSE JOHN'S BAPTISM WAS FOR THOSE WHO HAD REPENTED FROM THEIR SINS, AND JESUS HAD NEVER SINNED AT ANY TIME, CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY. HE WAS **BORN HOLY** AND DID NOT HAVE A SINFUL NATURE AS WE HAVE. HE HAD HEARD HIS FATHER TELL HIM TO **IDENTIFY** HIMSELF WITH THE **SINNERS** WHO WERE GETTING BAPTISED -- EVEN THOUGH HE HAD NEVER SINNED. UNLIKE JESUS, WE LOOK DOWN ON OTHERS WHO WE THINK ARE GREATER SINNERS THAN WE ARE.



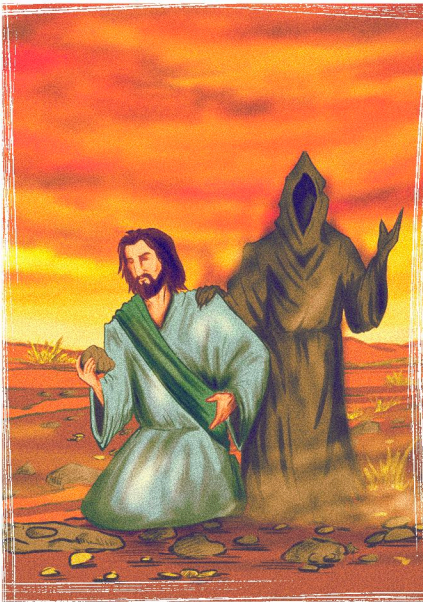
LET US **HUMBLE** OURSELVES AND FOLLOW **JESUS'** EXAMPLE. JESUS TOLD JOHN, "YOU HAVE TO BAPTISE ME BECAUSE THAT IS THE ONLY WAY I CAN FULFIL ALL **RIGHTEOUSNESS**." **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, FOR JESUS MEANT DOING THE **WILL** OF HIS **FATHER**, WHATEVER IT WAS.



IN 4:1--11, WE READ ABOUT THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS. THE BIBLE SAYS IN HEBREWS 4:15 THAT JESUS "WAS TEMPTED IN EVERY POINT EXACTLY LIKE US, BUT DID **NOT** SIN". **WE** TOO CAN **OVERCOME** AS **HE** OVERCAME (REVELATION 3:21). WE KNOW HE WAS **GOD** AND WE ALSO KNOW THAT HE DID **NOT** USE HIS **ABILITIES AS GOD** WHEN HE CAME TO EARTH AS A **MAN**. **GOD** CANNOT BE TEMPTED, BUT **JESUS** WAS TEMPTED.



JESUS OVERCAME EACH TEMPTATION WITH THE **SWORD OF THE SPIRIT** -- "IT IS WRITTEN." WHEN THE **DEVIL** SAW THAT JESUS QUOTED THE **WORD**, HE **ALSO** QUOTED A SCRIPTURE.. TO THAT JESUS REPLIED, "IT IS **ALSO** WRITTEN ..." THE **WHOLE** TRUTH IS NOT FOUND IN **ONE** SCRIPTURE ALONE BUT IN THE **WHOLE** OF THE SCRIPTURES -- ONE VERSE **BALANCED** OUT BY **ANOTHER** VERSE. IF SATAN COULD QUOTE SCRIPTURE TO TRY AND LEAD JESUS INTO SIN, YOU CAN BE CERTAIN THAT HE WILL QUOTE SCRIPTURE TO LEAD US ASTRAY AS WELL.



FIRST TEMPTATION - **SELFISHNESS**:  
TURN THE STONES INTO BREAD TO  
SATISFY YOUR HUNGER.

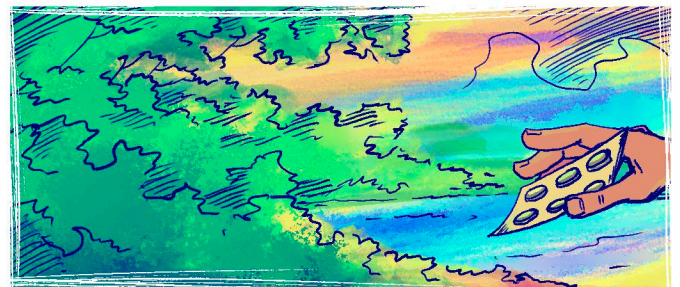
A. PLACE YOUR **PHYSICAL** NEEDS  
ABOVE YOUR **SPIRITUAL** NEEDS. JESUS  
REPLIED THAT MAN HAS TO LIVE BY  
EVERY **WORD** THAT PROCEEDS FROM  
**GOD'S** MOUTH AND NOT **MERELY** BY  
BREAD.

B. USE THE POWER GOD HAS GIVEN YOU  
FOR YOUR OWN **PERSONAL** GAIN. JESUS  
REFUSED TO DO SO. HE WOULD USE THIS  
POWER TO MULTIPLY BREAD FOR **5000**  
MEN LATER, BUT **NEVER** FOR **HIMSELF**.  
MANY PREACHERS HAVE FALLEN A PREY  
TO THIS TEMPTATION, BY USING THE  
POWER AND **GIFT** GOD GAVE THEM TO  
MAKE **MONEY** FOR **THEMSELVES**.



SECOND - **PRESUMPTION** (4:5--  
7). JUMP OFF THE TEMPLE-ROOF  
AND CLAIM GOD'S PROMISES FOR  
PROTECTION.

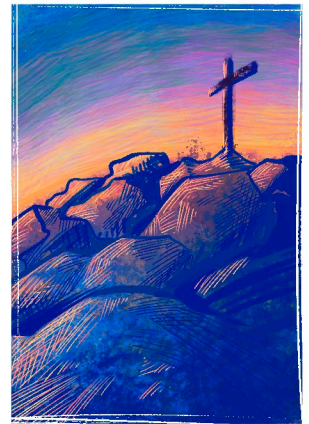
A. TAKE A STEP THAT GOD HAS  
NOT TOLD YOU TO TAKE -- AND  
CLAIM GOD'S PROMISES. JESUS  
REPLIED THAT WE SHOULD NOT  
TEMPT GOD BY DOING **RISKY**  
THINGS. IF THERE IS A **STAIR-  
CASE** COMING DOWN FROM THE  
TEMPLE-ROOF, WE SHOULD USE  
THAT AND **NOT** JUMP DOWN!! DO  
SOMETHING **SPECTACULAR** TO  
SHOW OTHERS THAT YOU ARE A  
MAN OF **GOD**. A TEMPTATION TO  
SEEK MAN'S **HONOUR**.



SOME **DON'T** TAKE MEDICINES BUT EXPECT GOD TO HEAL  
THEM **SUPERNATURALLY**. THAT IS **NOT** FAITH BUT  
**PRESUMPTION**. IT IS **SUICIDE**! MEDICINES ARE MADE FROM  
**GOD'S CREATION** AND WE SHOULD USE THEM. IF, HOWEVER,  
WE ARE IN A **JUNGLE** WHERE MEDICINES ARE **NOT** AVAILABLE,  
THEN WE CAN ASK GOD TO HEAL US **WITHOUT** MEDICINES



THIRD - COMPROMISE (4:8--10). TO GET THE KINGDOMS OF THE **WORLD** AND THEIR GLORY BY **BOWING TO SATAN**.  
 A. GET A **RIGHT** THING IN A **WRONG** WAY -- BY AN **UNRIGHTEOUS** SHORTCUT! AN UNRIGHTEOUS ACTION AMOUNTS TO **BOWING TO SATAN**. JESUS CHOSE THE LONG **ARDUOUS** WAY OF THE **CROSS** AND **REFUSED** ALL **SHORT-CUTS**.  
 B. PURSUE AFTER THE GLORY THIS WORLD OFFERS -- **MONEY** AND **HONOUR**, **POSITION** AND **POWER** (IN THE WORLD OR IN THE CHURCH).



MANY PREACHERS **SEEK** FOR A **WIDER** MINISTRY BY KEEPING **SILENT** ABOUT SOME THINGS (THAT GOD **WANTS** THEM TO **PREACH** ABOUT) AND THUS **PLEASING** **EVERYBODY**. THEY DO GET A **WIDER** MINISTRY THUS -- BUT IT IS BY **BOWING** THE **KNEE** TO **SATAN**.

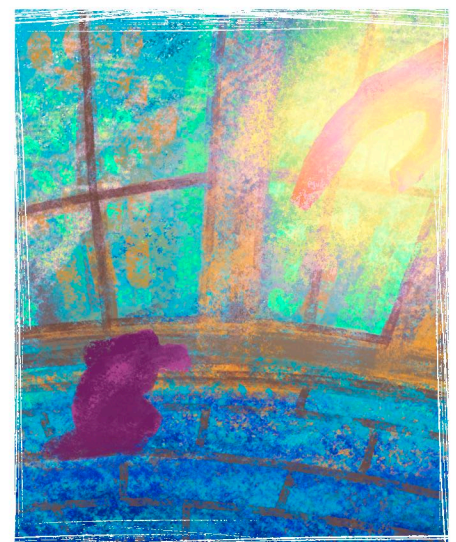


IN CHAPTERS 5, 6 AND 7 WE READ THE SERMON ON THE **MOUNT**. JESUS BEGAN THAT SERMON BY SAYING, "BLESSED ARE THE **POOR** IN SPIRIT FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN" (5:3). THIS IS THE **MASTER KEY** THAT OPENS EVERY DOOR IN THIS PALACE CALLED "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN". ALL THE **RICHERS** OF HEAVEN CAN BE OURS IF WE HAVE THIS **MASTER KEY**.



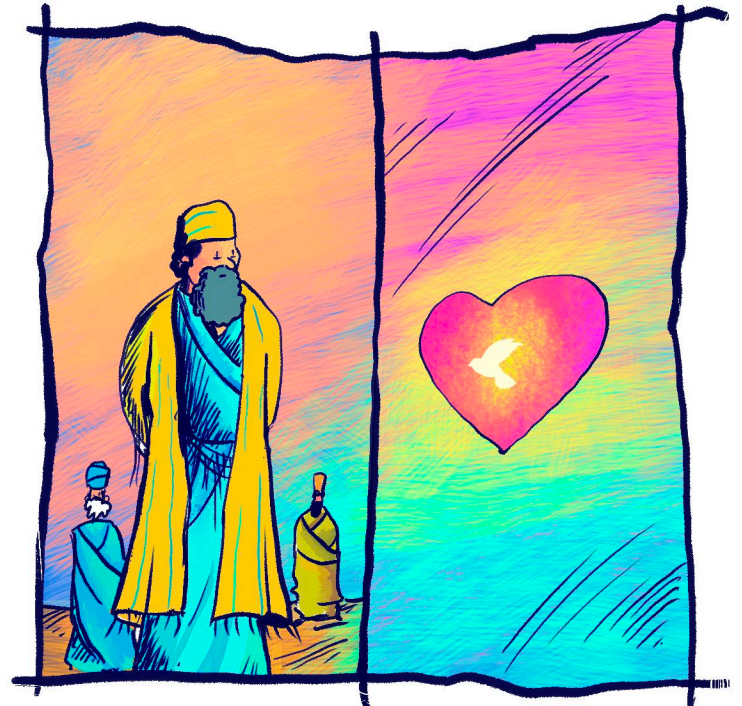
THINK OF A **BEGGAR** WHO COMES TO YOUR **GATE** ONE DAY -- AND YOU GIVE HIM A FEW **RUPEES**. HE WILL COME BACK AGAIN... WHY? BECAUSE HE IS **PERPETUALLY** IN **NEED**. HE IS ALWAYS AWARE OF HIS **NEED**, AND HE IS **HUMBLE** ENOUGH TO KEEP COMING TO YOUR **GATE** **UNASHAMEDLY**, AND TO **BEG** FOR MORE **MONEY** -- BECAUSE HE KNOWS YOU ARE A **GENEROUS** MAN.

THIS IS WHAT IT MEANS TO BE **POOR** IN **SPIRIT** TOO. WE GO TO **GOD** AND SAY, "LORD, I AM A **NEEDY** PERSON **SPIRITUALLY**. IF YOU DON'T GIVE ME WHAT I **NEED**, WON'T UNDERSTAND ANYTHING IN YOUR **WORD** AND I'LL BE **DEFEATED** BY **SIN** TODAY." WHEN **GOD** USES YOU **MIGHTILY** TO BRING MANY TO **CHRIST** AND TO BUILD **CHURCHES**, **DON'T FORGET** TO REMAIN **POOR** IN **SPIRIT**.

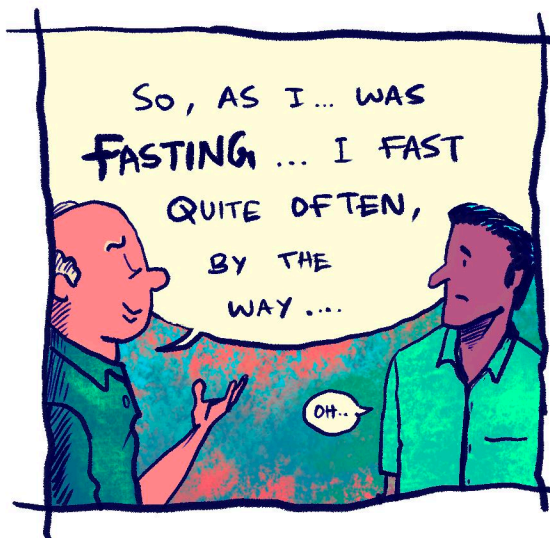




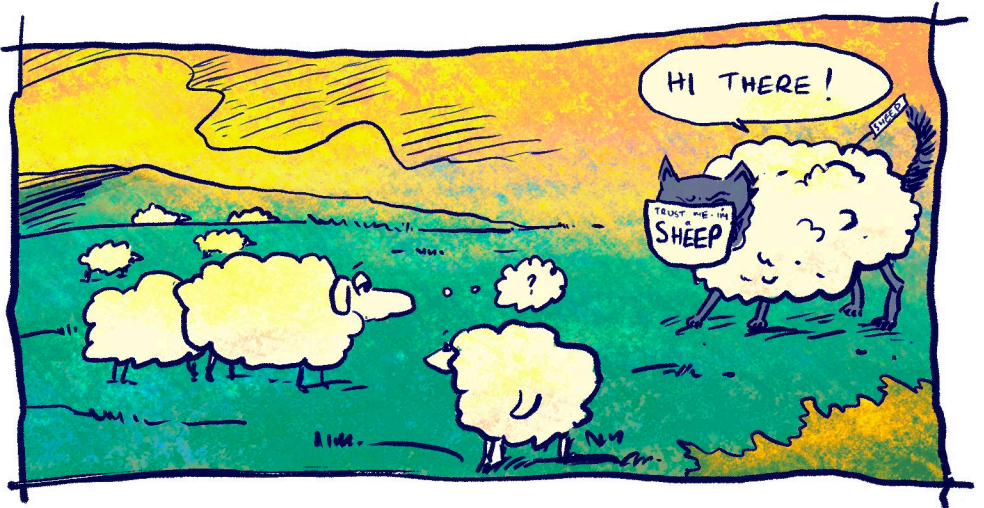
"BLESSED ARE THE **PURE** IN HEART FOR THEY SHALL SEE **GOD**" (5:8). A PURE HEART IS **DIFFERENT** FROM A CLEAN CONSCIENCE. A CLEAR CONSCIENCE ONLY MEANS A HEART THAT IS FREE FROM **ALL KNOWN SIN** -- WHERE EVERY SIN HAS BEEN **CONFESSED** AND **CLEANSED**. A **PURE** HEART, HOWEVER, IS A HEART THAT IS **FREE** FROM ALL THINGS AND HAS **PLACE ONLY** FOR **GOD**. A MAN CAN HAVE A GOOD CONSCIENCE AND STILL HAVE MANY **LAWFUL** THINGS IN HIS **HEART** OTHER THAN **GOD**. HE MAY HAVE **WORLDLY AMBITIONS**, EVEN THOUGH HIS CONSCIENCE IS CLEAR. BUT A MAN WITH A PURE HEART HAS ONLY **ONE** AMBITION -- TO PLEASE **GOD**. HIS WHOLE HEART BELONGS TO **GOD**. WHEN YOUR HEART IS PURE, YOU WILL SEE **GOD** -- EVERYWHERE ...IN YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES...EVERYTHING..



THE LORD'S MAIN EMPHASIS IN 5:20 TO 6:18 WAS ON THE **INNER** LIFE. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE PHARISEES WAS ON THE **OUTSIDE**, AND OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS IS TO EXCEED THAT (5:20). TRUE HOLINESS BEGINS ON THE **INSIDE**. IT IS **QUALITY** THE LORD SEEKS IN RIGHTEOUSNESS, **NOT QUANTITY**. THE QUALITY OF OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS MUST BE **FUNDAMENTALLY DIFFERENT** THAN THAT OF THE PHARISEES. THEY HAD AN **EARTHLY** RIGHTEOUSNESS THAT WAS **OUTWARD** AND BROUGHT THEM HONOUR FROM MEN. BUT IN THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, THE IMPORTANT THING IS THE **INNER** LIFE.



IN 6:1-18, JESUS SPOKE ABOUT PRACTISING OUR **GIVING**, OUR **PRAYING** AND OUR **FASTING** BEFORE **GOD** ALONE. JESUS GAVE ONLY **ONE** COMMAND ABOUT FASTING -- "WHEN YOU FAST, **DON'T** TELL ANYONE ABOUT IT" BUT, CHRISTIANS I HAVE MET IN INDIA WHO FAST, INVARIABLY **TALK** ABOUT IT. THERE IS A GREAT **LUST** WITHIN US TO GET **HONOUR** WHEN WE DO THESE THINGS



WHILE JESUS WARNED US IN CHAPTER 7, **NOT** TO **JUDGE** OTHERS, HE **ALSO** WARNED US TO **DISCERN** "**FALSE** PROPHETS WHO COME IN **SHEEP'S** CLOTHING" (7:15). A **FALSE** PROPHET (WOLF) MAY HAVE THE **CORRECT** DOCTRINE (SHEEP'S CLOTHING), BUT ARE OUT TO **EXPLOIT** SIMPLE BELIEVERS FOR THEIR OWN GAIN. IF YOU LISTEN TO HIS DOCTRINE **ALONE**, YOU WILL THINK HE IS A **SHEEP** OR EVEN A **SHEPHERD!!** BUT IF HE SEEKS TO **EXPLOIT** YOU FINANCIALLY OR TO **CONTROL** YOU IN SOME WAY, HE IS A **WOLF**. SUCH A MAN IS ONLY OUT TO **GAIN** SOMETHING FOR **HIMSELF** IN THE **NAME** OF **CHRIST** -- YOUR **MONEY** OR YOUR **SUBMISSION**. JESUS SAID THAT THE WAY TO DETECT FALSE PROPHETS WAS **NOT** BY THEIR **DOCTRINE**, OR BY THE RESULTS OF THEIR **MINISTRY**, BUT BY THE **LACK** OF THE **FRUIT** OF THE **SPIRIT** IN THEIR **CHARACTER** (7:16).



AFTER TALKING ABOUT THE **FRUIT** OF THE SPIRIT THROUGHOUT THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, JESUS FINALLY SPOKE ABOUT THE **GIFTS** OF THE SPIRIT. HE SAID THAT IN THE FINAL DAY, MANY WOULD COME TO HIM AND SAY, "LORD, WE **PROPHESIED** IN YOUR NAME, WE CAST OUT **DEMONS** IN YOUR NAME, WE DID **MIRACLES** IN YOUR NAME," ETC. (7:22). AND THE LORD WILL SAY TO THEM, "**DEPART** FROM ME, BECAUSE YOU **LIVED** IN **SIN**." THEY PREACHED TO OTHERS, CAST OUT DEMONS, AND EVEN DID MIRACLES IN JESUS' NAME, BUT THEY **STILL** WENT TO **HELL**! WE MUST NEVER ALLOW OURSELVES TO BE **IMPRESSED** BY ANYONE'S PROPHETIC GIFTS OR BY HIS CASTING OUT DEMONS OR DOING MIRACLES. IF YOU HAVE **GIFTS WITHOUT FRUIT**, YOU CAN END UP IN **HELL**. BUT IF YOU HAVE **FRUIT WITHOUT GIFTS**, YOU WILL **CERTAINLY** ENTER **GOD'S KINGDOM**.



CHAPTER 8, WE READ OF SOME OF THE MIRACLES THAT JESUS DID. HE **NOT ONLY** **PREACHED**, BUT HE **CARED** FOR PEOPLE AS WELL. HE **TOUCHED** **LEPERS** WHOM NO-ONE ELSE WOULD TOUCH. HE **NOT ONLY** **HEALED** THEM THEREBY BUT GAVE THEM A **SENSE** OF **WORTH**.



WE READ HERE OF A ROMAN CENTURION WHO WAS SO **HUMBLE** A MAN AND SO **FULL** OF FAITH THAT WHEN JESUS SAID HE WOULD COME TO HIS HOUSE TO HEAL HIS SERVANT, SAID, "LORD, I AM **NOT WORTHY** THAT YOU SHOULD COME TO MY HOUSE. JUST SPEAK THE WORD AND IT WILL BE DONE." **FAITH** AND **HUMILITY** ALWAYS GO **TOGETHER**. JESUS IMMEDIATELY SAID "I HAVE NOT FOUND SUCH GREAT **FAITH** IN ANYONE IN ISRAEL" (8:10). JESUS WAS A MASTER AT **APPRECIATING** AND **ENCOURAGING** IMPERFECT PEOPLE LIKE **PETER** AND **NATHANIEL**. THE CENTURION MUST HAVE BEEN SO **ENCOURAGED** BY THOSE WORDS, THAT IT IS **MORE** THAN **LIKELY** THAT HE BECAME A **WHOLEHEARTED DISCIPLE** OF **JESUS**.



THE CHILDREN OF ADAM ARE MISERS AT APPRECIATING PEOPLE AND MASTERS AT CRITICISING THEM. WE ARE HESITANT TO PUBLICLY APPRECIATE PEOPLE, FOR FEAR THAT THEY MIGHT GET PUFFED UP THEREBY. WE CANNOT EVEN APPRECIATE GENUINELY GODLY PEOPLE. MOST BELIEVERS HAVE NOT LEARNT THIS HABIT FROM CHRIST. WE CERTAINLY MUST NOT FLATTER ANYONE, FOR FLATTERY IS SATANIC. BUT GENUINE APPRECIATION IS A DIVINE CHARACTERISTIC.



IN 9:27, WE READ OF TWO BLIND MEN WHO CAME TO JESUS. BUT BEFORE JESUS HEALED THEM, HE ASKED THEM A QUESTION. "DO YOU BELIEVE THAT I AM ABLE TO DO THIS FOR YOU?" THEY SAID, "YES, LORD". THEN JESUS TOLD THEM, "ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH BE IT UNTO YOU" (9:29). THIS IS A DIVINE PRINCIPLE: WE RECEIVE ACCORDING TO THE MEASURE OF OUR FAITH. DID THOSE BLIND MEN NEED A MIRACLE? YES. DID JESUS WANT TO DO A MIRACLE FOR THEM? YES. BUT YET THE MIRACLE WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE IF THEY DID NOT HAVE FAITH.



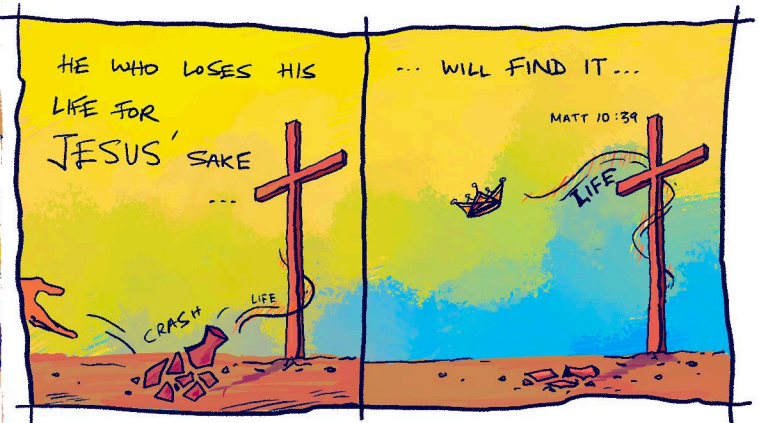
SUPPOSE ONE BLIND MAN HAD SAID, "WELL, LORD, I AM SURE YOU CAN OPEN AT LEAST ONE EYE OF MINE. ACTUALLY THAT WOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR ME" THE LORD WOULD HAVE SAID EXACTLY THE SAME WORDS TO HIM, "ACCORDING TO YOUR FAITH BE IT UNTO YOU," -- AND HE WOULD HAVE GOT JUST ONE EYE OPENED! IF THE SECOND MAN HAD SAID, "LORD, I BELIEVE YOU CAN OPEN BOTH MY EYES", HE WOULD HAVE RECEIVED ACCORDING TO HIS FAITH -- AND WOULD HAVE GOT BOTH EYES OPENED. THE ONE-EYED MAN WOULD THEN HAVE STARTED THE "ONE-EYE" DENOMINATION, PROCLAIMING THAT JESUS CAN OPEN ONE EYE. AND THE OTHER MAN WOULD HAVE STARTED THE "TWO-EYES" DENOMINATION, PROCLAIMING THAT JESUS CAN OPEN BOTH EYES. AND SO TODAY, SOME PROCLAIM HALF A GOSPEL SAYING THAT JESUS CAN ONLY FORGIVE US OUR SINS. BUT A FEW PROCLAIM THE FULL GOSPEL SAYING, "JESUS CAN NOT ONLY FORGIVE US OUR SINS. HE CAN ALSO GIVE US VICTORY OVER SIN."



IN CHAPTER 10, WE READ ABOUT JESUS SELECTING 12 APOSTLES AND GIVING THEM AUTHORITY FOR THEIR MINISTRY. HE TOLD THEM THAT THEY WOULD NOT ONLY HAVE HIS **AUTHORITY** IN THEIR MINISTRY, BUT **PERSECUTION** TOO. "I SEND YOU AS **SHEEP** IN THE MIDST OF **WOLVES**. BE SHREWD AS **SERPENTS** AND **INNOCENT** AS **DOVES**" (10:16). THAT MEANS THAT WE MUST NEVER TAKE **REVENGE** OR **HARM** OTHERS IN ANY WAY. WE MUST TRUST GOD TO **PROTECT** US FROM THE WOLVES. BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE SHOULD NOT **FOOLISHLY** SAY THINGS THAT WILL **UNNECESSARILY** **PROVOKE** THE **NON-CHRISTIANS** AROUND US. OUR MESSAGE IS **POSITIVE**. WE ARE TO **LIFT UP JESUS CHRIST**, **WITHOUT DENOUNCING** ANYONE ELSE'S RELIGION OR CULTURE (SEE ACTS 19:37). WE MUST BE WISE WITH **MONEY** AND BY **NOT REVEALING** INFORMATION TO THOSE WHO DON'T **NEED** TO KNOW IT.



JESUS WENT ON TO SAY THAT OUR ENEMIES WOULD BE MEMBERS OF OUR OWN **FAMILY** (10:36). WHEN WE FOLLOW THE LORD, WE CAN EXPECT TO BE **MISUNDERSTOOD** BY OUR RELATIVES. A PROPHET IS USUALLY NEVER **ACCEPTED** BY HIS OWN RELATIVES. AND IF WE LOVE OUR EARTHLY PARENTS **MORE** THAN THE **LORD**, THEN WE ARE **NOT WORTHY** OF HIM (10:37).

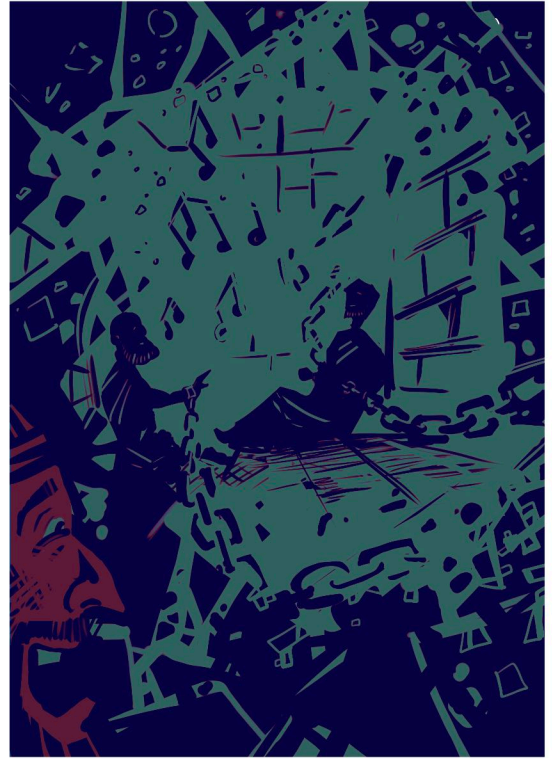


BUT IF BEING **REJECTED** BY MEN DOES NOT DISTURB US AND WE ARE WILLING **EVEN** TO **LOSE** OUR **LIFE** FOR JESUS' SAKE, THEN WE WILL **FIND** IT (10:39). AND IF WE GIVE EVEN A CUP OF WATER TO A DISCIPLE OF JESUS, HE WILL GIVE US A REWARD (10:42). ANY BELIEVER WHOSE MIND IS SET ON **EARTHLY** THINGS IS LIVING UNDER THE **OLD COVENANT**. CONVERSION TO CHRIST SHOULD BRING A **CHANGE** IN OUR WAY OF **THINKING**.

**MATTHEW** IS THE FIRST BOOK IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND IT SEEKS TO INTRODUCE US **IMMEDIATELY** TO THIS HEAVENLY NEW COVENANT LIFE. THAT'S WHY IT BEGINS WITH THE **SERMON ON THE MOUNT** (MATTHEW 5 TO 7).

THAT IS DESCRIBING A HEAVENLY LIFE ON EARTH, WHERE WE KEEP THE **COMMANDMENTS** OF **GOD** NOT JUST EXTERNALLY BUT **INWARDLY**





IN 11:2, 3, WE READ THAT **JOHN THE BAPTIST** BEGAN TO **DOUBT** WHETHER JESUS WAS THE MESSIAH, WHEN HE WAS IN **PRISON**. WE WOULD IMAGINE THAT IF WE HAD SEEN **HEAVEN OPENED** AND THE **HOLY SPIRIT** DESCENDING ON JESUS AND HAD HEARD A **VOICE FROM HEAVEN**, WE WOULD **NEVER** AGAIN HAVE ANY DOUBTS LEFT AT ALL. BUT THE **OLD-COVENANT MINDSET** HAS NO ROOM IN IT FOR BEING IN **PRISON**. BUT WHEN THOSE UNDER THE **NEW COVENANT** LIKE **PAUL** AND **SILAS** WERE IN PRISON, THEY DID NOT DOUBT GOD BUT **PRAISED** HIM INSTEAD BECAUSE THEY WERE **FILLED** WITH THE **HOLY SPIRIT**.



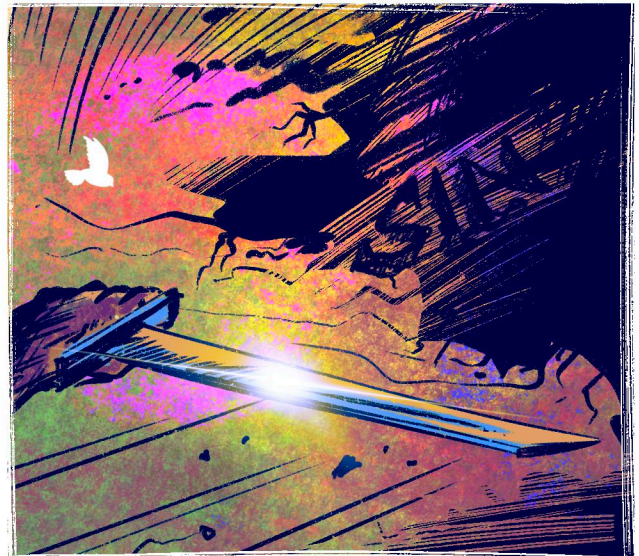
MANY OLD COVENANT BELIEVERS **JUSTIFY** ADULTERY BY CITING DAVID.. DEPRESSION BY CITING ELIJAH.. ANGER BY CITING MOSES.. OLD-COVENANT CHRISTIANS RUN THEIR RACE LOOKING UNTO **MOSES** AND **DAVID** AND **ELIJAH** AS THEIR EXAMPLES LOOKING FOR EXCUSES FOR SIN (INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT THE GOOD ASPECTS OF THESE MEN!) ; WHEREAS NEW-COVENANT CHRISTIANS RUN THEIR RACE LOOKING UNTO **JESUS**.



**JESUS** SENT THIS MESSAGE BACK TO JOHN THE BAPTIST, "GO AND TELL JOHN THAT THE **BLIND** RECEIVE SIGHT AND THE **POOR** HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM" (11:4, 5). THE NEW-COVENANT GOSPEL IS THE GOOD NEWS OF DELIVERANCE FROM **SIN** -- NOT DELIVERANCE FROM **PRISON**.. IT IS **ACCEPTING** WHATEVER **GOD** PERMITS AS BEING THE **VERY BEST** FOR US.



ACCORDING TO JESUS, WHO WAS THE **GREATEST** HUMAN BEING BORN BEFORE HIM? IT WAS **JOHN THE BAPTIST** -- **NOT MARY**, THE MOTHER OF JESUS, AS SOME CHRISTIANS IMAGINE!! AND THEN JESUS WENT ON TO SAY, "YET THE ONE WHO IS **LEAST** IN THE KINGDOM OF **HEAVEN** IS **GREATER** THAN HE" (11:11). THAT MEANS, THE LEAST PERSON WHO HAS ENTERED INTO THE NEW COVENANT WILL NOT ASK **QUESTIONS** LIKE JOHN ASKED, "LORD, WHY AREN'T YOU RELEASING ME?" HE WILL **KNOW** THAT GOD CAUSES **EVERYTHING** TO WORK FOR HIS **GOOD**.



IN 11:12, JESUS SAID, "THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERS **VIOLENCE**, AND **VIOLENT** MEN TAKE IT BY FORCE." WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A **VIOLENT** MAN? **EXTERNALLY**, A CHRISTIAN MUST ALWAYS BE A MAN OF **PEACE**. BUT **INWARDLY**, HE MUST DO **VIOLENCE** TO **EVERYTHING** THAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF HIS FOLLOWING THE LORD -- HE MUST STAND **STRONGLY** AGAINST THE **LUSTS** IN HIS **FLESH**, AGAINST **SIN** AND AGAINST **SATAN**.



IF WE ARE **HALF-HEARTED**, WE WILL NEVER BE **DISCIPLES** OF JESUS AND WE WON'T **POSSESS** THE **KINGDOM OF HEAVEN** EITHER.



THEN JESUS WENT ON TO SAY, "FATHER, I PRAISE YOU THAT YOU **HID** THESE THINGS FROM THE WISE AND THE INTELLIGENT AND REVEALED THEM TO **BABES**" (11:25). INTELLIGENCE GIVES US **NO** ADVANTAGE WHATSOEVER IN **GOD'S** KINGDOM. IT'S A **PURE** HEART THAT GETS **GOD'S** REVELATIONS. CHILDREN ARE ALSO **TEACHABLE**. A LITTLE CHILD IS **IGNORANT** AND GLADLY **ACKNOWLEDGES** ITS IGNORANCE. IN THE NEW COVENANT, WE HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF BEING FILLED WITH THE **HOLY SPIRIT** AND TO HAVE HIM **HIMSELF** TEACH US THE SCRIPTURES THAT **HE** WROTE.

