



The River of God

A Newsletter from the Little Flock Christian Fellowship

206 Cowley Avenue, East Lansing, Michigan 48823, Phone: (517)337 3949
www.littleflock.org, email: raogollapalli@hotmail.com or littleflock@hotmail.com

The Beginning of Sorrows

A Personal note from Bro. G. P. Rao

As recorded by Apostle Matthew (ch. 23), Jesus concluded his ministry in Jerusalem with two serious messages to the Scribes and the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the Jews. First, *Woe unto you (23:13)*; the second, *Behold, your house (The Temple) is left unto you desolate (23:38)*. For the last time he preached in Jerusalem and for the last time he visited the temple. He did not reject these leaders, but they rejected him. Within few years after the temple was destroyed and became desolate, the Jewish nation was hit hard with sorrows as the Lord had told them. They lost their temple and their beloved city, Jerusalem.

After he left Jerusalem, the Lord had private conversation with the disciples while sitting on Mount of Olives. Their conversation started with the admiration of the temple and the buildings by the disciples (Matt. 24:3). The Lord's word here is generally known as Olivet Discourse; but I like to call it as the Olivet Revelation (chapters 24 and 25). Here he gave some more insight of what he said to the Scribes and Pharisees earlier. The first eight verse of chapter 24 informs us of how the sorrows or woes will begin.

The Lord said '*these are the beginning of sorrows*' (24:8). That tells us that the sorrows for the Jewish nation began in the first century itself. Looking into the history after Christ, we can understand the way Jerusalem was crushed by its enemies. A brief summary:

66-70AD Following the Jewish revolt, the Roman army led by General Titus destroyed the Temple and much of the city Jerusalem in 70AD. **132-135AD** The Caesar Adrianus started transforming Jerusalem into a Roman city

*There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down
Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars... nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in diverse places (Matt. 24:2, 6, 7)*

though there was severe resistance from the Jews. The emperor renamed Jerusalem as *Aelia Capitolina* and the Jews were forbidden to enter the city. During this period

more buildings were destroyed in Jerusalem to provide area for new buildings with Roman architecture. **324-638AD** The city went through more changes and many Christian buildings came up during the rule of Constantine, the Emperor of Byzantium. **614-1099AD** The appearance of Jerusalem was further altered after Caliph Omar captured Jerusalem from the Byzantines in 614 AD. Caliph Abdel-Malik built the Dome of the Rock on the temple mount, in 691 AD enclosing the rock whereon Isaac was laid to be sacrificed by Abraham. It is the same place where the angel of destruction stopped to destroy Jerusalem (I Chro. 21:15) and David built alter

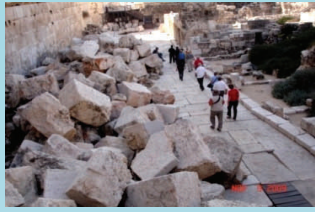
'A sower went forth to sow; And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way side' Matt. 13:3, 4

later at the command of the Lord (I Chro. 21:26). It is the place where the first temple built by Solomon stood till 586 BC and the second temple of Zerubbabel, Joshua and Ezra stood till 70AD (Ezra 5:2; 6:15). The Arabs ruled Jerusalem for 450 years until the crusaders arrived under whom Jerusalem further changed. **1099-1187AD** The Christian Crusaders from Europe captured Jerusalem. They rebuilt several Christian buildings which were first built by the Byzantines and destroyed by the Arabs. Ruins and the reconstructed Holy Sepulcher of Crusaders' time can be seen today.

1187-1245AD In 1187 AD Salah-a-Din captured Jerusalem and transformed the churches built by the Crusaders into mosques. **1250-1516AD** The Mamelukes of Turkish origin took over Jerusalem made it a very important Islamic holy place. **1516-1917AD** Ottoman Sultan Selim captured Jerusalem. The present day old city walls of Jerusalem were built by him in 1538AD.

1917-1948AD After World War I, the British General Allenby entered Jerusalem and captured the city without any battle and the entire Palestine came under the British Mandate. Although Jerusalem prospered during this period, the division between the Arabs and Jews was deepened. On November 29, 1947 the United Nations decided to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab States with Jerusalem as an international city. On May 14, 1948 the British Mandate in Palestine ended and they left the region. A short time after that, violence

erupted between the Jews and Arabs and Jewish quarter of Jerusalem was cut off from the Arab quarters in which was the temple mount (no temple). The Jews call their war of 1948 as the war of independence and they



named their newly born nation as Israel. Thus, 2000 years after Babylonian captivity the nation of Israel came into being once again. 1948 to 1967 Jerusalem remained a

divided city till 1967 during which Israel's six day war with the surrounding Arab nations united it and brought under the rule of Israel. The conflicts continue to be there as we hear almost every day in the news. The Lord said through Zachariah: "Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it" (Zechariah 12:2, 3)

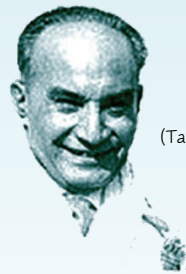
Today, except for the ground where at one time stood the temple, there is nothing of the temple or of the buildings that surrounded it. Last November when we were there, I asked the guide to show me something of the temple or of the buildings which were around it. He replied: there is nothing, except for the platform or the ground on which the temple stood. I realized that it is exactly as the Lord had foretold in his word (Matt. 24:2): There is left not even one stone upon another at this site. The historian Josephus wrote: No other city ever suffered such things. This was also foretold by Prophet Micah (3:12) in 750BC: *Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps.* In the after years, the stones from the temple and other ancient buildings were used by foreign rulers for building other structures, except for some heaps of stones still lying on one side of the temple mount. They were thrown down by the Roman army. These heaps of stones are left there as a witness to the destruction of Jerusalem. Today, Jerusalem is without the temple as per the word of the Lord: *Your house is left unto you desolate.*

The Lord said: ALL THESE ARE THE BEGINNING OF SORROWS (Matt. 24:5-8). The very first event that heralded the beginning of sorrows, as the Lord said, was the destruction of Jerusalem, especially the temple. Then followed wars, nation rising against nation and earth quakes. Since January of this year alone six major earth quakes have occurred in different countries resulting in heavy damage to properties and loss of life. The most recent one was on March 8 in Turkey. Thus the sorrows the Lord spoke about began nearly 2000 years ago. Then the question is: if these are only the beginnings of sorrows, what would be the Sorrow that all these will lead to? Prophet Jeremiah called these times as Jacob's Trouble (Jer. 30:7); but the Lord named it Great Tribulation (v. 21) and as The Hour of Temptation which shall come upon all the world (Rev. 3:10). In Greek

version, it is The Great Tribulation. This is the subject matter of Revelation chapters 6 to 19. For now I would like to leave this subject there as I do not wish to go into details in this article, but desire to remind ourselves of the events that have began to unfold before the glorious appearing of our Lord. We need to know the times we are in today. The Lord said: *heaven and earth will pass away, but my word shall never pass away (v.35).* What the Lord said in these chapters of Matthew will certainly be fulfilled to the last word. But, for a believer, the message of sorrows has hidden good news: Our Lord is coming soon (25:31). For we know that we shall be taken up before the wrath of God falls on this earth. Revelation 3:10 says: *I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world.*

The Jewish nation rejected Christ and came under what The Lord said: *Woe unto you.* Today there are millions of people in the world who are rejecting Christ. They are already under condemnation (John 3:18). For them the final sorrow shall be the everlasting hell - a sorrow that shall never end. If you have so far not accepted Christ, I urge you to do so now.

The world is now heading to the final stage of the sorrows - the Tribulation - which shall conclude with the return of the Lord. The good news is: The Lord shall come! We have a word from the Lord for these times: *Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come (Matt. 24:42).* Apostle Paul warns us: *Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep (Romans 13:11)*



FISHERS OF MEN

(Continued from last issue)

(Taken from audio tapes containing Bro. Bhakt Singh's messages and his Testimony given in Europe and USA)

Bro. Bhakt Singh

One day, sitting on the steps outside the house, I was reading the first epistle of John. A man who was going from house to house with some literature came to me and said - Are you from India? I said, yes. He tried to prove to me that there is no sin and hell, and that Christ was not the son of God. Then he took his Bible and read Genesis 1:26: God said, Let us make man in our image, after his likeness. When I tried to show him some scriptures, He said, you are just a babe, you don't know anything. I said - alright sir, I think, you are a Jehovah Witness; please go home and read I John chapters 1 and 2. That morning the Lord had showed me these two chapters. Six months later we had a gospel meeting

in Aldis, Canada. After the meeting, a tall grey haired man came to me in tears and said "do you recognize me?" I said yes sir. He was the same man who met me when I was reading I John on the door steps of the house where I lived. He said "you do not know what happened to me after I left you that evening; even though I laughed at you that day, I went home and read the first two chapters of I John as you had suggested; I am now born again". Both he and his wife were born again. That's how the Lord led me to people with the gospel. Every day I prayed: Lord lead me to someone to whom I could give the gospel; and the Lord led me to such people. When you are conscious of God's presence with you, he will speak to you. Along with some Christian workers at the Vancouver harbor, I worked for one year among Chinese, Japanese, Americans, Indians, and other foreigners. There were about 1,800 Punjabis living there at that time. Most of them were ship employees. After they were relieved from services, they wasted their money on drinking and gambling and became very poor. Some of them became thieves, drunkards and other kind of criminals. I used to stay with them till late in the night talking about the way of salvation. I had no money for bus fare or even for a cup of tea; I used to walk five miles back to my place. But I did not borrow money from any one. The word of God itself was my best food at such times. Later I realized that it was a training the Lord gave me for the work in India.

In the early days of my ministry in Karachi, in 1934, I did not know how to preach. All that I did was distributing tracts to people on the streets and talking to people individually. One day, a man came to me and said, will you please come and speak to us in our meeting. I said, Sir, I am not a speaker. But, he wouldn't believe me and literally forced me into the meeting. Seeing a big crowd, I started trembling. I held the Bible upside down. I was nervous and started praying in myself, Lord, have mercy upon me. After saying a few words I prayed in my heart: Lord what shall I say next? The Lord helped me. That's how I was in the beginning; I had no skills to be a public speaker.

In 1934, I was in Quetta (Pakistan) for 19 days of gospel campaign. Again in April 1935 the Lord clearly guided me to go to Quetta. We began the gospel campaign on May 4. On May 31 we had a big gathering in which I gave the gospel and told the people that God wanted them to repent and come to Him that night itself. Then I said, those who wished to be saved should stay back for

prayer. Fifty eight men and women stayed back and prayed repenting of their sins and asking the Lord to forgive them. After the meeting, I went to my tent but could not sleep. That night at about 12:30AM the Lord told me to get up and pray for those who went away from the meeting without receiving salvation. Then I knelt down and began to pray asking the Lord to wake up those people and to make them restless till they kneel down and confess their sins. At about 3AM, I was assured of the Lord that He heard my prayer. Moments after that, a powerful earth quake shook the area. I did not realize that it was an earth quake but thought that God was answering my prayer and the people were being shaken. I stayed on my knees. After half an hour my friend came to my tent and told me that there was a terrible earthquake. My friend next door was thrown out of his bed; men and women were crying and shouting for help. Then both of us continued in prayer till 5 AM,



asking the Lord to save the souls of those who had gone away without repentance. After that we went out and saw heaps of buildings, mud, stones, and bricks lying all over. It was a sad sight to see that some people were hanging with heads down from broken buildings and some had lost their legs and arms. All this happened in 18 seconds. We came to know later that 95% of the dead were non Christians and only 8% were Christians. Out of those who came to our meetings, only 2 persons were killed. All other believers were safe and had no injuries.

We stayed there for two weeks doing rescue work and giving out gospels. There were many without proper clothes and blankets to cover themselves. Seeing the need of the people, I prayed: Lord please give us four or five blankets for poor children near our tent. The next morning I met a man by name Evans who asked me if I wanted some blankets. He had many new woolen blankets sent by some military men, and so he told me to take as many blankets as I wanted. I took 72 blankets and gave to the needy people. I asked for only 4 or 5 blankets but the Lord gave me 72. One evening I saw a mother with a child who was crying for milk. I prayed, Lord that child is asking for milk, please tell me where I should go to get milk. The Lord told me that I should go in a particular direction. As I went

that way, I met a doctor by name Oliver. He asked me if I would like to have some milk as there was plenty of milk in his hospital. I asked the Lord for one cup, but the Lord gave me a gallon. The next morning a lady came crying and told me that she was very hungry and had nothing to eat. I told her the Lord could supply her need and I prayed for food for her and also for me. The Lord directed me to go in a particular direction, and as I went that way, I found a tent with plenty of food for free. Thus the Lord supplied her need and my need. After that a lady with a small daughter met me and asked me for clothes and shoes for her child. I prayed and asked God for help. God told me to go across the Railway line; and I did so. There I met a man who said: I have been given a parcel of children clothes; can you use some? I joyfully accepted the gift; and gave it to the lady who came to me for help. The shoes were exactly of her child's foot size. Through all these events I knew that God looks after us and he was at work. (To be continued on next issue)



On April 6, Sister Rekha, the second daughter of Brother Prasad Tharakaturi of Chicago was called to glory. On Saturday, April 3, she gave her testimony to the youth and sang the song: *All to Jesus I surrender*, in the Family Retreat. On the following Sunday she worshipped the Lord with all her heart in the midst of the saints and took part in the Lord's Table. The same night as they were returning to Chicago she became seriously ill due to some allergies and was taken to a hospital. On the second day she went to be with the Lord. The Lord wonderfully prepared her to meet Him in glory. Indeed our times are in His hands (Psalm 31:15). All the believers of Little Flock were together those two days in prayers and in providing support to the family of Bro. Prasad. About 250 people attended the funeral service held on April 10 at Wheaton near Chicago. Sister Rekha was a witnessing college student. She had in her bag a stack of gospel tracts with the title: *Good News*. At the funeral service I had the privilege of preaching that Good News, the Gospel, based on the text: *Jesus Christ hath abolished death* – 2 Timothy 1:10. Certainly the Spirit of God was in our midst that day. A man of God once said: The Lord blesses and uses the funeral service for His glory according to the testimony of the person who died. The Lord indeed honored the testimony of Rekha with His presence at her funeral service. We thank God for He has wonderfully comforted and strengthened the family of Bro. Prasad through the prayers and love of the fellow believers. Please pray that they may continue to experience the comfort and grace of God as they remain in fellowship with Brothers Mathews, Moses, Sunil and other believers of Zion House of Prayer at Wheaton, Illinois, near Chicago.

FOR PRAISE AND PRAYER

Ministry among Students

In the months of January and February the Lord enabled us to continue to work with some of the international students who had attended our gospel meetings during the last Christmas season. Some of them attended our family retreat also. There are about 48,000 students from about 125 countries in the Michigan State University located in East Lansing. There are about the same number of students at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor where some of our believers live. The Lord is giving a growing burden to some of our brothers to witness among them. Please pray for this vital ministry.

All-night Prayer Meetings

In March, by the grace of God we had two all-night prayer meetings: one in Detroit area and the other in Shepherdsville. We hope to have more of such prayer meetings in the months to come.

Annual Family Retreat of 2010

Retreat was held at Faholo Conference center during April 1-4. The theme was **“Worthy is the Lamb” - Rev. 5:12**. About 120 people of different nationalities stayed at one place, had fellowship together and received God's word. Three local youth and one sister from Chicago with a Hindu background were baptized. The Lord indeed blessed the retreat for His glory and for the edification of the body of Christ. Please pray that the new work started in the hearts of many may continue to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Open-air Gospel Work

We are praying more about this ministry and as the Lord leads we hope to go out for door-to-door evangelism during the coming summer months. We shall greatly appreciate your prayers in this regard.

Detroit: Believers in Detroit area are continuing to pray for a place where they could meet for Sunday worship services during morning hours. Currently they meet in the evenings. We see this as an urgent need and trust that the Lord will answer our prayers according to his will in this matter. Please pray for this need.

Canada: The ministry at Mississauga, Canada is continuing by God's grace. Please pray that the Lord will fully equip the saints there for greater ministry in the days to come. Pray especially for Brothers Venkat, Ruwan, and John who share the responsibilities of this ministry.

Praise the Lord
Bro. Rao Gollapalli