

PREFACE

“Dear Josiah, I would rather you call yourself Josiah rather than John Chen because we have another John Chen in our midst who is the patriarch of the Chen household in Bharuch, Gujarat, India. Your persistence in using John Chen will cause unnecessary confusion to our readers. Why don't you break your stupid pride into smithereens and gratefully accept the name given to you that have so much spiritual richness therein?

Secondly, like certain in our midst you too have a propensity to steal words from me and parrot them without acknowledging me nor the sermons or sources that you have taken them from. I do see this proclivity to plagiarize, a particular sin of the east Asian people owing to the powerful memory chips (due to the memorization of the characters of their vocabulary over many generations, for unlike other languages they are in want of an alphabet). Some of your phrases and proses are not naturally from you; sometimes you sound like a Chinese educated; God alone knows the great multitude of mistakes you make pertaining to grammar, syntax and tenses; O, the headaches you cause to *Mission Updates* editorial team! God knows that I am not exaggerating! Other times you imitate a Puritan; there are occasions you sound like a Malaysian; and nowadays, you also tend to have some Russian undertones! However, when you borrow my phrases, proses and particular doctrines, it is pretty obvious. The point is that you ought to acknowledge the source and my person when you do so. Even the heathen are more integral and courteous in this aspect. I know that sometimes these things come inadvertently or unconsciously but many brethren who spend much time reading my preaching notes, borrow my concepts and contents and even the forms thereof, yet when they fail to identify the reference they are bent on making the wicked and shameful impression as though the doctrines and forms originated from them and they had devised them from their own experiences and meditations; what is worse is that they label them with their own names. The blatant travesty is that these very people do not have spiritual capacity nor character to generate spiritual views, let alone the depth and wisdom thereof. Yet with their covetousness and arrogance simmering within them, they bide their time to part asunder the messages of the servant of the Lord God, just like they parted asunder our Lord Yeshua Christ's garments when they crucified Him. These are thieves and robbers; they come to steal and plunder, to ransack the vineyard of the owner. How can evil trees bear good fruits? Yet these hypocrites, hiding behind some garb of piety, pretend to be spiritual, when the discerning eye can see that they are carnal and merchant men who barter their goods they stole at the flea markets and thrift shops ever so cheaply. There is a generation of ravaging wolves, who adorn sheep's clothing to pounce and to devour at opportune time.

It's about time you learn to write briefly as only Josiah John Chen could without trying to be a Puritan at times, or a David Brainerd or a Reformer or an Elijah Thomas Chacko. There was one before you, a Samuel Kwong by name, he was a real great fraud and a wily fox and in the end he went away as though Satan had tethered him and pulled him away. He always impersonated something he fancied depending on his latest reading. At times, he pretended to be a Martin Luther, a David Brainerd, a Wang Ming-Dao, a John Sung or a Spurgeon. There are others full of conceit and ugliness but I refrain myself. On the other hand, there are others like your own sister, Sarah Chen, Joy Tan, Ruth Mary Thomas, Jochebed Ling, Hadassah Chew, Hannah Grace Thomas, Kelvin Ng, Joash Lee, Alex Patacsil, Antioch Buminaang, Job S., Simeon Chia, Israel Thomas and last but not least, Elisha Yee, they are always their native selves. These have a way of expression that is natural and fitting to their own personalities, experience, history and spiritual disposition. When they speak, they come across as sincere, transparent and unpretentious. When you read some, you get the feeling you are reading the prophets or illustrious forbears of the past, whose sepulchers they garnish but if the prophets and forbears were here living in their midst, they would vilify them, disparage them, do not own what they owe them, do not minister to them (and our Lord said that in as much as you did not minister to the least of them, you did not minister to Me) but go to the servants of God to seek their blood like Ades mosquitoes. When you read these, you sense the stark difference between their words and their practical living. They sound freakish, hollow and insincere. Our Lord warned us of these, *'But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge*

*the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.'* (Matthew 23:5-7)

**Josiah, when you are sharing, do not try to be a preacher. Do not try to be a philosopher. Just be as you are. Assume the disposition of a seeking sinner, fighting against his own sins, hypocrisies and pretences and desperately attempting to obtain the regeneration and the transformation of heart that Christ Yeshua alone can render unto him. Do not confess and end up doing exactly what you repented of, only in a more savvy and subtle way. Shalom. Yours in the discernment of the Spirit of God."** *Elijah Thomas Chacko, Andes, NY, USA, in reply to his letter about his struggles with the tidal waves of his guilt pangs, 21 October AD 2009*