



Caring for children around the world

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STORY OF YET ANOTHER MIRACLE

by Hulda Buntain, India



Left: Hulda Buntain; Right: Bible School Students

One young evangelist felt God's call to go from village to village on his motorcycle to assist the pastors with open-air services and to show the Jesus film. As he was going to a village, persecutors came out of the roadside jungle, poured kerosene all over his body and with their torches tried to burn him alive. The kerosene would not ignite. A miracle had occurred. The persecutors got very angry and poured more kerosene over him and once again tried to ignite a fire. Again it failed to burn or even cause a flicker of flame.

The gang of persecutors were so shocked at their failed attempt to kill him. They asked if he was a holy man as they believe strongly in witchcraft. He requested that they sit on the ground close by

while he witnessed and prayed with them. He then invited them to come to the near-by village to attend the service that evening where he was speaking.

It is so encouraging to see the results of the ministry of these young dedicated students after their Bible School graduation. This has resulted in the establishment of hundreds of village churches and schools in some of the most remote areas of the State of Orissa.

Only eternity will reveal the results of the donations given by the faithful people who support the Bible Schools through Sunday Line, which has resulted in the thousands of families who have been won to Christ through their monthly giving.

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THE MYSTERY OF THE FORGOTTEN NAME

Key Scripture: **Matthew 1:23**

*“And they shall call
His name Emmanuel”*

The Christmas story begins in Matthew 1, verse 18, a well-known and much loved account. In verse 21 the angel is speaking to Joseph in reference to Mary, and says, **“She shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.”** Verse 25 tells us that when the baby Jesus was born that Joseph was obedient to the command. As we celebrate the birth of Jesus during the Christmas season, the name of Jesus fills all our hearts with joy and worship because it tells us of forgiveness and peace and a home in heaven.

But notice what verses 22 and 23 tell us: **“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.”**

Notice - they shall call His name Emmanuel, meaning “God with us”! The great tragedy of the church today is that we have forgotten the name, Emmanuel. Matthew’s gospel begins and ends with this precious name and yet, to many Christians, it carries little significance.

Just consider the two names for a moment. The name of Jesus tells us what “He is” and what “He has done” for us... “He is our Saviour who saved us from our sins,” but the name Emmanuel tells us “WHO” He is: He is “God with us”. As Saviour, Jesus took all our sinsbut as Emmanuel he is always with us so that we can know His unfolding glory to help us carry our burdens day by day.

We are all familiar with the prophet’s words “and His name shall be called Emmanuel”, but do you know to whom these words were first spoken? It was to one of the greatest rebel kings recorded in the Old Testament, to a rebellious King named Ahaz. King Ahaz was twenty years old when he

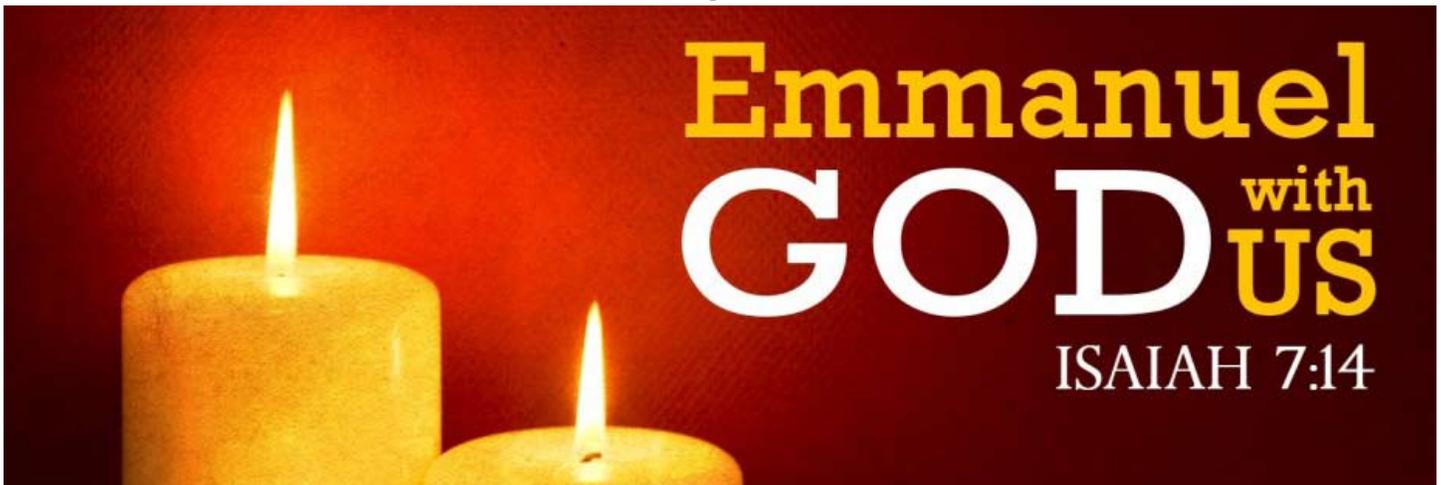
began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; **“but he did not do that which was right in the sight of the Lord”**. King Ahaz was God’s man, in God’s place, and leader of God’s people but he was dead and buried when he was only 36.

His basic problem was that like a lot of young men today which behave in misguided ways. He was the king with all power, he could do exactly what he wished and desired, but he could not solve the problem of the enemy attacks. Moreover, he enlisted pagan practices from false idols and false gods just like the pagan nations and sought the help from a vile god called Molech who demanded human sacrifice. Ahaz even had little babies thrown into the fire to seek help from the attacks of the Philistines, and furthermore, Ahaz also took gold out of Solomon’s glorious temple to buy help from the King of Assyria, but scripture says that he wasn’t helped by this king.

He also sacrificed to the gods of Damascus: and he said, because the gods of the kings of Syria help them, therefore I will sacrifice to them, that they may help me. But they were the ruin of Ahaz and all Israel.

It would seem unbelievable that Israel’s King could be so stupid, turning to pagan gods, and all the time living right next door to the House of the Lord. Instead of turning to the God of Israel whose House stood next to Ahaz, he turned to the gods of his enemies to seek their favour.

His rebellion was the ruining of his country and his family. What’s more, 2 Kings, chapter 16 records the visit which Ahaz made to Damascus to meet the king of Assyria, the one to whom he paid so much money. While there, Ahaz was awe stricken by the pagan altar of sacrifice and conceived that if he had an altar like that, he too would really have power and success. So he instructed the high priest Urijah, to make an exact copy of this pagan altar and the first thing he did was to offer four different kinds of offerings, but he had a problem: what was he to do with God’s order of worship in God’s Holy temple. Ahaz had defiled God’s altar by moving it and placing the pagan altar at the entrance of the courtyard.



What Ahaz had done was that he had revised the order of worship. There was no offering for sin, no repentance for sin, no cleansing, as God had ordained, only his own special altar and his own special sacrifice, just an arrogant demonstration of self-will. Ahaz had this to say about his brazen altar: **“and the brazen altar shall be for me to enquire by”**. How ridiculous, he would ask questions at the brazen altar.

Therefore God sent the prophet Isaiah to encourage him that God had a better plan for him, but Ahaz would not listen and so we read: **“Moreover the Lord spoke again unto Ahaz saying, ‘ask a sign from the Lord thy God’”** (Isaiah 7:11). This is a most moving passage, as God was trying to reach Ahaz to come to his senses and therefore encourages Ahaz to ask for a sign of God from earth or from heaven. But Ahaz said “I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord”. How could a man be so wretchedly ungrateful?

Then came the glorious promise from the heart of God; **“Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bare a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel”** (Isaiah 7:14).

Thank God for Jesus who came to save the sinner; but also thank God for Emmanuel who comes to save the Christian from himself, from his own fears, from his own helplessness.

All that Ahaz needed he could have found next door in The House of the Lord, according to God’s order of worship; if only he would have come to his senses, but instead he turned away and followed the way of worship according to his pagan enemies, which became the reason for his demise.

This is an important lesson for us today, that God has an avenue of help for everyone who has placed their faith in Jesus. He is **“Emmanuel”**...He is **“God with us”** and not God against us: If God be with us, who can be against us. And because He is with us we are more than conquerors, and can do all things through Him that gives us strength. He is our Redeemer, our Deliverer, our Provider, our Helper, our Healer, our Protector, and He is as close as the very breath of air that we breathe. And because He is our light and our salvation we have nothing and no one to fear, not even death itself as He gives His perfect Peace to those whose mind is kept steadfast on Him.

Beloved, all that you and I will ever need is to be found in **“Emmanuel”**, the risen victorious Christ who indwells us by His Holy Spirit.

During this Christmas season the world may try to find peace, joy and happiness in the abundance of material possessions according to its materialistic ways, but our greatest joy comes in knowing that we have the most precious gift ever given to mankind residing in us and with us. As we celebrate this Christmas Season, remember **“Emmanuel” God is with us! Forever!**

On behalf of all the Sunday Line team we want to wish you a very blessed Christ-centered Christmas.

Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Roman

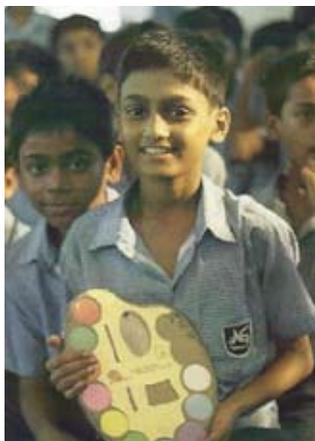


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The 'Fisherman' Church

The State of Orissa, bordering the Indian Ocean, is one of the poorest States of India. Thousands of fishermen and their families live in the worst poverty stricken area in shacks on the sand up and down this coast. The State was unevangelized and without churches and schools until B.L. David, a fisherman, was wonderfully converted and commenced services in a constructed mud hut large enough for about 50 people. Meanwhile, P.C. Hota had a marvelous conversion from Hinduism while in university through one of his professors, was disowned by his parents, and went to Calcutta to attend the Bible School. After graduation he felt led to go to Orissa to establish a ministry in Puri where B.L. David had been ministering. The 'fisherman' church now has over 1000 members, is the headquarters for all of the State ministries and is where the Bible School in that area is located.



God can use the smallest of gifts to show just how great His love is

TP's Story: I am 12 years old. I go to the Calcutta Mercy Center Hindi School. My parents work in the garbage dumps of Calcutta, collecting garbage to be recycled. We are very poor. I love to come to

school and to learn how to read and write. I hope to get a good job when I grow up and make enough money so that my mother will not have to work so hard to feed us each day. Most of all I love to draw! My friends tell me I am a good painter but I never had any paints or crayons to draw with.

Today we were told that some friends of ours, whom we did not even know, and who live in a place called Canada, had sent us gifts! I was so excited to hear this. I wondered what I would get. I received a beautiful set of paints! I have never seen

a set like that in my life; it had so many beautiful colors and even a board to mix them on! I was so happy; it was one of the best moments of my life. I thank Jesus for blessing me and I thank the donor with my whole heart of making my wish come true.

Reaching into Bhutan

The country of Bhutan is closed to the gospel but recently the king has turned the kingdom over to his son who has declared the country a democracy, which has given Christians more privileges. As yet, they are not allowed to have churches but are permitted to have house meetings. Mercy Ministries is building a Bible School in Jaigaon, on the border of Bhutan, and once completed, many Bhutanese students, who are already interested in Bible School training, will enroll. The prayer of the Bhutanese Christians is that soon God will answer their prayers and they will be able to have church buildings and services in their country.