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Mission Update

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KNOWING GOD'S HEART THE THREE PREFERENCES OF JESUS

God has wired each of us with preferences and unique tastes, shaped by the environment we grew up in, the experiences we have had, and the aspirations we hold. Similarly, Jesus has His own preferences, and it is important to understand His preferences: what He values, what brings Him joy, and, perhaps more importantly, when presented with two good choices, which one does He value more? Fortunately, Jesus does not leave us guessing. Through His interactions with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, Jesus reveals three clear preferences. If our desire is to live a life that pleases Jesus, these preferences are worth understanding.

Repentance over Activity

Martha found Jesus and took the initiative to open her home in Bethany and invite Jesus in. When Jesus arrived, she again took the initiative, this time to prepare and serve. She initiated, and then she organized. By any measure, her actions were commendable. She was hospitable, responsible, hardworking, and sincerely trying to serve Jesus. Yet, surprisingly, it was not Martha whom Jesus commended. It was her sister Mary. Mary made a very different choice. She went against what might have seemed intuitive, against the expectations of the culture, and perhaps even against her normal routine. Rather than joining Martha in all the work that

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needed to be done, Mary simply "sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said" (Luke 10:39). Martha had much to show for her time with Jesus - a home opened, a meal prepared, and a list of tasks accomplished. Mary, on the other hand, had little to show. She simply sat at His feet and listened. Yet Jesus said that Mary had chosen what was better.

This is an important distinction for us. It is easy to fall into the trap of believing that God must be pleased with us because of everything we are doing for Him - the responsibilities we carry, the ministries we serve in, the people we help, the meetings we attend, and all the boxes we can check. We can become so busy doing things for Jesus that we neglect simply being with Jesus. Perhaps, like Martha, we can even become

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MICRO SCHOOLS BIG IMPACT BRIGHT FUTURES FOR EVERY CHILD

Micro Schools bring education to children in remote communities where distance,

difficult terrain, and limited infrastructure keep formal schooling out of reach. By combining community participation, local teachers, and simple learning spaces, they provide a practical and sustainable pathway to education.

Small in size, but powerful in impact, Micro Schools are helping ensure that no child is left behind.

Hardingson A Sangma
Director, Rongringpal English Medium
School - South Garo Hills. Meghalaya.



ADULT EDUCATION IN GARO HILLS



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KNOWING GOD'S HEART

THE THREE PREFERENCES OF JESUS

frustrated with others because they do not seem to be doing as much as we are. We look at our list of accomplishments and then look at someone else's apparent inactivity and assume that surely Jesus must prefer what we are doing. But Mary reminds us that Jesus may see things very differently. Sometimes, after looking at everything we have accomplished for Him, we may discover that what God actually desired from us was something far simpler and far more personal: a little uninterrupted, one-on-one time with us. Before Jesus wants our activity, He wants our attention.

Situation over Miracle

John 11:35 is the shortest verse in the Bible, "Jesus wept." It may be a freebie for every student competing in Bible verse memorization, but those two simple words carry remarkable depth. The context is the death of Lazarus. We know that Jesus deeply loved Lazarus and his sisters, Martha and Mary. We also know that Jesus was fully aware of what He was about to do: raise Lazarus from the dead. So why weep? Why cry with Mary when He knew that, in just a few moments, her tears would turn to joy? Here, Jesus reveals another beautiful and perhaps counterintuitive preference: He values being with us in our situation even more than performing the miracle that changes it. Before the miracle, He chooses to weep with us, empathize with us, and comfort us. After the miracle, He chooses to rejoice and celebrate with us. The miracle matters to Him, but we matter more than the miracle. Jesus did not look past Mary's tears simply because He already knew the solution. He entered into her pain before He changed her circumstances.

How often do we do the opposite? In difficult seasons, when the miracle does not come quickly enough, we distance ourselves from God. Then, when the breakthrough finally comes and life is good again, we become so

consumed with the blessing that we neglect the One who gave it. In both cases, we miss something God deeply desires: to share the situation with us. He wants to weep with us before the breakthrough and rejoice with us afterward. The miracle may change our circumstances, but His greater desire is relationship - to walk with us through every circumstance, before, during, and after the miracle.

Presence over Provision

After her earlier encounters with Jesus, Mary seems to have understood yet another of His preferences. In John 12:3, she came to Jesus with an extraordinarily expensive perfume, poured it on His feet, and wiped His feet with her hair. The perfume was worth nearly a year's wages. But the greater gift was not the perfume itself—it was Mary. Her presence, her humility, her surrender, and her devotion were worth more to Jesus than anything she could place at His feet. This profound truth runs throughout Jesus' teaching and is beautifully reflected in the way He taught His disciples to pray. The Lord's Prayer is remarkably brief, yet notice its order. Before "Give us this day our daily bread" comes "Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done." Worship comes before provision. His Kingdom comes before our needs. His will comes before our wants. Jesus certainly invites us to bring our needs before God - daily bread is, after all, part of the prayer He taught us. But He teaches us that the Giver must occupy a greater place in our hearts than His gifts.

In fact, our prayers can often diagnose our posture toward God. How much of our prayer life is consumed by "Give me this, give me that, solve this, change that, provide this"? There is nothing wrong with asking; Jesus Himself taught us to ask. But our requests should be overshadowed by something greater: "Your name, Your Kingdom, Your will." Prayer is not merely approaching God with a shopping list of provisions; it is approaching Him with a surrendered life.

The Lord desires us more than our activities, and He desires that we treasure Him more than the provisions He can give us.

Dr. Giby Raphael

ADULT EDUCATION IN GARO HILLS

Bringing the Word of God Within Reach of Every Generation

Education is one of the greatest challenges facing many remote communities in the Garo Hills. With literacy levels remaining very low in some rural areas, many senior citizens have never had the opportunity to learn to read or write. For these elderly men and women, participating in Sunday worship and house prayer meetings can be difficult, especially when they long to read and follow the Bible for themselves.

Yet their desire for God's Word remains strong.

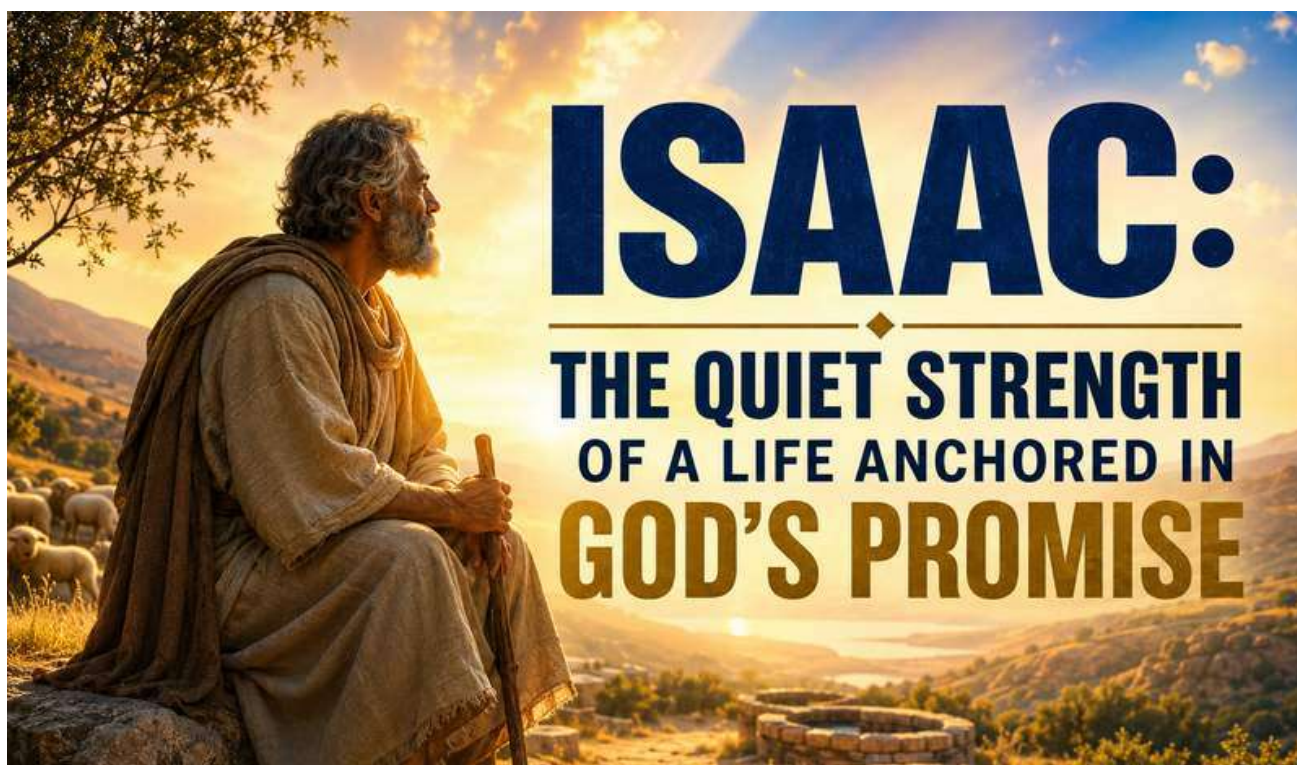
Many elders in the remote villages deeply desire to read the Bible during Sunday services and family or house prayer gatherings. Their inability to read, however, has often created a barrier. Rather than allowing literacy limitations to keep them from hearing and engaging with Scripture, an innovative and practical approach is bringing the Bible directly to them in their own language.

Faith Comes by Hearing — Bringing the Bible to the People

To address this need, we have connected with Faith Comes by Hearing, an organization committed to making the Word of God accessible to people through audio Scripture.

Through this partnership, Garo-language audio Bibles have been made available for use in remote communities. These specially designed audio devices enable people to listen to the Bible in their own language, even when they cannot read.

The impact is particularly meaningful among senior citizens. Instead of being excluded because they cannot read, they can now gather together and listen to God's Word. The devices are being used in small groups in remote villages, including during prayer gatherings and other community meetings.



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There is something profoundly moving about those words: “the two of them went on together.”

Isaac’s life teaches us that faith is not always demonstrated through dramatic action. Sometimes faith is demonstrated through trusting surrender.

Faith is not always shouting, “I will conquer!”

Sometimes faith quietly says:

“I will trust God even when I do not understand.”

That is a message desperately needed in our generation.

A Peacemaker Who Refused to Live by Quarrelling

Perhaps one of Isaac’s greatest strengths was his refusal to turn every conflict into a battle.

Genesis 26 records one of the clearest examples.

Isaac’s servants dug wells, but the Philistine herdsmen claimed them. Isaac moved on and dug another. Again there was conflict. He moved again.

He continued digging until he finally reached a place where there was no quarrel.

He called the place **Rehoboth**, saying:

“Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish in the land.” — Genesis 26:22

What a remarkable attitude!

Isaac understood something many people fail to understand:

Not every battle has to be won by fighting.

He could have used his increasing wealth and power to retaliate. Instead, he made room for peace.

This is not weakness. It is strength under control.

In today’s world - where families, churches, communities, organizations, and even nations can become divided over relatively small matters—Isaac’s example deserves renewed attention.

Sometimes the strongest person in the room is the one who knows when to walk away from a quarrel.

**“Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise.”
Galatians 4:28**

Some lives are remembered because they are dramatic. Others are remembered because they are faithful. Abraham is remembered for his pioneering faith. Jacob is remembered for his transformation and perseverance. But Isaac occupies a different place in the biblical story. His life is quieter. He does not travel as extensively as Abraham, nor does he experience the dramatic struggles of Jacob. Yet Isaac stands as a remarkable picture of patient faith, peaceable strength, perseverance, and covenantal continuity.

Isaac was the promised son of Abraham and Sarah - the child whose very name, Isaac, means “he laughs.” His birth transformed the laughter of disbelief and impossibility into the laughter of fulfilled promise.

His story, particularly in Genesis 21–28, teaches us a profound truth:

God does not need a perfect person to fulfil a perfect promise. He works through ordinary people, imperfect families, difficult circumstances, and generations of faithfulness to accomplish His purposes.

Isaac’s life therefore speaks powerfully to the Church, families, leaders, and communities today.

A LIFE BUILT ON THE PROMISE OF GOD

Isaac did not create the covenant. He inherited it. Before Isaac was born, God had already spoken to Abraham about his descendants. Isaac’s entire existence was evidence that God’s promise could survive circumstances that appeared impossible.

Sarah had been barren. Abraham was old. Human reasoning offered no realistic explanation for the promised child.

Yet Isaac was born. His life began with a miracle and continued under a covenant. This is an important lesson for every generation: **our calling does not begin with our ability; it begins with God’s faithfulness.**

Isaac’s life reminds us that we are not called merely to build something for ourselves. We are called to **receive, preserve, strengthen, and pass on what God has entrusted to us.**

Strengths

THE QUIET POWER OF ISAAC

Faith That Was Willing to Surrender

One of the most remarkable episodes in Isaac’s life is the journey to Mount Moriah. Genesis 22 describes Abraham taking Isaac to offer him as a sacrifice in obedience to God’s command. Isaac carried the wood and eventually found himself on the altar. The Bible does not explicitly describe Isaac’s age or record his inner thoughts at that moment. But the narrative presents him as participating in the journey and submitting to his father’s actions. His question was simple:

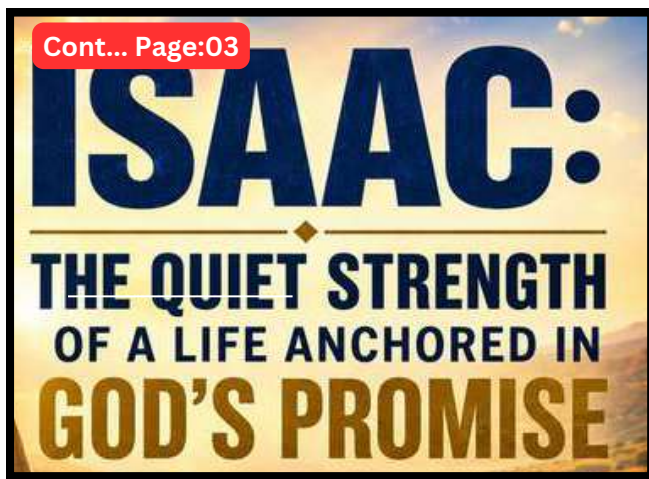
“Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?” — Genesis 22:7

Abraham answered:

**“God himself will provide the lamb.”
— Genesis 22:8**

And together they continued.

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A Man Who Took His Burden to God in Prayer

Genesis 25:21 gives us a brief but powerful picture of Isaac's prayer life:

"Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his wife, because she was childless."

Rebekah remained childless for many years. Isaac could have responded with frustration, anxiety, or human manipulation. Instead, he prayed. And the Lord answered. The passage is short, but its lesson is enormous. Isaac teaches us that when circumstances cannot be changed by human strength, they can still be brought before God.

Prayer was Isaac's response to an unanswered question.

- That principle remains relevant today.
- When a family is struggling, pray.
- When a ministry is waiting, pray.
- When a child is in difficulty, pray.
- When a door appears closed, pray.
- When the future is uncertain, pray.
- Isaac reminds us that waiting is not wasted time when we are waiting before God.

Weaknesses

WHEN A FAITHFUL MAN BECAME VULNERABLE

The Bible does not hide Isaac's weaknesses. That itself is significant.

Scripture does not present its heroes as flawless. Instead, it shows us that God's grace works through imperfect people.

Fear Caused Isaac to Repeat His Father's Mistake

During a famine, Isaac went to Gerar. God had instructed him to remain in the land, and Isaac obeyed that larger instruction. Yet, when he became afraid, he repeated the deception Abraham had previously used. He said concerning Rebekah:

"She is my sister."

— Genesis 26:7

The reason was fear.

Isaac was afraid that the men of the place might kill him because Rebekah was beautiful. Here we see a sobering reality:

Even people of faith can repeat patterns they have seen in previous generations.

Family patterns can be powerful.

Fear can be inherited.

Bad habits can be reproduced.

Unresolved weaknesses can move from one generation to another.

Therefore, spiritual maturity requires more than receiving our parents' faith. We must also learn to recognize and break unhealthy patterns.

Favoritism Created Blind Spots

Isaac loved Esau, while Rebekah loved Jacob.

Genesis 25:28 connects Isaac's preference for Esau with his taste for wild game.

Later, Isaac intended to bless Esau.

But God had already revealed:

"The older will serve the younger."

— Genesis 25:23

Isaac's physical blindness in old age becomes symbolic of another kind of blindness—a blindness of preference.

He saw what he wanted to see.

His appetite influenced his affection, and his affection influenced his judgment.

The result was disastrous.

Rebekah and Jacob resorted to deception.

Esau became bitter. Jacob was forced to

leave home. The family was fractured.

This is one of the strongest warnings in Isaac's story:

A leader may possess faith, wealth, experience, and spiritual heritage—and still develop dangerous blind spots.

Love must never become partiality.

Parents, pastors, leaders, and mentors must be especially careful not to allow personal preference to replace God's perspective.

Opportunities

WHEN GOD MAKES ROOM FOR HIS PURPOSE

God Renewed His Covenant

During famine, God told Isaac:

"Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you." — Genesis 26:3

Isaac had inherited God's promise through Abraham, but he had to trust God personally.

A spiritual inheritance must become a personal conviction.

Isaac obeyed—and remained where God had placed him.

Fruitfulness in Difficult Times

Isaac planted during famine and:

"The same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him." — Genesis 26:12

The conditions were difficult, but Isaac continued to sow.

Faith plants before it sees the harvest.

This challenges us in mission to keep investing in people, education, families, leadership, and communities, even when results are not immediate.

His Life Became a Testimony

Eventually, Isaac's opponents admitted:

"We saw plainly that the LORD was with you." — Genesis 26:28

His testimony was not merely spoken—it was visible.

May our lives make others see that the Lord is with us.

Threats

THE PRESSURES THAT TESTED ISAAC

Envy and Opposition

The Philistines stopped Isaac's wells and disputed his new ones. Yet Isaac refused to retaliate.

One well was blocked—he dug another.

Eventually he reached Rehoboth and said:

"Now the LORD has given us room and we will flourish." — Genesis 26:22

They could block a well, but they could not block God's purpose.

Famine and Uncertainty

Isaac faced famine and pressure to leave. But God told him to remain.

His challenge was to trust God in difficult circumstances.

Do not allow a difficult season to make you abandon a God-given assignment.

Family Conflict

Isaac's favoritism toward Esau contributed to the painful conflict between Jacob and Esau.

"Esau held a grudge against Jacob." — Genesis 27:41

This reminds every leader and parent:

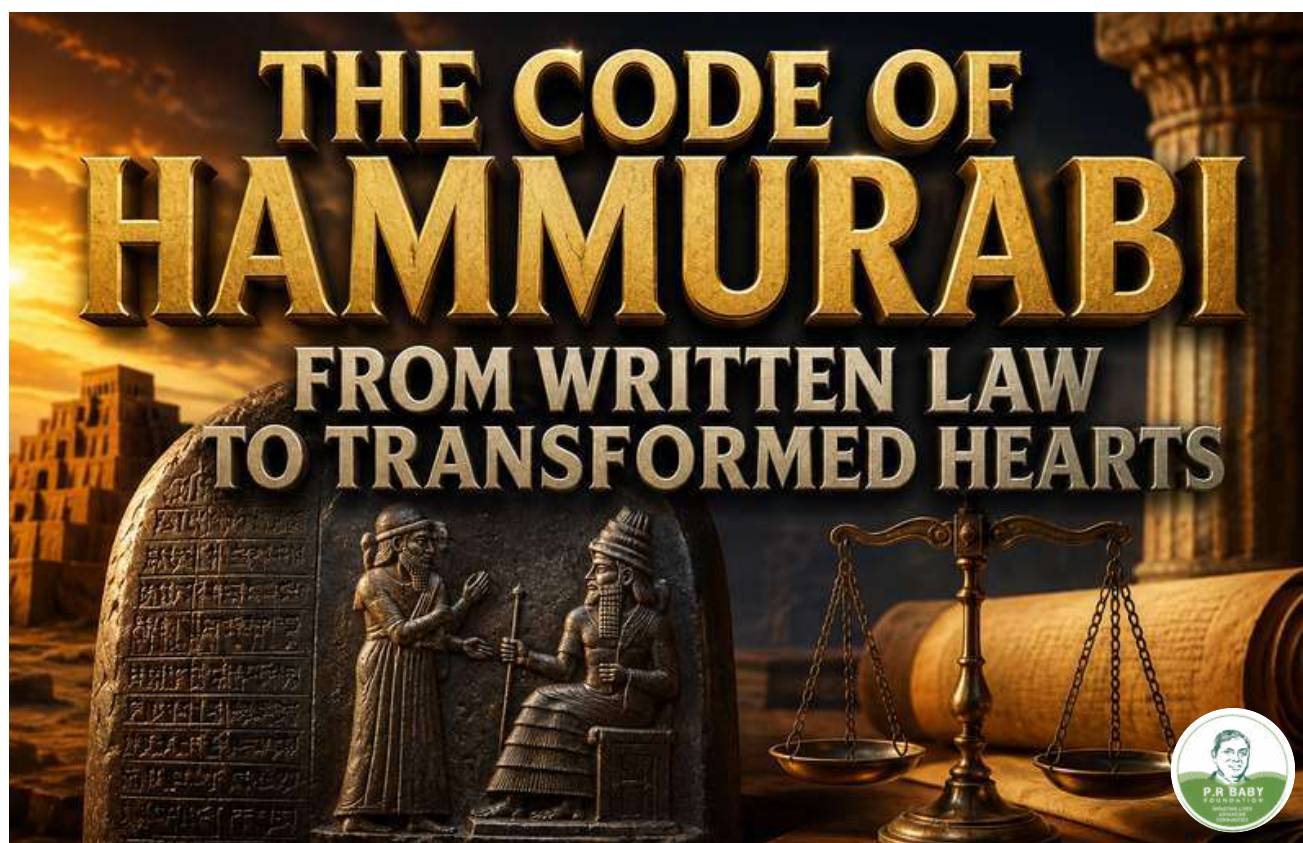
Success outside the home cannot compensate for failure inside the home.

Spiritual leadership must begin with integrity in the family.

THE STRATEGIC LESSON

Isaac stayed where God placed him, planted during famine, persevered through opposition, and chose peace.

Faithfulness created room for fruitfulness.



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From Law to Transformation

Human laws can restrain wrongdoing, establish order, and protect society. **But only God can transform the heart.**

The Code of Hammurabi represents humanity's ancient search for justice. Scripture reveals the character of the God who is perfectly just and merciful. And in Jesus Christ, justice and mercy meet through the cross.

For Christians today, the challenge remains beautifully simple:

Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly with God.

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” – Micah 6:8

A Landmark in Human History

Nearly 4,000 years ago, Hammurabi, the sixth king of the Old Babylonian Empire (c. 1792–1750 BC), established one of the ancient world's most famous legal codes. He transformed Babylon into a powerful kingdom and sought to bring order and justice to society.

His laws were inscribed in cuneiform on a large stone monument. Discovered at Susa in present-day Iran in 1901, the monument contains 282 laws covering marriage, property, trade, agriculture, wages, inheritance, crime, construction, and professional responsibility.

The original stele is preserved today in the Louvre Museum, Paris.

“Justice for the Weak”

Hammurabi presented himself as a ruler responsible for protecting the vulnerable and preventing the strong from oppressing the weak. His famous principle, **“an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,”** established the idea of proportional punishment rather than unlimited revenge.

The Code was significant because it placed laws in written form, helping establish standards by which judges, citizens, businesses, and professionals could be held accountable.

Hammurabi and the Bible

The Code of Hammurabi contains subjects that are also addressed in the **Law of Moses**, including theft, property damage, personal injury, marriage, and justice.

However, there is a fundamental distinction. Hammurabi's authority was connected to the gods of Babylon, while **Mosaic Law derives its authority from the one true God.**

Biblical justice also goes beyond punishment to emphasize mercy, impartiality, care for the vulnerable, repentance, and restoration.

The Bible declares:

“You shall not show partiality in judgment.” - Deuteronomy 1:17

Jesus took the principle of justice even further. In Matthew 5:38–44, He challenged His followers not simply to seek retribution, but to **love their enemies and overcome evil with goodness.**

Why Does It Matter Today?

The Code of Hammurabi reminds us that every society needs the **rule of law, accountability, fairness, and protection of the vulnerable.** These principles remain essential in government, business, family life, and community development. Yet Hammurabi's Code also had serious limitations. Justice could differ according to social status, punishments were often severe, and the law could regulate behaviour but could not transform the human heart.

This is where the biblical message goes deeper. God promised:

“I will put My law within them, and I will write it on their hearts.” - Jeremiah 31:33

Reflection

A good society needs just laws; a transformed society needs transformed hearts.



The original stele in the Louvre Museum, Paris.

Why Hammurabi Still Matters Today

The Code of Hammurabi remains relevant even in today's world because it highlights the enduring need for justice, accountability, fairness, and protection of the vulnerable. It reminds us that societies cannot function well without clear laws and responsible leadership. Its principle of holding people accountable for their actions continues to influence modern ideas of justice and the rule of law. Yet, ancient laws alone could not change the human heart. Today, we need not only just laws but also people of integrity, compassion, and moral responsibility. For Christians, this points us beyond written laws to God's call to “act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly” with Him (Micah 6:8).

ISAAC:

THE QUIET STRENGTH OF A LIFE ANCHORED IN GOD'S PROMISE

Fear and favouritism became dangerous when combined with family conflict. Unaddressed weaknesses become dangerous under pressure. Spiritual maturity requires prayer, self-examination, wisdom, and dependence on God.

ISAAC AND GENERATIONAL FAITH

Abraham received the promise.

Isaac preserved it.

Jacob carried it forward.

Isaac's greatest legacy was continuity.

Our calling is not only to build for today, but to prepare the next generation.

The measure of a life is not only what it achieves, but what it faithfully passes on.

GRACE GREATER THAN WEAKNESS

Isaac was imperfect, yet Scripture remembers his faith:

"By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau."
— Hebrews 11:20

Grace was greater than his weaknesses. God's purposes continued despite Isaac's limitations.

A LIFE OF QUIET FAITHFULNESS

Isaac trusted when he could not understand.

He prayed when he had to wait.

He planted during famine.

He dug again when wells were taken.

He chose peace over conflict.

He passed the promise to the next generation.

**Isaac's life may have been quiet -
but his faithfulness echoed across
generations.**

**A life does not have to be
spectacular to be significant. It
only has to remain faithful to God.**

Prof (Dr.) P J George

ADULT EDUCATION IN GARO HILLS



Learning Through Listening

This initiative is more than simply providing an audio Bible. It is creating an opportunity for adult education through listening. As villagers gather together to hear Scripture, they are not only listening to God's Word but also developing familiarity with words, stories, teachings and biblical concepts. For those who have had little or no formal education, repeated listening becomes an important pathway to learning. The group setting also makes the experience more meaningful. Older people who once depended entirely on others to read the Bible for them can now hear Scripture together with their families, friends and fellow believers.

A Bible for Every Generation

The vision is simple: no person should be prevented from hearing God's Word because they cannot read.

For many elderly believers in the Garo Hills, the audio Bible has opened a new door. They can listen during Sunday gatherings, house prayers and village meetings. Younger members can listen alongside them, creating opportunities for different generations to learn together.

What began as a response to a literacy challenge is therefore becoming a ministry of encouragement, discipleship and spiritual growth.

A Small Device with a Great Mission

The audio Bible may be a small device, but its significance is much greater. It carries the message of Scripture into remote villages where printed books may be difficult to use and where literacy remains a major challenge. For many elderly people who cannot read, this simple technology has opened a new door to God's Word.

Through the cooperation of local believers and Faith Comes by Hearing, Garo-language audio Bibles are being placed in the hands of communities that have long faced barriers to accessing Scripture. The devices are used during Sunday gatherings, house prayers and small village groups, allowing several people to listen together and reflect on what they hear. For senior citizens especially, this is more than listening to an audio recording. It gives them the joy of participating in the Word of God alongside other believers. As they listen repeatedly, they become familiar with biblical stories, teachings and truths, strengthening both their understanding and their faith.

The ministry also creates opportunities for younger and older generations to learn together. Families and village groups can listen to Scripture, discuss its meaning and encourage one another to put God's Word into practice.

As we continue this ministry in the Garo Hills, our prayer is that these small audio devices will become instruments of transformation—bringing hope, knowledge and the living Word of God to people in some of the most remote communities.

**A small device. A simple
solution. A great mission - to
make God's Word accessible to
everyone.**

**"Faith comes by hearing, and
hearing by the word of Christ."
— Romans 10:17**

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