

**SH-6**

**BELIEVERS  
AND  
ORNAMENTS**

**SAMSON HENRY, KOLLAM**

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## **BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS**



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Why believers should not wear ornaments? Can those who wear ornaments be baptized? Can they be allowed to take part in the Lord's Table? Has the Lord commanded us not to wear ornaments? If we could use expensive clothes, then what's wrong with wearing a bit of ornament? The ring on the finger of the prodigal son, the rich man wearing a gold ring in James' Epistle, Jesus Christ is wearing a golden sash on his chest .....; If so, why should not believers wear ornaments?

Many such questions arise among the believers. What does the Bible say about this? Through this book, Mr. Samson Henry shares with his readers the counsel given by God as a result of his prayer and Bible study. He serves the Lord through the ministries in Brethren Assembly, Kollam and through the works relating to Spiritual Tracts and Bible Books.

It is strongly written in the Old Testament to God's people, "*Take off your ornaments*" (Exodus.33:5). After this commandment was given, neither our Lord in the Gospels, nor the Apostles who followed and lived for the Lord in the Books of Acts, nor the Epistles allow to wear ornaments as a teaching.

Bible Goodnews Publications, Zion, Aradhana Nagar-22,  
Kollam, Pin - 691 001, Kerala

# **BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS** **(ENGLISH)**

**E-BOOK –**

FIRST EDITION: JANUARY 2021

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**TRANSLATION :**

THIS BOOK IS THE TRANSLATION OF MY MALAYALAM BOOK –  
**“VISWASIUM ABHARANAVUM”**

I extend my sincere thanks in God who assisted me in the translation:

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## AUTHOR'S NOTE

I am praising my Almighty God in preparing a Book on the subject "BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS" in English. I have published two editions in Malayalam on the subject in the year 2004 and 2014. There are so many arguments for and against the using of ornaments by believers. Moreover, this is a controversial subject among the Christians especially among the Pentecost and Brethren believers.

The publication of the Malayalam book, "Viswasium Abharanavum" was received by the believers' group with much enthusiasm. Many brethren from different parts of the world who can read Malayalam gave me encouragement in writing a book like this which is needed in the modern age. Also, I do not forget some persons who have blamed and raised controversies in this regard.

So many believers requested me to translate this book to English so that it can be read by the new generation who has no idea of using ornaments by the believers. Really this book is the outcome of many years prayers of me supported by hundreds of Brethren believers. Without many words, on the basis of scriptures, I am of the opinion that the believers should not wear ornaments.

We may think that forbidding ornaments of any kind is not come under the fundamental doctrines of the Bible. But a born again child of God must separate himself from the world. On a deep analysis of Separation from the World and consequent Sanctification of a believer also include keeping away from ornaments and worldly fashions. Not using ornaments is a public witness to the world —. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2.Cor.5:17). But many believers are reluctant to give emphasis to this important doctrine of "Separation".

As the printing of the book needs much financial commitments and distribution net work , I am presenting this book as an e-book. I am submitting this book "BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS" at the feet of my Lord and Saviour. May the reading of this book help the believers to live in this world as a witness to our LORD, separated unto GOD.

SAMSON HENRY

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25-11-2020

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# BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS

## CHAPTER – I

### Contemporary questions about Ornaments

- ⇒ Is it improper for a believer to wear ornaments?
- ⇒ Is it a sin to wear ornaments?
- ⇒ Does God hate ornaments and those who wear them?
- ⇒ If a believer forsakes ornaments at the time of baptism, will she lose her salvation, in case if she takes them back?
- ⇒ What will happen to such a believer on the Day of Reward?
- ⇒ Can baptism be denied to a believer simply because he or she does not give up ornaments?
- ⇒ Wearing ornaments is common among the believers outside Kerala State (India).
- ⇒ In that situation is it improper to deny baptism to the ornament-bearing believers in those places?
- ⇒ We tolerate expensive costumes and dresses in the churches. If so, what is wrong with "a little ornament"?
- ⇒ In some places in India, the widows abstain from ornaments, because of their social or religious restrictions.
- ⇒ Is it not proper to allow the believers in those places to wear some kind of ornaments, so that the sisters will be spared from humiliation there?
- ⇒ Is it proper for a sister wearing ornaments to take part in the Holy Communion?
- ⇒ Did God 'really' forbid ornaments in the scriptures?

*These are the contemporary questions that we face today.*

It appears that forbidding ornaments of any kind is not a part of the fundamental doctrine. It is a fundamental doctrine that a born again Christian should separate himself from the 'World'. On a deep analysis of the scripture, it is evident that wearing ornaments is also included in the above doctrine – 'Separation from the World'. It is a 'witnessing' to the world. It is a living testimony of a separated believer. But many Believers, Elders and Pastors are reluctant to give emphasis to this important doctrine of Separation.

Let me discuss the present stand points and various arguments raised in this regard —

- > So many believers are not speaking against the wearing of ornaments.
- > Many are keeping silent, though they are fully conversant with the scriptures.
- > Some give wishy washy answers.
- > Many believers think that wearing ornaments is a very minor thing, when most of the Christians are involved in more important infractions of the doctrines.
- > Some misinterpret the scripture to tolerate wearing ornaments.
- > Some believers say that it is not at all important to forsake ornaments even at the time of baptism. Eventually, when the believers grow up spiritually, they will do whatever is required based on the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, it is likely that the new believer will slip to other denominations, and the Church growth will be stalled.
- > Others argue that the doctrine of forbidding ornaments is an outdated fanatic piece of impracticable stuff, and it is our responsibility to move on with the new ideas suitable for the time.
- > Some people evaluate the doctrines with a modern mind. They advise as Job's wife *"Do you still hold fast to your integrity?"* (Job.2:9)
- > Some argue that *"People are inclined to come to the church because of our hard labor. But they cannot absorb our hard and stiff doctrines. They go to other churches where they are welcome, as they are"*.

#### **Answers as per the Scripture —**

Fortunately, we are able to find out answers to all the above questions and comments from the Bible. We have to remember a fundamental truth. God and His Word are unchangeable.

- > *"For I am the LORD, I do not change"* (Mal.3:6).
- > *"God is not a man, that He should lie. Nor a son of man, that He should repent"* (Num.23:19).
- > *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"* (Mat.24:35).

Everything is subject to continuous changes in the present world, the intelligence, beliefs, way of doing things, and even life. Even though a believer is a subject of the heavenly kingdom all the changes that are happening around him have profound impact on his life also. In such a context, his faith in God, and his confidence in the scripture also are subject to the challenges. The roots of doubts spring up in his heart. If another believer can do this, why can't I do the same thing?

Did God 'really' command this thing? The doubt comes up to her or his heart just like the question Satan hurled on Eve, the first mother of the human race (Gen.3:1). *"So, when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise"* (Gen.3:6). The ultimate result is that she fell into sin. The seed grows into a big tree that bears fruit of lust, worldly desires and ultimately, sin. *"For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world"* (1.John.2:16).



The same spirit of Satan in Eden Garden will surely approach the believers in relation to the wearing the ornaments. They will ask us — “Has God indeed said (Has God truly said / Did God said), You shall not wear ornaments? The question of Satan to Eve is not related to the wearing of ornaments. But this question can be taken as a question to make someone to raise doubt. What is the remedy or antidote to such questions that lead to confusions? The answer is that we must have a fundamental or basic knowledge in the Word of God. Also, we have to keep it in our heart and translate or copy the doctrines to our practical daily life. To this we have to keep in mind the model of the believers of Berea, exhortations of Apostle James and the warning of the writer of Hebrew Epistle.

> Acts.17:11 -- “These (Berea believers) were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”

> James.1:22 -- “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”

> Heb.2:1 -- “Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away.”

⇒ Wearing ornaments does not mean that Salvation will be lost. But the holy life and separation of the believer will be affected. He will be tempted to live and walk like a worldly man. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and we are bought with a price to glorify God (1.Cor.6:19,20). As we are owned by God, we should lead a holy life (Rom.12:1,2). We are not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold but redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot (1.Pet.1:18,19). When we are adorning with worldly things, the people around us are watching us (Acts.16:25). We have to obey the command — “*Be holy, for I am holy.*” Also live with fear in God (1.Pet.1:16,17).

“Now therefore, take off your ornaments” (Exo.33:5). After this command of God to our forefathers, there is no scripture in Bible giving permission for the wearing of ornaments. Dear brethren, our forefathers had a vision. With that great vision they abandoned many worldly things. Instead of picking up those filthy things, let us also run and press forward to the goal ahead of us. It is not our call to get reconciled to the world. Let us have a deeper vision and challenge to attain the goal ahead of us, because we have a strong heavenly call. Wearing ornaments is not at all suitable to a believer separated and dedicated to God.

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## CHAPTER – II

### HOW DID THE LUST FOR ORNAMENTS BEGIN?

Let us examine how the desire for wearing ornaments begins in human beings? Gold and silver are precious metals. The lust for wearing ornaments came to human hearts because of the fall of mankind into sin. Before the fall of man in Eden he was enjoying fellowship with God, and was covered with divine glory. The man did not wear any kind of dress or ornaments. As soon as the man sinned the glory of God departed him. Man became naked, and he covered the nakedness with fig leaves. He started wearing dress and decorated the body with material things in lieu of the divine glory departed.

There is no relation between ornaments and clothing. The need of clothing for covering nakedness started as and when Adam and Eve sinned against God in Eden. Before sinning, they were not concerned about wearing robes. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they covered their nakedness with fig leaves. Wearing of clothing is for covering nakedness. Whereas wearing of ornament is for decoration of the body. Wearing of ornament for adorning the body was the self selection of mankind after their forefathers were drove out from Eden.

Please read the following verses —

Gen.3:17-21 — *“Then to Adam He said, because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, you shall not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for your sake; In toil you shall eat it, All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground. For out of it you were taken; For dust you are, and to dust you shall return.....Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed him”*

Please note that God himself clothed the first human being, Adam and Eve. In Eden there was precious stones and gold (Gen.2:11,12). No ornaments in gold or stone were given to the man and his wife. God never made holes in nose or ears to wear ornaments. Later man discovered the materials and made ornaments out of them to decorate his body. This is consequent to the fall of man into sin. The man lost his glory and instead of looking unto his Creator for the clothing of salvation, he covered his body with perishable leaves. Likewise, his descendants looked unto the ground, collected the materials and started decorating himself.

The worldly man does not have the insight to realize what he has lost and he tried to find out substitutes for decorate himself. But the believer, who has the garment of salvation and saw the glory of God through Jesus Christ, does not have to decorate himself with worldly things. The heathen gods wear even serpents as ornaments. But the believer is not supposed to imitate the heathen gods and their followers. The body of the born-again Christian is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1.Cor.6:19). The believer does not have the right to make it unholy with material gadgets like ornaments.

## Ornaments among unbelievers —

The worldly man wears ornaments to make his body more beautiful. Also, he wants to show others that he is a rich man. But a believer who has been given the garment of salvation and divine glory is not supposed to increase his carnal beauty with material things.

Ornaments are the external modification and decoration of the body.

1.Pet.3:3,4 — *"Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."*

Ornament wearing shows love of world and luxury and lead to enmity with God.

James.4:4 — *"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."*

- ⇒ Not only that, the ornament in itself contains the seed of many social evils
- ⇒ The ornament wearing persons will often become the prey of robbers and even his life is at risk.
- ⇒ The artificial beauty of ladies made by ornaments will attract others for unholy relationships. Often men are attracted for sinful deeds.
- ⇒ The ornaments generate a pride and insolence in the human hearts. This is the luxury of the world.
- ⇒ Besides, the ornaments destroy the stability of many families.
- ⇒ Poor parents of the brides cannot afford the high amount of money and ornaments to the bridegroom's parents and thereby Christian love and peace in the families are at risk.

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## CHAPTER - III

### ORNAMENTS AND IDOL WORSHIP

The heathens used to decorate their Gods and goddesses with ornaments. The procession of idols adorned with various ornaments is very common in India. Idols decorated with ornaments are widely seen in temples. The heathen do so to please their gods and goddesses. They put ornaments on idols as a form of worship. Also, they make ornaments in the shape of the idols and put them on the bodies showing their reverence to the gods. All the ornaments wear today are connected to some form of idol worship.

Jacob while returning to Bethel, we see that all idols with their possession and those adorned the body are removed as a part of spiritual insight and honoring God. **Gen.35:4** - *"So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem."* Those who are living in New Testament age will have to adorn Jesus Christ and not with ornaments used for decorating dump idols.

#### **God's commandments to the children of God who were redeemed from Egypt –**

Gold and silver excavated from the earth are very precious in olden days also. Most of the idols for worship are made of gold and silver. They used these precious metals to adorn the idols. Instead of honoring and worshipping the living God, they went after other gods and gave respect to these idols by adorning them with gold and silver ornaments.

The most important commandment (Ten Commandments) that was given to the Israelites in Old Testament is that no idols shall be made; no other God shall be worshipped.

**Exo.20:1- 6** — *"And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other Gods before Me. You shall not make yourself a carved image — any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep my commandments".*

But the people ignored the commandments, they started making idols and worshipping them.

The people of Israel cast and curved the images of other gods and worshipped them. They provoked the living God and denied Him. Even though the first generation who turned to idol worship was punished, the succeeding generation again and again committed the same sin, and became idol worshippers. They made idols with gold and silver and enjoyed in worshipping them.

## **CALF MADE OF GOLD –**

Moses was called by God to the mountain to give the tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which God have written (Exo.24:12). While the whole people are camped at the foot of the mountain, Moses was with God for forty days and forty nights (Exo.24:18). During the wilderness journey of the Israelites from Egypt God wished to dwell with them in their midst. For this God asked Moses to build a dwelling place named Tabernacle (Exo.25:8). God gave the design for the Tabernacle, the materials to be used, and gave all the details relating to its construction and its services (Exo.25:1,2,8,9). Moses was to do all the things according to the pattern given by God (Exo.25:40).

When the people saw that Moses was delayed to return from the mountain top, they made a golden calf and began to worship. Their act of worshipping idol god led them to face the wrath of God. Please see their sinful actions in the absence of Moses.

**Exo.32:1-6** - *"Now when the people saw that Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people gathered together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods that shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."2 And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."3"So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. 4 And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"5 So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD."6 Then they rose early on the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play."*

The Israelites, the redeemed children of God who were bound to worship the living God, now worshipping the idol god of Egyptians made with their golden ornaments! For this they faced the wrath of God. Consequently, about three thousand men of the people died on that day (Exo.32:28). Though they have punished for their idol worship, the next generations often are committing the same act of idol worship by using gold and silver.

## **MOSES'CALL –**

God called and redeemed the Israelites from the slavery of Egyptians to give them the Promised Land Canaan. Before entering Canaan they have to keep spiritual separation and practice holiness. God called Abraham from the gentiles and redeemed the Israelites from Egypt are for keeping them separated unto God. God considered them as a treasure not because of seeing any special qualities in them. The book of Deuteronomy explains the reason for their peculiar selection by God.

**Deu.7:6,7** - *"For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples."*

Deuteronomy chapter 7 explains the Laws of Separation. After entering the land of Canaan, God has commanded them to destroy the seven great gentile nations. They were also instructed not to make any compromise or treaties with them. They have to conquer and destroy them utterly (Deu.7:1,2). When they get victory through God in defeating the seven great gentile nations, they have to keep certain principles.

**Deu.7:25,26** - *"You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing."*

They have to burn the carved images of gentile gods in fire. Also, not to take any gold or silver made idols. The keeping of these as their possession will lead them to temptation to sin against God. God knew that if these were not completely destroyed, the people will be driven to idol worship. If anyone does against the command of God, he will be punished. We can see two examples in this regard in the scripture. Achan saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, coveted them and took them. For the violation of the command he was caught, stoned and killed by burning (Josh.7:20-26). Saul, the first king of Israel also caught for this sin and hence removed from the position of king (1.Sam.15). Gold and silver often related to idol worship.

## **THE PERIOD OF JUDGES --**

Whenever the people turned to the idol worships, they were left into the hands of their enemies. Whenever they confessed and returned, they were protected. God gave them Judges to rule over them at those times. Deborah (Jud.4:4) was one of their rulers at a hard time of Israel. But people again turned away from God. They started worshipping Baal and idols thereof. What happened? The chosen people were left into the hands of Midianites again.

God heard their cry and lamentation and another Judge; Gideon was given to them (Jud.6). People started to make him king. *"But Gideon said to them, I will not rule over you, nor shall my son rule over you; the LORD shall rule over you"* (Jud.8:23).

But the subsequent action of Gideon led the people into idol worship — Jud.8:24-27 - *"Then Gideon said to them, I would like to make a request of you, that each of you would give me the earrings from his plunder. For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites. So, they answered, we will gladly give them. And they spread out a garment, and each man threw into it the earrings from his plunder. Now the weight of the gold earrings that he requested was one thousand seven hundred shekels of gold, besides the crescent ornaments, pendants, and purple robes which were on the kings of Midian, and besides the chains that were around their camels' necks. Then Gideon made it into an ephod and set it up in his city, Ophrah. And all Israel played the harlot with it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his house."*

Gideon was a valiant fighter. But his pride led the people into idol worship. This was a sad thing. The earrings of Ishmalites and other ornaments led to idol worship. Even after centuries the present generation also takes the ancient ornaments of Ishmalites and Midianites, their earrings, nose rings, garlands and the decorations of their camels. It is

written these gadgets “*became a snare to Gideon and to his house*” (Judg.8:27). Dear brethren, the ornaments can also become a dangerous snare and hence run away from it before you are trapped in.

## **THE PERIOD OF KINGS —**

The kings of Israel made idols of gold and silver and encouraged idol worship. God punished them and their kingship was removed. But the kings who removed the idols and their shrines from the country were blessed and honored. Let us examine some cases —

**JEHU —** He killed the priests and the prophets of Baal. He prevented idol worship in the country (2. Kings.10:18-28). But the shrines (high places) of Baal were not removed. What happened in non removing of high places? The people kept on worshipping the idols and offered incenses to Baal in the high places (2. Kings.12:3).

**ASA —** He ruled the country till David in accordance with the will of God. Even though his heart was focused on Jehovah, the God, the high places (shrines) of Baal were not removed (1.Kings.15:11-14). But the high places were not removed (1.Kings.15:14).

**JEROBOAM —** Jeroboam feared the people. He thought if the people go to Jerusalem to conduct sacrifice to God, and to observe the holy days, they would lose their allegiance to the king. He wanted to prevent people from going to Jerusalem. In order to do it, he made two idols of gold calves. He said “You don’t have to go to Jerusalem. Oh, Israel here is the God, who brought you out of Egypt”. One calf was dedicated in Bethel, and the other one in Dan (1. Kings.12:27-29). The people started worshipping the golden images and offering incense to the shrines, harboring fury from the Almighty God. Jeroboam was given warning by the prophet, a man of God. But he kept on doing the idol worship. It is written in the Word of God — “*And this thing was the sin of the house of Jeroboam, so as to exterminate and destroy it from the face of the earth*” (1. Kings.13:34).

Again, we see a reference to this golden calf in the book of Hosea. Hosea.10:5 — “*The inhabitants of Samaria fear because of the calf of Beth- Aven. For its people mourn for it, and its priests shriek for it - Because its glory has departed from it.*” The prophet Hosea is rebuking the infidelity of the children of Israel who was running after the heathen gods. Bethel is God’s house. But Bethel became Beth- Aven (the house of wickedness/ the house of Satan) because of idol worship. This is the severe consequence of Jeroboam’s evil deed of dedicating golden calves in Bethel and Dan. Go to Bethel and worship your God in the proper place.

**JEHOSHAPHAT —** He was walking in the ways of God like his father, David. He looked into the face of God for guidance. He observed and obeyed the commandments of God. The Almighty God was with him. He was bold enough to demolish and removed the high places and wooden images and purified the country (2. Chr.17:3,4,6).

Again, we see another sad reference to Jehoshaphat in 2.Chr.20:32,33 — “*And he walked in the way of his father Asa, and did not turn aside from it, doing what was right in the sight of the LORD. Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away, for as yet the people had not directed their hearts to the God of their fathers*”.

> Dear brethren, gold and silver are not untouchable metals. We can see that these precious metals have widely used in the temple of God. (Josh.6:19 /Hag.2:8). But men created images of other gods with the precious metals and started worshipping them. The

Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God in wilderness and in Canaan as well as a place of worship and atonement for sin to the Israelites. Tabernacle of God built by Moses for living in the midst of Israel consists of various metals like gold, silver, brass and precious stones (Exo.25-40). But the people made all these metals for making idols to worship the gentile gods instead of the living Almighty God.

The kings who feared God, the idols of silver and gold were destroyed and the real worship was reestablished. A repeated quotations we see in several places in the word of God is the following — “But the high places were not removed from Israel” (1 Kings.22:43 /2 Kings.12:3 /14:4 /15:4 /15:35 / 2 Chr.15:17).

The high place means the place where offering is given. There were numerous high places. The high places were still intact and the people looked at them. The high places still exist and stole the hearts of the people from the living God. The kings destroyed the idols, but the high places still existed. Outwardly the idol worship was stopped, but the room and the passion thereof were still in place.

We are sanctified by the blood of Jesus Christ. But examine yourself whether the high places of idol worship are still there in your hearts. The believers, Gods chosen people worship God indeed. But the ornaments proclaim that the “high places” still exist in their hearts.

> King Jeroboam made two golden calves and dedicated them in Bethel and Dan (1.Kings.12:29). This led the people to the idol worship. Bethel became Beth-Aven. The Gods home became the house of Satan (Hos.10:3). The worship in Jerusalem to Jehovah and the idol worship in Beth-Aven to the idols were progressing together. Dear believer, do you hear that your lust for ornaments will open the door for the adversary to enter into your body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit.

### **Message of Prophet Isaiah to the children of God under Babylonian Captivity –**

God is going to redeem the children of Israel who are under the Babylonian captivity. The message of God through prophet Isaiah is that they have to go out from there. Regarding their present condition is that they are hopeless, persecuted and has no spiritual vision. In spite of this tragic situation, they are not willing to leave from Babylon. The reason is that they are now fully adjusted and identified with the present condition as captives. But God is saying to them > Isa.52:11 - “*Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, Be clean, You who bear the vessels of the LORD*”.

They have to

- (1) Depart
- (2) Touch no unclean things
- (3) Have to go out from their midst
- (4) Be clean or sanctify themselves
- (5) Remember > they are bearing the vessels of God. They are captives and strangers in Babylon.



Babylon is not their native land. If they continue there, the gold, silver and earthly possessions of Babylon will attract and finally become idol worshippers. They have to realize that they are bearing the holy vessels of God. So they have to sanctify themselves.

Gehazi was a bearer of holy vessel of God. But he has touched the unclean thing once and became unfit to continue the ministry of God.

2.Kings.5:27 - *"Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you and your descendants forever. And he went out from his presence leprous, as white as snow"*.

> We were also under the captivity of Satan and the world as Israel in Egypt and in Babylon.

> We are redeemed by saving grace of God and became the beloved children of God.

> We are also bearing and carrying different vessels of God and thereby doing the ministry of God. The warning to the Israel in Babylon that they do not touch unclean things is also applicable to us.

> We should not be attracted by gold, silver, brass, precious stones, pearls etc.

> Do not adorn with these things because we are the temple of God.

> Once we were also under the captivity of Satan and the world. We have to live with fear of God and in sanctification.

Our beloved Lord has ascended to the throne of glory to prepare a mansion for us. He said "Behold I come quickly". He has given the word and He will do it. We will be raptured to be with God for ever. We will be treading the streets made of transparent gold. And we supposed to adorn our body with materials that we are going to tread upon?

When the temple of God was built and dedicated the glory of God (shekina) came down and filled it. But after sometime, King Solomon made friendship with Pharaoh and built shrine to gods and goddesses of other islands (1.Kings.8:1—9:9) and offered incense to them and conducted sacrifices (1.Kings.11:1—11). The Israel and their king lost their devotion and serenity to their God. This kind of action of King Solomon must not be an example to God's children.

We cannot be reconciled with the world. This is what our Lord wants from us. As and when we get reconciled with the world, we are opening the doors of our hearts to the filth and sin of the world to get in. When we are in live relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ, let us keep the world and its lust and passions away from us. The Mammon and the Pharaoh, the old kings who were ruling over old lives should not be allowed to get into our hearts again and ruin our holy relationship with our Lord and Savior. The desire for gold and silver will lead us to the passions of the world and eventually the idol worship. Whatever steals our hearts, more than love of Christ is leading us to idol worship. It becomes a stumbling block, to our devotion to our Lord. Believer will have to depart from all these lusts. Dear believer, take heed of the warnings *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"* (1.Tim.6:10,11).

Anyone become the child of God is a new creation. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new"* (2.Cori.5:17).

Do not run by looking back the old ways of sin. We have to run the life of faith by looking Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ said —

*“No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”* (Luke.9:62).

How we have to travel in this world?

- > Lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us (Heb.12:1)
- > By looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith (Heb.12:2).
- > By meditating Jesus — Consider Him who endured such hostility from sinners (Heb.12:3).
- > By forgetting old — forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead (Phili.3:13).
- > By fleeing away the youthful lusts (2.Tim.2:22).
- > By fleeing from idolatry (1.Cor.10:14).
- > By fleeing from sexual immorality (1.Cor.6:18).
- > By running with certainty (1 Cor.9:26).
- > Run in such a way that you may obtain the prize or reward (1.Cor.9:24).

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## CHAPTER - IV

### ORNAMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD OF GOD

Let us examine what the Word of God says about ornaments. When Jacob purified his household to worship God, he removed the ornaments also (Gen.35:1-5). We have to examine Jacob's life to understand the background of this incident. Jacob's brother was Esau, and his history is written in the book of Genesis. Jacob tricked Esau in the 'broth' incident to get the right of the first-born brother (Gen.25:33,34). Consequently, Jacob had to flee from his house. He was running from Beersheba and went toward Haran. In his travel he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. There he made some covenants with God and enrooted to Laban's house (Gen.28:10—22). Jacob served Laban for twenty years (Gen.31:41). God asked Jacob to return to Bethel (Gen.31:3,13).

God interfered in Jacob's life at the ford of Jabbok (Gen.32:22—32). There the darkness in his life (The sun had set — Gen.28:11) removed. The sun of blessing rose in his life (The sun rose on him — Gen.32:31). That was a turning point in Jacob's life. He was blessed in Jabbok. Jacob went to Shechem and he pitched his tent before the city (Gen.33:18). In Shechem Jacob met with undesirable incidents. His daughter was raped and his sons became murderers (Gen.34).

God appeared to Jacob in this calamity of his life and told him to move to Bethel. Jacob understood where the problem was. Instead of going to Bethel, where the presence of God was existing, he had moved to a place at his own will. Jacob discerned his mistake. He decided to purify his household to return to his God. Jacob is removing the ornaments also as a part of the purification of the household.

We read it in Gen.35:1—5. *"Then God said to Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there; and make an altar there to God, who appeared to you when you fled from the face of Esau your brother. And Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him. Put away the foreign gods that are among you, purify yourselves, and change your garments. Then let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me in the way which I have gone. So, they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was in Shechem. And they journeyed, and the terror of God was upon the cities that were all around them, and they did not pursue the sons of Jacob. So, Jacob came to Luz (that is Bethel), which is in the land of Canaan, he and all the people who were with him".*

Jacob's wife brought out the idols. All the idols and ornaments of Jacob's household had collected from Haran and Shechem were abandoned and buried under the oak tree as a part of the purification process. They understood that before worshipping the living God, all the filthy things of the household should be removed from the house and buried. A purification process was inevitable to enter into Bethel.

But now many people who claim to be "the chosen and sanctified" misinterpret the Word of God to establish their own theories. Some people say that only the earrings and images of heathen gods were removed and Jacob's household was still wearing ornaments. The earrings were removed because they were made in the images of other gods. This kind of arguments theorize their selfish passion for ornaments, are not based on the scripture. Many people are ensnared by this kind of misinterpretations. Dear brethren, when God asked to abandon and remove let us do it. Let us surrender to His call perfectly. Hundred percent or complete compliance is required for the God's command. Some preachers and speakers of the modern age allow the believers to use ornaments as gentiles. Woe to them! So many persons are attracted to such congregations that are misinterpreting the scripture in their own way by allowing wearing ornaments. They are boasting and self praising in this regard.

Jacob is removing the ornaments also as a part of the purification of the household (Gen.35:1-5). Some are pleading that Jacob's decision in removing ornaments are his voluntary act and encourage their members to wear ornaments. They have to look the repentance of Zacchaeus and his subsequent steps in this regard.

**Luke.19:8** - *"Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."* Our Lord not asked to do anything after his repentance. Here we see the subsequent step of a saved one after his salvation. Sanctification needs purification and holiness inside and outside.

Some people misinterpret the following portions of the scripture in Exodus and argue in favor of wearing ornaments.

> **Exo.3:22** — *"But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So, you shall plunder the Egyptians".*

> **Exo.11:2** — *"Speak now in the hearing of the people and let every man ask from his neighbor and every woman from her neighbor, articles of silver and articles of gold."*

> **Exo.12:35,36** — *"Now the children of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, and they had asked from The Egyptians articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing."*

When we examine the above texts, we can find out that they do not support any argument in favor of wearing ornaments.

Abraham's children went to Egypt. They became slaves in the land. They were treated as animals in Egypt. They were tormented by the slave masters of Pharaoh. God saw their pain and agony. He heard their cry (Exo.3:7). He decided to rescue His people. Moses was selected as the leader (Exo.3:9,10). God sent Moses to Pharaoh. Moses informed his people how God was going to deliver them from the grip of Pharaoh.

When the people of Israel were delivered, they had to do certain things. We read in Exo.3:22 — *"But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So, you shall plunder the Egyptians."* The Pharaoh and Egyptians did not give Israel their due reward of labour. Instead, they tormented the

people of Israel. Therefore, God commanded the Israel to get gold and silver ornaments and precious garments from Egyptians so that the reward or wages due to them will be compensated. What Israel got was the wages of their sweat and toil for centuries in the land of Egypt. Their act was not cheating or robbing. God wanted them to go out of Egypt with their wages for the toils in the bricks field of Egypt. "He also brought them out with silver and gold" (Psa.105:37).

In Genesis 15:13,14 we read a promise God given to Israel. "*Then He said to Abram: Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also, the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterwards they shall come out with great possessions*". The deliverance of Israel from Egypt with abundance of gold and silver ornaments was the fulfillment of the above promise. The gold and silver Israel procured from Egyptians was a compensational reward of hard labour of Israel for four centuries. This portion of the scripture does not give any room for any kind of interpretation in favour of wearing ornaments for the New Testament believer.

If God commands anything, there is a purpose behind it. God asked them to wear the silver and gold probably because it was difficult to keep them in the journey, especially when the Egyptians followed them. Wearing the ornaments on the body was a better method of keeping them in the long journey in the wilderness; rather than holding in bundles in hands. Not only that the Egyptians will be suspicious if the ornaments were kept in bundles. God wanted the precious metals to be used in His temple, when it was to be built in a later day (Exo.25:1,2/Exo.35:21,22/ Num.31:50-54). Please understand that God is competent to provide anything and everything for His redeemed children. But He honors the gifts and contributions from His children for any noble cause.

God commanded that the ornaments shall not be worn (Exo.33:1—6). The redeemed people from the land of Pharaoh, starts their exodus with an immense quantity of wealth they borrowed from their Egyptian neighbors. God liberated His people with a mighty arm. The army of Pharaoh who followed the liberated people was drowned in the Red sea. God led His people miraculously in the wilderness. But the redeemed people started murmuring against the God. The liberated people became rebellious and they made a golden calf in Horeb, using the ornaments, they brought out from Egypt. This act kindled the fury of God, who wanted to punish them severely. But Moses intervened. He fell down in the presence of God and interceded for the people. (Exo.32:31,32).

God heard Moses' plea. He gave them Ten Commandments. Please read the following text — Exo.33:3 —6 — "*Go to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, say to the children of Israel, you are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now, therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you. So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by mount Horeb.*"

Some teachers argue that the incident of forsaking the ornaments depicted in the above text was valid only for a short period. But the arguments cannot stand because it does not have any supporting evidence from the scripture.

> When Jacob decided to conduct a pleasing sacrifice to God, he purified his household. As a part of the process, he removed all the ornaments from his household and buried them under an oak tree near Shechem (Gen.35:2 -4).

> The Israelites borrowed ornaments from Egyptians before their journey as a compensation for their works (Exo.3:22). When they were misused the gold to make the idol of golden calf in the wilderness (Exo.32), God is giving this commandment — “You remove your ornaments lest you die on the way” (Exo.33:3 -6).

> In Egypt while they were travelling, the commandment was to wear the ornaments. But in Horeb the commandment was to remove them. After this God has not given any permission to wear the ornaments. Dear brethren, it is our responsibility to submit and surrender to the Lord’s commandments fully.

### **The Believer must abstain from the Ornaments voluntarily –**

Some arguments go like this. Those who have been saved need not be baptized, because the sacred thief on the cross did not take water baptism. But we cannot accept the above arguments. The thief on the cross did not learn Bible. Therefore, we do not have to learn it! The thief on the cross did not take Holy Communion. So, we do not have to take part in Holy Communion!! Please don’t misinterpret the Word of God. Let us avoid this kind of interpretations. They do not lead us to God. A redeemed believer does not have to be compelled to remove the ornaments. He or she must do it by himself or herself without any external compulsion. It is a testimony before the world, a testimony of separation from the world and the filthy things thereof. When Zacchaeus saw Jesus, a transient change took place in his heart. It was the experience of a new birth. Jesus did not demand anything from Zacchaeus. But he gave up the lust for money and the passions of the worldly things (Luke.19:8). A child of God strips of the old man with his lust and passions at the time of baptism. He is wearing the garment of a new creation, a new man (Col.3:9,10/ Gal.3:27). He is putting on the images of Jesus Christ on him. The baptized is able to walk in the newness of life (Rom.6:4,5). The fragrance of Jesus Christ falls upon him.

The redeemed believer is entitled to get the glory and divine beauty through Jesus Christ. He does not have to make up worldly beauty through wearing gold and silver. A redeemed believer is captivated by the enthralling beauty of the Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ. His heart is obsessed with the love, charm, fragrance and beauty of his redeemer. Let me paraphrase a beautiful Malayalam song written by the Missionary V. Nagal –

“Esuve ninte roopamee ente kannukalkethra soundaryam!  
Sisyanakunna enneyum ninneppoleyakkenam muzhuvan  
Manushyarilum doothanmarilum athisundaranayone!  
Anudinam nin divya soundaryam ennamothamakkenam.”

Means >

(Oh Jesus, how beautiful are you for my eyes!  
Transform me completely into your shape  
You are more beautiful than any man or angel  
Fill my heart with thy love and beauty!)

The love, mercy, humility, patience, obedience, teaching, prayer, sincerity, trust in God are more precious than anything we can imagine. Let us bring them into our lives. They are more precious than all treasures of Egypt. A spiritual man need not be adorned with silver and gold and worldly treasures. Spiritual adornment is what we have to do. *"The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands"* (Psa.135:15).

### **Some texts from scriptures about Ornaments --**

> **Gen.35:4** – *"So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem."*

> **Exo.33:5,6** – *"For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you. So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb."*

> **Deu.7:25,26** – *"You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the LORD your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing."*

> **Job.22:24,25** – *"Then you will lay your gold in the dust, And the gold of Ophir among the stones of the brooks"*

> **Psa.135:15** – *"The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands."*

> **Pro.8:17-21** – *"I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries."*

> **Pro.20:15** – *"There is gold and a multitude of rubies, But the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel."*

> **Isa.3:16-23** – *"Moreover the LORD says: Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, And walk with outstretched necks And wanton eyes, Walking and mincing as they go, Making a jingling with their feet, Therefore the Lord will strike with a scab. The crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, And the LORD will uncover their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away the finery: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; The pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; The headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; The perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; The nose jewels"*

> **Jere.4:30** – *"And when you are plundered, what will you do? Though you clothe yourself with crimson, though you adorn yourself with ornaments of gold, though you enlarge your eyes with paint, in vain you will make yourself fair; Your lovers will despise you; They will seek your life"*

> **Eze.7:19,20** – *"They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be like refuse; Their silver and gold will not be able to deliver them. In that day of the wrath of the LORD; They will not satisfy their souls, nor fill their stomachs, because it became*

*their stumbling block of iniquity. As for the beauty of his ornaments, He set it in majesty; But they made from it, the images of their abominations — Their detestable things; Therefore, I have made it, Like refuse to them."*

> **Hosea.2:13** — *"I will punish her, For the days of the Baals to which she burned incense. She decked herself with her earrings and jewelry. And went after her lovers; But Me she forgot, says the LORD."*

> **Zep. 1:18** — *"Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them. In the day of the LORD's wrath; But the whole land shall be devoured, By the fire of His jealousy, For He will make speedy riddance of all those who dwell in the land."*

> **Acts.3:6** — *"Then Peter said, Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."*

> **1.Timo.2:9,10** — *"In the like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."*

> **James.5:3** — *"Your gold and silver are corroded, and their corrosion will be a witness against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have heaped up treasure in the last days."*

> **1.Pet.1:18,19** — *"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."*

> **1.Pet.3:3,4** — *"Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel — rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."*

From the above portions of the scripture, we learn a special thing. Believers are not expected to adorn ornaments made of gold, silver, pearls, stones etc. They have to keep away from the passions of the earthly man. *"Now therefore, take off your ornaments"* (Exo.33:5). After this command in Horeb, there are no verses in the Word of God allowing the using of ornaments.

A believer is to be separated from the worldly passions. Abstaining from or removing all ornaments is the one of the spiritual steps for separation from world. It is a step of purification and sanctification. Not using ornaments is a mark of separated and dedicated believer. Believers are not to be adorned outwardly. On the contrary their beauty depends on their internal and spiritual adornment. Their hearts are to be filled with the things from 'above'. They should have a vision — a vision about God. Gold and silver cannot redeem us. We have been redeemed by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. A believer who put on the 'new man' shall put on Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour (Eph.4:24/ Rom.13:14).

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## CHAPTER - V

### EXPLANATIONS OF CERTAIN SCRIPTURES

Believers can wear all ornaments; there is nothing wrong with the scripture. This is the majority view of the modern new age believers. To confirm this view, they are preparing series of messages, thesis and speaks about the value and excellence of gold. To prove their views, they are picking parts of scriptures relating to gold.

Following are some of the arguments taken by them to prove the excellence of gold in scripture –

- > The first river Pishon flowing through the land of Havilah in Eden garden contain super gold (Gen.2:11,12)
- > Abraham was a wealthy man in gold.
- > Eliezer, Abraham's servant says that God has blessed his master with silver and gold (Gen.24:35).
- > Joseph who ran away from sin was adorned with gold ring and garland by Pharaoh (Gen.41:42,43).
- > Saving and keeping of gold is not prohibited in scripture (Exo.3:22 /Exo.11:2,3 /Exo.12:35,36).
- > God asked gold from His people as an offering (Exo.25:3-8 /Num.7:14,20).
- > God asked to use gold in making Tabernacle and Temple (Exo.25).
- > The holy garments of Aaron, the High Priest were adorned with pure gold (Exo.28).
- > When the Ark of God is returned from Ekron to Beth Shemesh, they are also sending five golden tumors and five golden rats (1.Sam.6:1-16).
- > Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon gold, spices in great quantity and precious stones (1 Kings.10:10).
- > Can a virgin forget her ornaments, Or a bride her attire? (Jer.2:32).
- > Belshazzar ordered to put a chain of gold around Daniel's neck (Dan.5:29).
- > "The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine," says the LORD of hosts" (Hag.2:8).
- > "Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest" (Zech.6:11).
- > "At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir" (Psa.45:9).
- > The wise men presented gifts to Jesus on his birth: gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Mat.2:11).
- > In the parable of the lost son, the father ordered to put a ring on his son's hand (Luke.15:22).
- > Jesus with a golden band on the chest (Rev.1:13).

- > The Church of the Laodicea was asked to buy gold refined in the fire (Rev.3:18).
- > The twenty-four elders sitting in heavenly throne had crowns of gold on their heads (Rev.4:4).

We see many remarks about gold in scripture. These references are not for specifying the excellence or importance of gold but for explaining the truth in a spiritual way. They are not giving permission for the use of gold for adorning the body of believers. Those who love gold ornaments are picking up some part of the scripture to prove their ideas. They are trying to back up their wishes with the ideas of majority in a worldly way.

Now we may discuss about some portions of the Word of God giving reference of gold which are seems to be permitting for the use of ornaments by the believers.

### **(1) Joseph was given Gold Chain —**

**Gen.41:42, 43** — *“Then Pharaoh took his signet ring off his hand and put it on Joseph’s hand; and he clothed him in garments of fine linen and put a gold chain around his neck. And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, Bow the knee! So, he set him over all the land of Egypt.”*

Joseph is known as the shadow of Jesus Christ. Joseph was given gold ring and garland. So, some people argue that even the believers can wear such ornaments. But if we examine the above portion, we can see that nothing is seen there in favor of the ornaments. Of course, Joseph is a shadow of Jesus Christ. Joseph was sold by his own brothers. He became a servant in the Potiphar’s house. But the events that took place there made Joseph a prisoner, even though he was innocent. But God was with Joseph. The Jailor became compassionate on Joseph (Gen.39). Joseph interpreted the dreams of the servants of Pharaoh who were fellow prisoners with Joseph. Just like Joseph interpreted, the baker was hanged and the cup bearer was released from prison. But the cup bearer forgot Joseph, even though he was reinstated in the palace of Pharaoh (Gen.40). But God did not forget Joseph. Time passed. The king (Pharaoh) had two dreams. No scholar and sorcerers of Egypt could interpret them. This time the cup bearer remembered Joseph. He brought Joseph’s name into Pharaoh’s attention. Joseph was brought to the palace. Joseph told Pharaoh that the interpretations of dreams would have from God (Gen.41:16). Joseph interpreted the dreams. Pharaoh’s response was like this — *“Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the spirit of God?”* (Gen.41:38).

Joseph was honored by the king and he was appointed as the ruler of the land. Joseph was given the following — (1) Signet Ring (2) Precious garments of fine linen (3) Gold Chain (4) Chariot ride (5) Proclamation. In addition to the above (6) Joseph was given new name. One of them was Zaphnath -Paaneah which means Protector of the World. (7) Besides Joseph was given a beautiful bride, Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On (Gen.41:45).

Pharaoh, the king of Egypt gave all the above gifts, presents and titles to Joseph. Pharaoh, the heathen king who did not know God of Israel gave all the precious gifts to Joseph. But any gift given to Joseph did not drag and drift his heart away from God of his father, whom he had worshipped so diligently and devotionally in all his good time and bad time. It is repeatedly written *“The LORD was with Joseph”* (Gen.39:2, 21, 23).

Pharaoh, the worldly king honored Joseph. But Jesus is our example. The gift we receive from Jesus is eternal, invaluable. Let us examine what we have received from Jesus Christ, as a comparison to the gifts, Joseph received from Pharaoh.

### **(1) Signet Ring —**

Pharaoh put his signet ring on Joseph's finger. With this ring Joseph got some powers in Egypt. But those powers were worldly and changeable. But we have been given certain imperishable power through Jesus Christ.

John.1:12 — *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."* The signet ring God gave us is the Holy Spirit.

Eph.1:13,14 — *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."*

### **(2) Special Garment —**

Pharaoh ordered Joseph to be adorned with special garments. The royal robe represented royal powers. Likewise, we have been given a special garment of salvation on the moment we have sanctified by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. The stained garment of flesh we had been wearing was removed, and a special holy and glorious garment of salvation was given to us.

Job. 29:14 — *"I put on righteousness, and it clothed me"*

Isa.61:10 — *"For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation"*

Zec.3:4 — *"Take away the filthy garments from him. And to him He said, See I have removed your iniquity from you, and I will cloth you with rich robes."*

Rev.19:7 — *"Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."*

### **(3) Gold Chain —**

*"And put a gold chain around his neck."* This was a custom of Egyptians to honour a special person. Joseph was honoured and adorned with a gold chain. He became second person in the country, next to king. The gold chain (VIP) and authority to rule (Minister) the country will be changed at any time. These positions are temporary. But the New Testament believer is adorned with not perishable materials, but with all spiritual gifts that came from heaven through Jesus Christ (Eph.1:3). He crowns us with loving kindness and tender mercies (Psa.103:4). The New Testament believer is adorned with imperishable spiritual gifts that nobody can comprehend. Both prophet Isaiah and Apostle Paul describe the fathomless spiritual richness of a believer as follows — *"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him"* (Isa.64:4/1.Cor.2:9).

#### **(4) Chariot Ride --**

Pharaoh honoured Joseph with a royal chariot ride. *"And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had"* (Gen.41:43). It means Joseph was elevated to a position, second to Pharaoh. But as soon as we are accepted and sanctified through Jesus Christ, we have been given the first place to sit along with the Father in the holy throne. Even though we are living in this world physically, we have been made to sit along with Jesus Christ in the first place of heaven with all spiritual gifts and spiritual titles and powers thereof.

Apostle Paul describe the blessing of a believer as follows — Eph.2:1-7 – *"And You He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked .....made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus."*

#### **(5) The Proclamation –**

*"And they cried out before him, Bow the knee! So, he set him over all the land of Egypt."* (Gen.41:43). Pharaoh made a proclamation. Everybody shall kneel before Joseph. But dear friend, all the honours of the world are in vain if you are not honoured by God. God honoured Joseph before Pharaoh did. All knees shall bow before the name of Jesus Christ and all will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD. Let us believe that the day of honour is very near. On that special day all believers who have been redeemed will be honoured.

Apostle Paul writes — Phil.2:10,11 – *"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"*

#### **(6) A New Title –**

Pharaoh gave a new name to Joseph (Gen.41:45). It was Zaphnath- Paaneah. This Egyptian name means protector of the world. It also means, interpreter of dreams or mysteries. Along with numerous Egyptian gifts, Joseph was honoured with an Egyptian name also. Pharaoh tried to make him as an Egyptian. Still Joseph called his children Manasseh and Ephraim, Hebrew names. Manasseh means God has made me to forget all my toil and my entire father's house. Ephraim means God has caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction (Gen.41:51,52).

Look, Joseph did not get reconciled with Egypt. He gave Hebrew names to his children. We can see that Joseph was an example to us. We are in a world that does not seek and honour God. We should not allow our self to be adorned with worldly things and reconciled with the fashions of the world. The world may honour us with many titles. But don't get excited with worldly gifts and titles. We are the children of God. We are spiritual people. Our names have been written in the Book of Life (Luke.10:20). It is the most blessed gift.

We are going to enjoy all the special and imperishable gifts promised to us as the children of God. We have been promised by the gift of hidden manna, the precious stone, a special title in recognition of our faithfulness to our Lord. That is our blessed hope. Rev.2:17 – *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give some of the hidden manna to eat. And I will give him a white stone a new name written which no one knows except him who receives it."*

## **(7) A New Relationship –**

Then, Pharaoh honoured Joseph with a new bride, an Egyptian woman. *“And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-Paaneah. And He gave him as a wife Asenath, the daughter of Poti-Pherah priest of On”* (Gen.41:45). **Asenath** means ‘gift of the sun-god’. The city of On was also known as Heliopolis, “The City of the Sun.” It was the center of worship of the sun god, Ra. Pharaoh gave Joseph an Egyptian name and an Egyptian wife. His intention was to “Egyptinise” Joseph. But in spite of all favorable worldly environments, Joseph decided to stick to the God of his Fathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob. None of the encouragements and gifts he received from Pharaoh was strong enough to drift his heart from the God he served so far. Joseph accepted an Egyptian woman as his wife. Similarly, Jesus Christ took a bride from the gentiles. The Church was selected from all tribes, races and tongues to be a holy and glorious bride for Jesus Christ. He pleased to have a bride redeemed from the world. We belong to the Satan before. We entered into a new relationship, a new family through the faith in Jesus Christ.

We cannot misinterpret the scripture to support the ornaments. Pharaoh gave Joseph ornaments of silver and gold. But this incident should not be interpreted in favor of wearing ornaments. We should find out many spiritual truths hidden in the life of Joseph. The life of Joseph points out how a believer, a spiritual man should keep himself away from the filth of the world, and how a spiritual man keep himself holy without getting reconciled to Egypt, the present world in spite of numerous provoking attractions, the world may bring about around us. All the gifts and honours Joseph received in Egypt were Egyptian. But Joseph was not ensnared by the profound treasure and glittery things of Egypt. He kept himself holy and did not adapt to the Egyptian style of living. His connection to the God of his Fathers was never broken.

While we are living in this world, we may be honoured with positions, wealth, high earthly relations. We should never allow these honors and prosperity to drift us from the love of our Lord. *“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth”* (Col.3:1,2). Joseph became a shadow of Jesus Christ. Indeed, he became a row model for the believer. Joseph’s high spiritual values and his high level of integrity to his God are always examples to the New Testament believers.

Pharaoh gives a living testimony about Joseph. *“Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom is the Spirit of God?”* (Gen.41:38). This is the testimony the world must give to us also. But a fully dedicated, holy life pleasing and acceptable to God is required for that kind of testimony. The world may honour us. But there are vested interests behind the honour from the world. The honour and love from the world are confined to the short span of life; we are here in this world. But the heavenly is eternal.

Many people loved Joseph for many reasons. But their love was short-living.

**(1) Jacob** loved Joseph because he was the son of his old age. Joseph gave him a special gift, a beautiful garment of many colours (Gen.37:3). It is the love from the father.

**(2) Judah** rescued Joseph from the dry pit (Gen.37:26-28), out of brotherly love.

**(3) Potiphar** loved Joseph because he was a faithful servant. That was the love from the master (Gen.39:3,4).

**(4) Potiphar's wife** loved Joseph because of her lust to him (Gen.39:7—20). But that love turned to be hatred.

**(5) The Prison Officer** loved Joseph (Gen.39:21-23). But his love was also short living.

**(6) The co-prisoners** loved Joseph for a while. But when the cup-bearer, the fellow prisoner was released and promoted he also forgot Joseph (Gen.40:23).

**(7) Pharaoh** loved and honoured Joseph because he interpreted the dreams (Gen.41). But the love of Pharaoh disappeared with his death.

**(8) God** — But the love of God was everlasting. It was flowing to Joseph because he kept himself holy, without reconciled to the evils of the world. The love of God is eternal and cannot be confined to the limitations of time and space and circumstances of the world.

Please read the following texts from the scripture —

> **James.4:4** - *"Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?"*

> **1.John.2:15—17** - *"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life— is not of the father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."*

> **Col.3:1,2** - *"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, Where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on things on earth."*

Apostle Paul in the epistle to Romans stated the depth and inseparable relation and love of our Lord to the believers.

> **Rom.8:35-39** - *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*

## **JOSEPH TO A FRUITFUL TREE PLANTED NEAR THE BROOK —**

Jacob compared Joseph to a fruitful tree planted near the brook. **Gen.49:22**— *"Joseph is a fruitful bough. A fruitful bough by a well; His branches run over the wall".* The blessings of his father later fulfilled in the life of Joseph. We can see three peculiar qualities in the life of Joseph. (1) A fruitful bough (2) Rooted near a well (3) Branches run over the wall. Though Joseph lived in Egypt he never conformed to Egyptian ways. He lived with God. All believers will have to follow the path selected by Joseph.

### **(1) A fruitful bough >**

Joseph was a fruit bearing tree in the garden of God. He produced fruits by abiding with God.

### **(2) Rooted near a well >**

Joseph rooted in the grace and blessings of God. Never he departed from the grace of God.

### **(3) Branches run over the wall >**

Joseph's life was rooted on the grace and blessings of God and bore fruit and its braches spread over the wall. The branches over the wall also bore fruits. Abundant fruits can be seen inside and outside of the wall. Such a fruit bearing tree is a blessing to all inside and outside. Joseph became blessings to those inside his family and outside. Really Joseph became a nourishment and joy to many including his father, his brothers who sold him for twenty silver coins. He became a blessing to the millions of Egyptians also. Indeed, Joseph was a fruitful tree planted by the water of cloven grace and love.

Joseph is an example to us. The believer can become like Joseph. But we have to get rid of worldly love, lust and passions. We have to get rooted in the grace of God. Suppose that a plant is tied with a metal wire to control its directions of growth when it is small. But eventually the metal wire will be engulfed by the bark of the tree. The wire will be inside the trunk. The wire will become an obstruction for the free passage of sap from the root to the leaves through the trunk. The wire will damage the tree. Likewise, the lust for the ornaments will become a stumbling block of passage of God's grace to us and will become an obstruction for bearing fruit. Let us throw away any obstruction from our spiritual body that may become a block for the spiritual flow of God's grace to us. Turn your attention only to God and spiritual things, not to the world. Allow the free flow of Holy Spirit to us and become a channel of blessing to others.

Please don't misinterpret the word of God. Don't argue that since Pharaoh adorned Joseph with gold and silver, the believers adorn himself or herself with silver and gold ornaments. Please do not pay heed to the pervasive arguments, which come from lack of vision. Jude.12 — *"These are spots in your love feasts, while they feast with you without fear, serving only themselves. They are clouds without water, carried about by the winds; late autumn trees without fruit, twice dead, pulled up by the roots; raging waves of the sea, foaming up their own shame; wandering stars for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever."*

### **(2) The People of God gave Gold and Gold coins for the construction of the Temple –**

**1.Chr.29:7** — *"They gave for the work of the house of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousands of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze, and one hundred thousand talents of iron."*

The people of Israel gave gold and silver for the construction of the temple. Based on the above scripture some argue that the Lord's people were wearing ornaments and therefore it is acceptable even today. Israel made the images of the calf at Horeb warranty God's fury over Israel. God punished them. Moses started interceding for Israel. But God was talking against them. It is written *"And when the people heard this bad news, they*

*mourned, and no one put on his ornaments*" (Exo.33:4). Some scholars think that the repentance and confession of Israel was only for a period, thereafter they started wearing ornaments. That is why they could donate gold and silver for the construction of the temple when David demanded them. This is a wrong interpretation.

It is clearly written in Exo.33:6 — *"So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb"*. Then how can we say that their confession was only for a short period? How can we come to the conclusion that Israel removed ornaments only at the time of repentance? Is it not a misinterpretation when we say that the Israel started wearing ornaments just after the short period of repentance and confession?

King David donated silver and gold from his treasury for building of the temple. He asked the people to donate generously for the purpose. In response to the call from the king, the leaders, centurions and governors of the country donated gold, silver, bronze and iron and other treasures for the building of the temple (1.Chr.29:1–6). The above gifts were their earnings. It is not written that they were ornaments worn by the people. In ancient times the treasures were cattle, camels, and male servants, female servants, gold and silver. The people donated all the above materials. All the above materials cannot be worn on the body. We cannot come to the conclusion that the Israel gave up the ornaments temporarily because it is clearly written that the Israel did not wear ornaments from the mountain Horeb.

The word of God should not be interpreted based on personnel inclination and desires. That kind of interpretation will bring about God's punishment. (Rev.22:18,19). As a result of the prostrated interpretation of the scripture, believers lose faith in the Word of God. They lose their integrity and faithfulness to the Lord and lose their testimony in the world.

### **(3) Job was given a Gold Ring —**

**Job.42:11,12** — *"Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the LORD had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold. Now the LORD blessed the latter days of Job more than his beginning; for he had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, one thousand yoke of oxen, and one thousand female donkeys. He also had seven sons and three daughters. And he called the name of the first Jemimah, the name of the second Keziah, and the name of the third Keren-Happuch."*

Job's friends gave him a gold ring. Since he didn't reject it, some people assume that Job was a man who wore ornaments. The argument is that since Job did not reject the ring, ornaments are acceptable to the believers also! What a strange interpretation? The Holy Spirit states that Job was an innocent and straightforward person and he was keeping himself away from evil (Job.1:1,8). Job was an immensely rich also. He lost his children, his cattle, properties one by one. Still, he says — *"The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD"* (Job.1:21). Job was passing through immeasurable pain in his life. He humbled himself before God, and prayed even for his friends who were accusing him. God's mercy fell upon Job. *"And the LORD restored Job's losses when he prayed for his friends. Indeed, the LORD gave Job twice as much as he had before."* (Job.42:10). Job was blessed with twice the quantity of the riches he had before (Job.1:3/ Job.42:12). God gave him children also, but ten children only, seven sons and



three daughters, equals to the children he had before the calamities. But in the matter of children also he got the double, ten children in heaven and ten children on earth. Job enjoyed multiplied blessings in his life. At this time his friends and relatives gave him gifts. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold as a token of their love and respect to Job. Some people bring a silly argument that the gold was acceptable to Job, and therefore ornaments are acceptable to us also.

It is not the right interpretation because of the following –

The word of God does not say that Job was wearing ornaments. Jobs friends and relatives gave gold ring as a present because of their friendship. Nobody made Job to wear gold ring.

(1) We also get gifts from our friends and relatives on special occasions. The gifts are a token of friendship and affection. Suppose we get a silver idol as a gift from one of our friends, does it mean that we are idol worshippers?! It is meaningless to say that Job was wearing ornaments because somebody gave him a gold ring.

(2) Job was almost a contemporary to Abraham. Scholars say that he has living much before Moses. God gave the commandment to Israel when they made gold and silver images and started worshipping them in the place of God. If it is so God's commandment to remove the ornaments is not applicable to Job and Abraham who lived before the commandment was given. Please don't bring Job to justify the passion for ornaments.

(3) Even Job's daughters were not wearing any ornament. Job had three daughters. They were –

1. Jemimah, which means dove
2. Keziah which means fragrant ointment
3. Keren-Happuch which means the horn of prosperity.

It is written Job's daughters were more beautiful than any girl of the land. *"In all the land were found no woman so beautiful as the daughters of Job"* (Job.42:15). As the daughter Jemimah was innocent as a dove. Keziah was giving fragrance to others because of her sweet character. Keren-Happuch was very prosperous and successful because of her noble character. Their secret of beauty was not by wearing gold ornaments but because of their God feared nature of deeds and character.

Job was innocent, straightforward and he feared God. Many friends gave him gifts. One was a gold ring. Only with a perverted interpretation one can assume that Job was wearing ornaments. Let us purify ourselves and fill our lives with sincerity and devote to the Lord and Saviour. Apostle Jude is giving us a warning – *"...There would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts"* (Jude.18).

#### **(4) The Queen is wearing the Gold from Ophir –**

**Psa.45:9** – *"At your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir"*

Since the Queen of this Psalm is seen with the gold from Ophir, we can also wear gold ornaments. This is a wrong interpretation. The above Psalm is a meditation of the sons of Korah. It is a Messianic Psalm filled with figures of speech. The spiritual meaning is the love of Christ towards the Church, His bride. In the Old Testament, the Church was

still a mystery (Eph.3:5,9/Col.1:26). Therefore, the Psalm can be taken as a song that depicts the love of God towards Israel. This Psalm is considered as a Messianic Psalm because the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> verses are quoted in Hebrew.1:8,9. The all-beautiful bridegroom of the Psalm represents Jesus Christ. The adorned princess depicted from 9<sup>th</sup> verse onward represents the glorious Church without blemish and wrinkles. "At your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir". This metaphorical use has many spiritual meanings embedded in it. 'Right hand' denotes power, blessing and prosperity. 'Queen' represents the redeemed and glorious Church. Gold from Ophir is the most precious and pure gold. Likewise, the Church must be without any spot, stain or wrinkles in her life. She is sharing the glory and honour with the bridegroom, Jesus Christ.

The gold from Ophir is the most purified gold. The gold of Ophir shows the purity and beauty of the Church. If the Word of God is interpreted by letter by letter, we have to interpret that *tongue* is a pen as said in the 1<sup>st</sup> verse of the above psalm. "My tongue is the pen of a ready writer" (45:1). The interpretation must reveal the spiritual truths embedded in the Word of God. The Queen in this Psalm is seen with the gold from Ophir is only a symbolic presentation. This does not allow a believer to wear gold ornaments.

### **(5) The Bride is adorning herself with Ornaments —**

**Isa.61:10** — "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels."

Based on the above text some people argue that ornaments are acceptable to believers. Again, we can see a rally of figures of speech here. Head dress, ornament, garment of salvation, the robe of righteousness, is all metamorphic usages. In Chapter 61 of Isaiah, we can see two appearances of Jesus Christ, one is the anointed Christ and the second is Christ who is ministering. The good news is delivered to the poor. They are given comfort, deliverance, liberty that comes with the rain of mercy of the Lord. The day of avenge is waiting those who do not obey the God. One is the rain of mercy and the second is the day of avenge of the almighty God.

The prophet Isaiah is proclaiming *that* the Israel will be brought back from the captivity and their enemies will be punished. That will be a day of rejoicing for the Israel. It is compared to the day of bride and bridegroom. The bride is adorning herself with ornaments and the bridegroom is putting on his head dress. The garment is salvation and the robe is righteousness. What a spiritual meaning is included! Just like salvation and righteousness are invisible, the ornaments and precious garments are also spiritual and invisible to the human eyes.

If we can rejoice in our Redeemer and Saviour without turban and ornaments, why do we attach physical metal pieces to the redeemed body?

Apostle John writes in Revelation.19:7,8 — "Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. And to her it was granted to be arrayed in fine linen, clean and bright, for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints."

## **(6) Can a Bride forget her Attire? —**

**Jere.2:32** — *"Can a virgin forget her ornaments or bride her attire?"*

The above verse is not at all related to wearing ornaments. Some people pick up Biblical verses and interpret them out of context like Jehovah Witness. This is a part of prophecy from Jeremiah to Israel. Please see the whole portion — Jere.2:32 — *"Can a virgin forget her ornaments or bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number"*. The Israel abandoned the living God, their Lord and went after heathen gods. God is talking through his prophet Jeremiah. Jer.2:13 — *"For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns — broken cisterns that can hold no water"*. Israel is portrayed as a bride betrothed to God, her bridegroom. But God is reminding the people through a powerful message. The allegory is not supportive for wearing ornaments.

## **(7) I adorned you with Ornaments! —**

**Eze.16:11,12** — *"I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head."*

Here God is adorning Israel with all kinds of ornaments including bangles, necklace, nose ring and earrings. But he above verses is misinterpreted to justify the lust for ornaments. Please note that the above statements were not in connection with wearing of any ornaments. The above verses are the statements that depict the divine provisions given to Israel. There are many similes in the Word of God to portray the different aspects of God's care and concern to the people of Israel.

Some of them are given below —

1. The Watchman (Eze.3:17/Eze.33:2-7)
2. The Wine (Eze.15:1,2)
3. The Rejected Child (Eze.16:4)
4. The Husband of the two unfaithful wives (Eze.23:4,5)
5. The Vessel in the fire place (Eze.24:3)
6. The Shepherd (Eze.34:2,3)

In the Book of Ezekiel (16:1-5) Israel is portrayed as orphan who does not deserve any compassion. But God had pity on her. He redeemed her. He cherished and nourished her. She was given all kinds of blessings. Please see the figurative narration that explains God's care and love to Israel. **Eze.16:1-5** — *"Again the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, cause Jerusalem to know her abominations, and say, 'Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your birth and your nativity are from the land of Canaan; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. As for your nativity, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed in water to cleanse you; you were not rubbed with salt nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. No eye pitied you, to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you; but you were thrown out into the open field, when you yourself were loathed on the day you were born"*.

God saw her painful and sympathetic condition. Then God explains the blessings and mercy passed on her in a symbolic language. Please look to the following verse. **Eze.16:6,9–12** – *"And when I passed by you and saw you struggling in your own blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!'.... 9" Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10" I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11" I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12" And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head."*

The figurative narration explained above is not in any way applicable to justify the lust for ornaments.

### **(8) Daniel was given a Gold Necklace –**

**Dan.5:29** – *"Then Belshazzar gave the command, and they clothed Daniel with purple and put a chain of gold around his neck, and made a proclamation concerning him that he should be the third ruler in the kingdom."*

The king adorned Daniel with a gold necklace. This incident cannot be quoted to justify wearing of ornaments in the New Testament Church. When the king offered Daniel all kinds of gifts, Daniel was reluctant to accept anything from the king. Daniel did not defile his body with any kingly dish when he was living in the palace. On the contrary he was keeping himself holy to his God without eating any defiled food of the royal palace. God counted his enthusiasm to keep himself hold before the God.

The story behind the above verse (Dan.5:29) is written in Dan.5:1,2. *"Belshazzar the king made a great feast for a thousand of his lords, and drank wine in the presence of the thousand. While he tasted the wine, Belshazzar gave the command to bring the gold and silver vessels which his father Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple which had been in Jerusalem, that the king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines might drink from them"* (Dan.5:1-2). The king and his lords, his wives, and his concubines abused the holy utensils of the tabernacle to dine and vine. The profanity warranted God's wrath and judgment over the Babylon king and the writing on the wall pronounced the judgment – MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN (Dan.5:26). The judgment was immediate. It is written that God's countenance charged immediately. He became panic with deep thoughts. His hip joints were dislocated and he became disabled. Dan.5:6 – *"Then the king's countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other."*

The sorceress of Babylon could not interpret the writing in the wall. Daniel was brought into the royal chamber. The king offered him many gifts if he could interpret the writing. Please read Daniel's answer and his interpretation of the dream. *"Then Daniel answered, and said before the king, "Let your gifts be for yourself, and give your rewards to another; yet I will read the writing to the king, and make known to him the interpretation"* (Dan.5:17). Daniel, the servant of Omniscient God explained the meaning > *"This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."* (Dan.5:26-28).

The gold necklace was forced upon Daniel (Dan.5:29). Daniel did not demand any gifts from the king (Dan.5:17). Please do not misinterpret the Word of God relating to Daniel (Dan.5:29) to justify the act of adorning ornaments by New Testament believers.

### **(9) A Crown made of Gold and Silver was put upon Joshua's head —**

**Zech.6:11,12** – *"Take the silver and gold, make an elaborate crown, and set it on the head of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD."*

The High Priest Joshua, son of Jehozadak had a crown made of silver and gold. Some people misinterpret the above verse to justify wearing of gold and silver ornaments. But we should understand the above verse was written in a different context.

The prophet Zechariah is giving prophecies on numerous subjects like judgment, hypocrisy, holiness and the glorious return of Christ. The prophet had eight visions on different subjects. In the above verse the prophet is describing a future incident figuratively. Zechariah is asked to *"Receive a gift from the captives — from Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have come from Babylon (Zech.1:10)*. Zechariah was commanded to get gold and silver from the returned three captives and to make a crown to be put on the head of the High Priest Joshua. After putting the crown on Joshua's head, the prophet Zechariah was asked to give the following proclamation.

**Zech.6:12,13** – *"Then speak to him, saying, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, saying: "Behold, the Man whose name is the BRANCH! From His place He shall branch out, And He shall build the temple of the LORD; Yes, He shall build the temple of the LORD. He shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule on His throne; So, He shall be a priest on His throne, And the counsel of peace shall be between them both."*

Crown is for the kings to wear, not for the prophets. Here we see that the High Priest was made to wear the crown. It means Jesus Christ will be the King and the High priest in the future. It is a figurative description. Jesus Christ is the Rod that grew out of the stems of Jesse. Isa.11:1 – *"There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots"*. Jesus Christ is the High Priest who is interceding for us in the presence of the throne of grace. He will be the King of kings and Lord of lords. He will reign in the world.

Please note that the High Priest Joshua was not wearing the crown always. It was instructed that the crown should be removed from his head, and be kept in the temple of God in token of a tribute to those people who contributed the gold and silver. All the descriptions have spiritual meanings. They cannot be connected to the wearing of ornaments. Also, crown is a symbol of kingship, not an ornament.

### **(10) A Ring for the Prodigal son —**

**Luke.15:2** – *"But the father said to his servants, Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet."*

This is a parable of Jesus Christ (Luke.15:11-32) relating to the parable of the Lost Son. Jesus used parables to portray the spiritual ideas. In the same chapter (Luke.15) there are other parables also, the Lost Sheep (15:4-7) and the Lost Coin (15:8-10). All

the three parables have a common theme. Man has lost his fellowship with God because of sin. God out of his mercy is waiting for man to return to his parental care. When the son returns, the father asks the servants to put a ring on his finger. But the parable does not endorse wearing of ornaments by a believer. Please note the following points —

(1) It is only a parable which does not depict any doctrinal instructions relating to ornaments.

(2) Many spiritual themes are included in the parable.

The prodigal son was rebellious against the father. Then he was living a way-ward. But the father is waiting and looking for the son's return for a long period. When all the situations became unfavorable to live further, the son decided to return to father's house to be a servant among the other workers. When the son was still at a great distance, his loving father saw him. The compassionate father runs towards the son, embraces him and celebrates the son's return. The father does not pay attention to the son's words of repentance — *"Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son"* (Luke.15:21).

He is instructing the servants — Luke.**15:22-25** — *"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing."*

We see the robe, ring, sandals, big feast, dancing and rejoicing in the above text. All of them talk aloud many spiritual thoughts and blessings. We cannot detach one phrase and attach literal meaning to it to justify our passion for worldly things. Jesus Christ told parables to illuminate spiritual themes in a figurative way. Let us examine them one by one.

### **(1) Best Robe —**

Reception as son — The son is welcome back to the father's house. It denotes Salvation. Also pictures the love of father to son (Gen.37:3). Both in Old and New Testaments the robe is a symbol of salvation. (Isa.61:10/Gen.41:42/ Rev.7:14/ Rev.19:7,8). In the book of Genesis (Gen.3:21) God himself made a robe for man to cover his nakedness. The abundant flow of mercy even amidst God's wrath is portrayed here. The spiritual meaning is that the sinner gets the robe of salvation through the atonement of Jesus Christ. The best robe or the robe of righteousness shows a sinner dead in sin get everlasting life through Jesus Christ.

### **(2) The Ring —**

The ring is a symbol of acceptance and authority. The prodigal son was given the right of inheritance. Ring here represent reception as son (Eph.1:5,6). The Pharaoh, the king of Egypt gave his signet ring to Joseph as a token of authority (Gen.41:42). In olden days the kings used ring as a seal in documents and proclamations instead of signature (Esth.3:12). The ring put on the finger of the returned lost son is the acceptance of his father as son.

### **(3) Shoes —**

Shoes (sandals) depict freedom and readiness for ministry (Eph.6:15). The slaves as well as captives did not have the right to wear the sandals (Isa.20:4). The shoe belongs to the children who inherit the fathers' property. The son who returned to Father's house is no more a slave or servant but own son has liberty in father's house. Now he can stand boldly in the presence of the father, by His grace came upon it with the liberty of a believer through Jesus Christ (Gal.4:7).

### **(4) The fatted calf —**

The fatted calf was an especially cared one which was kept for this occasion. Think about the finest, specially cared and superfine without any blemish. It was kept and cared by the father for his son. Here the returned son is treated as a very important person. So also God has kept from the ages past to offer as a sacrifice to redeem the lost man. The finest calf was slaughtered on the Calvary for my and your redemption is Jesus Christ (Mat.27:19,24,54/2 Cori.5:21/1 Pet.2:22/1 John.3:5).

### **(5) The Prodigal son was 'dead' —**

Indeed, he was spiritually dead, because he was immersed in the mud of sin. But he gained eternal life when he came back to his father's home. Without Jesus Christ we are dead in sin. When we accept the salvation through Jesus Christ, we will get everlasting life (Eph.2:1,5/Rom.6:1,2,23).

### **(6) Dancing and rejoicing —**

The joy of the father exceeds all limits. The son also rejoices on the warm welcome and acceptance, he got in the father's house. We also rejoice in our redemption and acceptance we got through Jesus Christ (Eph.5:19,20). What a joy!

The parable is about salvation, redemption and acceptance, a sinner gets through the blood of atonement of Jesus Christ. Please do not misinterpret the scripture to endorse someone's lust for wearing ornaments. The scripture says "My son was dead" (Luke.15:24). Does it mean that he was physically dead? All the celebrations portrayed here (robe, ring, sandals, feast with slaughtered calf, dance and rejoicing etc.) point to different spiritual blessing, a sinner enjoys when he returns to the Father's Home.

### **(11) The Richman in the book of James --**

**James. 2:1-4** --" *My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there **should come** into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place, "and say to the poor man, "You stand man, "You here at my footstool, "have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"*

Based on the above text some people argue that there were ornaments in the early churches and that the practice is acceptable in our churches also.

The book of James gives emphasis to practical Christianity. The second chapter of the book talks about problems, calamities, troubles, and shortages in the life of a Christian. The theme of James is not the ornaments. He emphasizes on non-discrimination in the Church. We do not know whether discrimination was practiced in the Jerusalem or anywhere

else. Here Apostle James is not telling that the Assembly contains persons who are wearing and not wearing ornaments. On the other hand, he exhorts them that they should not show partiality based on their family, richness, status etc.

The Apostle says suppose two visitors are coming to the Church – One rich man and another poor one. The rich man is well dressed. He is wearing gold rings. He receives an honorable welcome. The poor man comes in filthy clothes. He does not get an honorable welcome. Apostle says you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand man, "You here at my footstool, "The man with gold rings and costly fine dress is identified as a man of status and he has given a seat of honor. On the other hand, the poor man wearing filthy clothes was given an unimportant seat.

Such a kind of discrimination should not be practiced in the Church. Apostle points out that these discriminations are sin. "But if you show partiality, you commit sin" (James.2:9).

It is evident that the theme of the text is discrimination to others and not related to ornaments. From the following points we can see that this passage has no connection with ornament wearing in a Church

(1) "For if there **should come** into your assembly a man with gold rings, in fine apparel ....." (James.2:6). It does not say that it is an incident already happened. If it happens do not practice any discrimination. Here apostle is talking about the importance of nondiscrimination in the congregation. Both of these persons to be received in the same honor with love.

(2) "**For if .....** **say to him**, "You sit here in a good place, "and say to the poor man, "You stand man, "You here at my footstool.....". We cannot think that this statement is said by someone in the Assembly to a person came to the Assembly. Here Apostle James is just reminding that a person coming to the Assembly should not be received on the basis of his richness and status. All believers have to be received without any partiality.

(3) We do not know whether the apostle is talking about the Church or in a Synagogue. We cannot think that the well-dressed people coming to the Church wearing golden ornaments were members or believers of that Church. Sometimes even the non-believers may come to the Church as visitors. Sometimes Apostle James is pointing any kind of discrimination in the past.

(4) Richman wearing the gold rings may not be the member of the Church. If he was a member of the Church there is no need of receiving him and to say "You sit here in a good place."

No matter rich or poor, everyone should be treated equally and with the same affection and love. This is the theme of the text. It does not give any clue that there were believers wearing golden ornaments in the Jerusalem Church.



## **(12) Jesus Christ is wearing a Golden Sash at His Chest**

**Rev.1:12,13** –“ *Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band.*”

Here we can see Jesus Christ wearing a robe with a golden sash around the chest. Now the question is this – If Jesus Christ is wearing a golden sash around His chest, is it not permissible to wear a golden chain around the neck? Another argument is that many of the instruments in heaven are made of gold and therefore it is not improper for the believers to wear golden ornaments.

Let us examine the above arguments in the light of the scripture. Apostle John was the dearest disciple of Jesus Christ. He was exiled to the island Patmos. There he received the revelations of Jesus Christ, the resurrected and glorious one. John saw Jesus Christ as the First born, Ruler of the Nations, the Great Prophet and the High Priest. In the book of Revelation Chapter.1:13 to 18 Apostle John describes Jesus as the most Glorious Son of Man.

There are seven golden lamps. John sees Jesus Christ in the middle of the lamps. The golden lamps represent the seven Churches (Rev.1:20). Jesus Christ asks John to give His messages to the seven Churches represented by the golden lamp stands. The Churches are Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. In the Old Testament time, there was only one lamp in the Tabernacle. The single lamp had seven branches. There were burning wicks on each branch. But in the New Testament there are seven lamps that represent the seven Churches. But the Lord’s message was to go to the different Churches. The seven lamps show the structure of the Church in the New Testament times. Each Church is separate and independent. The Churches are independently related to the Lord. They are burning independently.

John sees Jesus Christ as the Son of Man who wears a golden sash around His chest. Let us look what they are.

Robe is an outer garment that reaches to the feet. Ordinary people do not wear the robe. Robe is a garment worn by the Kings (1.Sam.24:4) Prophets (1.Sam.28:14) and Priests (Exo.28:4/ Lev.16:4). Jesus did not wear a robe when He was alive as an ordinary man. But here John describes the robe as a garment without stitch or seam. John describes the robe of Jesus Christ in Gospel – “Now the tunic was without seam, woven from the top in one piece.” (John.19:23). It was totally woven from the bottom. John sees Jesus Christ wearing a golden robe. It shows that He was the King of Kings, Great Prophet and Great High Priest at the same time.

John sees Jesus Christ girded with a golden sash around His chest – “*One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band*” (Rev.1:13). The Judges used to wear the golden sash. The golden sash declares that Jesus Christ is the Judge. Golden sash speaks of Jesus Christ’s righteousness. Prophet Isaiah says – “*Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist*” (Isa.11:5). Aaron, the High Priest had a holy garment that shown his glory and authority. It was called Ephod that was made of gold and different colored textures namely blue, white, scarlet and specially woven cotton thread. Golden threads

were inter-weave. Ephod was worn on the chest with hangings to the shoulders (Exo.28:1-8). All the special adornments of Aaron represented the glory and authority of the High Priest. Of course, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the Great High Priest. The adornment of Aaron points the dignity, glory and authority of Jesus Christ as the High Priest. *"For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, And the peoples with His truth"* (Psa.96:13/John.5:22/Acts.17:31/ Rev.20:11-15).

*"Then I turned to see the voice that spoke with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands and in the midst of the seven lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the feet and girded about the chest with a golden band"* (Rev.1:12,13). None of the verses mentioned above justify the wearing of ornaments. They only reveal the glory, magnificence and authority of Jesus Christ as the High Priest, the Great Judge, King of kings.

### **(13) Church of Laodicea is asked to buy Gold refined in the fire to become Rich —**

**Rev.3:17,18** – *"Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing' —and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked— 'I counsel you to buy from Me gold refined in the fire, that you may be rich; and white garments, that you may be clothed, that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and anoint your eyes with eye salve, that you may see."*

Our Lord is asking the Church of Laodicea to buy gold refined in fire. Some people interpret it literally. They came to the conclusion that it is acceptable to give baptism also to believers even if they wear ornaments. But we should understand that the above text of scripture is to be interpreted in the spiritual sense. Let us examine the above text in the spiritual perspective.

The Church of Laodicea thinks that she is rich. They are self-complacent even though they are poor in the spiritual sense. The Lord reveals that they are poor, wretched and miserable. The Lord is advising them to buy refined gold so that they became rich. This is an allegorical explanation of their spiritual poverty.

Gold represent the glory of God. Man lost glory when he sinned. **Rom.3:22,23** – *"For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*. The only way to regain the lost glory is to come back to God. The gold refined in fire reveals righteousness of God. Prophet Isaiah says that the good deeds of men are like stained clothes.

**Isa.64:6** — *"But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteous nesses are like filthy rags; We all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."* Righteousness in Christ is more precious. The man cannot purchase God's righteousness through his good deeds. But God's righteousness is free of charge. But there is a price. The price is FAITH. The prophet Isaiah explained about the free gift of salvation.

**Isa.55:1,2** – *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance."* Apostle Paul says that God's righteousness is given through Jesus Christ.

**1. Cori.1:30** – *"But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption".*

**1. Cori.6:11** – *"And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."*

The people of Laodicea were very prosperous. They had treasures of gold. Their prosperity was based on gold. Even their coins for transactions are gold. Gold was a common element in their daily life. Hence, they are able to distinguish the impure gold. The impure gold has to go through the refining process through fire to make it pure and shining. In that context the Lord is asking the Church to buy pure gold refined in fire. The price they have to pay is faith and repentance of heart. The Lord is not talking about worldly gold in this context.

The price the Lord paid to regain the lost glory to man is the greatest. He paid it full in the sacrificial death on the Calvary cross. The man can purchase the lost glory or salvation through his faith. The worldly gold is perishable.

The Church of Laodicea is to purchase a special imperishable gold. It is the Salvation through faith. It is more precious than the whole world itself.

Apostle Peter mentions that our faith is more precious than the gold. **1.Pet.1:7** – *"That the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ".*

The gold refined in the fire is the sanctification through Jesus Christ. We have to interpret this portion of the scripture in the spiritual perspective. Our Lord is asking the Church of Laodicea to buy gold does not mean that all believers have to buy metal gold. Hence this portion is not permitting believers to wear golden ornaments.

## **(14) The Twenty- four Elders sitting in the thrones wearing Golden Crowns --**

**Rev.4:4** – *"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads."*

We see the twenty-four elders sitting in heavenly thrones wearing golden crowns. This portion of the scripture also should not be interpreted literally. We should not think that the elders were wearing golden crowns literally. Some persons who are wearing ornaments use this verse for justifying their argument. The golden crowns picture their rewards in allegorical manner. The golden crowns here denote that these elders are faithful and victorious.

Revelation chapter one explains the glorified Jesus Christ. Through the second and third chapters we see the messages to the seven Churches. In the fourth chapter John saw a door opens in heaven with a voice which he heard was like a trumpet saying, "Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this. "Immediately John saw many visions of heaven in spirit. At this contest John says – **Rev.4:4** – *"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads".*

At the first vision, John saw a throne in heaven, and One sat on the throne. This was the Almighty God the Father. Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones John saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. It is said that these twenty-four elders are the representatives of 12 Fathers of Tribes in Old Testament and 12 Apostles of New Testament. But this explanation of twenty-four elders is not accepted generally. Because the twenty-four stands for one group (1.Chr.24:7-19). The most accepted view is that they belong to all saints of New Testament Church taken at rapture with the coming of Jesus Christ in mid heaven.

White robe points to holiness. Hence these twenty-four elders are righteous one. In the book of Revelation we see so many references about the white robes (Rev.3:5/3:18/19:8). In the New Testament white robe points to holiness and to the justification attained by us through the salvation arranged by Jesus Christ.

John saw the twenty-four elders were adorned with golden crown. The golden crown here explains their position, dignity, status and highness. The golden crown here comes from the root word in Greek is "stephanos". This was the reward to those who are faithful up to their death. Being faithful and victorious they are eligible for getting crown of honor.

When we hear the word Crown, immediately we think about the crowns of Kings. This crown shows their position and status. But in scripture the crown is used for expressing spiritual aspect in allegorical manner.

> **Prov.4:9** – "She will place on your head an ornament of grace; A crown of glory she will deliver to you." Here crown shows for wisdom and knowledge.

> "An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who causes shame is like rottenness in his bones." (Pro.12:4). "The silver-haired head is a crown of glory, if it is found in the way of righteousness." (Pro.16:31). "Children's children are the crown of old men, And the glory of children is their father." (Prov.17:6). In these verses the crown shows admiration, honor, dignity, prestige etc.

> **Isa.28:5,6** – "In that day the LORD of hosts will be For a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty To the remnant of His people, For a spirit of justice to him who sits in judgment, And for strength to those who turn back the battle at the gate." Here the prophet explains how God deals with those who love God.

> Apostle Paul says that the Philippians believers are his crown. "Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved" (Phil.4:1).

> Believers of Thessalonica is said to be Paul's crown of rejoicing. "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing?" (1 Thess.2:19). Though the crown is meant for adorning the head, the above all verses speak of its spiritual meaning showing excellence, dignity, worth and praiseworthy.

There is day of honoring with reward to all saints who worked for the Lord in this earth. In scripture there are different rewards of crown that are awarded to the saints for their spiritual ministries.

They are -

1. Imperishable Crown (1.Cor.9:25).
2. Crown of Rejoicing (1.Thess.2:19).
3. Crown of Righteousness (2.Tim.4:8).
4. Crown of Glory (1.Pet.5:4).
5. Crown of Life (James.1:12/ Rev.2:10).

These are all the rewards of honoring the saints in heaven for their spiritual ministries and holy life. These are not the ornaments.

*"Around the throne were twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads"* (Rev.4:4).

This verse cannot be taken for arguing on the subject of wearing ornaments by believers. This is a vision of the things that took place in future. Moreover, this is an incident of honoring all the redeemed saints by the King of kings and Lord of lords who was seated in the heavenly throne.

At that occasion all the redeemed will give glory to Lord by falling at Lord's feet. *"Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying: You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created."* (Rev.4:9-11).

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## CHAPTER - VI

# QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WEARING OF ORNAMENTS AND ITS ANSWERS THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES

### **(1) Can a believer wear ornament? Is it wrong to wear it? Is it a sin to wear it? Will God hate them?**

It is God's will that the believer who is saved through Jesus Christ should not wear ornament. God has given commandment to remove the ornament.

Exo.33:3-6: *"Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornament. For the Lord had said to Moses, Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now **therefore, take off your ornament, that I may know what to do to you.'** So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornament by Mount Horeb."*

There was a special purpose in God's command to bring ornament when God's people were leaving Egypt. But the ornament they wore led them to idolatry and it resulted in God's wrath. God delivered them from the Egyptian bondage under Pharaoh, split the Red Sea and miraculously saved them from their enemies. Yet they forgot God and cast a calf out of the ornament they were wearing and worshiped and offered sacrifices to it. Instead of praising the living God who delivered them from their enemies, they bowed down and praised the idol calf, saying— *"This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!"* (Exo.32:8). This idolatry led to God's wrath and their judgment. About 3,000 people became prey to death (Exodus.32:28). But God had mercy on Moses, who pleaded for mercy of God for the people. He commanded them to remove their ornament so that they would not perish on their journey (Exodus. 33:1-6). We read in the Bible that the people who obeyed these words did not wear ornament from Mount Horeb onward. But interpreting that this commandment was only for the people of Israel, and that the New Testament believers could wear ornament, believers by imitating the heathens follow what is forbidden by God and fall in to the pit of sin.

God says, *"You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy."* (Leviticus.11:45). The saved believer has a personal relationship with the holy God. Though he lives on this earth yet is a heavenly citizen. Let no defilement of the world be entangled in the believer who is in the fellowship of God. The body of the believer is the dwelling place of God. Do not adorn this temple of God with anything unclean or not spiritual. God had given a commandment that in the sanctuary *"A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out"* (Leviticus.6:13) and that they shall not offer strange incense on the altar (Exodus.30:9). But Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, died suddenly in the temple, because they had

broken the commandment of God, and had brought a strange fire (Leviticus.10:1,2). In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit dwells in the believer because the believer's body is the temple of God. They are not their own, for they have been bought at a price from slavery and from Satan's bondage; therefore, they have to glorify God in their body and in their spirit, which are God's (1 Corinthians 6:11,15,19,20). The body of the believer, the temple of God, will be punished definitely if it is further illuminated by another fire.

*"Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are."* (1 Cor. 3:16,17). Our God is a merciful God. But in the presence of sin, He is also the fire that burns (Hebrews.12:29). "For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries." (Hebrews.10:26,27).

God commanded in the Old Testament to remove ornament (Exodus. 33:3-6). Nowhere in the New Testament Scriptures neither our Lord nor the Apostles oppose this command; not only that, it is not allowed to adorn the spiritual body of the believer with the gold and silver of the world. The Apostles Paul and Peter explained how holy women, who have been forgiven and justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, should adorn themselves and how not to adorn.

**1.Tim.2:9-10** — *"In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works."*

**1.Peter.3:3,4**— *"Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God."*

### **Adorning should be done by -**

- (1) Wearing appropriate clothes.
- (2) Being shy and sensible.
- (3) Decorating with good deeds.
- (4) Having a gentle and sober mind.

### **How not to adorn -**

- (1) Braided hair – Preparing as if going to a hairstyle competition.
- (2) Adorning with gold and pearls.
- (3) Precious dress – dresses which are not relevant for the witnessing life of the believer.

Holy women should adorn themselves not with outward ornament, but with spiritual virtues. What is precious in the sight of God is the meekness and sober mind, which is the indestructible inner spiritual man. But what is precious in the eyes of men is braiding their hair, wearing gold and wearing elegant clothes. As the outward decoration increases, the inner decoration may fade. Ornament made of gold and silver may make the outward appearance look attractive. But, without wisely handling the blessed God-given gift, i.e.,

the wealth, buying these metals at great cost and makes them into ornament, and wears them by piercing the body of the believer is not right. Let the men of this world wear them on their bodies, for they have not received the glory of God. But it is needless to the believer who has received the glory of God. Those who have this vision "*I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me*" will behave in a manner befitting the believer in all respects; and will not adorn their bodies with artificial metals.

It is a sin to break God's commandments. God does not like it. God's children are those who obey God and live according to God's will. They are also God's beloved children. "*The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands.*" (Psalm.135:15). Therefore, the believer's wearing of ornament shows that they are imitating the heathens and shows that they are not completely detached from the desires of the world. It is not good to bear this Egyptian filth, or the idol of the heathens, on the body of the believer, who is the abode of the Holy Spirit.

Notice what the Bible says believers should wear —

**Romans.13:12**— "*Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.*"

**Romans.13:14**— "*But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.*"

**2 Corinthians. 6:7**— "*Wear the armor of righteousness*"

**Ephesians.4:24** — "*And that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.*"

**Ephesians. 6:11** — "*Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*"

**Colossians. 3:12**— "*Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering....*"

**Colossians. 3:14**— "*But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*"

**1 Thessalonians. 5:8** — "*But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation.*"

**1 Peter. 5:5** — "*Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility*"

## **(2) Will salvation be lost if a believer who had given up ornament at baptism and wears it again?**

### **On the Day of Judgment will those who wear ornament feel ashamed before the throne of God?**

"Salvation" means deliverance from punishment. The salvation that God has provided for sinful mankind can be obtained through faith in Jesus Christ, for which God has given authority to all men; moreover this salvation is by grace. Look at some verses —

**Romans 10:9,10** — "*That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*"



**Ephesians 2:8-9** — *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."*

**John 1:12** — *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."*

God's salvation by grace will never be lost. The salvation of the soul is sealed by the Holy Spirit. When saved, the sinful man is transformed into a new creation in Jesus Christ. The old man is stripped off along with all worldly desires. The child of God who grows up in an active relationship with Jesus Christ, brings complete change in the way he looks, speaks, lives, deals with others, loves and serves others, and sets Jesus Christ an example for his life and become transformed into the likeness of Christ. The saved believer must voluntarily give up all desires of the world. Remember that wearing ornaments is a worldly lust, and it should not be removed by compulsion, but remember that giving up ornament is done in obedience to the Lord who saved them. Salvation has nothing to do with ornament because it is based on faith in Jesus Christ and God's grace. Giving up of ornament is not for going to heaven or to be saved. It is a public display of having been saved and a proclamation of a witnessing life.

The believer, or the saved child of God, has a personal relationship with holy God. The life of faith begins as soon as we are saved. Conforming to the likeness of Jesus Christ is the Christian life. In this life, all the filth of the world that hinders the fellowship of God must be swept away. Since ornament also comes under worldly desires, without imitating the heathens we must cleanse our spiritual temple by removing this impurity from our bodies. The believer must never in his lifetime defile the sanctuary with the filth brought from Egypt. The body of the believer is the dwelling place of God. The Spirit of God dwells in them (1.Cor.3:16,17). Neither brings into our holy temple any kind of strange fire that consumes the life of our witnesses, nor beautifies it.

God's Word declares that one day all will have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Therefore, believers must live with great care and holiness.

**Romans.14:10-12** - *"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: ...so then each of us shall give account of himself to God."*

**1.Cori.3:13-15** — *"Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire."*

**2 Corinthians 5:10** — *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."*

All saved believers will stand before the judgment seat, and those who are not saved will stand before the White throne. The Judge who sits on both thrones is One. He is the Son of God, the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the Saviour of mankind (John.5:22 / Acts.17:31 / Rev.20:11-15). The Judgment Seat is the throne of reward, whereas from the White throne proceeds punishment. For the believer who stands before the Judgment Seat, that time will be an opportunity to be held accountable and honoured for his work. That is, the Judgment Seat of Christ is related to trial, honour, praise, faithfulness, and acceptance of service (1.Cori. 3:13-15 / 2.Tim.4:8 /1.Cori.4:5).

When many are crowned and honoured, remember that believers who disregarded God's commandment and tarnished the testimony of life by wearing the filth of this world on their bodies, i.e., the temple of God, will be ashamed.

In the same way, many who trivialized God's commandment, "*Take off your ornament*" (Exo.33:5), those who disregard this commandment of God and believe that ornament can be worn, that it is not wrong to wear it, that it can be worn in moderation, that it needs to be changed according to world culture, that a person can take baptism wearing this, and that it is better to teach about this only after baptism will also be ashamed before the Judgment Seat. This is because God's command to "remove the ornament" still remains unchanged in the New Testament and it never allows wearing.

In the New Testament only one woman is seen wearing ornament. Notice what the Apostle John describes about her — "*The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls, .....I saw the woman, drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. And when I saw her, I marveled with great amazement. — She is - Mystery: Babylon the Great*" (Revelation.17:4-6). Look at the Lamb, the bride of Christ, standing in heavenly glory beautifully dressed uniquely, not wearing a necklace or ring made of gold, gems, pearls or crystals, or a garment of dazzling color. Revelation.19:7 — "*Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.*"

### **Our accountability at the Divine Judgment**

(1) For the works done while we were living in the flesh: -

2.Corinthians. 5:10 / Romans.14:12.

(2) For any trivial words spoken – Matthew.12:36 / James.5:9.

(3) For the thoughts of the heart - 1.Corinthians.4:5.

(4) For the talents received – Matthew.25:21.

Besides these, there will be a trial at the Judgment Seat in regard to one's soul, acts and deeds as a believer from the day of redemption to the time when God gave life to live on earth. For many things, appreciation and approval are gained. At the same time, there will be an examination of the doctrines given by God in relation to the holy life, and the proclamation of the gospel. One will be ashamed of laziness, inactivity, and lack of purity of life. Consider some of the passages found throughout the Bible.

(1) As a stranger on earth, how was our life spent?

> Psalm 90:12 / Eph.5:16 / Colossians.4:5/1.Peter.1:17

(2) How we handled the wealth God had given us, and the money entrusted to us?

> 2.Cori.9:6,7 / 1.Tim.6:17-20

(3) How we suffered for Christ and for the sake of the Gospel? How did you react to insults and blame?

> Matthew.5:11,12 / Mark.10:29,30 / Rom. 8:18 / 2.Cor.4:17 / 1.Pet. 4:12,13.

(4) How we respected, cared for and loved the brethren and servants of God?

> Matt.10:41,42 / Heb.6:10

(5) Later in your spiritual life, to what extent did you control the fleshly tendencies that were before your salvation? How about preaching, working, and witnessing?

> 1.Cori.9:25-27 / 1.Thess.2:4,5 / 2.Tim.2:15

(6) How was the race on the Christian race track?

> 1.Cori.9:24 / Phili.2:16 / Phili.3:13,14 / Heb.12:1

(7) What was the response to the test and temptations?

> James 1:2,3 / Revelation 3:10

(8) To whom did you communicate the requirements of the life of faith -to God or to man?

> Phili. 4:6

(9) To what extent have we used God-given gifts and abilities for the common good? Were we a good steward?

> Luke 19:11-26 / 1 Cor.12:7,8 / 1 Peter 4:10.

(10) Were you ashamed concerning Christ and the Word of Christ? How many lives heading towards the burning fiery furnace had been earned for Christ?

> Mark 8:38 / Luke 9:26 / Daniel 12:3 / 1 Thess.2:19,20.

(11) In God's service, in Evangelism, and in Charity — -Did you give God the honour and praise for the things received from others and from the world? Or did you praise yourself?

> Matt. 6:1-18

(12) How were the divine laws shared? Did we tell the whole truth without hiding anything? Did we live as an example to others? How did we care for the flock that God had given us?

> Acts 20:26-28 / 2. Tim.4:1-5 / 1.Pet. 5:2-4

Dear child of God, saved by grace! Let us live in holiness. Let us not look at the heathens and imitate them. Look at Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith (Heb.12:2). Let us consider the Apostle and High Priest Jesus (Heb.3:1). Let us see how great He is (Heb.7:4). By looking at this exemplary Lord, we can prepare ourselves to be revealed in holiness (1.Thess.3:13); Let us be sanctified (1.Thess. 5:23); Let us wait in peace without spot and blameless (2.Pet.3:14); Let us abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1.John.2:28).

### **(3) Can baptism be forbidden to a believer, who has been saved by grace, for the only reason that he is wearing ornament?**

The child of God who is saved by grace has become a member of God's family. God and the believer become part of the relationship as father and children. It is the duty of the children to obey the will of the Father. Disobedience and opposition to God's commandments are things that grieve God the Father. The child of God, who has received spiritual vision, should never imitate the world or follow the heathens and return to the old life. He who is born again by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ becomes a new creation in Christ. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."* (2.Cori.5:17).

In the new life, trying to beautify the spiritual body of the believer with worldly impurities is not consistent. Look at what God makes very clear in the Bible –

Exodus.33:5,6— *For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you. So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb."* After this commandment of God was given, nowhere else in the Bible we could find a verse that allows the wearing of ornament.

Why many want to be baptized without abandoning ornament is they want to secretly take baptism which is the commandment of God. Because when ornament is removed, many will realize that they have lost the faith and have left the former group. And they fear that this could lead to problems, humiliation and isolation. They want to obey to baptism because it is the commandment of God, but at the same time they wish that it should not be known by others. They should not have this attitude. One who is saved must get rid of all worldly desires and sins, including ornament, before taking baptism. Thus, a person who is not completely devoted should not be baptized for the sole reason that he has been saved.

On the day of Pentecost, the Apostle Peter spoke to a large crowd about Jesus Christ. Then the Holy Spirit made them aware of sin, righteousness, and judgment. Those who accepted Peter's exhortation, "*Save yourselves from this crooked generation*" were baptized, and we read in Acts that about 3,000 joined them that day (Acts.2:40,41). I have heard some people say that those who had accepted the word were baptized immediately, and that those who wore the ornament in that community had no time to remove it, so there is no need to remove the ornament while taking baptism! But this conclusion is not correct. For example, suppose you see a news in the Newspaper – 'the Prime Minister of India rested at the Kollam Guest House, got up in the morning and went to Thiruvananthapuram.' Since it is said that he got up in the morning and ate, would anyone think that he ate without cleaning his teeth or attending nature's call? Similarly, one person baptized immediately after being saved does not mean that all uncleanness in life has not been removed. God wants us to be baptized as soon as we are saved. But before taking baptism, which is God's commandment, any filth clinging to the baptismal nominee or any obstacle to Christian witnessing life must be removed. Ornament also comes under this category.

Baptism is not a means of salvation or of going to heaven. Baptism is the Commandment of God that the saved child of God obeys with all his heart and with all his soul and with his entire mind. It is a proclamation of salvation, of new life, of repentance. One is putting on Christ at baptism.

**Galatians. 3:27**— *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."*

**Colossians.3:9,10**— *"Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him."*

One becomes a new creation in Christ Jesus. Just like one changes his old clothes and put on new one, Christ is put on in baptism. After a letter is written and put in cover and pasted, the text is not visible; the cover is visible. In the same way, henceforth others will see us through Jesus Christ. Not only had that, at baptism, all of one's carnal mind,

thoughts and desires buried. The believer rising from the water of baptism has the resurrected experience with the Lord.

**Romans. 6:4** — *"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."* To walk in the newness of life the believer has risen from baptism. Therefore, do not adorn him /her with gold and silver.

Therefore, a saved believer should not be baptized or allowed to take baptism, for the sole reason that he/she has abandoned ornaments. The subsequent nature of the life of the saved are that a smoker quits smoking, a drunkard quits alcohol, and the immoral person turns away from immoral life. If a saved person comes with a lit cigarette or a bottle of liquor and says, 'I am saved, baptize me,' is then baptism permissible? After realizing that it is God's commandment that the believer should not wear ornaments, it is a display of witnessing life, and it is a complete separation from the world, is it not a breach of God's commandment to continue the life of faith, believing it to be insignificant? Is it not a display of corrupt testimony? Is it not conforming to the world? Baptizing such ones is like burying the person who is not dead, and thus the person who baptize will be guilty before God.

The Lord once told a rich young man – Matthew 19:21 - *"If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."* The Lord did not say this because this young man was rich. The Lord realized that the young man's thoughts and goals were centered on riches. In fact, the Lord was giving him an opportunity to change his attitude toward riches. But he loved the world more than God. And when he had heard the word of the Lord, he was sorrowful, and went away: for he had great possessions. Even though saved, the thoughts and desires of many today are like that of this rich young man – *"we need God; and doesn't want to leave Mammon either"*.

Some argue that when God commanded that the ornament be taken away, it was said to Israel in the Old Testament, but it is not said in the New Testament — Let them go their way. Those who, like Zacchaeus, forsake all things willingly (Luke 9:8), are the ones to take baptism, which is the Lord's commandment. It is recorded in 2 Timothy 3:16 that all Scripture is inspired of God. The commandments that God gave to the children of Israel in the Old Testament apply to us, since we are the New Testament Israelites. God commanded in the Old Testament, *"Take away your ornament"*— Modern counselors, at their convenience, interpret and add many of their things and teach many things in relation with God's Word. As believers, standing firm in God's Word, let us speak and act. **2 Corinthians. 2:17** – *"For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ."*

There is no doubt that many will be found in such churches if they are allowed to be baptized without giving up ornament. The church of God does not need carnal believers who live in sin, immersed in worldly desires, imitating the heathens. When unbelievers and unsaved men wear gold necklace, it is common that they leave some shirt buttons unbuttoned so that others can see the gold necklace. He is a living witness that some are canvassed to become members in the church even though they have not been separated from the world. When a man who had displayed his gold necklace and stood up at the Brethren Church in Kollam on his journey and testified that he was a baptized believer and

wanted to take part the Lord's Table, we were taken aback hearing this, and it grieved us. He is a living witness that at some places people are canvassed to the church by baptizing someone who is not separated from the world.

See what Jude writes –

**Jude.18-21**—*“How they told you that there would be mockers in the last time who would walk according to their own ungodly lusts. These are sensual persons, who cause divisions, not having the Spirit. But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”*

Many local churches are being formed today by baptizing people with ornaments, and they come up with the question of whether God has actually commanded the believer not to wear ornament. With the aim of increasing the number of worshipers in the churches in any way, they mix their own teachings in the Word of God and interpret it according to the tastes of the worshipers and serve in the name of God. Large crowds can also be seen here. There is no doubt that going back to the ways of the world without heeding the word of God is a sign of the end times. Believers, ye children of God! Let's wake up and let us not imitate them. Let us open our hearts and minds to the Lord of the Church, and pray for the spiritual enlightenment of our beloved ones.

While obviously it may seem that giving up of ornament is not part of the basic doctrine of the Church of God, the command to a saved believer to be separated and come away from the world includes giving up of ornaments too. It is therefore not the will of God to allow them to take baptism or baptize those who have not abandoned ornament, though saved. Because the Lord commanded us to make them disciples and then baptize them (see English, Tamil, Hindi, and Greek as the original language). That is, when the saved are led into the discipleship of the Lord, they themselves give up the luxuries and ornaments of the world.

#### **(4) Even some separated believers outside Kerala wear ornaments, if it is so, then what is wrong with baptizing there the saved ones who are wearing ornaments?**

This is another question that is asked in the modern age. Some servants of God, citing several verses by-the-way, proudly state that they should behave according to the customs of the day, that when they go to those regions, they baptize ornament wearing believers, and that there is nothing wrong with it. They acknowledge that the separated people of God in Kerala are the ones who really hold fast to the truths of separation, that their attitude towards giving up of ornament is absolutely right, that abandoning ornament is a living testimony to their separation from the world, and that they follow in the footsteps of their forefathers who counted everything in the world as waste and trash. But in some places when accepting an invitation in connection with the evangelistic work, when asked to give baptism, if there are ornament wearing believers, and baptize them with the thought that if they say no, they will get into trouble and argument, and they won't be invited next time. *The truth is that once they fall under the pressure of the situation, they continue to justify what they have done through God's Word. Later they come to the conclusion that either way is correct and acceptable.*

Are their opinions and actions right in the light of the Bible? Never. It is not appropriate for God's children to have two views on divine matters. No matter how far away from home or wherever we go, the Word of God does not alter. There is no provision in the Bible to comply with one law within Kerala and another outside and to change the doctrine according to circumstances. God's laws should not be changed in a way that pleases the hearer. There they may be giving baptism to ornament wearers according to the local customs.

But, beloved children of God, do not weaken the word of God by looking at the faces of men, and the things of the world. Forsake all thoughts of worldly dignity and superiority and look only to the face of God. The servants of God must pay heed to God and to godly matters. They should not have two visions, two thoughts, two masters, or two treasures (Matt.6:19-24). Remember, we too can have the same experience that Peter had when he lost sight of Him. God does not allow anyone to look at the cultures and customs of other states and do ministry. *Look only to Jesus Christ, the Author and Finisher of Faith.*

On this occasion I recall a recent issue. When the Bible Society decided to include "Apocrypha" in the Bible for those who need it and not include it for those who do not want it, was not the name of God glorified when the separated believers opposed it with one voice? It made others know the divine principles we hold fast, wasn't it? Even then some asked what's wrong with including Apocrypha if they wanted it be included? Didn't they? Likewise, with regard to ornament, let us be rooted in God's Word and live according to the principles that our forefathers exhibited in their lives.

If they do not baptize the ornament wearers, they may not be invited to the next meeting, and there may be comments and problems. But, for any reason do not be afraid. Do not doubt that God will approve and increase the work. The firm declaration of God's Word will cause God's name to be glorified, and through this, many will learn about the faith we hold fast. When it comes to ornament, there is no need to worry about not being invited to the next meeting. It is not necessary to go and work outside Kerala or outside India for evangelism, isn't it? *In Kerala itself, many people around our homes are still rushing to hell without knowing the living God. At this point let us check what we have done to reach them. Believers are appointed as guardians of the land. The watchman must guard himself and blow the trumpet of the gospel to warn of the coming sword against the land. "If he says nothing, the wicked will die in his iniquity; I will ask you his blood."* (Ezek.3:17,18 / Ezek.33:6-8).

Servants of God, those who lead God's people, and those who proclaim the word of God must remember with great care and fear that the slightest disobedience in the life of Moses, the man of God, caused him sorrow. Also God does not allow His servants to be criticized by others; He hates and punishes all acts that hinders His work and defames His name (Numbers.12:7-10).

In the same way, Moses' life shows that God's servants in God's service will not be exempted from disciplinary action if they make a mistake, disobey, or act against God's will. When the people quarreled for water at Kadesh in the wilderness of Zion, God instructed him to command the rock to give water. Moses said to them, *"Hear now, you rebels! Must we bring water for you out of this rock?"* Then Moses lifted his hand and struck the rock twice with his rod; God took into account Moses' angry speech, unbelief, and disobedience, and as a result said that Moses and Aaron would not enter the Promised Land (Num. 20:7-

13). Moses begged for forgiveness, but God refused (Deuteronomy. 3:23-27). When God asked Moses to command the rock to bring forth water, he struck it not once but twice with the rod in his hand. The rod was a symbol of Moses' authority and command. When it was in Moses' hand, it belonged to God, and God's power flowed through it. Through this incident we can understand that the word of God (the rod) is given and delivered into the hands of God's servants to do only God's will. Let us also follow in the footsteps of the prophets of God, who proclaimed God's words without looking anyone in the face, saying, "Thus says the LORD"; But if they deviate from the responsibility entrusted to them and speak and act against God's will according to circumstances and pressures, they will be subject to God's punishment, no matter how old, mature, burning and shining they may be.

*Therefore, even though saved, if they do not give up ornaments, it is a public declaration that there is no complete separation from the world. Therefore, it is not God's will to baptize them.* The Word of God does not allow anyone outside Kerala, the United States or anywhere else to follow their own Church system, cultures and customs.

*"And the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus.32:6).* Should everyone do that because some did that? The Word of God is unchanging and stable in Kerala and elsewhere. Look only at God and His Word.

### **(5) Is a doctrine accepted only because of its universality? —**

Another invention of lovers of ornament is the universality of the doctrine. They say that a doctrine is acceptable because of its universality. That is, if the giving up of ornament was a doctrine, everyone, regardless of the West or East, would obey. There is no doubt that it is the thought of the world to the doctrine of God on the basis of universality.

They ask, "Only in Kerala, which seem as a dot on the map, abandonment of ornament is accepted and observed only by a minority, then how can this become a doctrine?" The Word of God is given by the God of Heaven not only to Kerala but to the mankind all over the world. If we think spiritually and understand its contents with the help of the Holy Spirit, we will never need to turn to universal opinions.

*"Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. "And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornament. For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornament, that I may know what to do to you.' So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornament by Mount Horeb." (Exo.33:3-6).* The various interpretations that abandoning ornament was temporary, and that it should be taken lightly because it is part of the Old Testament, that it was ordered to be removed not because of God's displeasure with the adornment, but because He condemned idolatry -- these interpretations gain approval because of universality? Aren't they?

Ornament is removed wherever the Word of God is taught in its originality. That is, when the Word of God is clearly taught, then worldly love, worldly desires, and worldly luxuries will melt like butter in the sun. When the Word of God is adulterated and is divided according to the world, then such hearts will become like solid rocks in the love of the world. The lives of such people, without any real separation, will be seen wise in the



eyes of the world. The fact that sisters in different churches around the world use ornaments outside Kerala points to a truth - that in the past, those who went with the gospel and preached the word there remained silent on the subject of ornament.

Before the baptism was given to the saved people, they had to be taught of God's commandment in relation to the subject of ornament. Ornament lovers also spread the word that ornament is worn by all separated believers in the United States, Canada, and England. But isn't it true and significant that so many sisters there also do not wear any ornament? When such people come to foreign embassies for visa stamping or other purposes, to prove that they are married, the authorities also won't ask "Where is your wedding ring?". Marriage documents are to be submitted there. When they are not under the control of the Spirit of God and think like the worldly people, then the universality is spoken and the majority opinion is sought.

### **(6) Why is there no giving up of ornament in Tamil Nadu which is adjacent to Kerala? –**

There are people in Kerala who promote the wearing of ornament by saying that there is no removal of ornament in the adjacent Tamil Nadu. But it should not be forgotten that in Tamil Nadu too, many separated believers do not use ornament. The real reason for the existence of ornamentation among the believers there is that the early foreign missionaries and those who worked there from Kerala did not teach them about ornament. Had the people of Kerala taught the saved believers that they should be separated from the world and worldly desires before being baptized, and that baptism is the public proclamation of stripping off the old man and the beginning of a new life, there would have been no ornament wearing there too.

Wherever the Word of God is properly taught and the truths of separation are understood and led to discipleship, the believer will voluntarily abandon ornament. *We do not forget the sweat of their blood (including foreign missionaries who have been ordained) and the preaching of the gospel of salvation by Christ and the work done to start the Church outside Kerala, especially in Tamil Nadu. Let us praise God for them. But because they remained silent on the matter of removal of the ornament by the believer in connection with the holy life, there is no abandonment of ornament there. Perhaps it was because of the special circumstances of that day that they remained silent. But can their dignity underestimate or change God's command?*

*Therefore, it should not be forgotten that those who work there now, those who go from Kerala and work there nowadays, also have a duty to teach the present generation about this. The final commandment of the Lord (Matthew 28:18-20) is recorded in Tamil, not baptism and discipleship, but first discipleship and then baptism. **Matthew 28:19,20** – "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age, Amen."* That is, those who give the message of salvation must teach them the path of holiness and lead them into the discipleship of the Lord. When one is led into discipleship, he would realize that removal of ornament is necessary for a life of separation. Such ones are to be baptized. Is it correct to suggest that believers in Kerala can also wear ornament since Tamils wear ornament there, and deny that it is not a universal doctrine? Isn't it necessary to teach other people the example of the believers in Kerala?

## **(7) Is giving up of ornament an invention of Brethren and Pentecostals of Kerala?**

Giving up of ornament is not an invention of the Brethren and Pentecostals of Kerala. Holiness Movement, Quakers Pentecostal believers in the United State have all abandoned ornament. Records show that the Pentecostal Church, the Assemblies of God, brought change during the latter part of the twentieth century. See the history of Assemblies of God. ([www.http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblies\\_of\\_God\\_USA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assemblies_of_God_USA)).

—> “The Believers in the Pentecostal Church, which emerged in the early twentieth century, considered themselves as a separate people. Using drugs, gambling, social dance, alcohol, cinemas, public swimming pools, television, smoking, etc. were prohibited. Restrictions on women’s dress and fashion kept them as a separate community. Since 1950, the situation has changed. Many dramatic changes took place. Most importantly, the change in women’s clothing and fashion. There has been a significant change in the recent years in giving up of ornaments and control over the use of cosmetics.”

Do not these documents prove that Pentecostals in the United States adopted giving up of ornaments as a measure of holiness and separation until the 1950’s?

## **(8) Is it wrong to wear a little golden ornament for name’s sake?**

Is it wrong to wear some ornament of gold just for name’s sake? This question is asked by some people. Those who are proud to be believers, those who do not wear ornament obviously, and those who once followed in the footsteps of their forefathers who buried the ornaments under the terabinth tree, in modern times wear this filth as a ring on their fingers in a small form in secret. Alas! This manifests the violation of God’s commandment and as part of impurity. This is the filth of Egypt (the world). That is the bondage of Pharaoh (Satan).

Does it matter just wearing a thread thin necklace around the neck or a small ring on the finger? What’s wrong with wearing moderately? Such questions are asked nowadays. Believers are not allowed to wear ornament, according to Scripture: “*Take away your ornament .... so that the children of Israel did not wear ornament on Mount Horeb*” (Exodus 33:5,6). Do not doubt that wearing ornament, even if they are small, is denying God and His commandments. This is because after God had commanded to “*remove ornament*”, *there is not a single commandment was given permitting the wearing of ornament.*

Although related to idolatry and prayer, two incidents in chapters three and six of Daniel’s prophecy illustrate this. In Daniel chapter 3, the Jewish boys Shadrek, Meshach, and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace because they clung to the commandments of God. “*You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth*” (Exo.20:4,5). The divine law had been written on the tablet of their hearts. So, they decided that it was better to go to the fiery furnace than praying and falling before the golden idol of King Nebuchadnezzar. Look at the testimony of their faith.

**Daniel 3:17,18** — “*If that is the case, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.*” The governors, the ambassadors, the judges, and everyone

else worshiped the image. Everyone thought -Why not worship that? What's wrong with that? But the Jewish lads Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did not worship the image. They stood in awe of the word of God in front of a crowd which thought "What is wrong with praying? As a result, the living God of Heaven did not let His children burn down in the fiery furnace. God Himself came down from heaven and joined with them as fourth one in the furnace of fire. Their bodies, when came out of the furnace, did not burn, their hair did not burn, their clothes did not burn, and no one was seen with even the smell of fire.

God's children should also pay attention to what Daniel's prophecy describes in connection with prayer in the sixth chapter. Even while in exile in Babylon, Daniel adhered to God's laws and lived by them. The royal decree was proclaimed in Babylon, that for thirty days no one should pray to anyone but to the king. But Daniel opened the window of his house toward Jerusalem, and kneeled down three times a day, and prayed to God, as he had done before. Even in the land of the enemy, he did not break God's law which he kept from his youth. To obey God's command, or to obey the king's command? He kept God's principles and stood on God's side, without breaking it, even in times of crisis. As a result, Daniel was thrown into the lions' pit. Many would say that if he prayed without opening the window, his opponents would not have found him, and that he was foolish. But in any crisis, Daniel did not allow himself to abandon the laws of God written on the tablet of his heart. What was the word of God written in his heart?

**1 Kings 8:46-48** — *"..... When they sin against You (for there is no one who does not sin), and You become angry with them and deliver them to the enemy, and they take them captive to the land of the enemy, far or near; yet when they come to themselves in the land where they were carried captive, and repent, and make supplication to You in the land of those who took them captive, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong, we have committed wickedness'; and when they return to You with all their heart and with all their soul in the land of their enemies who led them away captive, and pray to You toward their land which You gave to their fathers, the city which You have chosen and the temple which I have built for Your name."* Though he was thrown into the lions' pit, God shut the lions' mouths and delivered His servant. The king also glorified God, knowing that the God of Daniel is the living God.

Many would have suggested that it would have been safer for the Jewish boys Shadrack, Meshach, and Abednego to worship the king's golden image for once and to escape punishment of being thrown into the fiery furnace. Many would have suggested that without opening the window, Daniel should have closed the doors and prayed. But their lives show us that we must not deviate from the Word of God, no matter what the circumstances of the son of God are. The laws were written on their heart and they lived according to them. So, they may be many saying that what is wrong with wearing a piece of ornament? But it is better for a true separated believer to look to the Lord and live without listening to the opinions of the world.

Nowadays, some local congregations teach that ornament could be worn lightly and modestly. It's like saying you can have a little alcohol for refreshment. This is a tendency to downplay God's words. If you obey nine of the Ten Commandments given by God and fail to obey one, you will be considered to have violated the Ten Commandments altogether. According to the condition of the law is that you will be found guilty before God. It may be argued that this is an Old Testament law. But look at common sense examples. How many

times one does has to steal to get the name 'thief'? Once caught, he is called a thief. Stealing ten rupees and stealing ten thousand rupees has, in effect, the same punishment as theft. That is, it is not the number or size of the wrongdoing that determines, but whether it is committed or not. As such, the result is the same whether you wear a lot of ornament, wear it in moderation, or wear it in secret. It is wrong before God. There are those who wear ornament in fear of others, hiding and hesitating. That is to say, there are those among the believers who do not have ornament while they are among the believers, and once they leave the gates of the church hall, they take the ornament kept in vanity bags and wear and walk with the world. How good it would be if they remembered the fact that no one can hide anything from the all-knowing and all-seeing God. "*And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*" (Hebrews 4:13).

### **(9) Why do believers who once gave up ornament later wear that again? What is the significance of the ring found on the fingers of believers?**

Believers should not wear ornament, including rings, made of gold, silver, pearls, crystals, or plastic. *There is not a verse in the Bible that allows us to wear ornament after God had commanded to remove it.* But is giving up of ornament the eleventh commandment? Is it not the Old Testament verse? Some wear ornament by asking like this. Those who rejected these at the time of salvation later return to ornament. A closer look reveals that this kind of return and the ornament illusion are largely common among those who have been saved from other Christian community that comes to the separated church. This is evident in some as the world's wealth increases. *What is the reason for this? Is there a remedy for this?*

> First of all, it is because they lose their spiritual vision in the journey of faith and become enslaved to the world. Once upon a time, when these people looked to the Lord, they might have endured many obstacles and hardships. And they would have abandoned everything voluntarily, knowing that the abandonment of ornament is separation from the world and that it is a display of the witnessing life of the believer. But as time goes on, the world enters into them and as a result they become weak in faith. The balance of the spiritual life goes wrong totally as their bank balance increases due to the earthly blessings in the world. When the spiritual vision is lost and one turns away from God, the thinking of the world becomes ingrained in the believer. New ideas that have never been in the heart pop up. And they think there is nothing wrong with wearing a small gold ring, and that when others see the ring on their finger, they will recognize that they are married.

*The earthly possessions and the upliftment we receive in the world should not become the factors that separate us from God. They must be used for the glory of God's name and for the advancement of the Gospel (Luke 16:19). When there is such a view, there will be no thought of ornament.*

>> Secondly, this worldliness and backsliding occurs in the believers who, when they entered into the life of faith, kept and cherished in their hearts some lustful idols, since they were without complete submission and separation. An example of this is what happened in the life of Rachel, Jacob's wife. Jacob, who had been living in Laban's house for twenty years long, decided to return to Bethel by divine command. When Laban and his son were not at home Jacob returned, and when Laban heard that Jacob fled, Laban

pursued after him and found him on mount Gilead. *"And now you have surely gone because you greatly long for your father's house, but why did you steal my gods?"* When we read this passage, we see that Rachel, Jacob's wife, was smuggling her father's idols without her husband's knowledge (Genesis.31:31-37). When Laban, Rachel's father, came and inspected the tent, Rachel took the idols and hid them inside the camel's saddle, sat on it and cunningly sent her father away. Jacob by this filthy in his own family miserably had to say to his children in Shechem, *"You have troubled me by making me obnoxious"* (Genesis.34:30). Jacob understood that purification is need in his family in the presence of at Shechem. So, he buried under the terabinth in Shechem all the ornaments and idols, including the idol god of her father, which his wife Rachel had smuggled out. The return of today's generation to the ornaments is the repetition of the mistake that Rachel actually made. That is to say, even when they have given up everything, the golden ring necklace for name's sake, it is made clear that they have kept in their hearts this idol unnoticed like Rachel.

*The idol that Rachel cunningly smuggled out of her father's house was also used as a reason to tarnish Jacob's witness life, and all the filth was cleaned and buried under the Terabinth pit of Shechem. Like that, the believer who has become a new creation in Christ by burying all filth at the foot of the cross of Calvary, the old idol has no place any more. Satan wanders and seeks to attract and deceive his bride's heart from Christ the Bridegroom. Rebekah was travelling in the wilderness when she saw Isaac in the distance, although she had not seen her beloved before (Genesis.24:64), she got down from the camel, because her heart was full of Isaac. Let us, too, in this desert lift up our heads as we await the coming of our Beloved; Let's come down from all the luxuries of the world and meet the beloved. At this point, do not be tempted to go back in search of the filthy sins and worldly treasures once abandoned.*

>>> Thirdly, in the life of faith, one fails to maintain holiness and separation by going away from loyalty and purity towards God. When the loyalty and purity of the heart for God and for the divine things is lost, the spiritual vision fades and the purity of heart is lost, and that leads to live like worldly people. A group of Corinthians who lived a life of sin, adultery, vices, immorality and idolatry believed in the gospel and were saved. They became saints and members of the church of God. The Apostle Paul wrote the first Corinthians epistle to address the spiritual problems of the Corinthian believers who came to the life of faith from heathen background, such as disorder, groupism, fornication, dishonesty in attending the Lord's Table, negligence, and abuse of the gift of grace. Spiritual stagnation in the Church was caused by the fact that some of the believers lived a life of carnal thinking and activity. Listen to what the apostle says about them - *"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, ...for you are still carnal... are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?"* (1 Corinthians.3:1-3).

In his second letter to the Corinthians about these believers, Paul feared not that, they would depart from the faith: but feared that they might perish by going away from the loyalty and purity for Christ.

**2 Corinthians 11:2,3** - *"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."* When the loyalty and purity shown to Christ diminishes, one clings to the world and is not able to rejoice in the things and laws

of God. Such believers have backslid. Spiritual backsliding does not happen overnight. When we lose loyalty to God, our fellowship with fellow believers diminishes. Gradually, just for insignificant matters Church meetings are avoided, such as avoiding meetings on weekdays, leaving only attending the first half of the weekly worship, leaving before the start of Word ministry. Then comes the innovative idea of worshipping at home and eventually falls into the hands of the world.

It has been written in the Bible about Amaziah son of Joash in 2. Chronicles.25:2 - *"And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, but not with a loyal heart."* If we look at the life of King Amasya, we can see that he tried to show good governance and life by doing what was pleasing to God, but all his actions failed because he did not do that wholeheartedly. If someone returns to this filth of Sodom after depending on God alone, realizing that ornament is not an adornment for believers, leaving all and declaring loudly, "Jesus is my only possession," it is definitely a sign of going away from wholeheartedness and purity towards Christ.

*Concentration on God and the Word of God is lost when one is attracted by worldly desires and turns to them. Then it becomes possible to live like the carnal man without holiness and separation. To have a steady heart there should not be God and the world at the same time; We must serve God alone and have him in our hearts. The believer who delights in the commandments of God and pays attention to the heavenly things will never give place to be adorned with luxuries, including ornament.*

>>>> Fourthly, when the believer departs from God, he loses the spiritual vision and discernment of the Word of God, and returns at one time when he worships many things more than God in his heart, he grows dimmer. At this point, he misinterprets many of the laws that God has commanded and begins to live as a worldly person. Consider an incident that occurred during the reign of King Hezekiah. **2.Kings18:3-5** — *"And he did what was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke the sacred pillars, **cut down the wooden image and broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the children of Israel burned incense to it, and called it Nehushtan.**"* The serpent was raised by Moses to be looked upon, as God commanded, so that the children of Israel bitten by a serpent would not die. Later, when the people gave a new name to this brass serpent, Nehushtan, and began to worship it, King Hezekiah smashed the serpent that Moses had made, along with the idols. Leaving Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea and entered Canaan, but they misrepresented the copper serpent that God had set for them with a special purpose, and they worshiped that instead of God. In the same way, after escaping from the pit of sin and eternal death, in the journey of faith life, many things that were once abandoned, by misinterpreting the Word of God and the divine system are re-established in the heart and the lusts of the world are carried in it. A little ornament is also a reminder of the old. For whatever reason, by whatever nickname it is called and worn, this is a "Nehushtan".

When there was a tendency to give the copper serpent a new name, Nehushtan, and to worship it, King Hezekiah broke it, this incident is an evident that he had lived faithfully and wholeheartedly before God. Listen what Hezekiah says to God — **Isa.38:3** - *"Remember now, O Lord, I pray, how I have walked before You in truth and with a loyal heart, and have done what is good in Your sight."* While we live like King Hezekiah pleasing God, we must eliminate all carnal desires that lead us to idolatry. If we, having spiritual vision,

want to do things that are pleasing to God with one heart and faithfulness, we must diligently discover and destroy from the heart all the unspiritual thoughts and worldly ornamental desires, by the lamp of God's Word. Other believers in the Church of God will not be drawn into the lusts of the world if we walk in holiness of life and are exemplary believers in life.

### **(10) The spiritual ruin caused by the ornament wearer among those who voluntarily give up ornament and worship God**

Look at the problems that this little piece of jewelry, worn both in secret and in public, cause to the Churches, Believers and Church leaders -

These people consciously forget that such ornament lovers cause many extensive spiritual problems in the church of God, which consists of separated believers, especially in the majority who have removed ornament. In external appearance they seem to be truly separated believer having no ornaments but secretly wearing a ring on their finger. Can't you see Pharaoh's bond on their fingers, even when they clap their hands and shout, *"All my sorrows are over, and the angel of destruction is gone, and I am no longer a slave to Pharaoh?"* Beloved believers, who have been baptized and worship the Lord, it is actually Pharaoh's bond that the ring on your finger holds. Remove this bondage around your finger in the serpent model and cleanse the sanctuary, which is your body. Look at the problems that this little piece of ornament causes to the churches, believers, and church leaders both in secret and in public —

(1) Giving up ornament is considered to be a complete separation from the world, and it is a display of witness life. The existing spiritual atmosphere of the exemplary worshipers of God in that church will be destroyed if someone is seen suddenly wearing ornaments one day in secret or in public. The thought, "If they can wear it, then why can't I?" arises in common among many believers, especially new believers. As a result, there are stumbling blocks, disunity, dissent, and spiritual stagnation in the church of God, which causes many believers to imitate them and go behind the world. Because of them, the local church goes into a state of Judges' day - *"everyone did what was right in his own eyes."*

(2) After being rooted in God, in His word, in joy and peace, the church bears spiritual fruit. At this time, if someone carries this metal (ornament) which is a sign of worldly love in their bodies, the leaven actually spreads in the church where he/she is a member. Notice what the apostle Paul said - **1 Corinthians. 5:6,7** — *"Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us."* Part of this leaven, which is considered very insignificant, will spread throughout the church, bringing the church to a state where it will lose its spiritual vitality.

(3) Some believers send their young children to church with ornament. It can sometimes be gold, silver, crystal, plastic, or pearl. *"It does not matter they are just children, There won't be any desire in them? They will change when they grow up"* — by saying like this the parents justify. There is no doubt that this seemingly insignificant tendency will later lead to irreversible spiritual decline. Also, they become a cause for the new generation to immerse into the world and ruin. Beloved parents don't think that it does not matter, be careful to note in the Scriptures that the tragedy that befell the family

of the priest Eli was a warning. If a believer's child wears ornament, it will make other children crave ornament. As a result, it will make them learn the ways of the world.

Parents have a responsibility to bring up their children in the way of the Lord as witnesses in their lives. If they are not taught the commandments of God and taught to live by them, parents will have to grieve in the future. If we want unity in home and courage to stand before God, we should follow the declaration of Job and Isaiah. "..... *But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" (Josh.24:15), "*Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me!*" (Isa.8:18). For getting victory in family life we have to train up children in spiritual path. "*Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it*" (Prov.22:6).

(4) In a church of believers who voluntarily give up ornaments and live a life of spiritual joy and unity, when some turn to community norms and ornaments, conversations and arguments arise about that and cause a loss of unity and loving fellowship. Then someone may ask — "Is there no one in the Church to ask or warn these disorders?" By hearing these words, the ministers of the church submit to God saying, "Let God deal with this!" By weeping and wailing, they minister the church. Notice what the Holy Spirit writes in the book of Hebrews — "*Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you*"(Heb.13:17).

Today, some believers cling to the Word of God and live as good witnesses, separated from all worldly desires. Let us thank God for them. But another group is automatically moving with the world as nominal separated believers. On the first day of the week, they come to worship the Lord. The special thing about them is that we see them later on the first day of next week. No fellowship with church believers; they are not interested in prayer meetings or bible study. Gradually they will halve their presence on the first day of the week. If the church ministers come together to advise them, we can study from their face that they ask inside, 'Who are you?'. Such believers gradually turn away from the faith and live as carnal believers, mingling with the world. At this point, they become ornament wearers thinking what is wrong with wearing ornament. Computer-assisted Internet video conferencing, Bible classes, and worship have emerged and they are on the rise! There comes a time that on the first day of the week at home they will break bread in front of the computer, it's not far away!!!

We come to the surroundings similar to that of Noah and Eli the priest. This is the time to live very carefully. When God's Word makes it clear that the believer is a watchman (Ezek.3:17,18 / Ezek.33:1-6). We need to understand that while he is the watchman of many, he is also his own watchman. How can you be a guardian of others without guarding the things you need to hold and care for in your teaching and life? Abandoning ornament is a must for believers. Believers who wear ornament do not even deserve to be called separated believers. "*My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment*" (James.3:1). Remember with fear what the Apostle James said. Dear people of God let us hold fast to the principles of God and live in true separation from the illusion of ornament and worldliness.

Realizing that ornament tarnishes the believer's testimony of life and that it is not God's will, one abandons it once and for all. In the middle of the journey to the City of God, what a shame it is if the same person turns back to it. Although God led the children



of Israel in abundance, the verse says that some of them *"returned to Egypt with their hearts"* (Acts.7:9), and it applies to these people as well. The reason for the backward journey in the life of faith is that some of what they left is kept in secret in their hearts. Notice again what the Apostle Peter said about those who go back to enjoying the filth of the world.

**2.Peter.2:20-22** – *"For if, after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the latter end is worse for them than the beginning. For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than having known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered to them. But it has happened to them according to the true proverb: "A dog returns to his own vomit, "and," a sow, having washed, to her wallowing in the mire."*

In external appearance a believer seems not an ornament wearer obviously, but wearing just a little bit of ornament, a ring on the finger, is the same as sailing in two boats at the same time. The Lord said — *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* (Matthew.6:24). God is the master of the believer. Let us serve only God. Understand that this Egyptian filth will hinder the service of God and the witness life of the believer. In a church of believers who have voluntarily given up ornament and become a witness in life, if someone is seen wearing little adornment, that leads to many problems, inconsistencies, stumbling blocks, and spiritual decline; and it is better wear in full instead of causing the aforesaid problems. *It would be better for the churches of God that emphasize holiness, to allow all such people to go to groups where everybody is wearing like them.*

Notice what John says in the book of Revelation — *"I know your works, that 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 works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent"* (Rev.3:1-3). *"I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth."* (Rev.3:15,16). When God commands **"therefore, take off your ornaments"** (Exo.33:5) -- fully obey this.

Believers who have accepted the Lord as their personal Savior and follow Him are not to wear ornament or adorn their bodies with worldly ornaments like the people of this world. That is, *not only wearing ornament, but also applying cosmetics on lips and fingers, hair blackening, braiding, straightening, curling and all the decoration and makeup of beauty parlors, should be avoided.*

## **(11) What the Bible says about removing of ornaments?**

The Bible gives a very clear command not to wear ornament, but not about wearing ornament. When God created Adam and Eve and put them in Eden, they did not even need clothes. But from the moment they broke God's command and fell into sin, they realized their nakedness and needed clothes. As a solution, God made clothes of leather and clothed them (Genesis.3:21). It is significant that God did not adorn them since then or before. If ornament was needed, God would have done so. If they had to have gold tied around their ears and noses, God would have provided holes in their ears and noses right from the beginning of creation.

## **Removing of ornaments in the light of the Scripture:**

(1) God commanded —

**Exodus.33:5**— “... Therefore, take off your ornaments”

(2) The people of obeyed the commandment of God —

**Exodus.33:6** — “So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.”

(3) God’s people realized that abandoning ornament was necessary for cleansing

When God asked Jacob to go to Bethel and build an altar, Jacob and all his family removed their ornament. That is, purification was required before entering Bethel (before the presence of God).

**Genesis 35:4** - “So they gave Jacob all the foreign gods which were in their hands, and the earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree which was by Shechem.”

(4) Giving up of ornaments is a commandment also given in relation to New Testament believers: -

“Therefore, take off your ornaments” after this commandment was given in the Old Testament, Bible doesn’t allow wearing of ornaments. That is, neither the Lord in the four Gospels, nor Apostles in the book of Acts or in the Epistles has given permission to wear ornaments.

Those who have accepted Jesus Christ or saved are children of God (John. 1:12). The Lord said: I am the way, the truth, and the life (John.14:5). Those who follow the Lord, the source of truth, must walk in the truth. It is a great pleasure to hear that they are walking in the truth (3.John 4). Those who walk in the truth must love God.

What is the uniqueness of those who love God?

**John.14:15** — “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”

What does God’s Word say about them if they do not obey God’s command?

**1.John.2:3,4** — “Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

“Remove your ornament” is God’s command. God said to wear it before, this Old Testament commandment is not mentioned in the New Testament, and it can be worn in moderation – those who interpret and say like this, are violating God’s commandment, aren’t they? The Bible clearly describes who they are and what they are like. Let us live in isolation from the world, without imitating groups that despise God’s commandments, and without adorning our body, which is the abode of the Holy Spirit, with the gold, silver, and pearls of the world.

## **Ornament: What Does the Bible Say?**

### **Answers to the unanswered questions**

#### **Questions to be answered: "What does the Bible say about ornament?"**

I received a pamphlet issued by BIBLE STUDY CENTER, MANNUTHY, THRISSUR - OCTOBER 2008) —

It outlined seven questions and challenged those who oppose ornament to be prepared to publish it in their book. Most of these questions are sub-standard and require no response. Through these, the zeal to support the ornament is revealed.

The Philistines once took the Ark of God and carried it to Ashdod, and set it beside the image of Dagon, the god of the Philistines. The next morning, they saw Dagon prostrating before the ark of God. They held the idol up again, but the next day the head and palms were cut off, leaving only the body and the pieces lying in front of the ark of God. Similarly, the questions and conclusions made to maintain and justify the ornamentation can be seen as futile attempts to support the idol of Dagon (1.Sam.5:1-5).

Since they requested answer, with the help of the Holy Spirit I answer their distorted questions and the misinterpretation they have given to them.

**Question 1 (a)** - If a mother says to her child, "Open your mouth to take medicine, "it means that the child should keep its mouth open only for taking the medicine, and that it can close its mouth after that, isn't it? When they knew what God had commanded Israel to do, saying, "Take away your ornament" (Ex.33:5), (after they were deeply saddened when they realized that their idolatry had made them deserving of the terrible punishment they deserved), it means that they can wear the ornaments as in the past, isn't it?

**Answer -->** This is just a childish example of distorting God's command to "take off your ornament" (Exodus.33:5). The mouth should be opened to take the medicine and it should be closed after drinking. One doesn't always have to keep one's mouth open. If a child always opens, such a child must be well treated for that. Here we see the urge to establish that God's command to remove ornament was temporary. The people mourned over sin, realizing that Israel's idolatry made them worthy of God's punishment. No one wore his/her ornament (Exodus.33:4). Then God says to them: "Therefore ..... take off your ornament." (Exodus.33:5) But this commandment of God does not mean that it is temporary, so ornamentation should not be continued. Moreover, the decision of God's people after receiving the commandment is very clearly documented. "*So, the children of Israel did not wear any ornament from Mount Horeb.*" (Exodus.33:6).

**Question 1 (b)** - If you say, "Climb the coconut tree to pluck the coconuts," then it is needless to say, "come down when you have finished plucking"; then does the person who pluck the coconut need to sit on the top of the coconut tree without coming down?" When God said, "Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you" doesn't mean that "after I have known what to do to you, you don't have to give up ornaments? Or what is the meaning of the phrase - "that I may know what to do to you"?

**Answer -->** There is no doubt that a person who has been told to climb a coconut tree, does not need to be told to climb down after plucking coconuts. But it is useless to use it to trivialize God's command - "remove your ornament. "After this command which says to remove the ornament, no other commandment is given to wear ornament, therefore, it is a violation of the commandment to wear.

"Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you." (Exodus.33:5). This does not mean that there is no need to abandon ornament after knowing this commandment. When God's people turn to idolatry, which causes God's wrath, it is God's command to inform them – "remove your ornament". It is unthinkable for God's people who acted in accordance with it - knowingly and obediently - to worship idols and wear ornament. When God says "to know," it must always be remembered and obeyed.

**Question. 2** — "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel" (2.Sam.1:24). Does not this passage prove that the people of Israel, who repented of their sins while travelling through the wilderness and removed ornament, began to wear ornament as in the past after entering the land of Canaan?

**Answer. 2** --> The phrase, "O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with luxury; who put ornaments of gold on your apparel" has nothing to do with ornament or giving up of ornament. When God's people heard God's command to "take off your ornaments" they obeyed. But it is a wrong notion that from the time they entered Canaan they began to wear the ornaments. It is a verse taken in haste to justify wearing ornaments. But what does this passage mean? These are the words of great sorrow of David expressed over the death of Saul, the first king of Israel. It is also known as the Lamentations of David. The daughters of Israel are commanded to weep for Saul. It is a figurative illustration King Saul clothed them beautifully with purple, and overlaid their garments with gold. The purple and garments woven with gold reveal the richness of King Saul's reign. That is, they are called to mourn the death of King Saul, who led Israel to prosperity. This does not mean that King Saul dressed all the women in purple and gold. Moreover, it is a misinterpretation of ignorance that the people of Israel began to wear ornament as they did in the past, when they entered Canaan.

After entering Canaan can believers do anything? Is it possible to walk as they wish? Wherever and in whatever circumstances they may be, they have the obligation to live according to God's commandments. What is God's warning to His people travelling to Canaan? Leviticus 18:1-3 - "*Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances."*"

**Question. 3 (a)** - It is said in Psalm.105:43 that God brought Israel out of Egypt with joy and gladness. Exodus.3:22 tells us that when they left, God commanded them to go out wearing all kinds of ornament. This shows that ornament is a way of expressing happiness, isn't it? When Job was delivered from his troubles, his friends gave him gold rings (Job.22:11), and the Lord said in His parable that when the prodigal son returned, his father put a ring on him (Luke.15:22). What the Lord said in his parable and all that proves that wearing ornaments is a way of rejoicing isn't it?

**Answer** --> The parts mentioned herein do not permit or encourage the wearing of ornament. It may be a declaration of selfishness, such as saying, "The rabbit I caught has four horns. "It may be because of ignorance to meditate on the verses spiritually; or even though knowing the truth of the word yet refusing to admit it – it is similar to the maxim "It's easy to awaken the really sleeping person, but it is difficult to awaken someone who acts like sleeping".

> *"He brought out His people with joy, His chosen ones with gladness."* (Psalms.105:43).. This is a psalm that describes God's faithfulness to Israel. Not only did God deliver the people of Israel who were living as slaves in Egypt, but He cared for them and gave them everything they needed. But the joy and the cheer they had when they left cannot be considered as the display of joy because of ornaments. It is not the separated believers, but the people of this world who buy and wear ornaments when they are happy.

> When the Israelites left Egypt, God told them to put on their ornaments – Exodus.3:22 - *"But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So, you shall plunder the Egyptians."*

This is the condition that the children of Israel must obey at the time of deliverance by God from slavery in Egypt through Moses. This is what they should do when Pharaoh sends them away without paying them the wages, they owe for their sweats shed in Pharaoh's brick field. God told them to ask for silver ornament, gold ornament, and clothing – the aim was not to clothe or adorn the women of Israel. It was the fulfillment of a promise God had made to Abraham (Gen.1:13,14). It was a fair wage for the Israelites who worked as slaves for 400 years. Later, when the calf was made of the gold ornaments they possessed, they began to worship it (Exo.32:4,9,10), and it brought the anger of God upon them. On that occasion God commanded that the ornament be removed (Exo.33:5). This commandment stands forever.

> When Job delivered from his troubles, his friends gave him gold rings. So, should believers also wear ornament? Never. Saying that a gold ring can be worn when hardships are over and that it is a sign of happiness is nothing more than words to encourage the wearing of ornament anyway, and has no significance at all.

**Job 42:11** - *"Then all his brothers, all his sisters, and all those who had been his acquaintances before, came to him and ate food with him in his house; and they consoled him and comforted him for all the adversity that the Lord had brought upon him. Each one gave him a piece of silver and each a ring of gold."*

Job went through various hardships. God changed all that and blessed him abundantly. And all his brothers, and all his sisters, and those who were acquainted with him, came and sympathized and comforted him. Each of them also gave him a gold coin and a gold ring. In those days, friends and acquaintances would come and comfort and give gifts to those who were suffering. Voluntary gifts were given as a support to their many losses. But despite the great loss in Job's life, God gave twofold everything and blessed him. The Bible does not say that Job wore and walked with all the gold rings he had received. The gold rings received as gifts from many were expressions of love. Moreover, Job was a sincere, upright, God fearing servant of God who lived long before God's commandment to "take off your ornaments" (Exo.33:5) was given. It is ridiculous to associate Job here as a model for violating God's commandment.

> When the prodigal son returned, his father put a ring on him (Luke.15:22). Does the Lord make it clear here that wearing ornament is the way of displaying happiness?

Ornament is an expression of joy and happiness for those who do not know the Lord and for those who know the Lord, but live conforming to the world. **Luke.15:22** - *"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his*

*hand and sandals on his feet.*" One who lived in sin and turned away from the presence of God the Father experienced repentance. Then the Lord, in the parable of the prodigal son, illustrates the great joy that the God feels when his son returns, remembering his father and his house.

This is a parable that illustrates many spiritual truths. Putting on a good coat, wearing a ring on the hand, and shoes on the feet represent God's blessings received by one who repents and comes before God. The best garment shows the garment of salvation, or the garment of righteousness, given to one who lived in sin. Saying to put a ring on the hand shows the recognition of sonship. That is, it refers to the acceptance, recognition, position, and authority of the son. Putting sandals on his feet signifies his freedom. The servant and the slave had no right to wear sandals (Isa.20:4). Because the son is told to wear the ring, believers should not think that they can wear rings and ornament — this is purely the deficiency of not correctly studying the Word.

**Question. 3 (b) - Are those who have been forgiven won't have freedom to wear ornament as a token of happiness and not to wear it if they do not like it?** God commanded to wear abundant ornaments when the people sinned not (Exodus.3:22) and when sinned God prohibited wearing ornament (Exodus.33:3) – don't this show that only those who have sinned have to grieve (who have committed terrible sins) and are obligated to abandon ornaments? Does not James.2:2 make it clear that there will be those in the church who wear ornaments?

**Answer -->** God's Word does not allow those who are forgiven to wear ornament as a sign of happiness. Because it is a violation of God's command. There is not a word either in the Old Testament or in the New Testament that allows people to wear ornament after God commanded, "Take off your ornament" (Exodus.33:5). Are those who have been forgiven, are free to wear and wear not ornament? The answer to that question is that there is freedom. Because God has given man the freedom to obey and disobey God's command. This law is found in Eden from the beginning of creation (Genesis.2:16). God has given man the freedom to choose either the path to eternal life or the path to eternal destruction in relation to the Salvation He has provided. You can also choose whether to obey God's commandments in relation to ornament. It is the responsibility of those who follow the Lord to live in obedience to God's commandment at all times. Remember what the Lord said to the Jews who believed in the Lord - John 8:31 - "*If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.*"

The one who is known as a believer should not disobey and deny God's commandments. To think that those who have been forgiven can wear ornament as a sign of happiness and that only those who have committed terrible sins should grieve and abandon ornament - is the thought of the world. God, who commanded, "take off your ornaments" (Exodus.33:5), did not say that they could ever wear them again; therefore, at any time in life whether happy or sad, a believer should not wear ornaments.

**Does not James.2:2 make it clear that there will be those in the church who wear ornament?**

**Answer -->** James.2:2 is not a verse that proves that those who wear ornament will be in the church. **James.2:1-4** — "*My brethren, do not hold the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with partiality. For if there should come into your assembly*

*a man with gold rings, in fine apparel, and there should also come in a poor man in filthy clothes, and you pay attention to the one wearing the fine clothes and say to him, "You sit here in a good place," and say to the poor man, "You stand there," or, "Sit here at my footstool," have you not shown partiality among yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"* It is stated here that fellow believers, as children of a father, should not show partiality (James.2:1). But to show partiality is to sin (James.2:9). Was there a man wearing the gold ring in the church? The answer is no. Because it is said only here, *'if such comes'*. The phrase *'If someone comes'* doesn't mean 'he has come'. Moreover, it is written clearly, if you say "You sit here in a good place..... sit at my feet ....." "If you say so"– it doesn't mean that it was actually said to a person came over there. Those who interpret the Scriptures for selfish purposes, interpret that there were those who wore the gold ring in the New Testament church, and say that we too can wear it -- this is just to incite and make the believers break God's commandments.

**Question. 4 – Gen.35:2 says that Jacob, the son of Rebekah (Gen.24:53), who wore a lot of ornament, ordered his wives to give up ornament.** Did not Jacob just tell them to abandon their idols? Didn't they give the ear rings to Jacob because they wore ear rings engraved with the images of other gods? Did not Jacob's wives go to Bethel to worship God, wearing necklaces, bangles, and rings that did not have images of gods?

**Answer -->** Jacob was staying in Shechem on his way back to Bethel (Gen.33:18). There his children went off the track. In the most sorrowful situation in Shechem, God again commands Jacob to go and dwell in Bethel and build an Altar there (Gen.35:1). Thus Jacob, who had decided to go to Bethel, decided that a cleansing in the family is necessary before entering into God's presence. At Jacob's direction for purification, his wives removed the images of other gods and the ear rings they used as ornament. All the ornament of that time contained images and carvings of gentile deities. Entry into the presence of God required a new beginning by changing the old ones.

Giving an account of the event as if this person is an eyewitness that they changed only the ear rings that were in the form of gods and went to worship God wearing all the formless necklaces, bangles and rings. This can be considered as a tendency to mislead the believers and a tendency to reject the commandment of God. Let us bury all the world's filth we had before our salvation, at the bottom of the terebinth tree, as Jacob did. We must not look back on the journey of the life of faith, and find the root of the old work, take away its filth, and with that adorn again the body, which is the temple of the Holy Spirit. As we live with the Lord in the experience of being saved at Bethel, let us shun the thoughts of Shechem.

**Question. 5 (a) – If they say electric bulb decoration is not allowed, does that mean we are not allowed to use ordinary electric bulbs?** If not, 1.Timothy.2:9,10 and 1.Peter.3:3-5 say that ornaments and costly clothing should not be used as decoration, but virtues and good deeds should be accepted as decoration, it means that clothing and ornament must be moderate, but virtues and good deeds must be generous, isn't it? When one wears ornament with the attitude that I want better ornament than others, then only it becomes ornamentation, isn't it?

**Answer -->** If it is said that electric bulb decoration is not allowed, then it is not allowed for any reason. At the same time this does not mean that electric lights should not be used. Believers must obey the laws passed by the rulers (1.Peter.2:13,14).

Ornament and clothing should be considered separately. While ornament is a luxury and adornment for man, clothing is needed to cover nudity and protect the body. When God clothed the sinful man, he did not put on ornament or pierce his ear or nose. 1.Timothy.2:9,10 and 1.Peter.3:3-5 do not say to be modest in dress and ornament. When it comes to clothing, it should be appropriate and not immediately decorative and expensive (1.Timothy.2:9,10). In the case of ornament, it is said that adornment is not of gold or pearls (1.Timothy.2:10). But it is described what kind of decoration it should be. We must be adorned with good works (1.Timothy.2:10). The adornment should not be superficial, but should be the inner man of the heart, adorned with meekness and gentle mind (1.Peter.3:3,4).

The dressing should be appropriate. But since God's commandment to "remove the ornament" still remains, it is a violation of God's commandment for believers to wear it moderately or excessively. Saying ornament can be a little, moderate is the same saying that alcohol can be a little. There are no minor and moderate permissions in the Word of God in relation to ornament; but such permissions are becoming the human laws and precepts of local churches today.

**Question. 5 (b) (1) - Is not Sarah, the wife of Abraham, mentioned in 1.Pet.3:3-5 as an exemplary woman who did not accept ornament and clothing as ornament but adorned herself with good manners and good works?**

**Answer -->** The Apostle Peter (1.Pet.3:3-5), who speaks of women's adornment, emphasizes here that their adornment is not outward but inward, which is most precious in the sight of God. It must be honorable before God and before men. The gentle and sober mind of the heart of the inner man is the indestructible beauty, and that must be present before God. There must be proper appearance or preparation before men. The world considers the braiding of hair and the wearing of gold as neat appearance. Those who recognize this will not adorn the perishable body. The Apostle Peter says that such people are "holy women who had hope in God" (1.Peter.3:5). They have two responsibilities -- having hope in God and be separated for God. In their relationship with their husbands, they submit to their husbands and respect them. Peter cites the example of Sarah, who put her trust in God and lived a submissive life, called her husband Abraham her master. It is not a matter here — whether ornament or clothing is accepted as decoration or not.

**Question. 5 (b) (2) - In Genesis.24:53 we read that Abraham sent his servant with many ornaments to give to Rebekah to wear.**

**Answer -->** The Bible does not say that Abraham sent his servant with a lot of ornament, and that it was for Rebekah to wear. It is written in Genesis 24:53 - "*Then the servant brought out jewelry of silver, jewelry of gold, and clothing, and gave them to Rebekah. He also gave precious things to her brother and to her mother.*" Abraham sent his servant to choose a wife for his son. When the servant realized the desire in Abraham's heart, he swore to Abraham, and it was he who took some things. **Genesis 24:10** — "*Then the servant took ten of his master's camels and departed, for all his master's goods were in his hand. And he arose and went to Mesopotamia, to the city of Nahor.*" In modern weddings, the bride's family transfers money and possessions to the bridegroom's family in the name of pocket money or shares, rather than dowry. But in the days of Abraham, when they were looking for a bride gifts were given to girls. In those days, gold and silver were given because there were neither promissory notes, nor fixed deposit documents,



and nor currency notes. When Abraham's servant saw Rebekah, we read that "He *took a golden nose ring weighing half a shekel, and two bracelets for her wrists weighing ten shekels of gold*" (Genesis. 24:22). Although Rebekah wears a gold necklace and bracelet, it doesn't look flawless. This is because God's command to "remove ornament" (Exodus.33:5) came at Horeb during Israel's journey across the Red Sea. Later, the Bible did not allow the wearing of ornament. But today's ornament wearing is based solely on human principles and customs.

**Question. 5 (b) (3) - While Abraham gave many ornaments to his daughter-in-law, he would have given Sarah liberally, hadn't he?**

**Answer -->** The Bible does not say that Abraham gave many jewels to his daughter-in-law Rebekah or to his wife Sarah. But there were ornaments in what Abraham's servant gave to Rebekah (Genesis.24:22). Justifying as though they are eyewitnesses that Abraham, a faithful man who left his homeland, his relatives, and his ancestral home after hearing God's call, gave his wife Sarah a lot of ornament is not relevant. It may just be a conclusion to promote ornament wearing. Did Abraham, who lived in tents looking at the City of God, who despised the wealth and riches of this world, give his wife ornament to walk around adorned with ornament abundantly?!!

**Question. 5 (b) (4) - If Sarah's ornament were not a barrier to the acceptance in good deeds, would others ornament be a barrier in accepting their good deeds today?**

**Answer -->** The Bible does not say that Sarah walked in ornament. God's commandment to "remove the ornament" (Exodus.33:5) comes at a time when the ornaments of the redeemed Israelites of God, led them to idolatry. It was in Horeb. The Word testifies of them that obeyed the commandment of God -

**Exodus.33:6** — "*So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.*" In Peter's exhortation to wives, Peter refers to Sarah, who put her trust in God and called her husband Abraham a master and lived in obedience (1.Peter.3:1-6). Will ornament be a barrier to being adorned in good deeds today? The answer is that it will be: Because no good deed done by neglecting the commandment of God is not respected before God. It is not appropriate to take Sarah, the holy woman who lived before the commandment of God was given at Horeb, as a veil to wear ornament.

**Question. 5 (2) (5) - If ordinary ornament is also decorative, how then Sarah, who wore ornament, becomes a role model for those who do not use ornament as adornment?**

**Answer -->** The Bible does not say whether Sarah was a wearer of ornament or not. Sarah was a model of holy women, one who walked with Abraham in faith before God. When the wearing of ornament is unscriptural and in violation of God's commandments, the question posed to Sarah seems to be a strategy to wear and encourage ornament anyway. Live by looking to the Lord, who is the source of good works.

**Question. 6 (a) - Were not the Gentiles Cornelius and his relatives (Acts.10), Philipians jailer and his family (Acts.6:19-34) used to wear ornaments?**

**Answer -->** It is not recorded in the Bible whether they are ornament wearers or not. Since both are from gentile backgrounds, it can be considered as an attempt to promote the wearing of ornament in any way by those who conclude that they were

wearing ornament. Also, the Bible does not say anything about whether they wore ornament when they were baptized. Those who believe in the Lord and are forgiven can be baptized. But they need to be taught what baptism is and why it is necessary. At the same time, one should be advised to give up all sins that destroy the sanctity of life, all thoughts that to live in accordance with the world, and worldly luxuries. We should make the believer understand that the wearing of ornament is not suitable for them and that God also forbids that. Thus, those who obey God's command are to be baptized.

**Question. 6 (b) - Did Paul order them to remove ornaments when they were baptized? As they did not command, is it not clear that the Apostles of Jesus Christ had no knowledge of the doctrine of giving up of ornament?**

**Answer -->** The Bible does not say whether Cornelius and his relatives (Acts.10), the Philippian jailer, and his family (Acts.6:19-34) members were wearing ornaments. If they had been ornament wearers, perhaps the apostle would have told them that wearing ornament was a violation of God's commandments. When one hears the gospel of Salvation, he/she will experience the repentance by the work of the Holy Spirit, and will be convicted of his/her sins and will put them away. At the same time, if they are wearing filthy ornament, they will be ready to give it up. There was no need for the apostles to say, "remove it, remove it." This is because there exists in the Old Testament (Exodus.Chapter.33) the command to "remove ornament" without any doubt (Exodus.33:5). There is no command or instruction in the Old and New Testament Scriptures that allows God's children to wear ornament after this command was given.

Those who do not give any importance to holiness and separation say: one may be baptized with ornament, may be a little bit, don't pay attention to it because it is an Old Testament principle. Their only goal is to gather people in the church anyway.

**Question. 6 (c) - Have the forefathers of the believers in Kerala ever decided together that we should abandon ornament to show the simplicity of life? If so, who made that decision? What is its historical record?**

**Answer -->** The bible has very clearly recorded the commandment of God - "*take off your ornaments*" (Exo.33:5), and the obedience of the people of God found in Exo.33:6. "*So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.*"

In this context, in order to show the simplicity of life, is there any need for the forefathers of the believers in Kerala to come together and make a decision that we should give up ornament? Remember that the Word of God is not to be accepted on the basis of historical records. Because the forefathers obeyed the Bible and valued their faith, they became the object of contempt for all, including the world. They counted the riches of the world as rubbish and looked only at the face of God. It is not right to insult God-fearing forefathers in the matter of ornament. They did not need to organize to obey God's command to "remove the ornament." Those who organizing unions for ornaments are just like the men who assembled against God in building the tower of Babel in the beginning of creation (Gen.11:4). In fact, ornament supporters are organized. Such organization reveals the believers' joining the world and rejecting God's commandments.

**Question. 6 (d) Has the great poet Sri. K.V. Simon Sir, who led the Church Reforms in Kerala, stated in any of his books that abandoning ornament is a teaching of God's Word? If so, on which page does it say so?**

**Answer -->** It can be understood that this is a question aimed at the Brethren Believers of Kerala. In order to justify the wearing of ornament, the tendency to connect in this matter the great poet K.V. Simon Sir is not right. Therefore, it is not worth answering whether he wrote any book or any reference in any book about forsaking ornament. These are crafty questions that one tries to reject God's commandment which clearly says, "Take away the ornament." Let us thank those who have finished the good fight before God and rest in Him, and the servants of God who are working for Him today, and for their works in the Lord.

Notice the significant part of the famous song "Salomi, Come My Beloved, you affectionate and beautiful woman of Heaven (Spiritual Hymns – General YMEF –No: 884 of Malayalam) written by the famous great poet K.V. Simon Sir. Please read, think, sing and meditate the 4<sup>th</sup> stanza of the song for the question 6(d).

(Veshavisheshangalabharanam  
Jathikalkkotha duracharanam  
Dooreekarikka nee sodarapooranam  
Sathichidum Kapadathmika dharanam)

Means >

(Costume and ornamentation  
Heathen's unacceptable custom  
Get rid of this by matured brotherhood  
There is possibility of hypocrisy)

**Question. 7 (a) -** Vidvankutty, a Brahmin scholar and lyricist, embraced Christian faith, and predicted the return of Jesus Christ would be on October 2, 1881. Later he formed the Yuomaya Church which was a cult group. Didn't the Christians in Kerala start removing the ornaments (placed them before the scholar Vidvankutty) as a sign of piety during the revival meetings he led? Isn't this the real truth? Was it not the custom of the Brahmin-Kshatriya widows who were meditating on god to abandon jewelry, which was accepted by a section of the Christians in Kerala during the time of the scholar who embraced Christianity from Brahmanism? Isn't this the absolute truth?

**Answer -->** The ornament was not removed at the directive of the Brahmin scholar and lyricist who formed the Yuomaya Church. Almighty God commands: "Take away the ornament." Obey God's commandments, leaving aside the distorted interpretation that it was only temporary and that only in times of sorrow.

**Question. 7 (b) - Is it not in fact an act of Christianization of Hinduism that misinterpreting certain scriptures and arguing that the devotional method of Hinduism, i.e. abandoning ornament, is the doctrine of the Word of God? Is it not a grave mistake to associate pagan religion with the Word of God?**

**Answer -->** God's command to "remove ornament" (Exo.33:5) still exists today, beyond interpretation. How can it be said that some people misinterpret this verse when it is so clear and simple? In obedience to God's command ornament is removed, then how can it be said that Hinduism is Christianized? Those who accept Jesus as Lord become members of God's family, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. The Word of God is the law for them. Pagan rituals should not be added to the Word of God. Wearing ornament is the custom of the pagans or the unsaved. The body of the believer is the temple of God. It is not right to adorn it with filth.

**Question. 7 (c) - Is it not the common stand that is consistent to the Word of God and common sense that those who are not afraid of thieves and robbers should wear ornament and that it is individuals and families, not churches, who should decide the matter of ornament?**

**Answer -->** The Church is the group of the saved ones. Every believer is a member of the Church of God. They are built as living stones (1.Peter.2:5). At the same time, the Church is a fenced garden (Genesis. 4:12). Its owner is God. The principle of the world is that one can walk as one pleases. Since the wearing of ornament is a violation of God's commandments, there is not one stand for the church, and another stand for individuals. It is not the teaching of the church of God that it should be worn by those who need it and discarded by those who don't need it. Individuals and churches should not turn aside from the law of God to the left or to the right.

**Questions to be answered: *What does the Bible say about wearing ornaments?***

The above text is the seven answers to the questions in the pamphlet published by the Bible Study Centre, Mannuthy, Thrissur in October-2008. They have challenged to publish the answers in the book of those who object the wearing of ornaments by the believers.

*\*\*\*Let the people who sent the above seven questions pay attention to that is stated in the author's special notice at the end of this book. I hereby state that I am not prepared to comment, respond, or debate directly, in writing, or in other media, regarding the answers and explanations I have written (Author).*

**(12) What is wrong with wearing a little ornament if you we can wear expensive clothes?**

Don't think of wearing ornament and clothing as one. The Bible does not say to avoid clothing but God commands that ornament be removed. It was God who first made clothes and clothed man (Genesis.3:21). Though believers live in this world, yet they are heavenly citizens and the children of the rich God. When the worldly people wear expensive clothes, believers do not have to wear torn, bad and inferior clothes just because they are believers. But believers must wear and appear in proper clothing. There is no reason to indulge in luxury and conform to the world.

**Romans.12:2** — *“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”*

The believer’s dress should be appropriate and dignified. Wearing luxurious should not go into the lusts of the world, and he should wear the proper clothes. If the believer wears torn and dirty clothes, he/she will be called poor by others and gives place to insult the rich God. This should be avoided by dressing proper and neat dresses bringing glory to God of heaven. *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* (1.Cori.10:31).

Praise God for the separated believers who do not use ornament. How much better it would be if separated believers around the world followed their example. Giving up of ornament is mainly related to sisters. The true separation from the people of the world is evident as soon as one sees them. That is to say, by not wearing ornament, they are revealed as a newspaper of separation read by all.

But due to the propagation of ornament-wearers, the idea of ornament has permeated to many believers these days. Proof of this is the ring that occupies the fingers of men and women of faith. There is no doubt that this ring is, in fact, Pharaoh’s bond that undermines spiritual progress and separation. This kind of metal bond that adorns the finger can be seen as a direct sign that they are stepping back from separation and joining the world.

It is not right for believers to use ornament, whether it is made of pearls, plastic, silver or gold. The spiritual new man should not be adorned with worldly things. Wearing ornament has a tendency to beautify and adorn the body. The redeemed believer, read by all is Christ’s newspaper, so they must abandon ornament and earthly adornment and live as an example to all and clothe themselves in decent clothes.

### **(1) What is appropriate clothing?**

Believers, especially women, should wear appropriate clothing. **1.Timothy.2:9,10**— *“In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”* What is decent dressing? The word modest is used in English for appropriate dressing. It means compact, humble and simple. From this you can quickly discern which dress is appropriate. But instead of looking at the world around us, we can examine today’s believers themselves. Most live in conformation to the world. But it is commendable that so few believers, in fact, are clothed in proper attire and lead a witnessing life as children of God’s Kingdom. Praise God for them.

In addition to the most expensive ones available, silk sarees with eye-catching colors (surpassing Babylon the Great as in Rev.17:4), sometimes appear in fashions unable to identify whether someone is male or female! If you look at them and the people of this world, there is no difference at all. Though they are saved ones, yet they do not practice spirituality in life. What does the Bible exhort them? What is God’s warning to God’s people travelling to Canaan?

**Leviticus.18:1-3** — *“Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God. According to the doings of the land of*

*Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances."*

**Deuteronomy.22:5** — "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment, for all who do so are an abomination to the Lord your God."

## **(2) Things parents should be careful in their children's clothing —**

As this is a bad time, parents should pay close attention to the dress and neatness of believers' children, male and female. They should be clearly taught about hair and veils.

### **Children's Clothing —**

Believing parents should take special care to dress their children appropriately or decently. We need to teach our children at an early age the truths that need to be followed in a separated life in the matter of clothing. If so, they will grow up to be exemplary witnessing children according to the Bible. Clothing should be appropriate for believers, whether inside or outside the home. Circumstances and cultures should not influence them. They should be clearly taught about hair and veils at an early age. God's Word does not allow boys to grow their hair long or girls to shorten theirs (1.Cor.11:13-15).

### **(3) The dress of boys and their imitations -**

When boys grow up, they may look at their friends in the world, and friends who do not know the Lord, and imitate certain things. They should wear clothes that are appropriate for the believer. Nowadays, boys' beards are deformed and gradually grow into Japanese beards and French beards. God's Word forbids such primitive imitations (Leviticus.19:26,27).

### **(4) Daughters' dress and their imitations -**

Parents should train our young daughters to dress appropriate for the believer. Women should wear a headscarf at church meetings and spiritual gatherings. It is the duty of the parents to inculcate in their daughters the habit of covering their heads as soon as they hear the call to pray. In any situation, a shawl should be a part of the wearing of the saved girl. In addition, mothers should make their children understand the use of shawls.

The Word of God does not allow the hair to be cut or cropped according to the fashion of the world. The hair that God has given them should be neatly combed and tied. The tendency to leave the hair uncombed and let it sway in the air is also not good. They should avoid paying thousands to beauty parlors for straightening, curling and dyeing the hair. Girls need to be taught at an early age that money given by God is not meant to be given to beauty parlors, and that should know about the stewardship of wealth. We must teach them that God-given riches, money, possessions should not be spent on worldly luxuries and that we should spend our money for God and the things of God and for the advancement of the gospel and treasure it in heaven (Matt.6:20). The believer should never imitate the work of the prophet Jonah, who fled to Tarshish by paying God-given money to the sailors for getting ticket reservation in the ship.

### **(5) Wedding Dress —**

Wedding dress and adorning should be appropriate for believers. It is better to avoid eye-catching dark colors. The veil should cover the head properly, avoiding the tendency to cover only the upper half. It is a sad scene to see the daughters of believers marching

to the wedding stage under the control of beauticians, videographers and photographers with preparations that excel the worldly people.

The believer should not imitate the worldly attire and fashions. Separated families should not have the tendency to humiliate the separated people in the eyes of the world and other communities. It is important to dress appropriately for the wedding. Parents and ministerial servants should take care of this in advance. Perfect spirituality can be maintained in the marriages of believers if the family and the church ministers see that the preparations are not given to the freedom of the beauticians and the services are not left to the control of the videographers.

**(13) Whether gold framed glasses and a watch's gold chain come under ornamentation? Can those believers who do not wear ornament wear such things?**

When you say that it is not in line with the Bible for believers to wear ornament, there are many questions that are raised by those who support ornament wearing - If wearing a necklace in a small thread size around the neck, you say it is ornamentation, not following separation but become conformed to the world; if so, how then you can wear expensive clothes, and possess large two-story houses, cars, air conditioners, gold-framed glasses, gold chain watch, gold coloured pen clip, and gold colour on the belt buckle ..... ? Can you teach that it is wrong ..... ???? - I have heard a series of such questions being asked of separated believers who live without wearing ornaments. Although they know that the Word of God does not permit the wearing of ornament, many support the use of ornament. But some people are reluctant to speak out against the ornament wearing due to circumstances and selfish interests. It is enough to think that these questions only arise from such people.

God-fearing forefathers valued faith, starved, and worked for the Lord, and they and their descendants have been blessed. They have been spiritually and materially blessed. *"For those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed"* (1.Samuel.2:30), *"The Lord bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem All the days of your life."* (Psalms.128:5). These blessings are given to those who honour and fear God and walk in His ways.

God exalts them spiritually and enables them to enjoy good things physically throughout their lives. Children are also blessed because fathers walked upright. When they, too, have been materially blessed and raised in the land, they will no longer have to live in huts like the poor, and appear in torn and dirty clothes. With the material blessings of their lives, they can have two-story houses and savings. They live without ornaments even then, but since the accusers have nothing else to talk about them, they ask about the big house, the car, the air conditioner that they have.

Believers must use their material possessions wisely. It is necessary to give up the thought of luxury and to live a dignified life by giving to God and to the things of God. We must use wisely our material possessions and riches that God gives us. That is, we do not own worldly possessions forever, but only temporarily. We must always keep in mind that we are only their temporary stewards. Its account will have to be presented to the Lord at one time. Therefore, the material blessings we receive should be treasured in heaven. If spent for godly matters and for the advancement of the gospel, it will result in eternal honour.

**“Gold-framed glasses and a watch’s gold chain – won’t they come under ornamentation?” Can believers who do not wear ornament wear such things?**

These types of questions can be considered to silence the believers who live without ornament. Therefore, it is better to avoid such things, if possible. Do not give place to anyone to slander us. Let’s pay attention to the exhortation given by the Apostle Paul to Titus: **Titus. 2:7,8** — *“In all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.”* Those who seek to find a cause against Daniel, God’s most beloved man can only say this — *“Then these men said, we shall not find any charge against this Daniel unless we find it against him concerning the law of his God”* (Daniel.6:5). If those who see us are to bear such testimony about us in our own lives, we must live according to God’s Word and live a separate witnessing life. Our walk, our life, our conduct, our speech, our looks, and our dress should all be in the manner that glorifies God’s name.

**(14) Since people say that women who do not wear ornament are widows, then is it not better for women to wear ornament?**

Though the believer who is saved and baptized worships God dwells in this world, yet he/she is a heavenly citizen. He/she is a traveler who is on his way to the Zion of heaven. God’s Word says that the believer in this world is “a sojourner and a stranger” (1.Peter.2:11 / Psalm.119:54). It is a great blessed privilege to follow Christ and to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. But it is a path of hardship, humiliation and ridicule in this world. Spiritually, it is the path to happiness, peace, and honour. There will be no dishonour, ridicule, or suffering in heaven. This is the world that mocked our Saviour. The Lord did not open his mouth in the face of reproach and scorn, but he alone trod the winepress. But this will not end in defeat. Humiliation and ridicule became a cause to all exaltation and honour (Philippians.2:9-11 / 1.Samuel.2:30).

In Lev.14:1-7, the purification of the leper is explained. *“And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water. And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.”* (Lev.14:5,6,7).

Spiritually speaking, we who tormented and lamented in sinful leprosy have been cleansed by the bloodshed on the Calvary of our beloved Lord. As soon as we are saved, the blood of the Beloved is sprinkled on us. The Lord has given his life for us and set us free from death. Let us imagine about the bird released after leprosy cleansing -- it flies away with the blood --stained body of its mate. When it goes to the old group, it will be isolated it and chased away. It flies again. This bird, which carries the blood of its mate, is no longer in the old flock, but it is separated from everything and is far away. When it is sad and lonely there, it can hear the voice of its lover. It will be according to - **Songs of Solomon.2:14** — *“O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, In the secret places of the cliff, let me see your face, let me hear your voice; For your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely.”* The blood of the Beloved is sprinkled on the saved believer. Purification and redemption were obtained by this precious blood.



Our place is no longer in the old group. (1.John.1:7 /1.Cor.1:30 /Psa.1:1-3). If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. If we go to the old group, they will despise us, isolate us and chase away. Therefore, we have taken refuge in Christ, the Rock that was cleft. When believers do not conform to the world, the world will hate them. *"I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world."* (John.17:14).

The believer and the bearer of the blood of the beloved Lord live in a separated manner in this world. The believer may be insulted and isolated by the world in many ways because he/she does not wear ornament like the gentiles. But the believer who endures this humiliation will be honored in heaven. The Holy Spirit records of the heroes of faith who went through various trials, such as mockery, flogging, chains, imprisonment, hardship, persecution, suffering, and dwelling in mountains and caves: *"The world was not fit for them"* (Heb.11. 38). Let us bear reproach on our Lord, as the apostles went forth rejoicing, for they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name's sake (Acts.5:41).

### **(15) When separated believers come wearing ornament to attend the Lord's Table, is it permissible?**

God's Word does not say that we should not associate with those who wear ornament. But ornament wearing is not appropriate to the believer, it is disobedience to the Word of God and it shows that one is not completely separated from the world. The saved child of God must give up ornament without being forced by anyone. This is the testimony and proclamation of the witness life of the saved child of God. Some, though they have been saved and baptized, despise the system of God, and not looking at God they imitate what others do – because of this attitude that they come into our meetings without forsaking ornaments and stretch their hands to the Lord's Table in some places today. Is this permissible? In order to get the answer for this question, we have to understand certain things - What is the Lord's Table? What does it represent? Who should participate in this? What is the personal responsibility of the believer involved? What is the punishment for participating without holiness and separation? Should anyone be given this ministry like the priests? And so on. We have to think about such points.

Baptism and the Lord's Table are the two rituals given to the church of God or to the saved ones. These are included among the basic doctrines of the Church of God. These both are not laws for forgiveness, salvation, going to heaven, or joining any local church. The commandment of baptism is to be obeyed once in a lifetime by the believer, they must observe the Lord's Table until the second coming of the Lord. The baptism of one who has believed in Jesus Christ is a public proclamation that he is separated from the world, has died to sin, and is united with Christ's death and resurrection, and is resurrected with Christ as a new man. But sharing in the bread and the cup at the Lord's Table is a service that proclaims the death of Jesus Christ, remembers the risen Lord - our Savior - and through that we worship God the Father until the return of the Lord. Only those who have been saved, baptized and separated are to partake in the Lord's Table.

Consider the seven basic principles of the church of God and their order -

**Acts 2 :41,42** — *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”*

1	Those who gladly received his word	<b>SALVATION</b>
2	Baptized	<b>BAPTIZM</b>
3	About three thousand souls were added	<b>SEPARATION</b>
4	Continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine	<b>WORD OF GOD</b>
5	Fellowship	<b>FELLOWSHIP</b>
6	Breaking of bread	<b>LORD’S TABLE</b>
7	In Prayer	<b>PRAYER</b>

The saved must be baptized, separate from the world, study the Word of God, and keep fellowship with God and His children, and take part in the Lord’s Table commemorating the Lord’s resurrection, and pray together. The Lord’s Table is a ministry in which the saved and baptized believers remember and praise their Lord. There is no change (transubstantiation) in the bread and wine used for this purpose. But these are only symbols of the body and blood of the Lord, and these are not worshiped.

### **Can everyone take part in the Lord’s Supper?**

**See what are the qualifications for it -**

#### ***(1) Those who are saved***

Those who have been forgiven and saved through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ are to partake in the Lord’s Table. *“Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers”* (Acts.2:41,42).

#### ***(2) Those who are baptized***

The saved must receive baptism, which is the commandment of God. It is at baptism that the believer identifies himself with the resurrection of the Lord (Acts.2:41,42 / Romans.6:3-11).

#### ***(3) Separated from the world***

After being saved and baptized, one should have fellowship with such people. Those who live separate from the world must partake in the Lord’s table (Acts.2:41,42).

#### ***(4) Those who have examined their own holiness***

Believers are to take part in the Lord’s Table. They must be holy before participating in it. They should not partake in this service in an unworthy manner. Sins and transgressions committed knowingly or unknowingly must be washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ. Not only sins committed against God, but also sins against the brethren also must be

confessed. God does not like them those who have a bitter attitude toward their brothers and sisters, who think that it does not matter, and reach out their hands to receive the bread and wine (1.Cor.11:27-30/Matt.23,24). Therefore, before attending the Lord's Table, one must examine himself and be sanctified in life.

Listen to Scripture passages concerning the Lord's Supper -

**Matthew.26:26,27** — *“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body. Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you.”*

**Luke.22:19,20**— *“And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me. Likewise, He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you.”*

**1.Corinthians.11:23-29**— *“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me. “In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. **Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.**”*

**1.Corinthians.10:16**— *“The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?”*

By considering two very important points, from these verses we get the answer for the question of whether the Lord's Supper is permissible for believers who do not give up ornament.

(1) The bread and wine at the Lord's Table is not a ministry that any priest can give praise and distribute to everyone. We read in the Bible - the cup of blessing which we bless ... The bread which we break. That is, saved believers are priests, they break it and they become partners.

(2) Believers should examine themselves, that is, whether they are worthy of it, and take it only after they have convinced themselves that they do not have the unconfessed sin which defiles holiness. If God's commands are considered trivial, punishment can be meted out if one participates without complete separation and without seriousness.

It is not the service of Evangelists, Elders, Pastors or Teachers in a church to give the Lord's Table to believers. At the same time, when a saved person commits all heinous acts without testimony and comes into the church meeting and reaches out his hand to the Lord's Table, the church has a responsibility to prevent such people lest God's name be blasphemed. The saved believers are the priests (Rev.1:6 / 1.Pet.2:9). Believers who are priests test themselves and participate in the Lord's Table. But for convenience in worship, and for the proper and beautiful conduct of all things, one or two persons from among the

believers, having witness, take and hand over the bread and wine. But they, who help serving bread and wine, have no particular importance, they just assist, that's all. Those who help serving the Lord's Table must have witness in the church lest the name of God blasphemed.

Participating in worship gives an experience of complete surrender to God. That is, one presents one's body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (Romans .12:1). The Old Testament sacrifices were made through dead animals, whereas today believers offer themselves as living sacrifices. At this point, we being the sacrifice, there mustn't be any blemish in us, and we must not cling to the filth of the world. After hearing the exhortation of the Scriptures, "remove the ornament," if a believer wears ornament and stretches for his his/her hands to receive the Lord's Table, he/she alone is responsible for that. Ornament shows that it is a violation of God's commandment and that such person is not completely separated from the world. In this age of grace, man has been given complete freedom and freedom of choice in matters of God. From the way of salvation and the way of destruction, to the things of holiness and uncleanness, one can choose by oneself. Personal freedom includes whether or not to wear ornament. No one should be forced to abandon ornament, but should voluntarily abandon that when the believer separates himself from the world and worldly desires and submits himself completely to God.

The Bible clearly states that those who attend the Lord's Table unworthily will be punished.

**1 Corinthians .11:27-30** — *"Therefore whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep."*

The responsibility of the church is to teach the believers the basic doctrinal truths of the Church of God. The believer, who understands the truths and teachings of the Bible with the help of the Holy Spirit, will voluntarily change everything that obscures the Christian testimony. Ornament is not suitable for the life of separation.

**(16)If those who have come to the faith alone from communities and Hindu background wear ornament under the pressure of the householders, can they be allowed to participate in the Lord's Table?**

Those who are in the ministry of the Church, sometimes need to take decision whether the Lord's Table is permissible for those who are baptized wearing ornaments, depending on certain circumstances. Sisters who are saved and baptized from communities, especially from Hindu backgrounds, will face much opposition. The condition of such sisters can be deplorable, especially in an environment where husbands, children, parents, and relatives are united against them in their home. After understanding God's commandments these saved sisters may have been baptized by discarding ornament. But in the midst of intense opposition, persecution, and threats from unbelieving relatives and friends, these sisters are forced to wear ornament. If the sisters in this particular situation, approach and ask those in charge of the Assembly whether they would be

allowed to participate in the Lord's Table, what answer will be given on the basis of God's Word?

See *2.Kings.5:1-19* for the answer. Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Syria, was a leper. A slave girl from Israel who was ministering at Naaman's house referred to God's prophet Elisha for healing her master's leprosy. After drowning seven times in the Jordan at the direction of the prophet, Naaman's leprosy changed and his body became like that of a boy. When Naaman was cured of his leprosy, he returned with great joy to the prophet Elisha, praising God. Though he tried to give gifts to the Prophet, he did not accept anything.

See the rest of the passage – **2.Kings. 5:17-19** - *".....So Naaman said, "Then, if not, please let your servant be given two mule-loads of earth; for your servant will no longer offer either burnt offering or sacrifice to other gods, but to the Lord. Yet in this thing may the Lord pardon your servant: when my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my hand, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the Lord please pardon your servant in this thing. Then he said to him, "Go in peace." So, he departed from him a short distance."*

Here Naaman's request with Elisha, the man of God, was not acceptable to the prophet. Worshiping, associating with, and promoting an idol will be punished because it is hated by God. But the prophet understands Naaman's helplessness. When Naaman returns to work, he is obliged to escort the king and obey everything the king commands. When the king went to the temple, if he had not helped and guarded, and stood aside without helping, his very life would have been in danger. Realizing Naaman's helplessness, the prophet didn't say, "do it or don't do it," but said, "Go in peace." That is, God sees all hearts and removes all problems and fills them with divine peace.

All we have to do in the church ministry is to teach without mixing anything to the word of God to those who come to faith and are saved. The unadulterated Word of God will open their spiritual eyes and cause them to voluntarily separate from all worldly desires, including ornament, and be baptized. Some are separated from all worldly desires including ornament might have taken baptism in the midst of all adversities, but if they have to use ornament because of the extreme threats from the members of the family in their home, they have no choice but to test themselves before taking part in the Lord's Table. We can only say "go in peace". Even in this case, we cannot give the believer permission to wear ornament. But Almighty God knows the condition of all hearts: God will fill everything with His divine peace and deliver us from all troubles. God will be able to remove all adversities of His beloved children, who keep the commandments.

### **(17)Is giving up of ornament necessary for baptism?**

One of the most hotly debated issues in the community of believers recently is whether believers can wear ornament. Under the guise of baptism, a question related to ornament was sent all over the country for opinion polls. The question was, "someone has heard the gospel, believed with all his/her heart in the gospel, and is saved, received the Holy Spirit, and wishes to obey the great commandment of the Lord in water; in such a case, is it scriptural to forbid them from taking water baptism for the sole purpose that he/she does not forsake ornaments?" The majority opinion is that it is not right to ban water for the sole reason of wearing ornament and at the same time the statistics of ornament

wearers in India could be seen. The organizers are satisfied with the majority opinion for wearing ornaments by the believers, thereby defeating the Word of God.

As India is a democratic country, it is not an exaggeration to say in a democratic way that the unspoken issues in the Bible are explained in a democratic way. On this occasion, it comes to mind the spying of the land of Canaan. Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land of Canaan according to the instruction of the Lord (Num. 13:1). But the spying was actually undertaken by the opinion of the people (Deut.1:22,23). That is, it stems from the skepticism of the people against the will of God. Of the 12 who were sent, Joshua and Caleb's opinion was rejected as a minority opinion, and the people encouraged the majority opinion and showed respect for them. As a result, God's people lost hope in the Lord and rebelled against God, which led to many tragedies. Even today, instead of understanding spiritual matters with the help of the Holy Spirit, like the people of the world, establishing and giving emphasis to the majority opinion is not desirable.

### **(18) "Has God really command not to wear any ornament?"**

Has God really commanded us not to wear any ornament? Many believers are approached in these last days with this question. It is very difficult for the new generation to follow in the footsteps of the forefathers who, looking at the Lord alone, abandoned everything in the world. When worldly things, including ornament, were abandoned by the forefathers, it all had a cause and a purpose. But they say that these are old philosophies and ideals and live according to the world. In short, without any certainty in God's Word they come to the conclusion that "it can be like this or like that". At this time, misinterpreting the Word of God, some approach the believer with the question of whether God has said anywhere in the Bible not to wear ornament. The tragedy that befell our first mother, who stumbled into sin in the face of this old question, "Did God really command?" is a horrifying example for us. The beginning of sin was not really in the Garden of Eden. It began in heaven itself with Lucifer, God's chief creation. Lucifer, the Son of Dawn, and the Beacon of Light, lived with God in heaven. He was called the Son of Dawn and Venus; he was adorned with precious stones, exemplified with wisdom and full of beauty, but he thought he was someone, and he had a proud heart. When he desired to be equal with the Most High God, he was cut down and plunged into hell (Isa.14:12-15/ Ezek. 28:12-17). Thus, Satan, God's most important creation and angel, fell into the abyss. From then on until today, he has been working day and night to undermine and change God's laws and to ensnare many in various ways.

The question "Has God really commanded it?" has nothing to do with wearing of ornament. But the significance of the question remains. Satan spied the man who was having fellowship and joy in the Garden of Eden. Satan approached the first mother, Eve, with the question, "Has God really commanded that?" When he was told that God had commanded, he tempted to disregard God's command. This deceiver interpreted God's commandment that they would not die, that their eyes would be opened, and that they would become like God, knowing good and evil. Then they fell into the sins of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; man was cast out of divine communion. Even today, many misinterpret the Word of God in connection with doctrines and practices, immersed in worldly desires as friends of this mastermind. After approaching the believers with the question, "Has God really commanded?" they shake the conviction and foundation of the believer in the Word of God and tempt them to break God's commandment.

When God clearly commanded, "Take off your ornament" (Exo.33:5), they perplex by asking, "Has God really commanded, or was it true, is it not an Old Testament verse, is it not temporary? Are there any commandment in the New Testament not to wear them?"- Let us stand firm on the side of the truth, stand away from the lusts of adornment, and proficient in the Word of God, and lead a witnessing life.

Remember one fact carefully - "Remove your ornaments"- (Exo.33:5)- after this strong commandment was given in the Old Testament, neither the Lord in the Gospels, nor the apostles in the book of Acts, nor in the Epistles, nor even a single doctrinal commandment is found that says "wear ornaments". Therefore, beware of cult lest you fall prey to the question of whether God has really commanded it. *"That we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—"* (Eph.4:14,15). *"Therefore, we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away."* (Heb.2:1); *"He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked"* (1.John.2:6). By holding fast to these words of God, let us continue the journey of faith by concentrating only on our soul lover.

### **(19) Is it not a transgression of the commandment of the Lord, to remove the ornament before baptism?**

There are those who interpret the final commandment, i.e., the Great Commission recorded in the Gospel of Matthew, in relation to wearing ornament, according to their desire, stating that there is nothing wrong with wearing ornament. Their conclusion is that one should be baptized as soon as one is saved and after that one should be taught everything. That is, they say it is enough to teach only after baptism about everything such as the unforgiven sins, and about the separation from the carefree life. If so, many are likely to come to the church, they argue. They suggest that removing ornament before baptism is a violation of the order of the Lord's Great Commission. Let us examine this part.

**Matthew.28:19,20** - Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. **(NKJV)**.

In the original Greek, it is *"to make disciples and be baptized"* and not *"baptize and teach them."* See various translations of the text —

**ASV — Matt.28:19,20** - Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

**KJV — Matt.28:19,20** - Go 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 commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

**TAMIL: Matt.28:19,20** - (Matheu.28:19,20) Aakayal neengal purappettu poyi sakala jathikaleum sishyarakki Pitha Kumaran Parisudhaviyil namathile avarkalkku jnanasnam koduthu, njan unkalukku kattalai ittu yavavum avarkal kaikkollumpadi avarkalkku upadesam pannungal. Itho, ulakathil mudivu paryantham sakala nadkalilum njan unkalude koode irikkeren entrar. Amen

**Hindi : Matt.28:19,20** - (Mathi.28:19,20) Isiliye thum javo, sub jathiyom ke logom ko chela benavo our unhem Pitha, Puthru, our Pavithra athma ke nam bepthisma tho. Our unem sub bathomjo maim ne thumem anjha de he, manna sikhavo: our dekha, maim jagath ke anth thak sadaivu thumaer sang hoom.

**Bharat Bible Society, Kochi : Matt.28:19,20** — (Malayalam) ..... sakala jathikaleum sishyarakki ..... snanam kazhippichum .....

**Bible League International (World Bible Translation Center, Texas: Matt.28:19,20** — (Malayalam) ..... ella rajyangalilum chennu avare sishyarakkuka. .... avare snanappeduthuka.....

(Refer:<http://www.bibleleague.org/resources/bible-download/malayalam-bible>).

In these verses it is written, "Make disciples and baptize". Discipleship is not just about teaching salvation. It also requires the admonition to take up the cross of the Lord and follow the Him. Being born again or being saved and being a disciple are different.

(1) To be saved means hear the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour in your heart. To be a disciple is to follow the Lord and His counsel after being saved.

(2) To be saved is something that happens in a moment as soon as you hear the gospel. But discipleship is not like that. When we walk with the Lord and listen to and obey the doctrines, we enter into discipleship.

(3) Not all who are saved are disciples. There were many believers in the time of the Lord. But the disciples were few.

(4) The Lord wants sinners to be saved and to become disciples.

(5) To be saved means come to the cross and become children of adoption. To be a disciple means the adopted ones take the cross of the Lord and walk.

(6) Jesus Christ fills the house of the body and sanctifies it when one is saved. When one becomes a disciple, in the saved state he follows the Lord, removing all the filthiness of the house.

To make disciples of all nations' means to make disciples by preaching the message of salvation as well as the teaching of discipleship. Therefore, it is not a violation of the commandment of the Lord's great commandment that the saved should be separated from all worldly filth, including ornament, before baptism. Moreover, removing the worldly waste of ornaments is not something that should be taught after making disciples.



## **(20) Can believers wear ornament because the scholars presented gold at the birth of Jesus?**

Scholars presented gold at the birth of Jesus – Some have therefore interpreted the idea that the believers can also wear gold ornaments. They emphasize to accept the literal meaning of the presentation of gold to Jesus rather than its spiritual meaning.

A child of God can only mourn like this: Woe to me when I hear the exhortation to accept this event literally rather than its spiritual interpretation! When I hear this, I am reminded of the words of the Lord—

*"At that time Jesus answered and said, "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes." (Matthew.11:25).*

*"And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive;" (Matthew.13:14).*

Can believers wear ornament because the scholars presented gold at the birth of Jesus?

**Matthew.2:10,11** — *"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceedingly great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh."*

It is a misinterpretation that a believer can wear gold because the scholars presented him gold. The three scholars presented gold, frankincense, and myrrh in veneration to honor the Lord. That is exactly what happened literally. As believers, today we are obliged to praise the Lord by understanding its spiritual meaning.

**Gold** -- shows the recognition of the kingship and divinity of the Lord.

**Incense** -- shows the recognition of the Priesthood of the Lord.

**Myrrh** -- shows the recognition of Lord's sacrificial death, suffering, and prophetic ministry.

That is, gold, frankincense and myrrh reveal the three official positions of the Lord. Gold represents the kingdom, frankincense the high priesthood, and myrrh the prophet hood. Do not mislead believers by thinking that we too can wear gold since Jesus was presented gold. Moreover, like the wise men, understand the Lord's superiority and open our treasury vessels and offer precious exaltations that come from the bottom of the heart.

In connection with Jesus and the gold described below, because of their contempt for the Bible and their spiritual ignorance, they urge believers to wear ornament.

Their statements are described below. It is like this:

> When Jesus sent 70 men, they were not allowed to take gold and silver in their pockets (Matthew.10:9).

> Gold and silver were later allowed to be taken in purses (Luke.22:35,36).

> Jesus' parables of gold coin and talent are also proof that Jesus was not averse to gold.

> It is noteworthy that the Lord mentioned that the father wore a ring to the finger of the prodigal son (Luke.15:2).

> John sees Jesus in Patmos as wearing a golden belt on his chest (Rev.1:13).

> The Lord tells the Laodicea church to buy gold that has been refined by fire (Rev.3:18).

When Jesus sent 70 men, he did not allow them to take any gold or silver in their pocket, but later allowed them; In the parables of Lost Coin and Talents Jesus was not disgusted with gold, the prodigal son was worn a ring on the finger, and the Lord is seen worn a gold belt on his chest, and the Lord advises the church to buy from him gold refined by fire. > They point out these things and misinterpret that God's people can wear ornaments; and this is a contemptible insult to God's Word and spirituality.

Believers, let us ponder over this spiritually, and give up all lust for jewelry, and be instruments of harmony in the hands of the Lord to produce silently the fruit of the Spirit.

### **(21) Is not giving up of ornament the same as cleaning the outside of jars?**

This is a crafty question that is being asked by those who support, promote and wear ornament. The passage they are highlighting is the Lord's reference to the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees.

**Matthew.23:25,26** — *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also."*

These are the words that the Lord spoke to the multitudes and disciples who followed him. The hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees, who were proud to be religious leaders, was exposed in Matthew 23. A sect of people having filth inside!

Those who pretend to be ignorant and do not understand the true spirituality adhere to ornament without understanding the context, and associate this part with ornament. But this has nothing to do with ornament. "Separation by denying ornament is like cleaning the outside of a bowl." Their conclusion is that removal of ornament is just purifying the outer body of the vessel. It is not enough to clean only the outside of the jars; we must return to the Lord's admonition to clean the inside as well. Jars and bowls are commonly used for pouring water for purification and drinking. How dirty would these be if there was a trace of dirt inside or outside?

Sanctification means that the inside and the outside must be the same. Even if believers are likened to bowls, the significance of sanctification must be high in them. Then only the owner can count it as a vessel of honour. The believer must maintain holiness on the inside as well as external cleansing by maintaining good witness. Abandonment of ornament is obedience to God's command, removal of worldly filth, and display of witnessing life. See what the prophet Samuel says -

1.Samuel.16:7 - But the Lord said to Samuel..."for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

Does this mean that Jehovah looks only at the heart? Never. God looks for inner purity and outer purity. There is nothing hidden from the Lord (Hebrews.2:13).

The great poet K.V. Simon Sir was instrumental in the spiritual awakening of Kerala and the strengthening of the separated churches. Some have assumed that Sir Simon has said nothing about giving up of ornament. In his famous hymn "Salome! Varikente Priye, Chelezhum Swarloka Sundariye", the believer is told how to live in the world and in what areas to be separated. Note that it is clearly stated that adornment is the wrong practice of the gentiles (Spiritual Hymns – General Y.M.E.F- No: 884 - Malayalam).

Veshavisheshangalabharanam

Jathikalkkotha duracharanam

Dooreekarikka nee sodarapooranam

Sathichidum Kapadathmika dharanam

Means >

Costume and ornamentation

Heathen's unacceptable custom

Get rid of this by matured brotherhood

There is possibility of hypocrisy

## **(22) Marriage and the wedding ring – Is it right to use the ring to reveal the covenant in the marriage of the believers?**

The Bible, the Word of God, begins with the statement, "*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*" Marriage is honorable because it was designed by God. In creation, God created a family. God created the family according to His plan. Everything was created by His word, but He formed man by His own hand, in His own image. God looked at creation every day and judged it to be good. But the first thing God said "it was not good" was in relation to man; And the Lord God said, "*It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him*" (Genesis.2:18). God gave every living thing a mate. He gave only man the helper he deserved. Why? We need help to share in our joys and sorrows in this worldly life. Distresses and sorrows will decrease when shared. Happiness doubles when shared. For this we need helper, not a mate. How was the helper given? —

*"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen.2:21-23).*

While the first man, Adam, was taken from the dust of the ground, Eve was made from the Adam's rib. Neither the woman is made not from the man's head to rule the man! Nor she is made out of his feet to trample her! But she is the rib close to the heart! So that to walk hand in hand for the rest of their lives. Mutual love is the important element of marriage.

God, the beginning, did not conduct the marriage of Adam and Eve by performing the sacraments or other customs. There are many types of marriage in the world today. This includes tying glitter, placing garlands on each other, tying clothes, and changing rings. But how about the wedding service of believers? Both profess the words of the covenant or mutual consent in the presence of God, that is, the Bible allows mutual consent before God and before the church. "*Yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.*" (Mal.2:14).

'Dharmapatni' (wife by covenant) is the original word for wife of the marriage covenant. This is their lifetime covenant. While inducted into high official positions, ministers and others take over the reins of government by accepting the terms of the agreement. This makes their agreement public. Holy marriage and confession are accepted by giving hands with each other. God unites them. Therefore, the bondage of the ring at the wedding of the believer is irrelevant.

### **(23) Where is your wedding ring? – What to do if asked by the High Commissioner while traveling abroad?**

I read what a great servant of God wrote: when visiting foreign embassies for visa stamping and other purposes related to foreign travel, imagine that the authorities ask "Where is your wedding ring?" to prove that some is married, what one will do then?

This is a very interesting question. When we hear this question, it sounds like he can only wear ornament to prove that he is married. The fact is that there will be no such question from the authorities. Clear documents are needed there. Even if there is such a question, there is no doubt that a child of God who has studied the Bible and put it into practice will be able to give a clear answer to it. -- They will answer, "*I am a separated Christian believer, and the Holy Bible, the Word of God in which I believe, does not permit wearing ornament.*" By this bring glory to the name of the Lord.

We have to doubt him that he did not know that he could produce not only a gold ring but also many clear written documents to prove that he is married. This ignorance can be seen as a tendency to promote ornament.

### **(24) Neither I nor my family wears ornament. But giving up of ornament is not in line with the Word of God – is this statement correct? -**

This is the opinion of some people who support and promote ornament these days. It is said that after hearing the gospel they left everything and came to the Lord, and their fathers did not allow them to use ornament, and it still continues. What I have to say to them when it comes to ornament is that "neither I nor my family wears ornament, it is our personal decision".

It may be because they did not make a clear decision based on the Word of God in their life like Joshua that they set foot in two boats, and their preaching, behaviour and testimony are not consistent. Mind that the personal decisions of such ones would harm God's people.

Look Back and Forth to Joshua's Declaration -

**Joshua.24:14-16** — "*Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and*

*in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."*

Ornament and wearing of ornament are remnants of Egypt. Let the saved people's former customs, rituals, and adornments lie in the Red Sea. Ornament is not an adornment for those who come into discipleship and follow Christ.

I have heard some people comparing abandonment of ornament to the eight men in Noah's ark. It is an accusation to say that wearing ornament is not for the believers -- that there were only a few people in Noah's ark, that is, only eight, so here too in the church they have a sense of self-sufficiency. For years, Noah preached that the only way to escape God's judgment was to enter the ark. But only eight entered into that.

Spiritually the ark represents Jesus Christ, and deliverance from the Flood symbolizes salvation through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it has nothing to do with ornament or abandonment of ornament. But those who take refuge in Jesus Christ must be clean. If only eight let it be eight. In order to canvass members to the church, they declare that giving up ornament is not required, and they lie in uncleanness and filth, such persons have no place in the church of God.

### **(25) Is giving up of ornaments relevant to the Scriptures with regard to the terms of the institution of doctrines? -**

I read a book that says, "Conservatives, including the Brethren, have adopted three conditions which are the most important ones before establishing a doctrine." They are - (1) What did Jesus Christ teach? (2) Whether it was practiced by the Apostles? (3) Do the Epistles contain any relevant advice? - Again they argue that - The Lord did not teach anything about giving up of ornament in the Gospels. The Apostles did not force the people to give up ornament. It is not possible to present any sentence in favor of giving up of ornament throughout the epistles.

We accept a form of doctrine based on the doctrine of Jesus Christ, the teaching of the apostles, and the doctrine in the epistles. There is no difference of opinion that it should be so. From the same point of view, we can think of each of these in relation to ornament wearing.

(1) What did Jesus Christ teach? -

Through the four Gospels of the New Testament, our Lord taught His followers many spiritual truths. Each of them is still significant today. None of these verses allow the believer to wear ornament. Moreover, neither the Lord nor the disciples were seen wearing any ornament made of gold, silver, or pearls. The Lord's final commandment is to make disciples of all nations and baptize them (see English, Tamil, Hindi, and expression in Greek). It does not mean to baptize the saved with all kinds of worldly filth, but to teach them path of discipleship and make them practice that and then baptize them.

(2) Apostolic practicality? -

The book of Acts contains what the apostles who followed the Lord and listened to the Lord's counsel practiced in their lives. And there too there is no word that allows

wearing ornament. There are no passages in the Bible that prove that the early church and the believers wore ornament.

(3) Is there any doctrine in the epistles regarding this? -

In addition to the teachings in the Gospels of the Lord Jesus Christ and the relevance of practical matters in the Acts of the Apostles, we must look for verses in the twenty-one epistles that allow believers to wear ornament. But the fact is that there is not found a single verse in the epistles, directly or indirectly, that allows wearing ornament.

The Bible clearly states that ornament is not appropriate for the children of God, that it was ordered to be removed by God, and that they did not wear it from Horeb onwards. **Exodus.33:3-6** - *"Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. **And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned, and no one put on his ornament.** For the Lord had said to Moses, 'Say to the children of Israel, 'You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. **Now therefore, take off your ornament, that I may know what to do to you.'** So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornament by Mount Horeb."*

The texts of the New Testament declare that certain elements of the Old Testament have been abolished or modified, such as the Circumcision, the Sabbath, and the Leviticus Sacrifices. But God's command in the Old Testament, "take off your ornaments" (Exodus.33:5) still remains the same today.

"Take off your ornaments"- After this commandment was given, neither the Lord in the Gospels, nor the Apostles in the book of Acts, nor in the Epistles, nor even a single commandment is found that allows or encourages moderate or full wearing of ornaments. If so, is the abandonment of the ornament scriptural according to the doctrines? Yes, the Word of God does not allow the believer to wear ornaments. The reason is that with a firm declaration, the command "take off" remains unchanged today.

### **(26) Is abandonment of ornament an added burden for the saved people?**

In a publication relating to the incident in Antioch, I read this statement which said that individuals who have been saved from community backgrounds and other religions to abandon ornament is an additional burden placed on them. In addition, the writer describes that the heathens that were saved in Antioch certainly wore ornaments as if he were an eyewitness! Notice what actually happened in Antioch.

This is what the Council of Jerusalem ordered when it sent delegates to Antioch to make a decision against the claim that salvation by faith was not complete without circumcision. *"For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality"* (Act.15:28).

The subject there was not ornament. It is not fair to say that this is an extra burden associated with ornament. There is no doubt that the conclusion that the saved heathens in Antioch were indeed wearers of ornament stems from the lust for ornamentation. Some say that abandonment of ornaments is an additional burden to the saved people. But in fact, abandonment of ornament reduces the burden added by fixing the metals on the body!

When God said to His people, 'Take off your ornament,' it was God's command. It is the duty and obligation of children to obey God's commands. "He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (1.John 2:4). "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome" (1.John 5:3). When John states that the commandments of the Lord are not burdensome, it does not mean that keeping the commandments of God is easy; the commandments of God appear burdensome and challenging for an unbeliever or one who does not completely love God. But this is the Father's doctrine for those who are saved and love God with all their hearts. Since there is love and desire to follow it, then it does not seem to be complicated or burdensome.

The reason why some people think it's burdensome to take off the ornament is that they don't really respect God. When God created man at the beginning of creation, he did not pierce the nose or the ears to direct the way of placing metals or wearing ornaments. It is noteworthy that, while in the Garden of Eden there was fine gold, they were given only leather garments. Hence it is simply a burden against the will of God to place on the body ornaments by piercing or without piercing it. In the case of separation, it is a stigma.

## **(27) KOLLAM BRETHERN ASSEMBLY AND ORNAMENTS —**

The author of the book "BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS" belongs to the Kollam Brethren Assembly and I think it is better to explain our attitude towards wearing ornaments. And after writing, advising, and teaching, if he tackles this matter as it seems good in his own eyes, it won't be a good model.

We are most careful to keep the Lord's final commandment given to His disciples. We preach the gospel to the perishing people of the world who do not know what salvation by faith is and leads them to the feet of Christ. They are saved when the Holy Spirit reminds them of sin, righteousness, and judgment. We keep teaching them the things of discipleship, just as the Lord's last commandment says. We teach the disciple to observe separation in everything, including ornament, while teaching about discipleship. Before being baptized by the royal commandment of the Lord, they willingly remove the ornament. Those with ornaments or immersed as unbelievers in earthly filth will never be baptized.

When going to other separated churches, if there are some wearing ornament, will they participate in the Lord's Table with them? Those who wear ornament when they come to a meeting for worship while on their journey, will they be allowed to take part in the Lord's a table? What will be the attitude towards the ornament wearer when they come from other states for short stay in connection with their work? I understand that such questions also need explanation.

Although ornament is not on the list of sins, in the case of Separation, the believer must avoid it. But while going to any of the separated Brethren gathering during the journey, if someone is seen wearing ornament, there is no need to stay away from the Lord's Table. The fact that they wear ornaments is not our fault. In addition, there is nothing wrong with participating in the Lord's Table there, by examining oneself.

Separated believers from other areas, when they arrive in Kollam on their journey, worship with us at the Kollam Church in the city centre. But if any of them use ornament, they will not be withheld from the Lord's Table that day. They will be allowed to participate in the Table as per the command to check themselves.

Except on journey visit, if anyone who wears ornament wants to regularly attend worship service in the Kollam Assembly, we will explain to them what the Bible says about wearing ornament. Affectionately on the basis of the scripture, we will explain very clearly the fact that it is not God's will for separated believers to wear ornament. Those who hear the Word of God and want to have fellowship with the church will voluntarily remove the ornament and come forward with joy. But those who refuse to listen and do not fully submit themselves to the Word of God and want to live like the heathens in worldly desires, will go to such groups of their taste. Since we are not ready to form big gatherings by absorbing such people in the church, we will never be silent, but will say, *"Thus says the Word of God"*.

Praise be to God that it is possible to exclude the unbelievers in the church by teaching, practicing, and living in accordance with the Scriptures that separated believers should not wear ornament.

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## CHAPTER – VII

### CONCLUSION

#### **Take off your ornaments –**

**Exodus.33:5,6** – “.....Now therefore, take off your ornament, that I may know what to do to you.’ So, the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornament by Mount Horeb.”

#### **To be adorned with good deeds: -**

**1.Timothy.2:9,10** – “In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing, but which is proper for women professing godliness, with good works.”

#### **Decoration should not be external –**

**1.Peter.3:3,4** – “Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel— rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.”

We live in an ever-changing world. The nations of the world may change, the regimes may change, the friends may become enemies, the people may not keep their words, the horns of dependence may be broken, the sanctuary and the place of refuge may be changed, and what was once considered a solid rock may be shaken. Many changes are taking place in the spiritual sphere and in the thinking and outlook of the believers also. But in this ever-changing world no change has come to the God we trust in or to the Word of God. Questions and doubts about wearing of ornament have arisen from the pressures of the world on the new generation.

Looking only the Lord, our forefathers chose the path of the cross, they left the country, the home, and their own people behind. And they counted all that they had in the world as dung and rubbish, and looked on the face of the Lord, and led a separated life. They abandoned ornament, realizing that it was the world’s adornment and that it does not belong to the faith. Over time, the spiritual zeal of the believers who followed them is decreasing. The previous generation, who adhered to the commandments and teachings of God, abandoned as trash all that the world values.

By the twenty-first century, a new generation sees them as treasure and sees no fault in acquiring, and adorning themselves with all these things and finds no fault in them. The doctrines and rules of the forefathers are questioned today. If those who lost their spiritual vision then ran for clothing, olive groves, vineyards, sheep, and slaves,

today a group of people run after the world as heathens, increase their bank balances, distort their spiritual balance, and live as God's people by name's sake, grieving God. By asking "Did God Really Command?" new gatherings are formed by distorting the truths of the Scriptures and interpreting them according to their own doctrines. They lead believers into the grip of the world and Satan.

While it may seem obvious that abandonment of ornament is not part of the church's doctrine, removing of ornament involves in separating the saved believer from the world. Believers who worship God in spirit and in truth must be freed from all worldly desires, filthiness, and all abominations.

*"And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."* (Galatians.5:24). When the apostle Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;"* he meant that we, the children of God, were crucified with Jesus Christ. And then we live as a new creation. Thus, as we lead the Christian life we must conform to Jesus Christ as embodying the character and vision of our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice the commandment given by God in the Old Testament regarding Nazarite vow. *"He shall separate himself from wine and similar drink; he shall drink neither vinegar made from wine nor vinegar made from similar drink; neither shall he drink any grape juice, nor eat fresh grapes or raisins. All the days of his separation he shall eat nothing that is produced by the grapevine, from seed to skin"* (Numbers.6:3,4).

During the Nazarite vow, not only wine, alcohol and its vinegar, but also grape seeds and skins should not be used. Grapes symbolize happiness. A Nazirite is one who renounces worldly pleasures and facilities. Many of the joys and decorations in the world can be harmless. Yet the true spiritual people must be willing to renounce such things. The saved believer is a Nazirite of God. He is not allowed to interfere or use anything in the world that is considered small or trivial. This means that anything that separates from the Savior or anything that attracts worldly desires should not be in the believer's life.

We do not want ornament, which is the treasure of Egypt. Not even a part of it should be in us and our children. Like Moses, let us consider the reproach of Christ is greater treasure than the treasures of Egypt (Hebrews.11:26).

When Jacob decided to go to Bethel and worship God, he took the foreign gods and the ear-rings that he had with him and buried them under the oak tree near Shechem (Genesis.35:1), since he perceived that they might prevent them from worshiping God. The oak pit at Shechem was the grave of Jacob, his family, and all kinds of unclean things. After coming to the crucifixion at Calvary, leaving everything and buried them there, the separated believers who worship God in spirit and in truth, in their life journey should not re-dig and take the Egyptian filth which had once been buried under this oak and bring an obstacle in their journey.

When the ornament brought by the children of Israel from Egypt caused idolatry and their destruction, God commanded them to remove their ornament so that they would not perish on the way (Exo.33:3-6). In order to worship God in holiness, love and serve God above all else, and that they may not return to idolatry, separated believers do not want ornaments.

When God gives victory to his people in their journey from Egypt into Canaan, they must burn out the idols of the enemy nations; He commanded that they should not take the silver and gold that covered the idols so that they would not be attracted to.

**Deu.7:25,26** — *You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold that is on them, nor take it for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it is an abomination to the Lord your God. Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it is an accursed thing.*" The believer is a heavenly citizen but lives in a world dominated by the wicked. In the triumphant journey to heaven and Zion, leaving back Satan and the world, one should not possess the filth of the world and adorn the body of the temple of God. If you look at it, it might come to pass that you may be attracted and live like the worldly people.

God's children should not imitate the world, whether in Egypt or in Canaan. The believer should not live according to the customs and traditions of the land. Ornament wearing is part of the world's customs and traditions. There are many who are saved but do not practice spirituality in life. What does the Scripture say to them? What is God's warning to God's people travelling to Canaan?

**Leviticus.18:1-3** - *"Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: 'I am the Lord your God. According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doings of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances."*

According to the Law of Purification, when a living bird (Lev.14:1-8) is dipped in the blood of a slaughtered bird, when it goes to the flock it is chased away by other birds. The world will isolate, despise, and ridicule us because the blood of our beloved is on us. Our place is now in Christ the Rock that has been cleft and our hiding place is in the secret places of the cliff (Song.2:14). The mark of this precious blood on the body of the departed believer is sufficient, and worldly ornaments are not needed.

God miraculously broke down the wall of Jericho and gave victory to His people Israel (Joshua.6:20). But they were defeated in the small town of Ai (Joshua.7:4). It was because of Achan's greed for gold and silver. Achan lusted and took them and buried them in the ground in his tent. Achan and all his possessions, including the silver, the gold, and the robe, were taken to the valley of Achor and set on fire and stoned to death (Joshua.7:10-26). It also shows that one's sin has hindered the journey of millions. If the saved and separated believers see the gold and silver and follow the path of Achan, that will be a hindrance to their spiritual progress and to the church they belong.

What happened to Balaam, the prophet of God, who went down with greed to Moab to seek gold and silver as the wages of unrighteousness, is a warning to the saved believers (Num.22,23,24 /2.Peter 2:15,16). God tried to dissuade Balaam from going astray, but he did not listen and went ahead and perished with the Moabites (Num.31:8). The turn to Moab will lead one to greed, defeat, and deception.

We do not want the treasures of Moab. *"For by whom a person is overcome, by him also he is brought into bondage."* (2.Peter.2:19).

Gehazi, Elisha's young man, who had once gone out to serve God, chased after Naaman's chariot. His target was the sack that Naaman brought from Aram! He said while he was running *"But as the Lord lives, I will run after him and take something from him."* (2.Kings.5:20). Gehazi runs to earn money by uttering the name of the Almighty Jehovah. After laying his hands on the plow, Gehazi ran after the world; he earned silver and clothing and left the ministry as a leper (2.Kings.5:27). If the saved believer runs after the world chariot of Aramaic wealth, he will become greedy for money and become unfit for the service of God.

Paul says, that Demas loved this world and left him (2.Tim.4:10), let this statement be not said of us. *"For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, ... But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness."* (1.Timothy.6:10,11). As believers, let us follow the Apostle Paul's admonition to the young Timothy.

Let those who see us see Christ. *"A people dwelling alone, Not reckoning itself among the nations"* (Numbers.23:9). Let the world say that they are another group — Separate ones. *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."* (Galatians.2:20). Let this be our testimony. Let us live and exhibit in life that we are an Epistle of Christ known and read by all men; (2.Corinthians.3:2,3).

"Then Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."* (Acts.3:5,6). We can say the same thing as the Apostle Peter. Let us live a witnessing life by the path of this Nazarene. Let us not make friends with silver and gold, for the grace of the Lord is sufficient for us.

Ornament is a kind of yeast that destroys holy life. If this leaven is getting mixed with the believer's body, it will leaven the spiritual life and make it useless. The Feast of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread are the first two of the seven Jewish festivals. Notice what God commanded Moses to do. —

**Leviticus.23:5,6** - *"On the fourteenth day of the first month at twilight is the Lord's Passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread."*

> The Passover is a day of remembrance of the redemption from Egypt. This refers to Jesus Christ, the Passover lamb who was slaughtered for us.

> The Feast of Unleavened Bread shows fellowship with God and their holiness. In a literal sense, it symbolizes their relationship with Christ and their holiness of life of those redeemed by the blood of Jesus, the Passover lamb.

> Seven days represents perfection. Eating of unleavened bread for seven days, indicates that those redeemed by Jesus Christ should live a life of holiness, without any leaven or impurity throughout their life.

> The evening of the fourteenth day is Passover, and the fifteenth day the feast of unleavened bread; this means redemption first, then holy life. Redemption marks the beginning of a holy life immediately after salvation.

> Fresh flour is usually fermented by adding a little from the previous day's yeast. They kept the Passover feast, which God commanded, with unleavened bread. That is, nothing in the life or body of the believer should be mixed with anything of the old life.

> Before the Passover was celebrated, every Jew was commanded to observe the Feast of Tabernacles only after making sure that it was not leavened, and no part of leaven was found.

### **Where else the yeast be examined and removed? –**

**(1) Exodus.12:15** – *“Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven from your houses.”* There should be no un holiness in the personal or family life of the believer.

**(2) Exodus.13:7** - *“And no leavened bread shall be seen among you, nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters.”* In the journey of faith, one should re-examine oneself and make sure that no un holiness has entered in him/her.

**(3) Exodus.13:7** – *“Nor shall leaven be seen among you in all your quarters.”* In the believer's actions, dealings, worldly works, or spiritual life, there must be no impurity. In the New Testament, as in the Old Testament, leaven refers to uncleanness and unleavened bread to holiness. Mainly there are two types of leaven in the New Testament.

### **First of all, the leaven of the doctrine -**

Distorting the word of God - Jesus said to them, *“Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees”* (Matthew.16:6/ Luke. 12:1). By misinterpreting God's teachings without believing them, the leaven here reflects one's life of hypocrisy.

### **Secondly, the sourness in the life of faith -**

The fall in the witnessing life. **1 Corinthians.5:6-8** – *“Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore, purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”* Both the Old Testament and the New Testament make it clear that among the saved and separated believers - in their families - in their testimonies there should be nothing that could defile the Word of God or the holy life.

There is no doubt that by misinterpreting the Word of God according to one's own taste, and by imitating the heathens wearing ornament, one adds leaven to the body of the believer, the sanctuary of God. The believer must live and worship God with purity and truth without leaven.

Wearing ornaments, luxury clothing, changes in fashion, and dressing with makeup are just some of the signs of becoming worldliness seen among God's separated people nowadays. Though ornament is considered insignificant, God's Word makes it clear that *“a little leaven leavens the whole lump.”* Not only in them, but in the churches and believers where they congregate, they become spiritually stagnant, and live according to the world without producing any spiritual fruit.

The Lord has gone to prepare a place for us *"Behold, I am coming quickly!"* (Rev.22:7,12,20), and He will soon return without delay. We can perceive from the events around us that end time is nearing. Let us examine ourselves before the word of God, and wait for the Lord in holiness - *"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now, our salvation is nearer than when we first believed."* (Romans.13:11)

When we look at the world, even we can see that the faith in the children of God is diminishing. *"Nevertheless, when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"* asked our Lord. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers: *"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified."* (2.Corinthians.13:5).

In today's generation, believers thoughtful of development turn to the luxuries of the world and grieve their master. Moses said *"Whoever is on the Lord's side—come to me!"*- (Exodus.32:26) likewise we too can say today. Let us say with prophetic voice *"Thus says the Lord:"* (Isaiah.56:1), *He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"* (Matthew.13:9). With this call of the Lord, let us without hesitation or fear of men spoken aloud the word of God. By adhering to God's promises, let us run by avoiding the ways of the world, including ornament. If you want to be able to speak boldly at the end of life *"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith"* (2.Timothy.4:7) then you must be *"building yourselves up on your most holy faith"* (Jude.20) that you once received, and live an exemplary life.

Let those who argue that the believer can wear ornament argue; Let those who want to wear ornament wear it. We must not judge others, at the same time don't step back an iota from godly things. With the thought that God will take care of God's church, let us hand over all things with tears in the hands of our Lord, the owner of the church, and pray for their deliverance from worldliness. ***"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."*** (Romans.14:12). So, let us look to the Lord alone and stand on the side of truth.

Pay close attention to what the Holy Spirit has written through the Apostle John. – ***Revelation.22:11,12 — "He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."***

There are those who think lightly about the wearing of ornament, arguing that abandonment of ornament was not given as a doctrine in the light of the New Testament. If so, is it possible for a separated believer to smoke a beedi, smoke a cigarette, munch beetle leaf and areca nut, or choke on tobacco, as it is not mentioned in the New Testament to do so? While some see it as bad, users see it as a good habit.

Ornament is the consequence of the sinful nature of man who has lost his divine glory. Examining the Scriptures in relation to human creation alone reveals the greatness and perfection of God's creation. Genesis.1:27,31 — *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.... Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good."* Man, created in the image of God and adorned by God, had no flaws. But God did not adorn him with the finest gold that was plentiful in the Garden of Eden, even though he had lost his glory by Satan's deceiving. He only made them coats of leather and clothed them. When expelled from the

Garden of Eden, the man who toiled on earth for his livelihood began to dig out metals from the earth and made them as ornament and began to wear. Separated believers should never imitate the imaginary god, who wears around his neck a serpent with a hood, and the gentiles who worship idols of terrifying shapes and wear them garlands. The body of the believer is the temple of God. Do not defile the spiritual temple by adorning with anything unspiritual.

## **Separation, what is it?**

An attribute of God is holiness. "Kadesh" in Hebrew and "Hagios" in Greek are the words for holiness and purity. Such phrases mean separated / has been separated. The Holy God is separate from all creation, from the world, and from sin. "*You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*" (Lev.11:45). From this we know that it is God's will and word that we should be separate because he is separate. Separation is also a characteristic of believers. When a person believes in Christ is forgiven of his sins, he deserves to be called a "saint." Here we get the idea of being set apart for God. Such sanctification, or separation, is found in the book of Hebrews and in the first letter of Peter. Hebrews.10:10 — "*By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*" 1.Peter.1:15 - "*but as He who called you is holy; you also be holy in all your conduct.*" Though the believers live in the world, let the world not dwell in them. They must live in separation from sin, rituals, and the ornamentations of the heathens.

God's call to God's people of all time, who, like Babylon, are drowning in heaps of iniquities. God calls them to come out of her /be departed/ be separated. The Apostle Paul told the first-century believers that the Lord says, "*Separate yourselves.*" **2.Cor.6:16** — "*And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. ...Therefore, come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean*".

Just as the message of separation was given to believers in the first century, God gives the message of separation to the saints of the great tribulation after the church is taken away. They are told to flee from the destruction of the city of Babylon, the heap of uncleanness. **Rev.18:4** — "*And I heard another voice from heaven saying, "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues."*

Look at the prophet Isaiah's call for the Israelites in exile in Babylon to return to Jerusalem. **Isa. 52:11** — "*Depart! Depart! Go out from there, touch no unclean thing; Go out from the midst of her, be clean, you who bear the vessels of the Lord.*" Babylon is not an ideal place for God's people to live. Babylon is the source of slavery and all kinds of sins. Therefore, when they leave, they must be careful — (1) *not to touch anything unclean; Go out from the midst of her, and defile not yourselves with any of the things that are in Babylon:* (2) *O ye that bear the utensils of the LORD, purify yourselves:* touch not the unclean thing, for they have borne the utensils of the LORD. They are those who know the divine commandments, who bear them, and who are set apart for God.

We were under the bondage of Satan and the world, just as the Israelites were in Egypt and Babylon. God, who encouraged Israel to leave, speaks to us that the way of dressing and rituals of the heathens should not be copied in life. We are on our way to heaven. Nothing unclean in this world should be touched or owned. Because believers are called by God, they must live in holiness as bearers of God's instrument.

The new generation, including the children and grandchildren of believers and servants of God in the separated society, is almost choosing to wear ornaments thinking that it is a good habit. The children are choosing to be associated with the group of ornament wearing people and to be in such situations. The modern age teaches – One doesn't have to remove the ornament for baptism, baptize as soon as one is saved, and teach doctrine later. How can such people neutrally say that the concept of ornament is not in line with the Bible? While it might seem obvious that wearing an ornament is not one of the basic doctrines or sub-branches of the church of God, the commandment provided to the saved believers to separate themselves from the world will also require giving up ornaments.

Even those who boast of being separated from God's people are slipping into the world just like others. The hymn "I want the world, I want everything, and I want to go to the presence of my Lord as well" is manifested in everything in their life - vision, thought, action and purpose. New groups of worshipers of God are on the rise today – in which women wear ornaments as they wish, apply lipstick on their lips, cuticles on their fingers and toes, bob hair in beauty parlors, and wear clothes that do not fit the believer, even wear like men, even do not put a piece of cloth on their heads. While Sarah addressed and honoured her husband Abraham as "Lord" (1.Peter.3:5,6), the gathering is filled with a new generation of Sarahs who call their husbands by name "Abraham" in the modern age.

The Bible does not allow a woman to cut her hair, to come without wearing a veil, or a man to grow his hair long (1.Cor.11:4,5,7,14,15) or to disfigure the edges of the beard (Lev.19:27). But a new generation of believers is being formed, with women cutting and curling their hair, men growing their hair long, and beards disfiguring. Servants of God in the past appeared clean-shaven and dressed in pearly white on the streets and in church services. Nowadays, God's servants appear in various sermon medias wearing just like the wicked woman, Babylon the Great, in purple and scarlet (Rev.1:4). If the leaders, who lead the church and the believers, are like this, what seriousness would the believers show to the commandment of God - "take off your ornament"?

*"Jehovah repented that he had made man on the earth; It has saddened his heart"* (Gen.6:6). In the modern world wickedness and abomination increasing, just as it was in Noah's day. Moreover, we have come to a time like the time of the prophet Habakkuk, when God's people were untied and did not pay attention to God's commandments. Ignoring God and His Word, ungodliness and worldly desires abound, giving priority to human commandments, world order, customs and traditions they proudly live as God's people according to the world (Hab.1:4).

Dear children of God who are saved, separated, and worship God in spirit and truth (John.4:23,24), when we see such crowds, let us fall before God for them, plead, "Woe to me" (Hab.2:6,9,12,15,19) like the prophet Habakkuk! Let their hearts and minds be enlightened, and let them pray to God to remove all the filth of the world. At the same time, *"But the just shall live by his faith."* (Hab.2:4), *"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."* (Rev.22:11,12) Let us increase our faith and holiness by listening to God's voice in these verses.



As imitators of Jesus Christ, instead of conforming to the world and indulging in luxuries, let us give up ornament and the desire to wear it and lead exemplary lives. The believer should not imitate those who do not know the Lord and follow Him. They live according to their own principles and customs. But, dear believer, you have many restrictions. It is not permissible to live like the worldly people and to live according to the world by indulging in luxuries. The Lord has redeemed us by His own blood. Our body is the temple of God. It does not need to be adorned with the gold, silver, rolled gold, pearls, crystals, plastics, copper or metals of this world.

Opinions may be raised such as - the New Testament does not forbid wearing ornaments, it is not wrong to wear ornaments, it may be worn in moderation, it is not unscriptural, it is a condition only in Kerala, and early missionaries outside Kerala, particularly in Tamil Nadu, did not oppose wearing ornaments. We must always remember that the majority opinion formed by these is not acceptable to God's people.

Neither the Lord in the Gospels, nor the Apostles who lived after the Lord in the Acts of the Apostles, nor the Apostles in the Epistles, instructed to "*put on the ornament*" after God's command in the Old Testament which strongly recommends "*take off your ornament*" (Exodus.33:5). Ornament is, in fact, a tendency to downplay God's commandments. Therefore, ornament is not a model for the believer to imitate for any reason.

**===== AMEN, HALLELUJAH =====**

## **SPECIAL NOTE**

While publishing the e-book " BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS", clarifies yet one more thing. According to the Word of God, is it wrong for believers to wear ornaments? Why the separated believers not wear? The book records the truths found in the Word of God for such questions.

God has given man the right to choose between heaven and hell, good and bad, blessings and curses. Likewise, the decision and compliance on whether or not to wear ornaments lies with each believer. I have no right to enter into their personal decisions.

Future generations of Brethren and Pentecostals need to know why they do not wear ornament. The aim of this book is to encourage the children of those who have given up wearing ornaments not to blindly imitate their parents, but to recognize that giving up the ornament is a complete obedience to the commandments of God, and to do so willingly and to live in holiness.

I wrote down the advice God which has given to me regarding ornament. But I declare that I am not prepared to argue, respond, or discuss this matter directly either in writing or through any other media. If God allows me to publish another edition of the book " BELIEVERS AND ORNAMENTS", I trust in the Lord that any such questions I receive would be included in that.

AUTHOR

===== THE END =====

