

**DR DIRK H**

# **MINISTRY LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE**

**A  
PRACTICAL  
GUIDE TO  
BECOMING  
A WORLD  
CHANGER**

**BOOK - 16  
LEVEL  
MINISTER**

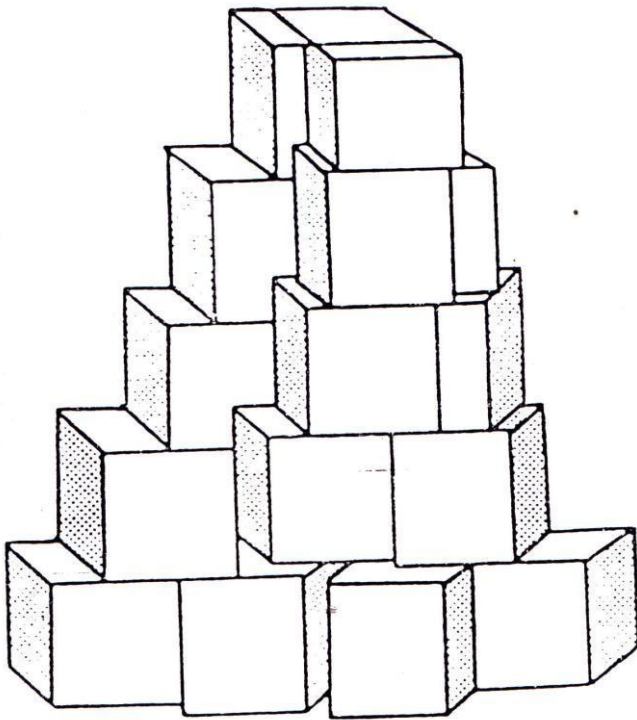
**ENGLISH**



# MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

Level: **MINISTER**

Study book no: 16



## LEVELS:

5. **Minister**
4. Leader / Pastor
3. Group or cell leader
2. Disciple
1. Beginner

*Bible Study Course to grow to spiritual maturity making every believer in Christ a minister and to increase in effective and efficient ministry!!!*

*Easy to use for self-study as well as to teach others!!!*

# MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING COURSE

## PURPOSE:

### - TO KNOW HIM, THE ONLY TRUE GOD

(Growing / Maturing)

- Josh. 1 : 8, "This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success."
- II Pet. 3 : 18, "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen."
- II Tim. 1 : 15, "Study to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth."
- Col. 1 : 27b - 28, "Christ in you, the hope of glory, Him we proclaim, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man mature in Christ."

### - AND TO MAKE HIM KNOWN TO OTHERS!

(Multiplying / Reproducing)

- II Tim. 2 : 2, "And what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."
- II Tim. 3 : 16 - 17, "All scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
- Eph. 2 : 10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."
- II Pet. 1 : 8, "For if these things are yours and abound, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

<p><b><u>PRINCIPLE:</u> "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things!"</b> <b>(Rom. 11 : 36)</b></p>
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(INCREASING IN KNOWLEDGE; MATURING IN CHARACTER; USING SPIRITUAL GIFTS)

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# HOW PRAYER AND INTERCESSION CAN BE USED BY GOD TO BRING CHANGE ON EARTH!

## Chapter 1 - The Question Is...

### No Hope

I knew the person I was going to pray for was very ill. What I didn't know was that she was in a coma and the doctors had put feeding tube into her stomach. She had been in that condition for a year and a half. I was shocked when I first saw her. Her sister, who had asked me to visit this young lady, had not given me the whole story. She was afraid if she told me how bad things were, I wouldn't go at all. She knew if she could just get me there once, I'd probably go back. She was right! The doctors gave her no hope for living, or even for coming out of the coma. They believed she had extensive brain damage. They said if she did regain consciousness, she would be like a vegetable without any ability to think. Have you ever stood beside someone in this kind of condition and asked God for a miracle? To stand beside the death and ask for life can be frightening. It can also teach us – about life, about death, about ourselves and about our God. When we stand beside the same person 60 to 70 times, for an hour or more each time, throughout the course of a year we can learn a lot.

### Confronted With The Unexpected

With this young lady, things didn't work out as I expected. Life rarely does, does it? I expected the Lord to heal this young lady through our prayers in a dramatic, easy, quick way. After all, that's how it happened in the Bible when Jesus healed someone.

- I didn't expect to invest three to four hours of my life each week for a year (including the travel time).
- I didn't expect humiliation and insults from the staff of the nursing home where she stayed
- I didn't expect to cry so much.
- I didn't expect to be so bold at times.
- I didn't expect to be so intimidated at times.
- I didn't expect it to take so long.
- I didn't expect to learn so much.

### The Miracle

Yes, God restored the young lady! The front page of the local newspaper read, "Woman Awake, Alive, Healthy After Two Years In Coma." God healed her brain, even though the doctors said the outer layer of it had been totally destroyed by a virus. Every part of it had been covered with infection. The doctors called it a "medical miracle". "We have no explanation," they said, though they stopped short of giving God the glory. The healing actually happened on Saturday morning when she was all alone. Earlier that week she had moved from the nursing to a hospital for treatment of an infection. After more tests, the doctors determined her condition had grown worse and informed her family that she would probably die soon. Upon hearing this bad news, the young lady's sister relayed the information to me. I dashed off to the hospital. I knew that people who are in a coma can often hear and understand everything happening around them. Therefore that Wednesday I spoke much to her. (As we later learned, because of the damage to her brain, she was not hearing me.)

"This nightmare was almost over," I said, with tears streaming down my face.

"Nothing can keep us from receiving our miracle. Nothing!"

As I left the hospital weeping, I remember saying to myself again and again "Nothing can keep us from receiving our miracle. Nothing!"

This was not just the strong hope I had, but also a great faith. I had turned to God many times throughout the course of that year asking Him if He had really sent me to this young lady. Each time I received His assurance: "I sent you, don't quit."

## The Power Of Persistence

I have been accused of being quite a stubborn fellow, and I suppose that's true. Stubbornness, however, can be channeled in to the righteous force called **persistence**, or **endurance**. I've found it to be one of the most important spiritual attributes of the Christian life. The great preacher Charles Spurgeon said, "By perseverance the snail reached Noah's ark."

A lack of endurance is one of the greatest causes of defeat, especially in the prayer. It is difficult for us to wait.

So, I persisted for a year. As I did, my faith grew, until I knew deep inside we were going to win. My motto had become Galatians 6: 9, "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary."

Three days after that Wednesday in the hospital I was rewarded! The young lady woke up with full restoration to her brain. Every hour and every tear I had invested became worth the wait when I saw her awake and heard her speak the words, "Praise the Lord."

## No Prayer Heroes

What did I learn from that Year? Much! And I am still learning. Someone wrote about a group of tourists visiting a picturesque village. They walked by an old man seated along the path. One tourist asked this old man, "Were any great men born in this village?" The old man replied, "No, only babies." I've learned that no one is born prayer hero. They are shaped and refined on the practice field of life.

## So Many Questions

From this and other prayer journeys... from failures as well as victories... from hundreds of hours of study, I've formed some thoughts to share with you. I believe they will answer many questions such as:

- Is prayer really necessary? If so, why? Isn't God sovereign? Doesn't that mean He accomplishes what He wants, when He wants? If so, why pray?
- Is God's will for a Christian automatically guaranteed or is it linked to prayer and other factors?
- Why does it often take so long to get a prayer answered? Why is persistence required? Jacob wrestled with God. Is that what we are to do in prayer? I don't like the thought of wrestling with God, do you?
- What about prayer for the lost? How can I be more effective? I get little frustrated trying to think of new ways to ask God to save people, don't you? I thought He wanted to save them. Then why do I feel as though I am trying to talk Him into it? Is there a better way? Do I ask for their salvation again and again simply petition Him once and then just thank Him in faith?
- What about spiritual warfare? If Satan is defeated and Christ has all authority, shouldn't we just forget about the devil? Does God bind the evil or do we?
- What exactly is intercessory prayer? I know the thought is taken from the Bible, but what does it mean?
- What about protection? Is everything that happens to me or my family simply allowed by God? Or is there something I need to do to procure our safety?
- How do we "bear one another's burdens"? (Gal. 6:2)
- Is there a right time for answers to prayer or does the timing depend on me?

Are you getting tired of all these questions? I know I am – so I'll stop. You may be even tired of asking yourself some of them. I know I was. Many people stopped asking them long ago – and probably stopped praying, too.

Please, don't do that! Keep asking! I've discovered that the right **answer** begins with the right **question**. I've also discovered that God is not offended by a sincere question. He won't satisfy the skeptic and He is not pleased with unbelief; but He loves an honest seeker. Those who lack and ask for wisdom He does not rebuke (Jas 1:5). God is a good father.

Will you pray this prayer with me?

*Father, we need more understanding not more knowledge. We have so much knowledge now that we are becoming confused. Yes, and we've even been cynical at times because our knowledge has*

*not always worked. Sometimes the Bible seems to argue with our experiences. We need some answers. We need a marriage of theology and experience.*

*We've heard of great intercessors of the past who prayed long hours each day with wonderful results. Frankly, Lord, it gets a bit frustrating and intimidating when our prayers don't seem to work. We don't know if we could ever be able to pray two to three hours a day, as great intercessors did. We need more than their inspiration now. We need answer.*

*So, as your disciples did, Lord, we say, "Teach us to pray". We know it often requires hard work, but can't it also be fun? We know there will be failures, but how about a few more success? We know "we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7) but couldn't we see a few more victories? ... Souls saved? ... Healings? We are tired of religious exercises that make us feel better for awhile but bear little lasting fruit. We are tired of a form of godliness without the power (2 Tim. 3:5) Help us, please. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*

## **Chapter 2 - The Necessity of Prayer**

When you were a child, probably someone in authority would often say to you, "Do this!" When you asked, "Why?" they would just reply, "Because I said so!" None of us wants to do something just because someone else said to do it. Actually, we often don't want to do something just because God says to do it. Oh, I know God requires things of us at times without the full knowledge of "why". However, these are usually occasional times when He is testing whether or not we really trust Him. If we obey without knowing "why", this shows Him we trust Him totally.

Most of the time He expects us to ask "why." In fact, I believe He wants us to do so. We are not supposed to be programmed robots that never ask "why." "God does not require us to have an "ostrich mentality": head in the sand, blind to the truth, the issues, the facts.

### **I Wonder Why**

God has given us a Bible full of answers to the "why" questions of life. The one I'm interested in is: **Why pray?**

When we **want** or **need** something and pray to God for it, there is no need to ask "why pray?" I'm not speaking of "why" in that sense. Obviously we pray because we want or need something. I'm speaking of "why" in that sense. Obviously we pray because we want or need something. I'm not speaking of "why" in that sense. Obviously we pray because we want or need something. I'm speaking of "why pray?" in the context of God's sovereignty. Since God is sovereign, do my prayers really matter all that much? Isn't God going to do what He wants anyway? Most people believe just that, even without admitting it. They prove they believe this in their prayer life, or lack of prayer life. Can my prayers actually change things? Can God's will on earth be frustrated or not accomplished if I don't pray? Does God need me to pray or does He just want me to pray?

Some would argue an omnipotent God doesn't "need" anything, including our prayers. But these and other questions deserve answers.

### **I Need To Know**

When God says, "Pray." I want to know it will matter. I'm not into religious exercises and my time is valuable. So is yours. Someone wrote: "You can do more than pray **after** you have prayed, but you cannot do more than pray **until** you have prayed. Prayer is striking the winning blow. Service is gathering up the results."

If God is going to do something regardless of whether or not we pray, then He doesn't need us to ask Him and we don't need to waste our time. We could say: If everything is just going to happen anyway, then let's take a nap and let it all just happen.

John Wesley wrote, "God does nothing on the earth save in answer to believing prayer." If that is true, I'll lose a little sleep for that. I'll change my lifestyle for that. I'll stop whatever I'm doing in order to pray. I'll even miss my meal or two.

- I need to know if that cyst on my wife's ovary dissolved because I prayed.
- I need to know if I was spared in the earthquake because someone prayed.
- I need to know if Diane came out of her coma with a restored brain because we prayed.
- I need to know if my prayers can make a difference between heaven and hell for someone.

### **Is Prayer Really Necessary?**

The real question is: Does a sovereign, all-powerful God need our involvement or not? Is prayer really necessary? If so, why?

I believe it is necessary. Our prayers **can** bring revival. They **can** bring healing. We **can** change a nation. Satan's stronghold **can** come down because we pray.

I agree with the statement that: "God shapes the world by prayer. The more prayer there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against the evil. The prayers of God's saints are the capital stock of the heaven... by which God carries on His great work upon earth." If you also agree with this, you'll pray more. You will most likely pray with greater faith, too.

### **God's Original Plan**

The answer to why prayer is necessary lies in God's original plan when He created Adam. The name Adam means "Man, mankind, person or human being." In other words, when God named Adam, He was actually calling him "Man."

I share this simply to say that Adam represents all of us. What God intended for Adam, He intended for the entire human race (mankind). What was God's intention? Initially, He gave Adam and Eve and their descendants dominion over the entire earth and all creation. We see this in Genesis 1:26-28: "Then God said, 'Let us make man in our image, according our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And God created a man in his own image, in the image of the God he created him; male and female he created them. And God blessed them; and

God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.'"

We see this also in Psalm 8:3-8: "*When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou dost take thought of him? And the son of man, that thou dost care for him? Yet thou hast made him a little lower than God, and dost crown him with glory and majesty! Thou dost make him to rule over the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet, all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas.*"

### **Adam, God's Re-Presenter On Earth**

The Hebrew word "*mashal*" translated: the "rule" in verse 6 of Psalm 8 shows that Adam was God's manager on the earth. Adam was God's steward, governor, mediator, go-between or representative. Eventually Adam's descendants shared this responsibility.

Psalm 115:16 also confirm this: "The heaven... the Eternal holds himself, the earth he has assigned to men". God didn't give away ownership of the earth, but He did assign the responsibility of governing it to the mankind.

Genesis 2:15 says, "*Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it.*" The word "keep" is a translation of the Hebrew word '*shamar*', which means, "to guard or protect." It is the primary word used for a watchman in the scriptures. Adam literally was God's watchman or guardian on the earth. No serious student of the Bible would argue that Adam was God's representative here. But what does it actually mean to represent someone? The dictionary defines "represent" as "to present again." A representative is one who represents the will for another. I, for example, am often honored to represent Christ throughout the world. I hope I keep presenting Him again and again as I speak His name.

Now, it's no small task to represent God. Therefore God had a way to help us humans' carry out this assignment. He made us very much like Himself.

"*And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them*" (Gen 1:27)



The Hebrew word for “image” is “*tselem*”, which carries the idea of a shadow, a phantom or an illusion. An illusion is something you think you see, but on closer observation you discover that your eyes have tricked you. When the rest of the creation saw Adam, they must have thought something like this: “For a moment I thought it was God, but it’s only Adam.” Adam was a re-presenter of God, and very much like Him! Psalm 8:5 actually says: God made man “*a little lower than angels, and crowned him with glory and honor.*” This verse says humanity was crowned with God’s own glory. The Hebrew word for “glory” literally means “heavy.” This, of course, is linked to the idea of authority. Adam carried the weight on the earth. I don’t know what he weighed in pounds, but he was in authority. He represented God with full authority! He was in charge! The Greek word for glory, “*doxa*”, involves the concept of recognition. Glory is that thing which causes someone to be recognized for what he really is.

When we read in Scripture that humankind is the glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7) it is telling us God was recognized in humans. Why? So humans could accurately represent Him. When the creatures and the creation looked at Adam, they were supposed to see God. And they did! That is, until Adam sinned and fell short of the glory of God. God is no longer recognized in fallen humans. We must be changed back into God’s image “*from glory to glory*” (2 Cor. 3:18) for this recognition to be realized again. My purpose is not to overwhelm or impress you with a lot of definitions, but rather to broaden your understanding of God’s original plan for us humans. Therefore, let’s summarize what we’ve said:

- Adam was comparable to or similar to God. He was so much like God that he seemed to look like God. God was recognized in Adam.
- This meant that Adam “carried the weight” here on earth. Adam represented God. Adam “presented again” God’s will on the earth. Adam was God’s governor or manager here.
- The earth was Adam’s assignment. It was under Adam’s charge or care. Adam was the watchman or guardian. How things went on planet Earth, for better or worse, depended on Adam and his offspring.

Please think about that. If the earth remained paradise, it would be because of humankind. If things became messed up, it would be because of humankind. If the serpent (Satan) ever gained control, it would be because of humankind. Humanity was really in charge! Why would God do this way? Why would he take such a risk? From what I know about God in the Scriptures and from my personal walk with Him, I find only one conclusion: God wanted a family: sons and daughters who could personally relate to Him, and He would relate to them. Therefore he made our original parents similar to Himself. He put His very life and Spirit into them, and gave them a beautiful home with lots of pets. Then he sat down and said, “This is good.” Daily he communed with them, walked with them, taught them about Himself and their home. He said, “Give me some grandsons and granddaughters.” God was now a dad, and He was thrilled!

### **God Works Through The Prayers Of His People**

So complete and final was Adam’s authority over the earth that he had the ability to give it away to another! Listen to the words of Satan in Luke 4:6,7 as he tempted Jesus: “*I will give you all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it whomever I wish. Therefore, if you worship before me, it shall all be yours.*”

The part about the domain being handed over to Satan was true, and Jesus knew it. He even called Satan “the ruler of this world” three times in the Gospels (see John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11).

God’s decision to do things on the earth through human beings was complete and final. It was so final that it cost God His beloved son regain what Adam gave away. Jesus had to become part of the human race in order to redeem the fallen mankind. I can’t think of more staggering truth. Jesus is the proof of the finality of God’s decision to act on earth through humans. Without question, humans were forever to be God’s link to authority and activity on the earth.

Here we have the reasons for necessity of prayer. God chose, from the time of Creation, to work on the earth through humans. He chose not to work independent of them. He always has and always will, even at the cost of becoming a human in Jesus Christ. God is sovereign and all-powerful. However, Scriptures clearly tells us that He limited Himself to working through human beings

concerning the affairs of earth. Isn't this the reason the earth is in such a mess? It is not a mess because of God wills it so. It is a mess because of His need to work and carry out His will through people.

This is the story woven throughout the Scriptures:

- God and humans, for better or worse, doing it together.
- God needing faithful men and women.
- God needing a race through whom to work.
- God needing prophets.
- God needing judges.
- God needing a human Messiah.
- God needing human hands to heal, human voices to speak and human feet to go up.

Doesn't He need us to ask for His kingdom to come, His will to be done (Matt. 6:10)? Surely, He wouldn't want us to waste our time asking for something that was going to happen anyway, would He?

Didn't He tell us to ask for our daily bread? (Matt. 6:11). And Yet, He knows our needs even before we ask for.

Didn't He tell us to ask that laborers be sent into the harvest? (Matt 9:38). But, doesn't the Lord of the harvest want that more than we do?

Didn't Paul say, "*Pray for us that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified*" (2 Thes. 3:1)? Wasn't God already planning to do this?

Are not these things God's will? Why should I ask Him for something He already wants to do, if it 's not that my asking somehow releases Him to do it?

### **Elijah's Fervent Prayers**

In 1 Kings of 18 we find the story of God needing and using a person to accomplish. His will through prayer. It is the account of Elijah praying for rain after three years of drought. James 5:17-18 also mention this occasion. We know from James' account that not only did Elijah's prayer bring rain, but his prayers also stopped the rain three years earlier. In 1 Kings 18:1, after three years of drought, God spoke to Elijah and said, "*Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth.*" Then Elijah prays seven times and finally rain comes.

Whose idea was it to send rain? ... Whose will? ... Whose initiation? ... Answer: God's, not Elijah's. Then why, if it was God's will, idea and timing, did it take a human's prayers to "birth" the rain? (When praying for rain, Elijah was in the posture of a woman in that culture giving birth. This symbolized travailing prayer. See 1 Kings 18:41-45.)

Why did the Elijah have to ask seven times? Seven is the biblical number of completion. I'm sure God was teaching us that we must pray until the task is accomplished. But why would this or any other prayer endeavor require perseverance, when it was God's will, idea and timing?

And finally, did Elijah's prayer really produce the rain or was it simply coincidental that he happened to be praying when God sent it?

James clarifies the answer to this last question. Yes, the prayers of this man did stop and start the rain: "*The fervent prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it did not rain on the earth for years and six months. And he prayed again, and the sky poured the rain, and the earth produce its fruits.*" (Jas. 5:16-18). The only logical answer to the question of why Elijah needed to pray is simply that God has chosen to work through people. Even when it is the Lord Himself initiating something, He still needs us to ask. Even He desires to do something, He needed us to pray.

As someone wrote of our need to ask: "God's giving is inseparably connected with our asking ... Only by intercession can that power be brought down from heaven which will enable the Church to conquer the world."

## **Daniel A Man Of Prayer**

Another example which supports our idea of the absolute need for prayer is found in the life of Daniel. In 606 B.C. Israel had been taken captive by another nation because of sin and disobedience. Year later Daniel reading the writings of the prophet Jeremiah. He discovered it was time for Israel's captivity to end (see Daniel 9:2). Jeremiah had not only prophesied the captivity (of which Daniel was a part), but he also prophesied it would last 70 years. (Jer. 25:12). At this point Daniel did something very different from what most of us would do. When we receive a promise of revival, deliverance or healing we tend to passively wait for its fulfillment.

But not Daniel; he knew better. Somehow he must have known that God needed His involvement, because He said, *"So I gave my attention to the Lord God to seek him by prayer and supplications, with fasting, sackcloth, and ashes"* (Dan. 9:3). The angel Gabriel was dispatched immediately after Daniel started praying. However, Gabriel became engaged in a great war in the heavenliness, which delayed Daniel's answer. It took this great archangel 21 days to inform Daniel that *"Your words were heard, and I have come in response to your words"* (Dan. 10:12). I can't help wondering how many promises from God have gone unfulfilled because He can't find the human involvement He needs.

## **God Needs Our Prayers**

God's existence and character are completely independent of created thing (Acts 17:24-25). God already has all resources in His hands (Job 41:11; Ps. 50:10-12). Nevertheless, God needs our prayers: *"And I searched for a man among them who should build up the wall and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it; but I found no one. Thus I have poured out my indignation on them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their way I have brought upon their heads, declares the Lord God "* (Ezek. 22:30-31). The deep meaning of these verses is strong enough to make us stagger: God's holiness, integrity and uncompromising truth prevent Him from simply excusing sin. It must be judged.

On the other hand, not only is He holy, but He is also love. His love always desires to redeem, to restore and to show mercy. Scripture tells us that God takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33:11). The passage in Ezekiel 22 is clearly the Lord saying: "While My justice demanded judgment, my love wanted forgiveness. I wanted to find a human to ask me to spare this people. If I could have found someone to pray, it would have allowed me to show mercy. Because I found no one, however, I had to destroy the people I love."

I don't like what this passage shows any more than you do. I don't want the responsibility it brings. I don't like to consider the thought of a God who has somehow limited Himself to us earthlings. But in the light of these and other passages, as well as the condition of the world, I can come to no other conclusion.

Either God wants the earth in this condition or He doesn't. If He doesn't, then we must assume one of two things. Either He is powerless to do anything about it, or He needs and is waiting on something from us to bring about change. This truth could intimidate us with the responsibility it carries. It could even condemn us because of our lack of prayer.

But another responsibility exists as well. A responsibility can also be a privilege. A responsibility can be enjoyable. This revelation can raise us up in our hearts to a new position of dignity alongside our heavenly Father and Lord Jesus.

As said, "Prayer is essentially a partnership. In prayer, the redeemed child of God is working hand in hand with God. Because of prayer, they move together toward the fulfillment of God's redemptive purposes on earth."

Let's rise to the occasion and embrace the invitation to be co-laborers with God. Let us be carriers of His awesome Holy Spirit, and ambassadors for His great kingdom. Let's represent Him! Awaken us to our destiny, Lord!

## Chapter 3 - Re-Presenting Jesus

### Looking for answers

In order to define intercessory prayer, we must first define intercession. We'll not only define intercession literally, but also in context of

- 1) God's plan for humankind at the time of Creation,
- 2) The disruption of that plan by the Fall, and
- 3) God's solution

In other words, we're going to see the concept of intercession in these settings and allow them to help us define it. This will accomplish three things:

1. It will help you to understand the concept of intercession so you can understand intercessory prayers.
2. It will enable you to see Christ's role as THE intercessor. (Our intercessory prayer will always and only be an extension of His intercessory work.)
3. With that kind of knowledge, it will make you the most spiritual person in your prayer group!

### Defining Intercession

Let's look first at the literal concept of intercession. Then, we will think about it in the context of the Fall. According to Webster's Dictionary, the concept of intercession can be summarized as mediating, going between, pleading for another, representing one party to another.

- Intercession happens in our courts daily with lawyers interceding for clients.
- Intercession happens daily in meetings where contracts are made.
- Intercession happens in offices and business meetings daily as secretaries or other associates "go between" representing one person to another.

There is nothing spiritual about this. It involves authority. It involves representation. As we discussed in the previous chapter, to represent means to re-present, or present again. Many years ago my dad hired an intercessor (we called him a lawyer) to represent him in the court. Dad had been stopped by some policeman. They beat him up quite badly and threw him into the jail while my mother and baby sister were watching. The reason the policeman did this was because they thought he was someone else! Dad was actually on his way home from a church service where he had preached that night. This fact added to the irony and injustice of the entire ordeal.

Our attorney went between Dad, the judge, the other lawyer and the policemen. He listened to the case, gathered proof, found out what Dad wanted and then re-presented it in court. He mediated well. Dad won the case.

An intercession is not in the sense of an attorney. That's only one example. Any work of representing or mediating between people is intercession.

Now, let's think about this concept in the light of the Creation and the Fall. Adam was supposed to represent God on planet Earth – managing, governing or ruling for Him. God told Adam what He wanted and Adam re-presented Him to the rest of the earth. Adam was go-between for God. Literally, Adam was God's intercessor or mediator on the earth.

### Christ, The ultimate intercessor

Adam, of course, failed, and God had to send another human called the "Last Adam" or "Second Man" (Jesus Christ – see 1 Corinthians 15:45-47). The "last Adam" did what the first Adam was supposed to do and fixed what the first Adam messed up. So, Christ came to re-present God on the earth. He became the intercessor or mediator, going between and re-presenting God to humanity.

According to John 1:18, Jesus showed us what God is like: "*No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained Him.*"

The word "explained" comes from the Greek word "*exegeomai*" – which means: to exegete. When we "exegete" the Scriptures we are explaining, giving, understanding, clarifying and revealing the truth in a way that makes it all comprehensible, Jesus came to exegete God – to make God comprehensible.

Jesus came and drew us a picture of God! Now we know what He looked like. Jesus said, “...*he that hath seen me hath seen the Father...*” (John 14:9)

But that’s not the only direction of Jesus’ interceding. Man was meant to be God’s intercessor, mediator or representative on the earth. However, because of Adam’s fall into sin, man now needed someone to mediate for him, Adam, who was made to represent God on the earth, now needed someone to represent him to God. Christ, of course, became that representative, intercessor or mediator. Not only did he represent God to man, but he also represented man to God. This God-man was “attorney” for both sides! He is the ultimate, final and only go-between. He is “*the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.*” (Heb. 3:1)

As the Apostle, Jesus is go between for God to the human race. As High Priest, he is go between for the human race to the God. Christ’s intercession, considering its literal meaning, was not a prayer he prayed, but a work of mediation. He did. “*For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ.*” (1 Tim. 2: 5)

Many people feel that Jesus’ intercession in heaven before the Father on our behalf is prayer. I don’t believe this. I’m certain His intercession refers to His being our Advocate (lawyer, barrister) with the Father (see 1 John 2:1). He is now functioning as our representative. He is guaranteeing our access to the Father and to our benefits of redemption. In fact, he tells us in John 16:26 that He is not doing our asking of the Father for us: “*In that day you will ask in my name, and I do not say to you that I will request the Father on your behalf.*”

So what is He doing as He makes an intercession for us? He is mediating or going between. He does this, not to clear us of charges against us. The charges against us were dealt with when He went to the cross and paid the price to redeem us from sin. His intercession is now primarily to present each of us to the Father as righteous, and one of His own. When I approach the Throne, I think Jesus is always there saying something like this: “Father, Jay is here to speak with you. He isn’t coming on his merits or righteousness. He is here based on My righteousness. He is here in My name. I am sure You remember that I’ve gone between You and Jay and provided him with access to You. He has few things to ask You.” Can’t you just hear the Father say in response, “Of course, I remember, Son. You have made him one of ours. Because he came through You, Jay is always welcome here.” The Father looks at me and says, “Come boldly to My throne of grace, son, and make your request known.” Jesus isn’t praying for us; He is interceding for us so we can pray. This is what is meant by asking “in His name.”

Let’s look at one more aspect of Christ’s intercession in the context of the Fall of the mankind from innocence to sinfulness. Basically, humanity needed two things after the Fall.

- 1) First, they needed someone to “go between” themselves and God to reconcile themselves to God.
- 2) Second, they also needed someone to “go between” themselves and Satan to separate themselves from the enemy.

The first was a uniting, the second was disuniting. The first re-established the last Adam’s headship, the second broke Satan’s headship. It was a twofold work of intercession. We needed both. Jesus did both. As the intercessor-mediator, He went between God and humanity, reconciling us to the Father – and He went between Satan and humanity, breaking Satan’s dominion over us and sin’s ownership of us. This is the redemptive work of intercession and it is complete. Therefore, in the legal sense of humanity’s redemption, Christ is the one and only intercessor. This is why the Scriptures say, “*For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.*” (1 Tim. 2:5). The verse could just as easily read, “one intercessor.” This revelation is essential for us to understand. It means our prayers of intercession are always and only an extension of His work of intercession. Why is this so important? Because God won’t honor any intercession except Christ’s. Also, this understanding will make our prayers of intercession much more powerful.

Let’s return to the conversation in the Throne room. I am there asking the Father to extend mercy and to bring salvation to the people of a certain nation. The Father could reply, “How can I do this?”

They are sinners. They worship false gods, which is really worshipping Satan. And besides, they don't even want Me to do this. They themselves have never asked." I answer, "Because Jesus interceded or mediated for them, Father. I am asking based on what He did. And He needed a Human on earth to ask for Him because He is in heaven now. So, as He taught me, I am asking for Your Kingdom to come and Your will to be done in that particular nation. I'm asking for some laborers to be sent there." "I'm asking these things for Christ and through Christ. And I am asking You to do it based entirely on the redemptive work. He has already done." The Father replies "RIGHT!" And then He calls the angel Gabriel to go into action in that country.

### **Distributors For God**

Our prayers of intercession are an extension of Jesus' work of intercession. The difference between our prayers and His work is the difference between distributing and producing.

We don't have to produce anything such as reconciliation, deliverance, victory and so forth. Rather we distribute, as the disciples did with the loaves and fishes. (Matt. 14:17-19). Our calling and function is not to replace God, but to release Him.

Knowing the following things liberates us from intimidation and makes us bold.

- God, the Producer, simply wants to distribute through us.
- God, the Intercessor, wants to intercede through us.
- The Mediator wants to mediate through us.
- The representative wants to represent through us.
- The Go-between wants to go between through us.
- The Victor wants His victory enforced through us.
- The Minister of reconciliation has given to us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Cor. 5:18-19)

We now represent Him in His representation ministry. Go Himself is the one who continues to carry out His redemptive purposes – and He does it through human lives. We don't deliver anyone. We don't reconcile anyone to God. We don't defeat the enemy. The work is already done. Reconciliation is complete. Deliverance and victory are complete. Salvation is complete. Intercession is complete! Finished! Done! WOW! What a relief. And yet... We must ask for the release and application of these things.

So, let me offer the following as a Biblical definition of intercessory prayer. **Intercessory prayer is an extension of the ministry of Jesus through His Body, the Church.**

**By prayer we mediate between God and humanity for the purpose of reconciling the world to Him.**  
**By prayer we mediate between Satan and humanity for the purpose of enforcing the victory of Calvary.**

The Father needed a human on the earth through which to represent Himself. Jesus needs human on earth through which to represent Himself, too. The Father's human was Jesus; Jesus' humans are us, the Church. He said, "*As the father has sent me, I also send you.*" (John 20:21). The idea of being sent is important. A representative is "sent" one. Sent ones have authority, as long as they represent the sender. The important is not on the sent one but sender. An ambassador representing one nation to another nation is sent one. He has no authority of his own, but he is authorized to represent the authority of the nation sending him. Jesus was a sent-one. He received His authority from the Father who sent Him. Forty times in John's Gospel He mentions the importance of the fact of being sent by Father. Actually, Jesus wasn't doing the mighty works, but the Father who sent Him was doing them. (See John 14:10)

The name is true with us. Our authority comes from being sent ones, representing Jesus. As long as we function in that capacity, we function in Christ's authority. And, in essence, we're not really doing the works; He is.

Let me illustrate. Some years ago, while praying about an upcoming trip and outreach to a particular nation, I heard the words: “On this strip, represent Jesus to the people.”

At first I rebuked the voice thinking it was an evil spirit trying to deceive me. But voice came again, this time adding the words: “Be His voice, be His hands, be His feet. Do what you know He would do if He were there in the flesh. Represent Him.” Suddenly, I understand. I was not going to represent myself or the ministry with which I was working. In the same way that Jesus represented the Father, I was to represent Jesus. I would be speaking His words and doing His works. If I really believed I was functioning as an ambassador or a sent one, then I could believe it wasn’t my ability or authority, but Christ’s. I was simply representing Him and what He had already done.

### **A “Galilee Jesus” Became A “Local Jesus”**

Once in the country I traveled with a team to a remote village far from any modern city. There was no electrical power, no plumbing, and no phones. Our purpose in being there was to build shelters for the villagers whose primitive homes had been destroyed in devastating earthquake earlier. It had killed many people and left even more homeless.

We had trucked in materials and building small, one-room homes for them during the daylight hours. In the evenings we would hold services in the center of the village. We preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them, explaining that His love was motivating us to spend our time, money and energies to help them. We had been ministering for one week with very few people coming to Christ. The people were listening, but not responding.

I was to preach on the final night of our trip. Just as the service was about to begin, a team member told me about a little girl, six or seven years old, tied to a tree at the edge of the village. Not believing what he was seeing, the team member asked the family that lived nearby, “Why is this small girl tied to that tree?” It was obvious that she lived there, much like a dog, in the backyard – nasty, filthy, helpless and alone. “She is crazy”, parents replied. “We can’t control her. She hurts herself and others and runs away if we turn her loose. There is nothing else we can do for her so we just have to tie her up.” My heart broke as the member shared what he had seen. It was on my mind as we began the service. A few minutes into my message, the same voice that had spoken to me before the trip began speaking to me again. “Tell them you are going to pray for the little insane girl across the village tied to the tree. Tell them you are going to do this in the name of Jesus you’ve preaching about. Tell them that through Him you are going to break the evil powers controlling her.” “Tell them when she is free and normal, they can then know that what you are preaching is true. Then they can believe that the Jesus you are preaching about is who you He is.” I responded to the voice in my heart with fear and trembling. “Isn’t there some other way to do this?” I asked. “Any other way would bring rebellion and failure”, came the response. “Remember what I said to you before the trip began? Represent Jesus.”

Faith began to rise in my spirit. I could see that the emphasis was not on me in this situation; but on the one who sent me. I was simply His spokesman. I could only release what He has already done. He has finished the work of delivering this little girl. My prayers would release the work. I am only the distributor of what He has already produced. “Be bold, sent one,” I said to myself. “Enforce the victory!” With new assurance I began informing the people about what I was planning to do. They were amazed to listen to my plans. Then I prayed. On a moonlit night in a tiny, remote village of that country with a handful of people as my audience, my life changed forever. It seemed that Jesus came out of hiding. He became alive... sufficient... available! A “hidden” Jesus emerged from the cobwebs of theology. A yesterday Jesus became today and forever Jesus. A Galilee Jesus became a local Jesus. And a new plan unfolded to me. A new concept emerged – Jesus and me.

### **The Heavenly Pattern**

For the first time I understood the heavenly pattern: Jesus is the Victor – we’re the enforcers. Jesus is the redeemer – we’re the releasers. Jesus is the Head – we’re the Body.

Yes, He set the little girl free. Yes, the village turned to the Christ. Yes, Jesus prevailed through the sent one. So the partnership goes on – God and humans. But the correct pattern is critical: My prayers of intercession release Christ’s finished work of intercession.

There are many wounded and hurting individuals “tied to trees” around the world. You may know some at your place of work. Others live across the street from you. Their chains are alcohol, drugs, broken dreams, rejection, money and lust. Come on Church! Let’s “untie” some folks. Let’s tell them there is a God Who cares. Let’s represent – let’s mediate – let’s intercede!

## **Chapter 4 - Meetings: The Good, The Bad And The Ugly**

### **Boy Meets Girl**

“Sir, I want you to meet sister So-and-so.” The world suddenly stood still and my life changed forever. The second most important meeting of my life was taking place – only my introduction to Jesus ranked higher. It was years ago and I was at that time a student in a Bible college. Having just enjoyed a time of private prayer, I emerged from the prayer room to see two individuals carrying a large folding table. One of them was male friend of mine. The other was the most beautiful young lady I had ever seen. Oh, it wasn’t the first time I had seen her, but this was my first face-to-face encounter. My knees felt weak and I couldn’t speak. I nearly tripped over myself in order to grab her end of the table. With a gallant demonstration of manliness and muscle, I relieved her of her burden. I nearly knocked the other guy off his feet showing how fast I could carry the table. God then introduced me to what had to be my “missing rib”, (See Genesis 2:21-22) and I knew life would never be right if I didn’t marry this woman! I told God this. Fortunately, He agreed and so did she. Life is good! I sure am glad that I spent that time in prayer that day. I would not have wanted to miss that meeting!

### **Boy Meets Baseball**

I had another memorable meeting when I was in the sixth standard or grade. This one wasn’t so pleasant. It would also remain with me the rest of my life, however. A baseball met my front teeth; I have two nice caps on my front teeth today as a result of that meeting.

### **God Meets A Mate, Satan Meets His Match**

A figure hangs on a cross between heaven and earth. Two meetings are about to take place – one good and pleasant, one ugly and violent.

A man is about to meet His Bride and a serpent is about to meet a curve ball to the teeth.

*“For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church.”* (Eph 5:31-32)

*“Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God! For thou hast smitten all my enemies on the cheek; thou hast shattered the teeth of the wicked”* (Ps. 3:7).

Such beauty, such ugliness... union, disunion... joining, breaking... Actually, many other meetings took place through the cross.

- Mercy met judgment.
- Righteousness met sin.
- Light met darkness.
- Humility met pride.
- Love met hate.
- Life met death.
- The sting of death met its antidote: resurrection.

Only God could plan such an event and have it turn out perfectly. Only he could marry such extremes in one occurrence.

Who but God could shed blood to create life, and use pain to bring healing? Who but God could allow injustice to satisfy justice, and accept rejection to restore acceptance? Who could use such an evil act to accomplish so much good? Only God.



The serpent accomplished his greatest victory at the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent suffered his greatest defeat at another tree: the Cross of Cavalry (1 Pet. 2:24)

Isn't amazing that the first Adam fell to temptation in the Garden of Eden, and the last Adam (Jesus) overcame His greatest temptation in the garden of Gethsemane?

Think again about these three stories: meeting my wife, the baseball and the Cross. Perhaps you have guessed that hidden somewhere in these three stories are pictures of intercession.

### **Intercession Creates A Meeting**

The Hebrew word for intercession, "*paga*", means: "to meet." As we have already seen, intercession is not only a prayer a person **prays**, but also something a person **does** that can only be done through prayer. In this case, it is "to meet" with God.

### **A Meeting For Reconciliation**

As we have said, on the Cross Jesus **met with** both God and Satan. Our own intercession can be compared to that. When we meet God in intercession, we ask Him to meet with someone else. Often our meeting with God is to cause another meeting – reconciliation. We become the go-between. We might say: "Heavenly Father, I **meet with** you today, asking You to **meet with** my friend."

On the other hand, as Christ did through spiritual warfare, our meeting with the enemy is to **undo** a meeting. It is to cause a breaking, a severing, a disuniting.

All of our prayer in intercession will involve one or both of these ministries – reconciliation of breaking, uniting and disuniting.

Let's look first at a couple of Scriptures that describe what Christ did when He met the Father to create a meeting between God and humanity. Psalm 85:10 say, "*Loving-kindness and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.*"

God's true character is seen through four words in the verse: "*Loving-kindness,*" but He is also a God of "*truth.*" He does not merely represent "*Peace,*" but also "*righteousness.*" Without God's truth and righteousness, there can be no loving-kindness and peace. A holy, righteous, just and true God cannot simply forgive, grant mercy or give peace to a fallen humanity. Sin cannot be excused. It must be judged, and with it sinner is judged, too.

So how can this holy, yet loving, God "marry" these two sides? How can He cause them to meet?

The answer: ON THE CROSS! On the cross, loving-kindness and truth met each other. Righteousness and peace kissed. When this happened, God and humanity truly met!

We kissed the Father through the Son! We met Him through the blood of Christ! To use the metaphor how I met my wife: Jesus "grabbed our end of the table" and was introduced to His Bride.

In one sovereign act of wisdom, God satisfied both His love and His justice. He established the righteousness and peace. When this took place, Christ's ministry of reconciliation was being accomplished. "*God reconciled us to Himself through Christ... God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.*" (2 Cor. 5:18-19). Because we now represent Christ in His intercession, let's apply these verses to ourselves. In 2 Corinthians 5:18 says, "... *He gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*" Through our praying intercession, we release the power of what Jesus did through His act of intercession on the Cross. We bring individuals to God in prayer asking the Father to meet with them. We, too, have been given the ministry of reconciliation. Whether we are praying for the person or a nation, we are being used to create a meeting between God and humans. This way we release the power and fruit of Christ's work. This can happen if you walk through your neighborhood asking God to meet with families and save them. It happens as you kneel besides your bed in prayer. Every time you intercede in prayer you are creating a meeting between God and people.

### **Meetings That Heal**

I have witnessed miracles of healing because of intercession. Once my wife, another couple and I were ministering to an elderly lady who had recently been saved. We have gone to her home to

share some teaching with her. Six month earlier this lady had fallen from a stool and broken her ankle. As is often the case with the elderly, the fracture was not healing well. Her ankle was still badly swollen and she was in much pain. While we visited with her, the other gentleman and I both sensed that God wanted to heal her ankle – right then.

We shared this with her and she agreed to have us pray. We asked her to prop her leg on a stool. In prayer, I stepped between her and God to effect a meeting. At that moment the presence of God came so powerfully into that room that I stopped at once. I had taken only one step toward her and uttered one word: “Father.” That was all God needed! It seemed He was so eager to touch this dear lady that He couldn’t wait any longer. The presence of the Holy Spirit filled the room so strongly that I froze in my tracks, stopped speaking and began to weep. My wife and other couple also began to weep. The lady we were ministering to began to weep. Her foot began to bounce up and down on the stool, shaking uncontrollably for several minutes. She was having a powerful encounter with the Holy Spirit – a meeting! The Lord healed her and filled her with His Spirit.

On the same visit my wife and I, along with the couple previously mentioned, were asking to pray for a woman hospitalized with tuberculosis. We found her in a ward with approximately 40 other women. The beds were only about three feet apart. As we talked and prayed with her; we noticed the lady in the next bed watching us closely. When we finished she asked if we would be willing to pray for her, Of course we were glad to and inquired about her need. She pulled her arms out from under the covers and showed us her two hands, curled back toward her body, somewhat frozen in that position. She could not use them at all. Her feet also were in the same condition. While she was in the hospital for the back surgery, the doctor had accidentally cut a nerve in her spinal cord. This left her in this condition. There was nothing they could do correct the problem.

Compassion filled our hearts as we asked the Lord to meet her need. Nothing noticeable happened, but we encouraged her to trust the Lord. We moved across the room to see if we could share Jesus with anyone else. Then we heard a sudden commotion and screaming. We turned to look and saw the lady moving her hands wildly, opening and closing them, wiggling her fingers, kicking her feet under the covers and shouting “miracle.” A meeting had taken place! The next thing we knew, every woman in the room begging us to minister to them. We went from bed to bed, leading woman to Christ and praying for their recoveries. We were having the revival in the hospital ward!

Several were saved. The lady with tuberculosis was also healed, and another lady who had been scheduled for the surgery the following morning was sent home healed instead. What on earth can turn a sad, hopeless, disease-filled ward into a Church service? God! God meeting with people. Prayer meetings create God meetings!

I don’t want to mislead you into thinking that the miracles will always happen as easily as they did on these two occasions. However, we can bring individuals into contact with God and that is the very meaning of the word “intercession.” It often requires much intercession. However, it takes days or minutes, it’s always worth the effort. The important thing is that we do it.

### **She-Bear Meetings**

Let’s talk now about the breaking aspect of intercession meetings. In these, we enforce the victory of Cavalry. I call this “the bear anointing” because of Proverbs 17:12: “*Let a man meet a bear robbed of her cubs, rather than a fool in his folly.*” I never met a she-bear in the wild with or without her cubs, and I hope I never do. A wise old woodsman gave me the following piece of wisdom: “Son, try to avoid a bear with her cubs, if possible! But if you do meet one, don’t ever get between her and her cubs. If you do, there’s going to be a meeting, and you’re going to get hurt or killed!” I am not trying to say that Proverbs 17:12 is talking about a prayer. I am saying, however, that the word for “meet” in this verse is the Hebrew word “*paga*”, which translated the “intercession.”

Other Hebrew words could have been used here. However, *paga* was chosen partly because it often means something very violent is happening. In fact, *paga* is frequently a battlefield term. (See Judges 8:21; 15:12; 1 Samuel 22:17; 2 Samuel 1:15; 1 Kings 2:25-46).

Intercession can be violent! Meetings can be unpleasant! Some can be very ugly, such as the one Satan had with Jesus at the Cavalry. That was when Christ interceded for us. Satan had come 2349

between God and His children. This could be compared coming between a she-bear and her cubs! Satan's worst nightmare comes true. Jesus met with him at Cavalry. The earth rocked with the force of the battle. The very sun grew dark as the war raged. (See Matthew 27:52, 54). Satan thought he has won his greatest triumph. But then he and all his forces heard the most terrifying sound they had ever heard: God's laugh of derision! (See Psalm 2:4). The laughter was followed by the voice of the Son of man crying with a loud voice, "*It is finished.*" (John 19:30). Please don't think Jesus was talking about the death when He spoke that word. The Greek word used here is "*tetelestai*". It means: "to fully accomplish something or bring it to its completed state."

It was also the word stamped on the purchase in that day meaning: "Paid in full." Jesus was shouting, "The debt is paid in full!" Hallelujah! Christ was quoting from Psalm 22:31 when He chose this statement. Three of His seven sayings on the Cross come from this Psalm. The Hebrew word quoted from this verse is "*asah*". It means: "to create." This same word is used in Genesis when God created the earth. Christ was saying, "The debt was paid in full." I believe He was also saying, "Come forth, new Creation!" No wonder the earth shook, the sun reappeared, the Centurion was terrified and Old Testament saints were resurrected. (See Matthew 27:52-54). Also behind the senses it was violent. Captives were rescued, bruises were inflicted and authority was transferred. (See 1 Peter 2:24; 3:19; 4:6; Isaiah 53:5; 61:1; Genesis 3:15; Matthew 28:18).

An interesting word is used in 1 John 3:8 that adds insight to what happened at the Cross. The verse reads, "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*" "Destroy" is the Greek word "*luo*", which has both legal and physical meaning. Understanding its full meaning will greatly help us to know what Jesus did to Satan and his works.

The legal meaning of *luo* is:

- 1) To pronounce that something or someone is no longer bound;
- 2) To void a contract or anything that legally binds.

Jesus came to dissolve the legal hold Satan had over us and to pronounce that we were no longer bound by his works. He voided "the contract," breaking Satan's dominion over us.

The physical meaning of *luo* is:

- 1) To dissolve or melt,
- 2) To break,
- 3) To beat something to pieces, or
- 4) To untie something that is bound.

In acts 27:41 the boat Paul traveled on was broken to pieces (*luo*) by the force of storm. In 2 Peter 3:10,12. We're told that one day the elements of the earth will melt or dissolve (*luo*) from a great heat. Jesus not only delivered us legally. He also made certain the physical results of that deliverance were clearly shown to everyone. He brought healing, set captives free, lifted oppression and liberated those who were under demonic control.

### **Enforcing The Victory**

Our responsibility is to enforce victory as we also meet the powers of darkness. It is interesting that Jesus used the same word, *luo*, to describe what we, the Church, are to do through spiritual warfare. Matthew 16:19 tells us, "*I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven; and whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatever you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.*" The word loose in this verse is *luo*.

Now, the question is – Did Christ *luo* the works of the devil or do we *luo* the works of the devil? The answer is – Both are true. Jesus fully accomplished the task of breaking the authority of Satan. Jesus voided Satan's legal hold upon the human race. However, someone on earth must represent Him in that victory, and enforce it. This is what exactly what took place in our outreach when we prayed for the little girl tied to a tree (mentioned in the previous chapter). We met the powers of darkness and enforced the victory of the Cross.

Several years ago a friend of mine pointed out a vibrant, healthy young woman. He then told me the following story:

A few months ago, when he first saw this woman, she was paralyzed from the neck down. She could move her head slightly, but could not speak. She had been that way for two years. The doctors could find nothing physically wrong with her to create such a problem. My friend discerned that the cause was demonic. He did not know the church's position about such matters. Therefore, he carefully approached this young lady in her wheelchair. He knelt next to her and whispered in her ear. He prayed: "Satan, I break your hold over this young lady in the name of Jesus. I command you to loose your hold over her and let her go." No manifestations or immediate changes occurred. A week later, however, she was able to move her arms little. The following week she was moving her arms normally and her legs slightly. The recovery continued for a month until she was totally free and well.

She then told my friend the following details about the cause of her condition:

"A teacher in my school, who was also a witch doctor, made a sexual advances toward me, which I refused. He grew angry and told me that if I didn't have sex with him, he would place a curse on me." She knew nothing about the evil curses and didn't think much about it. A short time later, however, this condition of paralysis comes upon her. Her inability to speak prevented her from communicating with anyone about what had taken place.

What happened to bring about the girl's freedom? An individual stepped between this young lady and the powers of darkness. He met them in the name Jesus, enforcing Jesus' victory. That is intercession! A meeting can be a pleasant experience, or it can be a violent confrontation between opposing forces. The intercessor may meet with God for the purpose of reconciling the world to the Father and His wonderful blessings. On the other hand, he may meet satanic forces of opposition in order to enforce the victory of Cavalry.

The purpose of the meeting will vary, but one thing is certain. The prayers of an understanding intercessor WILL create a meeting. And when the meeting comes close, something will have changed. Don't be intimidated by the size of this giant. Jesus has qualified you to represent Him. And don't be intimidated by past failures. You can do it! Let's have prayer meeting!

## **Chapter 5 - Cheek To Cheek**

### **Lean On Me**

The Bible says, "*Weep with those who weep*" (Rom. 12:15) and "*Bear one another's burden*" (Gal. 6:2). This involves standing together, sharing each other's pain. However, these verses mean even more than that. We are not merely to carry burdens for our brothers and sisters in Christ; we are to carry them away. This involves removing a load. Actually, two words are used for "bear" or "bearing" in the New Testament. The first one, "*anechomai*", means: "to sustain, bear or hold up against a thing." Have you ever seen tomato plant loaded with tomatoes? The weight of the fruit can bend the branches so far they can break. To help the plant, the gardener will tie a stake to tomato plant to keep the branches from drooping and breaking from the weight they carry. The strength of the stake is given to the plant. Therefore, the stake "bears up" the plant.

When the Lord commands us to bear with one another in Colossians 3:13 and Ephesians 4:2, He isn't simply saying, "Tolerate one another." He is telling us to do that, but He is also saying, "Stake yourselves to one another." In other words, we are to come alongside a weak brother or sister who is "weighed down" and say, "You're not going to fall and be broken, because I am staking myself to you. My strength is now yours. Go ahead, lean on me. As long as I can stand, you will." What a wonderful picture for the Body of the Christ. Fruit will result.

### **Carry The Burden Away**

The second for "bearing" is "*bastazo*", meaning: "to bear, lift or carry." This word has the idea of carrying something away or removing it. It is used in Romans 15:1-3 and Galatians 6:2.

Christ performed both of these bearing ideas. In fact, He was the perfect example of both “staking” Himself to us, and carrying away our burdens.

We have already established that His intercession for us was not a **prayer** He prayed, but a **work** He did. It was work of “going between” to **reconcile** us to the Father, and **break** Satan’s dominion. Understanding His work in this area opens the way for us to understand our work of intercession, too. The intercessory work of Christ reached its fullest and deepest expression when our sins were “laid on” Him and He “bore” them away: *“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.....he hath poured out*

*his soul until death; and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”* (Is. 53:6,12). The Hebrew word *paga* was used twice in these two verses. The first time it is translated “laid on.” The other time it is translated to “intercession.” Both times refer to our sins, iniquities and diseases being placed upon Him.

The New Testament describes this action in this way: *“He (God) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be made sin on our behalf, that they might become the righteousness of God in Him (Jesus)”* (2 Cor. 5:21). Christ then “bore” our sins and weaknesses away, *“as far as the east is from the west”* (Ps. 103:12). He is not still carrying them. He got rid of them. The Hebrew word for “bore” or “bare” in the verse is *“nasa”*. It means: “to bear away” or “remove to a distance.” This idea of bearing something to get rid of it is very important. It is even more important when we think of our own role in Christ’s ministry of intercession.

It is essential to know that we don’t simply carry someone’s burden. We stake (*anechomai*) ourselves to the person and carry the burden away (*bastazo*). We help them to get rid of their burden!

### **The Scapegoat**

A scapegoat is one who bears someone else’s blame and resulting punishment. There was an Old Testament pageant enacted yearly that illustrates this.

Once a year, on the day of Atonement, the high priest of Israel was to select a goat to bear away the sins of the nation. (Lev. 16:7-22). This goat was called the scapegoat. The scapegoat was brought to Aaron, the high priest. *“And Aaron lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all the transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat...”* (Lev. 16:21). By placing his hands on the scapegoat’s head, Aaron was transferring the sins of the people he confessed to the scapegoat. When the sins had been confessed and transferred to the scapegoat, the goat was led into the wilderness and released there to perish under this burden of sin. The Old Testament scapegoat symbolized Christ who is our scapegoat. *“The next day John saw Jesus...and said, Behold the Lamb of God, which bears away the sins of the world.”* (John 1:29). Just as the scapegoat died outside the camp of Israel in the wilderness, Jesus was crucified outside the city bearing away our curse or punishment for sin (Heb. 13:11-13).

Christ, our scapegoat, bearing our curses is well illustrated by a story I once read. The story has been edited in order to simplify it:

There was a couple who discovered that their 14-year-old son Steven had lied to them. The young boy has skipped school for three days in a row. When discovered, he lied to his parents about this. The parents were more upset by Steven’s lies than his missing school. After praying with him about what he had done, they decided on a very unusual and severe punishment. Steven’s father said to him, “Your mother and I must make you understand the seriousness of lies you told for three days. Your discipline will be this: for the next three days you must go to attic and stay there by yourself. You will even eat and sleep there.” So young Steven headed off to the attic and the bed prepared him for there. It was long evening for Steven, and perhaps longer for Mom and Dad. Neither could eat or sleep. Finally, it was 2.00 A.M. and the parents were still wide awake. “I can’t stand this any longer!” murmured Dad as he climbed out of bed grabbing a pillow and a blanket. “I’m going to the attic.” He found Steven much as he expected – wide awake, too, with tears in his eyes.

“Steven,” said the father, “I can’t take away the punishment for your lies because you must discover how serious it is to lie. But your mother and I can’t bear the thought of you being all alone

herein the attic, so I'm going to share your punishment with you." Father laid down next to his son and the two put their arms around each other's necks. The tears on their cheeks mingled as they shared the same pillow and the same punishment for three nights.

What a picture! Two thousand years ago God crawled "out of bed with His blanket and pillow." He "staked" His tear-stained cheek next to ours and "bore" our punishment for sin. His attic was a tomb and His bed was a slab rock. The cheek next to Him was yours and mine. Christ was not alone on the Cross. We were with Him. He was actually there to join us in our punishment of death. We may not have been there physically, but we were there spiritually (See Romans 6:4,6). As he hung there He was "bearing" some things. Our sins were being "laid on" Him and He was carrying them away.

Christ didn't quite finish the job, however. You may not agree with this, but let's look at Colossians 1:24: "*Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of his Body the Church in filling up that which is lacking in Christ's affections.*"

### **Our Part**

"*Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.*" (Rom. 15:1-2). "*Bear one another's burdens, and thus fulfill the law of Christ.*" (Gal. 6:2). The Greek word for "bear" in both verses is "*bastazo*", which means: "to lift or carry." It gives the idea of removing or carrying away. In doing Christ's priestly ministry of intercession, we're not simply to carry burdens for others. We are to carry them away from others, just as Jesus did.

Please, remember, however, we're not literally re-doing what Christ did. We're re-presenting what He did. There is a big difference between the two. We are representing Christ. He bore our infirmities, diseases, sins, reproaches and rejection when they were "laid on" (*paga*) Him. We are to extend this work in the world today.

He is the balm of Gilead (Jer. 8:22), but we put on the healing salve.

He is the fountain of life (Jer. 2:13; 17:13), but we give out His living water.

He owns the comforting shepherd's staff (Ps. 23:4), but He allows us the privilege of using it.

Not only did He bear our weaknesses, but He also still "*touched with the feeling of our infirmities*" (Heb. 4:15). He wants to touch us with that same compassion so that we might be bearers, too.

The great Healer wants to "heal" through us. The great High Priest wants to "perform His priestly duties" through us. The great Lover wants to "love" through us.

He created the new covenant with his blood (Heb. 12:24). However, He has "*made us able ministers of the New Testament*" (2 Cor. 3:6) ("Testament" is just a Bible word for "covenant".) Yes, Christ has made us "able ministers." Ministers administer something. What do we administer? The blessings and the provisions of the new covenant.

Who secured and guarantees those benefits? Jesus, of course. Then, this verse is just a way of saying that we have been made able distributors of what Christ has already done.

### **Released Through Others Coming To Your Aid**

To realize I am an able minister of the new covenant became alive for me through my friend. I suddenly gained understanding as he said, "Sometimes the covenant of the Lord is released to you through others coming to your aid."

At that time my friend and his wife were serving the Lord abroad. They had been in a life-and-death struggle with their son. The young boy had contracted a critical illness and was near death. That's when he called me on the telephone.

"I am sorry to interrupt you," my friend began, "But I desperately need your help." "What is it?" I asked.

"It's my son," he replied, "He is deathly ill with a raging fever. The doctors haven't been able to find the cause. They have done all they know to do, but nothing seems to help. It is not certain he can survive another night in this condition."

"I have been praying and praying for him; but can't seem to break the attack. The Lord has revealed to me that his illness is caused by a strong spirit of infirmity. I have not being able to break its

power over my son, even though I have warred against it for hours.” “However, I feel that the Lord has shown me that I should contact some strong intercessors. If they will join me in the prayer, we can break this attack.”

My friend and his wife are strong in the Lord. They pray. They have faith. They understand authority. They were not in sin. Why could they not get the break-through they needed on their son? I don't know. But I suspect the Lord wanted to teach an important principle to those of us who were praying. We went into the prayer. We asked to meet *paga* with this child. We said, “Father, allow us to move into our priestly role as intercessors (*paga*), enforcing the victory of Jesus in this situation. Allow us to re-present the blessings of the new covenant. Stake us to the child. Allow us along with Christ, to be touched with the feeling of this infirmity. Lay on (*paga*) us this burden that we might bear it away (*nasa, bastazo*). We ask this in Jesus' name – based Who He is and what He has done, Father.”

We then bound the power of Satan over this child's life. We did this in Christ' name, of course, because it was His victory we were “administering.”

My friend called back a few hours later and said, “Almost immediately I contacted several of you to pray with me, the fever broke and my son began to improve. Within a few hours he was well and released from the hospital.” Praise God! The Body of Christ has acted as the Lord intended. Jesus was glorified. My friend continued, “I asked the Lord why I needed others to help break this attack against my son. He reminded the story of Joshua and the army of Israel coming to aid of the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites were outnumbered by five armies.”

He then recounted the story from Joshua 9 and 10 for me:

The Gibeonites were one of the Canaanite tribes that Joshua and Israel was supposed to destroy. When they first marched past Jericho to possess their inheritance – the land of Canaan. The Gibeonites didn't want to die so they deceived the Israelites in order to obtain a covenant of friendship with them. They caused the Israelites to believe they had come from a far country in order entreat their mercy and enter a covenant with them. Joshua and the Israelites did not pray about this. They were quite flattered that people who purported to come from some far away would be entreating them for a covenant friendship. They were therefore deceived into a binding agreement with the Gibeonites. (Have you ever gotten into trouble because you didn't pray about the matter first?)

The covenant was valid, and made Israel an ally of Gibeon. A few days later five armies marched against Gibeon. Because of the covenant, Gibeon called upon Joshua for help. Joshua and his armies traveled all night to arrive in time to rescue the Gibeonites. This story is an incredible demonstration of the power of covenant.

After calling my attention to this story, my friend spoke these word to me: “After reminding you of this story, the Lord planted the following thought in my heart: Sometime the covenant of the Lord is released to you through others coming to your aid! “Isn't that wonderful? The Almighty administrating the blessings of the covenant through us. That's what intercession is all about.

*Paga*: He “lays on” us someone else's need.

*Anechomai*: We “stake” ourselves to that person.

*Bastazo*: We “carry away” the weakness or burden.

### **Enforcing and Trading Upon The Enemy**

Another picture of this partnership between Christ and the Church is shown in this same story of Israel and the Gibeonites. It's found in Joshua 10:22-27. Joshua is an Old Testament picture of Church. Even Joshua's name is the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek name, Jesus. According to covenant, Joshua defended the Gibeonites by defeating the five Canaanite armies. Then the kings of these armies fled to hide in a cave. Upon discovering them, Joshua ordered the kings to be brought to him. He made them lie down on the ground. He was about to place his foot on their necks to display his conquest, as was the custom in those days. However, rather than place his foot on the necks of these kings, Joshua summoned some of his soldiers and had them do it. This gives us literal picture of Christ and the Church, His army.

Jesus fulfilled this prophetic picture when He defeated Satan and rule of the darkness of this world. He too, called members of his army (us) to Him and said, “ You put your feet on the necks of these enemies.” Ephesians 2:6 teach that Jesus “*raised us up with Him.*” Christ is saying to us, “It’s not only my victory, it’s yours. What I have done, you must enforce. I have conquered the powers of the darkness and present them to you to put your feet on their necks. They are under my authority. However, you must exercise that authority in individual situation.”

That is why Romans 16:20 says, “*And the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*” Luke 10:19 tell us, “*Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpent and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you.*” This is what happened when we helped my friend overcome the raging fever (spirit of infirmity) that threatened to kill his son. There was an enforcing and treading. Sometime a “laying on” requires a “treading upon”!

Psalms 110 also pictures our partnership with Christ. An amazing prophecy in this Psalm foretells the resurrection of Christ and His ascension to the right hand of the father. The New Testament parallel passage is found in Ephesians Chapter One. At the time of His ascension and enthronement God the Father had already placed all spiritual dominions and other authorities under Christ’s feet: “*And He [the Father] put all things in subjection under His [Jesus] feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.*” (Eph. 1:22) “*For He [the Father] has put all things in subjection under His [Jesus] feet. But when he says. But, ‘All things are put in subjection,’ it is evident that He [the Father] is expected who put all things in subjection to Him [Jesus]*” (1 Cor. 15:27).

However, Psalm 110 informs us that Jesus is still waiting for “all things” to become His footstool: The Father says to the Son, “*Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.*” (Ps 110:1). Do we have contradiction between this Messianic prophecy and the New Testament verses? Is Christ waiting for all things to be under His feet, or are they already under His feet? Are they under His feet **now**, or **will** they be placed there? The answer is YES to both!

All things are under His feet legally through the Cross. They will be literally under His feet as we do our part. Verses 2 and 3 of Psalm 110 describe our part: “*The Lord will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion, saying, ‘Rule in the midst of your enemies.’ Thy people will volunteer freely in the day of your power.*” The word “power” in the passage is the Hebrew word “*chayil*”. It is also translated “army”. Christ is looking for a volunteer army that will stretch forward His long scepter of authority. They will rule in the midst of their enemies, enforcing His great Victory.

Sometimes Christ lays a prayer mission or burden on us (*paga*) so we might bear that burden away (*nasa, bastazo*). Often the task involves the warfare. ...Both the Hebrew and the Greek words used for “tread” involve the concept of violence or war. They are “*darak*” (Hebrew), and “*poteo*” (Greek). The Hebrew word *darak* actually came to be used for: “bending the bow” when about to shoot an arrow. It is still used in Israel for the command “Load your weapons.”

Both words are used for treading or trampling in a wine press. This is fitting symbol of Christ overcoming His enemies in Isaiah 63:3 and Revelation 19:15. The verse in Revelation says, “*And from his mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it he might smite the nations; and He rule them with a rod of iron; and he treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty.*”

These same two words are used to describe not only Christ at war, but also our warfare. In Joshua 1:3 the Lord said to Joshua, “*Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, I have given it to you, just as I spoke to Moses.*” The word “tread,” of course, is *darak*. God wasn’t telling Israel that everywhere they walked or stepped was theirs. He had already marked off the boundaries of the inheritance. He meant, “I am going to you give every place where you are willing to load your bow and use your weapons.”

Was God **giving** victory, or were they **taking** it? Both are true! Remember that the previous generation under Moses was afraid and wouldn’t load their weapons and fight. Therefore God wouldn’t give them the land. (See Numbers 14:1-39).

Please, don’t think for a moment that it’s any different for us today. These things happened to Israel as types or shadows for us (See 1 Corinthians 10: 6,11). What Jesus has and is giving to us won’t automatically come to us just because we belong to Him. We, too, must take, “*the weapons of our*



*warfare*” (See 2 Corinthians 10:4) and *darak!* That is, we must tread down our spiritual enemies with our spiritual weapons if we are to inherit God’s promises to us.

The way we do this is through intercession. Often we must climb into our brothers’ and sisters’ attics of despair. We must place our cheeks next to theirs and carry away their burdens or weaknesses.

- May Christ live through you!
- May that which is lacking in our Christ’s afflictions – our part – be lacking no more!
- May the scepter be extended from us as we rule in the midst of our enemies! May we make them His footstool!
- May the covenant of the Lord be administered in the earth!

### **Only A Piece Of Bread**

The following father-and-son story serves as a fitting end to this chapter:

In spite of repeated warnings, a small boy continued coming home later after school. One morning his parents informed him that there was no more grace. He must arrive on time that evening. However, he was late again.

At dinner that night the young man discovered his punishment. On his plate was only a piece of bread. The boy was shocked and dismayed. The father waited for a few moments for the full impact to do its work. Then he took the boy’s plate and filled it up with meat and potatoes.

When the boy was grown to manhood he said, “All my life I have known what God is like by what my father did that night.” To be like Christ will cost us. The work of intercession has a price. Let’s pay it. Let’s push back from our bountiful table once in a while and show someone what God is like.

### **Questions For Reflection**

1. Explain the two types of bearing in the Scriptures. How do they help explain intercession? What does *paga* have to do with bearing?
2. Can you explain how the scapegoat is a picture of intercession?
3. How is the account of Joshua and the Israelites in Joshua 10:22-27 a picture of the partnership between Christ and the Church?
4. In what way does Psalm 110 picture the relationship between Jesus and the Church?
5. Have you told Jesus today that you love Him?

## **Chapter 6 - No Trespassing**

“No dumping allowed. Trespassers will be punished.”

This is a sign often seen in public places, in parks, wherever boundaries are set. People must obey these boundaries or else suffer from the consequences. There is an aspect of intercession that relates to the protective boundaries. This is rather like posting signs in the Spirit. The signs would read, “No dumping allowed, Satan. Trespassers will be punished.” Joshua chapter 19 describes the boundaries of each of the tribes of Israel. In this chapter the word *paga* (intercession) is used several times. When used in this way, *paga* is: the extent to which a boundary reaches.

Does it surprise you that the word used for intercession, *paga*, can also be translated “boundary?” It really shouldn’t surprise you. It is completely logical that boundaries of protection be linked to a prayer. We CAN build boundaries of protection around others and ourselves through intercession. What a comfort to know that this truth is found in the very meaning of the Hebrew word for “intercession!”

Many Christians believed that protection from accidents, destruction and satanic attacks is automatic for the Christian. Many believe that we do nothing to cause this protection. They believe that this protection is based on the sovereignty of God alone.

In other words many believe that when God wants to protect us from these things, He does. They also feel that when He chooses not to protect us, He allows bad things to happen. This belief simply means that our deliverance from destructive things is based entirely on God, not us. Those who hold to this teaching usually believe in this way: Nothing can happen to a Christian that is not allowed by God. Others go so far as to say this is true for everyone, not just Christians. They believe God is in control on everything that happens on earth.

Actually, God is not directly in control of everything that takes place on the earth. We can see this in the following facts:

- God would never decide a person should be raped or abused.
- God would never desire that the innocent suffer.
- God's will never choose the many forms of murder seen in the world today.

### **Governing Principles**

Does God directly control every event in the life of a Christian? This question can be answered by the basic laws of sowing and reaping. For an answer we can look at cause and effect, individual responsibility and the free will. These things are not erased when we come to Christ.

Yes, God has given us many precious promises. However, all promises from God are attached to conditions. These conditions are called "governing principles." This means that, in order to obtain a certain promise, we must fulfill a certain condition. Most, if not all, of these conditions involve responsibility on our part. We must think a certain way, do a certain thing, or believe a certain truth in order to receive the promise. Receiving protection is no exception. Most of us don't like the idea. It threatens us. It somehow weakens God in our minds to suggest He's not in total control of everything. Most people are greatly offended by the idea that a failure to receive protection from God could be their fault. They don't want to believe lack of healing or no answer to prayer could be their fault. They don't want to believe that not receiving something from God could possibly be their fault.

Many of the promises in the Bible have to do with believing and then receiving. So often the Bible says if we believe and do not doubt we'll receive (See Matthew 17:20; 21:21; Mark 11:22-24; James 1:6-7). Therefore, why are we opposed to a teaching that says our unbelief kept us from receiving from God? The Bible says that we "*through faith and patience inherit the promises*" (Heb. 6:12). Then why are we offended when it is shown that our inability to preserve created lack? The Bible says if we're "*willing and obedient*" we'll eat the good of the land (Is. 1:19). Therefore, why are we confused or angry when it is suggested that our not doing something caused failure?

For example, as many as 80 percent of those who consider themselves born-again don't tithe. By this way, they open themselves to a curse. Yet they are offended when someone says that their lack of provision might be their own fault (See Malachi 3:8-12).

- We don't forgive, and still we think God will hear and answer our prayers (See Mark 11:25-26).

Often, we eat poorly, don't exercise, and hurt our bodies in other ways. Then we blame our sickness on God's will.

- We don't properly train our children. Yet we are offended when someone says that their rebellion might be our own fault (See Deuteronomy 6:7 and Proverbs 22:6).

- We don't abide Christ and His word. Still, we blame it on "God's will" when we "ask what we will" and it isn't done (See John 15:7).

- We know faith comes through hearing and meditating on God's Word (See Romans 10:17). However, most of us do very little of that. Then we are angry when someone says that we didn't receive promise because of our lack of faith.

Psalm 91 is full of protective promises. Some people call it "The Christian's Insurance Policy." There is a condition for receiving the promises. This condition is found in verse 1: "*He that dwells in the secret place of the most High*" receives the promises in the rest of that Psalm.

Ephesians 6:13-18 tells us that we have spiritual armor we must wear to ward off Satan's fiery darts. This armor includes a shield of faith (See verse 16). Can we expect victory over Satan if we don't wear the spiritual armor?

I Peter 5:8 makes it plain that “*the devil, as a roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour.*” James 4:7 tells me that I am to resist the devil. However, I am offended if someone suggests me that my lack of protection from some bad thing could be my own fault. How about you? Do you get offended, too?

I’m certainly not saying that God never allows us to walk through difficulties. I am not saying that all our problems are because of disobedience. I am not saying that all unanswered prayer is because of our unbelief. I am saying that many of our failures and difficulties are our fault. They are not all “God’s will.”

We have part to play in getting the protection and other heavenly provisions.

- Let’s try to lay down our fears, insecurities and offenses.
- Let’s accept the fact that the Scriptures are filled with the principles that put responsibility on us. These responsibilities must be met to receive God’s promises.
- Let’s realize this doesn’t teach salvation by works. It doesn’t cancel grace. However, grace does not imply “no responsibility” on our part.
- Let’s realize the love of God is unconditional, But his favor and blessings are not.
- Let’s cast off all laziness and lack of desire toward God.
- Let’s realize we will fall short at times. Let’s not feel condemned when we do.

### **Building Boundaries Through Prayer**

Do we now agree that we must take action to secure protection? One of the actions is building boundaries (*paga*) of protection through the prayer.

There is the story of a pastor who years ago received divine protection. He did this by building boundaries of protection through prayer. This pastor has developed the discipline of beginning every day with an hour of prayer. One day, however, he felt strong leading of the Holy Spirit to pray longer. He continued for a second hour. After two hours he still felt the need to keep on praying. He continued on for a third hour, asking for God’s protection and blessing on his day. He also prayed for other things. Finally he felt released from the need of pray longer, so he stopped. That evening, as he was working in his yard, he felt something repeatedly brush up against his leg. He looked down and saw a rattlesnake trying to strike him. However, it just couldn’t hit him! Instead, it kept brushing either side of his leg.

Why had the man felt the need to pray longer that morning? What was he doing actually when he prayed? Among other things he was building the “boundaries” of protection through prayer – *paga*. Some would say that God doesn’t need three hours of praying to protect one from rattlesnake. I would agree. God didn’t “need” seven days of marching around Jericho to tear it down either. But He chose it to do that way. He doesn’t “need” to spit in person’s eyes to heal them, but Jesus did that. Why He requires things to be done certain ways, we don’t always know. However, we do know that for us – **obedience is the key.** If He says, “three hours,” then hours is exactly what it will take.

### **Dwelling In The Secret Place**

Steady effort is also a key when it comes to prayer of protection. We must “dwell” in the secret place to “abide” under the Almighty’s protective shadow: “*He that dwells in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*” (Ps 91:1).

Jesus said that the “secret” place is the prayer closet in Matthew 6:6. The word “dwell” in Psalm 91:1 is “*yashab*”, which means: “to remain or abide.”

The point is that the prayer must be a lifestyle, not an activity we do once in a while. We must make the secret place our “dwelling” place. Many believers’ times of prayer are not frequent or steady enough to build solid wall of protection.

The word “abide” in Psalm 91:1 is “*luwn*”, which means: among other things, “to spend the night.” Let’s read it through that meaning: “*He that dwells in the secret place of the most High, shall spend the night under the shadow of Almighty.*” In other words, the prayer is like the Word of God. What we read today can’t last for the entire week. We must have daily “bread” or manna. Likewise, we

must go to the secret place **daily**. When we do, we can “spend the night” there. Tomorrow, however, we must go again. To pray with steady effort is the key.

There was a minister who served on the ship during the World War II. Everyday, he and a few other sailors would have a prayer time. They would seek God for protection for themselves and the ship.

What were they doing? They were building boundaries (*paga*) of protection. The minister related, “In one battle an enemy plane dropped a bomb onto the deck of our ship. However, instead of exploding, the bomb bounced off the deck and in the water. It bounced just like a rubber ball!” This minister said that in battle after battle that ship and its men were miraculously spared.

### **Well-Timed Times To Pray**

Boundaries to protection! Life in the secret place!

The part of intercession is not only to be something we can do on a general regular basis. There are also specific times when the Holy Spirit will alert us to particular situations needing protective prayer. These are what Bible calls “*kairos*” times.

There are only two Greek words for “time.” One is “*chronos*”, which is the **general** time in which anything is done. The time on a clock would be *chronos* time. The other word, “*kairos*”, is the **strategic or right** time. It is the perfect point of time at which something **should be done**.

A special time of opportunity would be *kairos*. The exactly right time for an attack in war would be *kairos*. When someone is in danger or about to be attacked by Satan, that is *kairos* to the intercessor. The Bible speaks of well-timed (*kairos*) temptations (See Luke 4:13; 8:13). There’s no doubt a temptation sometimes simply happen. A person just happens to be in the working place at the wrong time. But the enemy also can bring well-planned, well-timed temptations. It is important to be alert, for ourselves and for others. I’ve had the Holy Spirit prompt me to pray for young believers, with the thought, “it’s a time (*kairos*) of temptations for them.” This is what took place in Luke 22:31- 32, when Jesus interceded for Peter. Jesus prayed that Peter’s faith would not fail him after he denied Christ. Jesus’ prayer for Peter was answered.

There are those who have fallen away from Christ. Would this have been prevented if someone had interceded for them?

The Scriptures also inform us of specially timed persecutions (See Acts 12:1; 19:23). This is usually planned by the enemy to discourage us. It can also distract or even destroy us. During certain times of renewal and the success in the early church, Satan launched attacks of persecution. His attacks failed, for the believers were interceding. Is it possible that much successful per-secution against the Church could be stopped? Could it be stopped if we were alert and interceded against it? Often we forget the instruction to not lean on our own understanding (See Proverbs 3:5-6). At those times we fail to acknowledge the Lord in our intercession. We do not wait for or listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. This usually hurts us. We forget that, “*we wrestle not against flesh and blood*” (Eph. 6:12). We neglect the fact that the “*weapons of our warfare are not carnal*” (2 Cor. 10:4). We are so afraid of becoming too conscious of demons that we become demon unconscious. Sometimes our seeking for balance gets us out of balance.

Ephesians 6:18 say that we are to “*be on the alert...for all the saints*” and “*pray at all [kairos] times in the Spirit.*” God is not telling us to pray all the time. That would be *chronos*. Rather He tells us to pray at all **special** times (*kairos*). In other words, we are in a war.

If we are alert, the Holy Spirit will warn us of the special, well-timed attacks of the enemy. Then we can create a boundary [*paga*] of protection by praying.

### **Kairos, A Time To Paga**

Several Years ago I was praying, the Lord gave me a mental picture. Some might call it a vision. Whatever it is called, I saw something. It was a rattlesnake coiled at my dad’s feet.

That seemed like a *kairos* time to me! I spent about 15 minutes praying earnestly for his protection until I felt released. The next day my dad called me from another state. He said, “You’ll never guess what happened yesterday. Mum went out back to the shed. She normally would walk right in.

But this time she pushed the door open, stopped and looked down. There, where she was about to step, was a coiled rattlesnake. She backed away carefully. She came and got me and I killed it.”

I said to Dad, “Yes, I know.” Surprised, he asked, “How did you know?” “I saw it in the spirit,” I responded, “and prayed for your protection. Praise God!” What was I doing as I prayed for him? Setting boundaries (*paga*) of protection around him and Mum.

How did I pray? I asked the Father to protect them. I bound any attempt of Satan to harm them. I quoted a Bible verse or two that promises the protection. Then I prayed in the Spirit.

### A Mother’s Prayers

I had a friend who experienced as interesting answer to prayer in a *kairos* situation. She had gone early one morning to visit her son and daughter-in-law. The son worked in an all-night shift. Awaiting his return from the work, his wife and mother visited for a while. As time wore on and son didn’t arrive, they began to feel uneasy. Something didn’t seem right. Thinking that perhaps he was still at work, they called his place of employment, “No” they told, “he has left already.” Becoming more alarmed, the mother said, “I’m concerned. Let’s drive toward his place of work.” She had assumed her son had left work at his normal time and should have been home by then. In fact, he had left work just moments before their call. But, the Lord was even directing in that. Though this young man was not in any danger yet, the Holy Spirit knew a *kairos* moment was coming for him. The Lord wanted this praying mother there when it happened.

The mother and the daughter-in-law drove toward workplace on a busy highway. Then they saw him coming from the other direction on his motorcycle, traveling about 60 to 70 kilometers per hour. As they watched he fell asleep and veered off the road. He hit the curb and flew 40 feet through the air. He was not even wearing the helmet. As the boy was moving through the air, his mother was praying, “Jesus, protect my son!” She continued to pray as they turned around and drove back to him. They ran to the scene wondering what they would find. A crowd had already gathered around him.

They found a miracle! No injuries of any kind – no cuts, no broken bones or internal injuries. There was just a young dazed man... wondering what had happened. *Kairos* and *paga* happened! Boundaries happened. A mother has received a warning from the Holy Spirit. Therefore, she was in the right place at the right time.

Does this mean you are to blame if you weren’t there praying when someone you loved had an accident? Would their injury or death be your fault? Of course not. It simply means we must be alert. When warnings do come from the Holy Spirit, we must respond by praying. We must build some boundaries. Boundaries of protection sometimes are built in an instant. Other times there is a whole **season** of intercession in which they are built.

A man I know told an interesting story involving *kairos* season of building boundaries (*paga*). This man had the same vivid dream many times. It was of her married daughter dying. He felt it strongly it was the warning from the Lord. In the dream he has not shown how her death happened. However, he felt that Satan had a plan to take his daughter’s life. He didn’t want to alarm her, so he told only his son-in-law. The two of them began to intercede (*paga*) daily for her safety. They were building boundaries (*paga*) of protection around her.

Several times a day, whenever it came to mind, he would bind Satan’s plan to take her daughter’s life. He said things like:

- “Father, I bring my daughter to You.” (He was creating a “meeting” [*paga*] with God.)
- “I ask you to protect her from any trap of Satan has set for her. You said: You would ‘*deliver us from the snare of the trapper*’ (Ps. 91:3). (Here he was building boundaries of protection.)”
- “Thank You for laying this prayer burden on me that I might carry it away from her (*nasa*) this treat of death.” (He was having someone’s burden or weaknesses “laid on” himself.)
- “Satan, I bind this plan of yours. Your weapons against her won’t prosper, and you are not going to take her life.” (He was “meeting” [*paga*] the enemy to break Satan’s evil purposes.)
- “I do this in the name of Jesus!” (Here he was basing all his prayers on the work of Jesus Christ has already done. He was representing Christ. He was administering what Jesus had already accomplished. He was enforcing Jesus’ victory.)

About a month later, after he had prayed daily for a season, his daughter received promotion at work. With the promotion came the life insurance policy, which required a physical exam. During the exam, a doctor took a sample of her blood. He suddenly became very frightened. He said, “Lady, what have you been doing in your diet? We can find no potassium at all in your blood! You should be dead! There is no reasonable explanation why you are alive.” Potassium is a necessary mineral. When there is not enough of it in a person’s blood, they usually feel fine but suddenly drop dead. The doctor rushed the woman to the hospital and began to give her potassium. She lived, of course. She had been on strange diet of only two kinds of food for several weeks. There was no reasonable explanation as to why she lived. However, we know the Spiritual explanation: There was a boundary (*paga*) of protection built through prayer.

### **Under The Shadow Of The Most High: *Keep Out!***

Perhaps the most amazing example of *kairos* intercession in my life happened on one of my journeys. I was one of the 45 individuals traveling to a remote place on a River in the Jungle. Our mission was to build a clinic and outreach station on the river. We were to construct two buildings, as well as preach in nearby villages. It was an amazing trip. We ate monkey and snake meat. I was definitely used to this diet. We killed huge tarantulas (spiders). We also killed nine-inch scorpion (poisonous insect) and a deadly coral snake in our camp. I was attacked by ants that had taken the refuge in the lumber we were sleeping on. We flew in unsafe, old army planes. Before we landed, goats had to be cleared from the landing fields.

Before leaving for the jungle, we spent our first night in the City. We had arranged months earlier for the airlines to fly us the following day into the jungle. On our arrival at the airport, we were informed that they had changed their plans. They would fly us to our destination a day later than we expected. Our leader felt it important to go on the day first scheduled. For three hours we tried to get the airlines to honor their original agreement.

“No,” the airline manager said, “we take you tomorrow.”

“But you agreed months ago to take us today,” We argued. “We have no pilot available,” they said. “Find one,” we pleaded.

“What is your hurry? Enjoy the city,” they encouraged us.

And so it went for three hours. We were in and out of offices, meeting with one official, then another. Finally, one of them threw up his hands and said, “Okay, we take you now! Get on that plane quickly!”

We all ran to the plane, throwing our bags and tools into the baggage area. We wanted to leave before they changed their minds. The plane finally took off with us on board. That night, a terrible earthquake hit the City and killed tens of thousands of people in 34 seconds! By that time we were 250 miles away. If we had stayed in the city one more night (as the airlines wanted us to) some of our team would have been killed and others injured. We know this for certain because, on our return to the city, we saw that the building we had stayed in. There were huge beams lying across the beds! Now I will explain how intercessory prayer fits into this story. There was a woman who was an intercessor in our church back in our city. She had received a strong burden from the Lord to pray for us. That was on the second day of our journey. For three hours she was in an intense intercession for us. Can you guess which three hours? Yes – the three hours that our leaders were talking with the airlines officials. If we had stayed in that City another night, our lives would have been in terrible danger. We didn’t know that, but God did. This intercessor didn’t know it either. She only knew that for some reason she had a strong burden to pray for us. She was alert, as Ephesians 6:18 informs us, and perceived the *kairos* time. There isn’t a doubt in my mind that she helped to create the protection we experienced.

There is a life in secret place, but it’s not automatic for believers. We are promised protection from our enemy. However, we have a definite part to play. Through prayer we secure the protection for ourselves and for others. The intercessor knows this and leaves nothing to chance. A true intercessor posts signs for all the forces of hell to see: “Under the shadow of the Most High. *Keep out!*”

### Questions For Reflection

1. Is all protection automatic for Christians? Is everything that happens to us allowed by God? Do our actions and prayers have part in it? Explain.
2. Comment on being consistent in prayer as it relates to protection.
3. Explain the difference between *chronos* and *kairos*. How does this relate to intercession?
4. Have you posted any “No Trespassing” signs lately?

## Chapter 7 - Butterflies, Mice, Elephants And Bull’s-Eyes

### A Happening By Chance

My wife and I were on the last day of our three-day vacation. We were staying at an Oceanside resort town. For two days, I had been watching people “para-sailing” from the beach. You may be wondering what “parasailing” is. This is a sport in which people stand on the beach wearing open parachutes. They are holding onto ropes, which extend out to boats in the water. Then the boats drag them from the beach. Their parachutes billow out and pull them up into the air. They float off across the beautiful waters. I was enjoying watching people doing this exciting sport. These airborne sailors would soar without effort for 5 to 10 minutes. They were almost like birds flying. Then they swung back to the beach. To my amazement, they landed softly and safely. They didn’t even get wet!

My wife expressed awe at what these parasailing people were doing. She actually encouraged me to give it a try! I was really afraid. However, my pride made me go along with her idea. I decided to go parasailing. I silently cried to the God, “Oh, dear heavenly Father, get me out of this!” I heard Him answer in my heart; “You get yourself out of it. You get yourself into it.”

There are times in your life when it is best to humble yourself and admit you are afraid. You need to repent of your sin of male pride. However, instead I decided to save face. God has real sense of justice, and sense of humor, too. Do you think He was going to allow my prideful attitude? It was the final morning of our stay. We were to leave in an hour or so. I was in my street clothes, shoes and all. I even kept my wristwatch on. After all, you didn’t even touch the water, right? I should have known this parasailing didn’t always go as planned. My take-off was fairly routine. Within seconds, I was 200 feet high, enjoying a bird’s eye view of the beach. I was the first sailor of the day. For this reason the boat was pulling me along close to the beach. I was only about 50 yards out from the shoreline. The men in the boat wanted to use me to advertise me for their day’s business. I actually began to enjoy it. People along the shore could easily see me. They began to wave at me and cheer me on. I was the center of attraction for everyone. Of course I waved backed in a casual way. I didn’t want to “show off” too much.

Suddenly, I had a strange feeling that the water was getting closer. A second later, I knew it is getting closer. I lighted upon the water with a great splash. “*How the mighty have fallen!*” (2 Sam 1:19). “This is impossible,” I thought. “This is dream – a bad dream.” It didn’t take me long to realize that it wasn’t a dream at all. I swam to the boat and we drove back to the starting point. I tried very hard to look happy and confident as I waded back onto the beach. My clothes, wristwatch were very, very wet. Of course, my wife knew exactly how I felt inside.

I can imagine what you are thinking now. You are wondering what this story could possibly have to do with intercession. Actually, in this story another of the meanings of *paga* is used. This is when *paga* means: “to light upon.” The idea is “landing on, or coming to, a certain place.” It also holds the idea that this landing happens by chance. We might, therefore, use the phrase “chance upon” or “happen upon.”

### Our Helper

This chapter is about our Helper, the Holy Spirit. The greatest single key to intercession is learning to cooperate with the Holy Spirit. It is allowing Him to be all He was sent to be in us.

Jesus called Him our “Helper” in John 14:26, “*But the Helper, Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all the things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.*” Some translations use the word “Comforter” instead of “Helper.” But the Greek word is “*parakletos*” and means: “one called alongside to aid, help or support.” Sometimes it can be translated “Intercessor.” I want to focus on the Holy Spirit as our “Helper” and “Intercessor.”

We read in Romans 8:26-28 that He wants to help us in our prayer lives: “*And in the same way the Spirit also helps us in our weaknesses; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with the groanings too deep for words; and he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that God causes all the things to work together for good for those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.*”

Notice that verse 28 begins with the word “and.” This little word connects verse 28 to verse 26 and verse 27. “And” makes verse 28 dependent on what is said in the verse 26 and 27. In other words, all things DON’T work together for good in the life of Christians or believers, unless certain conditions are met. All things can work together for our good. It is God’s will for all things to work together for our good, but this isn’t automatic. We have a part to play. Our part happens as we allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us (see Romans 8:26-27).

I don’t believe the intercession of the Holy Spirit spoken of in these verses refers only to praying “with tongues.” However, I believe it has to include this gift. To pray “with tongues” allows the Holy Spirit to literally pray through us. I am not trying to prove this here. Also, I am not saying that those who do not practice the gift of tongues are second-rate in their praying! If you do not pray in this way, it is my strong desire not to offend you. However, I must share what I believe the Lord has taught me concerning this passage from Romans 8. From this point on, I will only use the phrase “praying in the Spirit.” However, often this will mean exactly praying with the tongues.

This passage from Romans 8 says that the Holy Spirit wants to help us in our “weakness.” The word Greek is “*astheneia*” and means: “without strength or ability.” Have you ever felt complete lack of ability to produce results in your prayer life? Have you ever come up against a “mountain” you couldn’t move? That has happened to me many times. The Lord says in Romans 8:26 that we are not able to produce results because we don’t “*know how to pray as we should.*” The word “should” here is very important. In the Greek, it is primarily a legal term. It means, “that which is necessary, right or proper in a legal case.” It is what the law says a person **must** do.

Luke 18:1 tells us, “*Men ought always to pray, and not to faint.*” The verse does not mean, “It would be a good idea to pray.” It is saying, “It is absolutely necessary that you pray.” Jesus used the word when He spoke of the woman bent over from a spirit of infirmity: “*And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?*” (Luke 13:16). Jesus had a good reason that she should be loosed from this illness. It was because she was “a daughter of Abraham.” In other words, she had a right to be loosed, according to the God’s covenant with Abraham.

Jesus had the ability to give her what she had the legal or the covenant right to receive. It was necessary, because of the covenant that He delivered this daughter of Abraham from this spirit of infirmity. Now that we understand the strength of the word “should,” let’s put it back into the Romans 8:26. The Lord says that we don’t always know what needs to happen in a given situation. We don’t always know what is necessary or right. Sometimes I have felt led by the Holy Spirit to pray for someone. Yet I had no way at that moment knowing why they needed prayer. Sometimes intercessors are strongly prompted by the Lord to pray. However, they do not know what they are praying for. They don’t know for whom they are praying. They just feel a burden to pray. What do we do in these times? This is when the Holy Spirit wants to help us. He will lead us as we pray, perhaps revealing things about the situation to us. Sometimes He will bring Scriptures to our minds so we can pray them. He will certainly help us by empowering our prayers. He also wants to help us by actually praying through as we pray in the Spirit.



## **The Right Place At The Right Time**

This now brings us to *paga* and the definition mentioned earlier: “to light upon,” or “to light on by chance.” The setting where the word is used this way is in Genesis 28:10-17. In this passage Jacob is running away from Esau after tricking Esau out of his birthright. After traveling all day, Jacob needed a place to spend the night “because the sun was set.” Verse 11 says he “lighted upon” a particular place, and there he spent the night. Notice that Jacob has not decided beforehand to spend the night there. He didn’t choose the place in advance. However, he was guided by chance. He had to stop when it got dark. The place turned out to be a very special place named Bethel. The Hebrew word *Bethel* means, “House of God.” Jacob actually referred to it as a “gate of heaven.”

Even though the most translations say Jacob lighted on “a place,” the literal Hebrew wording is “the place.” What was simply a place that Jacob chose by chance, was the place of the Lord. It was sovereignty chosen by Him. It was there that Jacob had a mighty, life-changing encounter with God. It was there that Jacob saw the angels ascending and descending from heaven on a ladder. This was the time that God gave Jacob the same covenant He had made with Abraham. God informed Jacob that through Jacob’s offspring He would save the world. God also promised great blessing to Jacob. He promised to protect Jacob and bring him back to his homeland safely. In short, it was the place where Jacob’s entire future was foretold. It was where his history was shaped.

It’s a nice story but you may be wondering how it relates to the intercession. Also how does it relate to Romans 8:26-28? Sometimes when we intercede we are like Jacob. He was not guided to this special place by his own reasoning or understanding. We are not always able to be directed in prayer by our understanding either. For this reason, we often feel weak in our ability to produce results. At times it seems the process is one of trying to hit the target, and missing it. It seems as though we have to land or “light upon” the situation purely “by chance.” That’s okay. “To light upon” is one of the primary meanings of *paga*. What seems by chance for us is not by chance to our Helper, the Holy Spirit. In fact, *paga* also means, “bull-eye.” A bull-eye is a word used for the center of a target. It is the exact place we should land our arrow or bullet when we shoot. People still use the word this way in Israel today. So – close your eyes and shoot! You can allow the Holy Spirit to intercede through you. Let the Holy Spirit guide the prayers the same way He guided Jacob to the right place at the right time.

If we do this, the Spirit will cause our prayer to light upon (*paga*) the right person or place. Our prayers will land in the right way, at the right time. They will bring forth the will of God in situations. And that is really good.

- Meetings with God will occur!
- Heavens gate will open!
- Future events will be written!
- History will be shaped!

Do you think this is too dramatic? Then you don’t know God well enough. Or perhaps you don’t believe strongly enough that we can invite the miracle working Holy Spirit into our praying. One of the reasons we don’t see more miracles is because we don’t expect more miracles. Both the Old and the New Testament of Bible tell us a lot of them. Miracles come from God, however. The way to see more miracles is to invite the Holy Spirit into many situations. Praying in the Spirit does this.

## **The Butterfly Anointing**

Have you ever looked at the butterfly flying from one place to another? It flutters this way and that, up and down. It seems to not have the slightest idea where it’s going. At times when I am praying in the Spirit, I feel like a butterfly looks! When I begin to pray in the Spirit, I don’t know what I’m saying. Sometimes my mind wanders this way and that. I feel as though I’m trying to move in the “butterfly anointing.” Where am I going? What am I doing? Will I land in the right place, on the right person? Is this praying really causing something to happen? But just as surely as that butterfly knows exactly where it’s going, so the Holy Spirit directs my prayers precisely! My prayers will “light upon” correctly. An example of this truth is the story I heard a minister relate. He was ministering a small church. It was his first time there. He did not know anyone in the church well.

About 15 minutes into his message, he heard the Holy Spirit speak inwardly to him: "Stop your message and begin to pray in the Spirit." I'm sure you can imagine how he felt, especially since he really didn't know these people. However, the leading of the Holy Spirit was so strong that he obeyed. "You will have to excuse me," he said, "but the Lord has just instructed me to stop in my message and pray in the Holy Spirit." He began to pace back and forth on the platform. He was praying in the Spirit loudly. Fifteen minutes went by and he was still walking back and forth and praying out loud in the Spirit. I don't know about you, but I would be feeling pretty nervous by that time. I would have liked to disappear through a trap door in the platform! This minister did not have even the slightest idea what this was all about. He certainly did not know how to pray, as he should. He really needed the "butterfly anointing" so that his prayers could "light upon by chance." Twenty minutes passed by. The people simply sat and listened to him pray. Suddenly a woman in the back began to scream! She leaped to her feet and ran to the front of the church. "What is happening?" the minister asked. "My daughter is a minister in Africa," the lady began. "It takes three weeks to get where she is. You have to travel by automobile, then boat, ride an animal and then walk for 21 days." "My husband and I just received a telegram telling us that she is sick. She has contracted a fatal disease that it runs its course in three days. If she were in the city, it could be treated, but it would take her too long to get her there. She will probably die within three days." "The last time my daughter was home," the lady continued, "she taught me some of the language of the people with whom she works. You just said, in that language. You can rejoice, your daughter is healed! You can rejoice, your daughter is healed!" And she was!

Now that was *paga*! That is lighting upon the right person, at the right time, in the right way. That is the help from the Holy Spirit. That is the "butterfly anointing." I'm not sure why it took twenty minutes. However, I believe perseverance (steadily continuing to pray) is often necessary. We will discuss perseverance in a later chapter.

#### **"Take Hold Of Together With Against"**

Another great way the Holy Spirit aids us in our intercession is hidden in the meaning of the word "helps." "*And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weaknesses*" (Rom. 8:26). The Greek word for "helps" is '*sunantilambanomai*'. It is a long word made up of three words: "*sun*" means: "together with;" "*anti*" means: "against;" "*lambano*" means: "to take hold of." Putting them together, a very literal meaning of the word would be: "take hold of together with against."

Sometimes when we pray we do not see results. In these cases the Holy Spirit wants to direct our prayers precisely. He wants to cause them "light upon" correctly. The Spirit also wants to take the hold of the situation together with us. He wants to add His strength to ours. "*Not by your might nor by your power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts*" (Zech. 4:6). Only by His power will the mountain be moved. 2 Corinthians 12:9 say that God's strength is made complete in our weakness. Praying in the Spirit is perhaps the greatest example of His strength being made complete in our weaknesses. Our weaknesses in prayer are our inability to produce results. When we realize our weaknesses, we will look to the Holy Spirit for help.

If we allow the Holy Spirit to pray through us, He will "take hold together with" us. We just have to believe that when the Holy Spirit takes hold, something is going to move! As we said, the literal meaning of the word "helps" is "takes hold together with against." This shows that the Spirit is acting with us, not instead of us. The Holy Spirit is not just praying in us without our doing anything at all. No; we pray in the Spirit, which is actually allowing Him to pray through us.

Several years ago my wife developed a pain in her stomach. Over the course of a year the pain increased. Finally, she went to be checked by a doctor. He found a large cyst inside her about the size of an egg. He informed us that a surgery was necessary to remove it. This doctor was Christian believer and understood spiritual principles. I said to him, "Doctor, if you can give us some time, I think we can get rid of that cyst by prayer." He was fairly confident that the cyst was not life threatening. Therefore, he replied, "I'll give you two months. If nothing has happened by then, we must do the surgery."

“That is fair,” I agreed. We prayed for her with every Biblical method we knew. We lay on hands. Elders anointed her with oil. We spoke the Scriptures. We prayed “binding”, “loosing” and “casting out” prayers. No change in her condition occurred. I realized we were going to have to get this healing through steady prayer, and by “...*fighting the good fight of faith*” – laying hold of healing by faith (see 1 Timothy 6:12). That, by the way, is the way most answers to prayer come. Answers do not come as instant miracles, but through fighting the fight of faith and patience.

I felt I needed to spend an hour a day praying for my wife. I began my prayer times by telling the Father why I was coming to Him. Then I thought of the scriptures on which I was basing my request. I would say them, thanking the Father for His Word and thanking Jesus for providing healing. This usually took no more than five or six minutes. Then I prayed in the Spirit for the rest of the hour. I prayed an hour a day for a month. Some would say that was an unreasonable amount of time to pray for something. Others would say God doesn’t need that long to heal someone. I’m only telling you what worked for me. What I’ve discovered is that God does not have only one way of doing things. He doesn’t even do the same things in the same way. He is always doing creative new things in new ways. The key for us is always obedience.

After a couple of weeks of praying for her, the Lord showed me a picture as I was praying in the Spirit. I saw myself holding a cyst in my hand, squeezing the life out of it. The Holy Spirit was teaching me a wonderful truth. I knew, of course, that I couldn’t really get my hands on the cyst. However, I was allowing the Holy Spirit to pray through me. He was showing me that He was “lighting on” and “taking hold with me against” the cyst. Obviously, it was His power making the difference. Our efforts are very tiny when compared to the power of an enormous God!

This reminds me of the story of the mouse and elephant who were best friends. They stayed close together all the time. The mouse would ride on the elephant’s back. One day they crossed a wooden bridge. This caused it to shake, quake and sway under their weight. Finally they got across. The mouse said to the elephant, “Wow! We really shook that bridge, didn’t we?”

This makes me think of some stories I’ve heard about what has happened in certain church meetings. From these stories, you would think God was the mouse and we were the elephant. This may be why we don’t “shake many bridges!”

After seeing the picture of myself squeezing the life out of the cyst, I asked my wife if there is any change in her condition. “Yes, the pain is decreasing,” she informed me. The doctor’s response was, “If the pain is decreasing, the cyst must be shrinking. Keep doing whatever it is you’re doing.” I tried hard to make sure I wasn’t just making up the pictures in my mind. However, twice more than the Holy Spirit showed me my hand squeezing the cyst. Each time the cyst was smaller.

I had been praying for a month when He showed me this the third and last time. In the picture the cyst was about the size of a quarter. As I prayed it vanished in my hand. I knew the Lord was letting me know the work has finished. Even though my wife said there was still a very small amount of pain, I could not bring myself to pray about it any further. I knew it was done.

Three days later she informed me that all the pain was gone. The next medical tests confirmed what we already knew in our hearts – no more cyst!

You know what happened, don’t you? *Paga!*

- A “taking hold together with against” happened.
- A “lighting on” happened.
- A “laying on” and “bearing away” happened.
- A “meeting” happened.
- A “enforcing” happened.
- A “re-presenting” happened.
- Intercession happened! And it can happen through you!

The most important thing I want to tell you is – God wants to use YOU. You don’t have to be a pastor or prophet. You don’t have to be well known in the ministry. You don’t have to know foreign languages. You simply have to be a believer in Jesus – one of His chosen representatives – one called to administer the blessings of the new covenant – a Christian.

God the Father wants to release the work of Jesus through your prayers. The Holy Spirit wants to help you. Places like Jacob's *Bethel* are waiting to be discovered. Histories are waiting to be written. Futures are waiting to be shaped. Don't be frightened by your lack of knowledge. Don't worry that you don't know what is "right or proper." Don't allow your weaknesses to stop your action. Rise up! Better still; allow your Helper, the Holy Spirit, to rise up in you! Together, you can "shake any bridge"! Just make sure you know who the mouse is.

### Questions For Reflection

1. Can you explain the connection between Genesis 28:10-17 and Romans 8:26,27? How are *paga*, the "butterfly anointing" and praying in the Spirit related to these scriptures?
2. What does the Holy Spirit do to "help" us in our weaknesses?
3. Think of situations where you don't know how to pray, as you should. Make a decision to allow the Holy Spirit to help you. Decide a certain time when you are going to give Him the opportunity to do so.

## Chapter 8 - Supernatural Childbirth

### Does The Bible Tell Us To Pray For Salvation?

There is a natural birth – "being born of the flesh" – and there is spiritual birth – "being born again of the Spirit." You can read about how Jesus compares these two in John, Chapter 3. My own words for being "born-again" are "supernatural childbirth." That's what this chapter is about.

I have tried for years to pray for the lost so they would be born again of the Spirit. My success rate was poor in praying for the lost. So was everyone else's I knew. So I thought I'd see what the Bible had to say about it. Not much! Nowhere does it say in the Bible to ask God to save someone. This puzzled me. How could something so important have so little said about it?

I did find one verse that said, "*Ask of me, and I shall give you the heathen for your inheritance*" (Ps. 2:8). I knew this was a prophetic Old Testament verse. It speaks of the Father telling Jesus to ask for the heathen. I figured that Christ had already done this, and the Father had probably said, "Yes." I found that we were to ask for laborers to be sent into the harvest (Matt. 9:38). But that wasn't asking God to save anyone. It was asking for workers. I also discovered a few scriptures about travail.

### Travail: What Is It?

Travail – what is it, anyway? What does it do? Is it a valid form of prayer? I wondered.

Is there really a prayer that causes new birth? I now believe there is. However, it is not easy to explain. How can a mere human have part in birthing spiritual life? Is it like natural childbirth labor? What do groaning, weeping and hard work have to do with it?

Part of the Body of Christ probably believes they already understand what travail is. Another part has likely heard enough to think they don't want to know any more about it. There's probably a part that have heard nothing about it. I say to all three parts: "Please read on with an open mind."

Prayer that reaches high intensity is called "travail." Travail is described in Hebrews 5:17. Of Jesus' prayer ministry the Bible says: "...*in the days of His flesh... He offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears...*" This kind of prayer always puzzled me. I was raised in a part of the Body of the Christ that believed in it. However, it didn't happen very often. The few times I did see *travailing intercession*, it involved a certain little old lady. She was also one of the few "prayer warriors" in the church.

It seemed to me that no one really understood travail. Very few people ever did it. When they did do it, it was very seldom. However, every one showed honor and respect to it.

## **It Happened To Me**

Travail is actually happened to me once, although I didn't make the kind of noise I'd heard others make. Those I had heard sounded a lot like my wife when she was in labor just before the childbirth. I was probably 9 or 10 years old when traving prayer took hold of me. It happened while praying for an unsaved aunt. One night as I lay in bed, I felt a strong burden to pray for my aunt's salvation. I remember getting out my bed and onto my knees. I was weeping uncontrollably, asking God to save her. It lasted 30 minutes to an hour. Finally, the burden lifted – and I went to sleep.

My aunt lived about an hour and half away from us. However, she called us later that week and said she wanted to come to our church Sunday morning. We did not know at the time that she was actually planning to give her life to Christ. She did! I was amazed. I had travailed for her the very same week she traveled the long distance to come to our church to give her heart to the Lord. Travail was wonderful, but I didn't understand it. I only did it once. I wondered why something that helped people get saved did not happen more often.

This sort of intense, emotional prayer just didn't seem to "come upon" anyone very often. Therefore, we felt we just had to wait and be patient. It was like the crippled people at the pool of Bethesda waiting for the moving of the water (see John 5:2-4). I didn't question the idea of travail. I thought, "God forbid that anyone would have questions about something so spiritual!"

The things we couldn't explain, we traced as too holy to question. We are supposed to act as if the questions weren't there. If we had questions, we might be too disrespectful. So we didn't let God or anyone else know we had them. Of course, we couldn't fool God. He knew we had the questions!

## **The Thomas Anointing**

Then I discovered that the disciples asked Jesus a lot of questions when they didn't understand the things. Sometimes the questions even seemed a little disrespectful. This gave the idea they thought His teaching skills weren't very good. They would ask about His parables. They questioned some of His difficult sayings. Oh, they would say things nicely. They called Him "Master." But you and I both know that they were really saying, "What in the world are you talking about?"

Once He told them to eat His flesh and drink His blood. A group of them told Him that was "*a hard saying.*" We know they really meant, "This is strange!" That group of "believers" finally left Him. Another time Christ was telling the disciples not to be worried. He said there were many houses where His Father lived. He was going to go there and a few more houses for them. Then He would come back and take them there. He even said they knew the way to His place (see John 14:1-4). About then Thomas said what all of them were thinking: "Wait, Jesus. WE don't have any idea what You're talking about. We don't even know where You're going. And We don't know how to get there." Christ answered, "I am the way. You go through Me." I don't think the disciples understood what Jesus said until later (see John 14:5-6).

As the Twelve usually did, I often act like I understand, even when I don't. It keeps me ignorant but I look good. Sadly, I often think that is what really matters most to me and others! Once in a while, however, the "Thomas Anointing" comes. Then I just go ahead and tell God He has done a poor job of explaining something – such as travail. As I thought about this subject of travail, I allowed some of the questions I had buried to come to the surface: "Lord, does traving intercession really help get people saved? Why, then is it so hard to do? Why does it happen so seldom?" "Why do only a few people do it? Why does it have to be so loud and strange? Why didn't You say more about what it is, and how to do it?"

## **Spiritual Experience Verses Physical Facades**

I believe travail is an important part of intercession for the lost. I don't believe it always means groaning, wailing, weeping and hard work. Natural childbirth travail certainly does have all those things in it. Spiritual travail **can** include these things, too. I do not believe, it must include them. In fact, I believe a person can travail a while doing the dishes, mowing the lawn or driving a car. They can travail while doing anything a person can do and still pray.

We in the church have needed to see or feel something in order to believe in it. Thus, we tend to judge what is happening in the Spirit by what we see naturally.

For example, we pray with someone for salvation or repentance. Then we believe the person who weeps is receiving more than the one who doesn't weep. We even say things such as, "The Holy Spirit really touched him." This is because we see that person's reaction. In truth, I have seen some who did not cry or show any emotion. They were totally transformed. On the other hand, I have seen some who sobbed and wept. It seemed they were repenting. However, they experienced no change at all. Again, the point is **you cannot judge what is happening in the Spirit by what takes place in the natural.**

### **Travail, A Spiritual Happening**

In Galatians 4:19, Paul says, "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ formed in you.*" Here, the Holy Spirit uses a physical event – childbirth – to describe the spiritual happening. In doing so, his emphasis is not on the physical realm but the spiritual. The Holy Spirit is not trying to describe what is happening physically but rather spiritually when He uses the word travail. It isn't a natural birth, but a spiritual one. Paul wants to think about the spiritual power released to give birth spiritually. We are not being concerned about the physical things that might go along with the spiritual birth. Some of these might be groaning, weeping and crying out.

Many have made what happens physically the main point. By this they miss the point that something is being born of the Spirit. It's easy to find out if you have made this mistake. Ask yourself this question and answer it honestly: When you hear the word "travail" connected with prayer, what do you think of first? Do you think of the birthing taking place in the Spirit? Or do you think of how it is happening outwardly in the body? Most of us understand a work of the Spirit as a work of the body. It would probably be wise to use different words. Perhaps we could use "birthing through the prayer" rather than the word "travail." This might help our understanding.

In saying travail is a physical work of the body; we have missed the real point. We have also unconsciously accepted a lie of Satan. This lie is that only few people can really travail, and these can travail once in a while. I do not believe this is true. In fact, I believe all of us can travail (bring something to birth) in intercession, and do so often. The key is to realize that the emphasis is on birthing something spiritually. It is not on what happens to us as we do it.

Please remember that travailling intercession can include strong physical manifestations. However, it doesn't have to.

### **The Birthing Prayer**

For the sake of the study, "birthing prayer" and "travail," mean the same thing. From this point in the chapter, I will use either of these terms to point to this type of the intercession.

**There is an aspect of prayer that births things in the Spirit.** We are "birthers" for God. The Holy Spirit wants us to "bring forth" through us.

Jesus said in John 7:38, "*from his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.*" "Innermost being" is the Greek word "*koilia*", which means: "womb." We are the womb of the God upon the earth. We are not the source of life, but we are carriers of the source of life. God generates life. But we release God to act when we pray.

### **Saved Because Of Loving Prayer**

Two members of our church recently received the answer to the prayer for the salvation of their son. They had prayed for him for more than four years before God acted. The mother and a few of her friends, prayed together through this time. They grasped tightly onto the prayer for their son for four years. They showed me one of the most persistent and thorough examples of intercession I have ever seen. It includes this idea of birthing.

The following are the some excerpts from their story:

We gave Jonathan to God before he has ever born. We raised in him in the church, but at 17 years of age he began to wander away from God. We believe the enemy caused this through some evil, careful planning. It wasn't long before he was living a life of total rebellion. He used drugs and all the things that go along with such a lifestyle. Through these things, he became very ill, and at times

he would end up in the hospital. When he gets out of the hospital again, he would only go back to doing drugs. About that time our pastor began teaching the church about intercession. Although we were full of fear, we began to learn more and more. My friends and I began to intercede together. God gave instructions how to pray, along with many uplifting promises and words of encouragement. We would intercede (*paga*), asking the Holy Spirit to hover around my son's bed as he slept ... or in his car... wherever he was. We asked the Lord to birth life into him. I did this praying daily. Almost daily, we anointed his bed, his room, his car, his clothing and anything else that was close to him. When he was not at home, I would go into his room and sing in the Spirit for an hour or more. I sang things like, "The name of Jesus is exalted in this place – over this bed, over these things, these clothes everything!" I sang, "My son has a destiny I know he will fulfill." My friends and I would sometimes pray for four to six hours late at night.

One Sunday, Pastor taught about "prayer cloths." This is not about the "clothes," as someone would wear. It is about little pieces of cloth that someone has prayed over. Our use of these was based on Paul's sweat rags (handkerchiefs) that brought healing to the early believers (see Acts 19:11-12). Immediately I thought, "We do that for my son!" Pastor and we together laid hands on a prayer cloth, releasing God's power and anointing into it. We agreed that the bondage of drugs, sin, ungodly friends, perversion and anything else that needed breaking. We cut the cloth into about 12 pieces and put them under his sheets and inside his pillow. We hid one in the flaps of his wallet. We sewed them into the cuff of his pants and under his pocket. We stuffed them inside holes in his walls and inside the tag on the tongue of his shoes. With each one we would declare, "The anointing breaks the yoke." (see Isaiah 10:27).

At times it seemed things would get worse. It was as if our son was on a mission to destroy his life. But we stood fast in loving him and speaking God's plan over his life. We anointed and sang over his room and car. We interceded daily and repeated scripture after scripture. We also said every word and promise God had ever given to us about our son. The more we said the scriptures, the more our faith grew. Every few months we would take a new prayer cloth to Pastor and repeat the process.

We also carried out spiritual warfare for our son. We cursed the power of the drugs and asked God to remove every ungodly influence in his life. We also prayed for the salvation of his friends. Three of them have come to Christ. God took our fears and turned them into fighting! After almost four years we received a word from a friend saying, God was about to "tip the bowl" of our prayers. This really encouraged us, and we could hardly wait.

During the next month, after more than four years, we could see God was dealing with our son. He wanted his life to be straight. He started to read his Bible and became concerned about the salvation of his girlfriend. He began to hate the power that the drugs had over his friends. Then one night at one of our prayer meetings, he prayed a prayer of re-commitment to Christ. We watched in amazement as the things of the world began to fall away from him. At the same time, the things of the kingdom of God became clear and appealing to him.

Throughout four years of intercession, the Lord taught us much about prayer. He gave us great encouragement along the way. He used pastor who cared and taught us, and friends who cared and prayed. He gave us prophetic words concerning our son's call and God's hand on him. God even allowed my husband to see the angel that rode in his car everywhere he went. Two of these times the angel was there even when our son spent the night in jail. All fear left and we were able to fully trust God. We are so thankful to God for the miracle that has taken place in our precious son. No one could ever convince us prayer doesn't work! God is faithful and we are forever grateful!

### **Travail Is Simple And Powerful**

Now let's examine prayer travail. May the Holy Spirit give us ears to hear? Can we somehow make travail seem less mysterious? I believe we can.

The following passage either directly mentions or hints at travailing (birthing) prayer: I Kings 18:41-45: "*Now Elijah said to Ahab, 'Go up, eat and drink; for there is the sound of the roar of a heavy shower.'* So Ahab went up to eat and drink. But Elijah went up to the top of the Carmel; and

*he crouched down on the earth, and put his face between the knees. And he said to his servant, 'Go up now, look toward the sea.' So he went and looked and said, 'Go back' seven times. And it came about seventh time, that he said, 'Behold, a cloud as small as the man's hand is coming up from the sea.' And he said, 'Go up, say to Ahab, Prepare your chariot and go down, so that the heavy shower does not stop you. So it came about in a little while, that the sky grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a heavy shower. And Ahab rode and went to Jezreel.'"*

The physical posture Elijah took was the same as women in eastern lands assume when in labor. *"He crouched down on the earth, and put his face between the knees."* We can see that Elijah was actually in travailing birthing prayer. James 5:16 also tell about this event. He calls it "fervent" prayer. Psalm 126:5-6: *"Those who sow in tears shall reap with joyful shouting. He who goes to and fro weeping, carrying his bag of seed, shall indeed come again with a shout of joy, bringing his sheaves with him."* Isaiah 66:7-8: *"Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she gave birth to a boy. Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such a thing? Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once? As soon as Zion travailed, she also brought forth her sons."*

John 11:33, 35, 38, 41-43: *"When Jesus therefore saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in the Spirit, and was troubled..."*

*Jesus wept...Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and stone was lying against it... And so they removed the stone."*

*"And Jesus rose his eyes, and said, 'Father, I thank you that You hear me. And I knew that thou hear me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me.' And when he had said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, 'Lazarus, come forth.'"*

Matthew 26:36-39: *"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' And he took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is deeply grieved, to the point of death; remain here and keep watch with me.' And He went little beyond them, and fell on his face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.'"*

Romans 8:26-27: *"And in the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as I should, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groaning too deep for words; And he who searches the hearts knows what the mind of Spirit is, because he intercedes for the saints according to the will of God."* The subject of this passage is travail. The Lord also speaks of all creation groaning and travailing with us (see Romans 8:22-25).

Galatians 4:19: *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you."*

These passages do not fully explain what travail is or how it is done. However, some things are clear:

- The Holy Spirit is involved.
- Travail is associated with producing spiritual birth.
- Travail helps believers to grow up spiritually.
- Travail can be very intense. It can involve tears and even groaning.
- Travail is involved in producing physical miracles.

### **The Holy Spirit, God's Birthing Agent**

We don't birth anything spiritually. The Holy Spirit does. He is the birthing agent of Godhead (see Luke 1:34-35; John 3:38). The Holy Spirit is the power source of the Godhead (see Acts 1:8; 10:38; Luke 4:14, 18). He is the power behind Creation. This creative power is like birthing (see Genesis 1:2). The Holy Spirit's power gives life to the God's will. He gives birth to the will of God. He is one who breathes God's life into people. This brings both physical and spiritual life (see Genesis 2:7; Ezekiel 37: 9- 10, 14; Acts 2:1-4). When speaking of salvation, we call this the "new birth" or the "new creation." Sometimes we say that we see the results because of our intercession. However, it is the really Holy Spirit causing the results, not us. For example, Elijah as a human being couldn't



birth or produce rain. Yet James tells us his prayers did. Paul couldn't create the new birth or maturity in the Galatians 4:19 shows that his intercession did. We cannot produce spiritual sons and daughters through our human abilities. Yet Isaiah 66:7-8 tells us that travail can.

We realize we cannot create or birth these things through our own power or ability. However, our prayers must in some way release the Holy Spirit to do so.

There is a prayer that births. However, the Holy Spirit's power actually does the work. There are words in Scripture that describe what the Holy Spirit does in bringing forth life. These are the same words that are used to describe what our prayers accomplish. It is very clear what the Holy Spirit really does to release this life-giving power.

Genesis 1:1 says, "*In the beginning... the earth was without form, and void.*" The words "without form" are in Hebrew "*tohuw*", which means: "a desolation; to lay waste; a desert; a worthless thing." *Tohuw* also means: "confusion"; "empty"; "a form-less, life-less mass." The basic idea here is the lifelessness and disorder. Verse 2 goes on to tell us, "*The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*" What does it mean when it says the Holy Spirit "moved?" We use that word today when we speak of the Holy Spirit moving in a service. We say things such as, "The Lord really moved today," or "The Holy Spirit was moving mightily." But what does these statements mean? We have a shadowy idea of what it means to us. We are saying that God was doing something. But what was He doing? Was He moving from one place to another? Was He moving upon the hearts of the people? What does the word "move" mean in these cases?

Actually, the present day use of the word "move" is rooted in Genesis Chapter 1. The Hebrew word used for "moving" is "*rachaph*". It means, "to brood over." "Brooding" is what the mother bird does when she carefully sits over her eggs in the nest. Then later she "broods over" her newly hatched baby birds until they are big enough to fly. She is bringing forth new life. Some Bible translations of Genesis 1:2 actually use the words "hovering" or "brooding over." So, *rachaph* is a hovering or brooding over something. The Holy Spirit uses the word to describe the Creation. He is using the picture of birthing something. He was bringing forth life. A Hebrew scholar told me that *rachaph* could be used to describe a husband hovering over his bride. This certainly shows us that *rachaph* is word describing the new life being formed. One Hebrew dictionary calls it "brooding and fertilizing." John 1:13 and Colossians 1:16 tells us that all things were created by Jesus, the Word. From these scriptures we know that Jesus was calling forth life as recorded in chapter Genesis chapter one. But it was the Holy Spirit who brooded or hovered over the earth. It was the Holy Spirit who was releasing His creative power when Jesus spoke the creative words of command. The Spirit gave birth to what Jesus spoke. Psalm 90:2 actually says it was a birthing that the Holy Spirit did at Creation. This verse uses two important Hebrew words "*yalad*" and "*chuwl*". It says, "*Before the mountains were born [yalad] or You did give birth [chuwl] to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.*" *Yalad* and *chuwl* are the main Hebrew words for "travail." They are translated in different places: "bringing forth," "born," "give birth to" and "travail" (see Deuteronomy 32:18; Job 15:7; 39:1). They always give the idea of giving birth to something. It is not always a physical birth, but it is always some kind of creating.

### **Hovering Over And Bringing Forth**

Now, let's connect all this to prayer. These are very same Hebrew words used in Isaiah 66:7, "*As soon as Zion travailed [chuwl] she brought forth [yalad] her sons.*" This is very important! In Genesis the Holy Spirit "brought forth" or "gave birth to" the world. This is exactly what He wants to do through our prayers. He wants to "bring forth" sons and daughters. He wants to go forth and hover around individuals. He wants to release His awesome power to convict, and break bondages. He wants to draw people to Himself to cause a new birth in them. **Yes, the Holy Spirit wants to birth through us.**

Another example of the Holy Spirit bringing forth and hovering is in Deuteronomy 32:10-18. All four of the Hebrew words we mentioned are used in this passage: *tohuw*, *rachaph*, *yalad* and *chuwl*. In this passage Moses is reciting to the Israelites their history and origin. He recounts the role of the Spirit's involvement in the fathering (birthing) of the nation.

Verse 10 says that God found Israel in *tohuw* situation. In our Bible, the name *Israel* refers to two entities. The name was first given to the grandson of Abraham. At his birth he was named as Jacob – then God changed his name to *Israel* (Gen. 32:28). Secondly, the offspring of Israel’s twelve sons became the twelve tribes of Israel and as a nation was called as *Israel*. Abraham was the patriarch (male parent) of the nation; that is, he was the one from whom the nation sprang. So this passage in Deuteronomy 32 is referring to what happened to Abraham. Abraham was like the earth before the Creation. In other words, Abraham was lifeless and barren. At that time he and his wife, Sarah, could not produce life. They were both sterile and lifeless (see Genesis 17). Deuteronomy 10:11 tells us that, like an angel hovers (*rachaph*) over its young, the Lord hovered over them. The Holy Spirit brooded over Abraham and Sarah, releasing His life and power. Even though Sarah was 90 years old and Abraham 100 (Gen 17:17) – both well-passed childbearing age – God gave them ability to produce a baby! They could now produce new life!

We read in Hebrews 11:11 that Sarah received the miraculous power of the Holy Spirit to bring forth a child. She did this “by faith.” As the Spirit hovered, God was actually birthing a nation in Abraham and Sarah! As He hovered, the Holy Spirit renewed their physical bodies, making them like younger people again. We know this physical renewal was real because in Genesis 20, the King of Gerar wanted Sarah as his own wife. An oriental King only chose the most beautiful woman for a wife. She must have appeared very young and beautiful. Otherwise he wouldn’t have wanted her! Also, Abraham received a lasting change in his body and had many other children (after Sarah died) with Keturah, the wife of his old age.

In Deuteronomy 32:18 *yalad* and *chuw* are used again: “*You neglected the Rock who begot you and forgot the God who gave you birth.*” The Rock mentioned here is the spiritual Rock that followed Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness. It was a picture of Christ. Remember the Hebrew words “bigot” and “birth” mean: to hover or brood over. The hovering that brought forth the natural Israel will also bring forth spiritual Israel, which is the church!

### **The Angel And Mary**

One more example of the Holy Spirit bringing forth the life as He hovered over and brooded over is found in Luke 1:35. This describes the conceiving of Christ in the Virgin Mary. The angel of the Lord came to Mary telling her that she would bear a child.

She responded by asking, “*How can this be, since I am a virgin?*” (Luke 1:34).

The angel answered, “*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*” “Overshadow” is the Greek word “*episkiazo*” which means: to cast a shade upon. It also means: “to cover in bright haze; to put supernatural power in someone.” It is like the Hebrew word “*rachaph*”. It is used the Holy Spirit putting creative energy upon the Virgin Mary. “Overshadow” [*episkiazo*] is one used three times in the Bible. At the transfiguration of Jesus in Matthew 17:5, the cloud of the Lord overshadowed the people. It is also used in Acts 5:15 when people were trying to get in Peter’s shadow so that they might be healed. Have you ever wondered how Peter’s shadow could heal anyone? It didn’t. What was actually happening was that the Holy Spirit was “moving” out of Peter. The Spirit was hovering. When people stepped into the “overshadowing,” they were healed.

Perhaps you have seen this kind of thing happen. I have! I’ve been in services where God was moving in a very strong way. Before people were ever prayed for or touched by anyone, they were saved, healed and delivered. They came under the *episkiazo* or hovering shadow of the Holy Spirit. May be you have been in meeting where the Spirit of God began to hover over the whole room. At times God has even done this over entire communities.

In many of the revivals of the past, stories are told of a person coming close to a church where God has been moving in mighty ways. The person begins to weep, goes to the church, walks inside and says, “*Something drew me here and I want to get saved.*” What happened? The moving or the hovering of the Holy Spirit became so great that He brooded over an entire area. He did this in order to bring forth life. I believe this overshadowing will even happen on nations, as there is more prayer for the unsaved people of the earth. This is a great time in history. Never before has there been such a volume of prayer being offered up to God for the lost.

The Spirit of the Lord is being released to hover over cities and entire nations. This is being done through intercession. We will see dramatic revivals as this hovering continues through the prayers of the saints.

### **Can A Land Be Born In One Day?**

I was preaching shortly after the fall of the Communist Governments in Europe. This was the season when most of the governments were falling. Normally, these things would have taken years and years to happen. It was a very unusual time. I preached under a very strong anointing. The Holy Spirit came upon me and I began to prophesy, "You have seen nations fall politically in a day. In this same way, you will see nations fall before Me spiritually. Then they will be born in a day." While I said this, I found myself wondering if it could really happen. After the service I went to the Lord in prayer. I said this to Him, "Father, I do not want to speak in Your Name when it is not You. Nor do I want to get Your people excited by things that I say. I need to know if that was You speaking through me today." The Lord's answer to me was surprising. He reminded me of Isaiah

66: 7-8: "*As soon as Zion travailed she also brought forth her sons. Can a land be born in one day? Can a nation be brought forth all at once?*" The Lord was assuring me that He was declaring His Word through me. He was telling me that nations would be born in a day. He assured me that there would come a mighty move (hovering, brooding) of the Spirit. Such a power would be released by the Spirit of the God that entire nations would come to Christ overnight. I don't know if "overnight" is to be the actual time, or if that word just paints the picture. But I'll accept either, won't you? In Zechariah 2:11, we have this prophesy: "*And many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day...*" I believe God will do that. Don't you? The passage in Isaiah 66:7 tells us that this will happen through the travail of Zion. Zion represents the church (see Psalm 87; Hebrews 12:12; 1 Peter 2:4-10). Those being born are the sons and daughters of Zion. This is a promise that not only points to Israel, but also to us, the Body of Christ. We can birth sons and daughters through travail.

### **A Sense Of Birthing**

A woman in our fellowship tells of an experience she had several years ago. At that time, she worked in full-time ministry as a Christian counselor. She would spend time interceding in prayer for the people she counseled. She would pray about their problems, and for their salvation. One couple she counseled had many trials: addictions, eating disorders and family problems. Neither were believers; in fact, the wife was an atheist. She said she felt as though she were "pregnant" with them. She felt that she was carrying them in her spirit. She would intercede for them daily, often moaning and crying for hours. This went on for several months. During her times of intercession, the Lord would reveal things about this couple to her. She would share this information with each of them alone. She didn't know at first what the Lord was doing. However, He was preparing them for salvation. One day the spirit powerfully hovered over them during their time with her. They were finally able to understand as she shared Scriptures with them. The next time she met with them, both of them received the Lord together. She strongly sensed that a birthing was happening. Then began the time of their growing and maturing. She helped them find good Biblical teaching and Christian relationship.

I believe spiritual travail is the releasing of the Holy Spirit's power to produce, create or give birth to something. Travailing intercession is simply prayer that causes this. Therefore, travailing intercession is a kind of intercession that releases the power of the Holy Spirit to produce, create or give birth to something. I use the words "produce" and "create" because travail is not only used in the Scriptures for someone being born again. It is also used for bringing forth other things.

For example, when the Holy Spirit was hovering through Peter, He was bringing forth healing (see Acts 5: 15). When the spirit hovered through Elijah He brought rain (see 1 Kings 18:45) Through Paul He brought maturity to the weak Galatians believers (see Galatians 4:19).

### **Christ's Travail**

Let's look at the two examples from Christ's ministry where He was in travailing or birthing prayer. The first is in John 11:33-44, the resurrection of Lazarus.

Just before going to the tomb, verse 33 says Jesus “ *was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled* ”. More correctly we would say that Jesus “*was moved with anger in his spirit, and deeply troubled* ”. The word “troubled” in Greek is “*tarasso*”. It means: “to stir up.” Jesus was stirring up the anointing within Himself. Verse 38 again says, He was moved with anger. According to these verses, the tears Christ shed were not merely tears of sympathy, but of anger (see verse 35). His tears were caused by the stirring up of his spirit. We also know that His tears were connected with prayer. Verse 41 tells us that Jesus prayed to the Father before raising Lazarus from the dead. He said, “*I thank you that thou heard me.*” He then gave the command, “*Lazarus, come forth.*”

I do not believe it is necessary to weep and groan in order to release the birthing power of the Holy Spirit. However, weeping and groaning can and will happen at times when we move into deep intercession. I believe this is what happened with Jesus in this situation.

When I interceded for my aunt, I was in form of travail. Although I was not groaning, I was weeping heavily. It was not the emotion that caused her salvation. It was my response to the Holy Spirit that allowed Him to move through me. This released Him to go hover around my aunt, covering her with His power and life. He convicted her of sin, and possibly broke some strongholds.

Sometimes we see the immediate results of intercession. However, it doesn’t always happen quickly. With the couple earlier referred to and their son a season of prayers was necessary. A season of prayer is when we allow the Spirit of God to intercede through us regularly over a period of time. This releases Him to go hover around an individual with His life-giving power. He then does what is needed to cause the person to be born again.

Another example of Jesus travailing was in the Garden of Gethsemane, Christ’s redemption of humanity was His work of intercession. This began with his travail in the Garden. Isaiah prophesied of Him “ *He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.*” (Is. 53:11). Jesus fulfilled this prophecy when He cried out in Gethsemane. He said, “ *My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death*” (Matt. 26:38). It was in the Garden of Gethsemane that redemption began. It was there that the victory over the entire ordeal was won in the spirit.

I believe that redemption was beginning in this travailing of Jesus. Luke 22:44 tells us, Jesus began to shed great drops of blood. Jesus was not simply sweating so much that it seemed like a person bleeding. He was actually bleeding through the pores of His skin. This is medical condition known today as “hematidrosis.” It is through the shedding of His blood that we have the cleansing from sin (Heb. 9:22). Therefore, when the blood of Christ began to flow in the Garden, redemption was beginning. I also believe that redemption was beginning in the Garden because of what Jesus said: “*My soul is exceedingly sorrowful even unto death*” (Matt. 26:38). The Greek word used for death is “*thanatos*”. This word is often used when death is the result and penalty of sin. This is the same kind of death Adam experienced when he fell. Two other words might have been used that mean simply physical death. However, when *thanatos* is used it often means death as a result of sin. Jesus may have meant that the sin of the world was already being laid upon Him in the Garden.

Therefore, we see that the redemption that happened at the Cross may have begun in the Garden travail. I believe the word “travail” was used not because Jesus was working hard. It was used because He was bringing forth the new birth. Our intercession is also called travail because it releases the fruit of what Jesus birthed.

### **Bringing Forth The Fruit Of Calvary**

The Holy Spirit desperately wants to release His creative, birthing powers through us. He wants to bring forth the fruit of Calvary. He wants to use us in lifeless, fruitless situations. He wants to release His life into lifeless situations...

- ... as He did at Creation.  
Through our intercession, He wants to bring forth “new creations” in Christ Jesus.
- ... as with Abraham and Sarah, bringing forth a nation. He wants to bring forth “spiritual Israel” from us.
- ... as with Mary, bringing forth Jesus Christ in her. He desires to bring forth Christ in people today through our intercession.

- ... as happened with Lazarus' resurrection. Through our intercession. He wants to bring forth spiritual life from death.
- ... as in Gethsemane when the fruit of our redemption was brought forth in Christ. He wants the fruit of that work to be created again through our intercession.
- ... as through Peter people were healed. He wants to heal people today through our intercession. He wants to hover around them, releasing His life.

**Not only does the Holy Spirit want to be released through travailing prayer for salvation and healing; travail is also to be done in order to mature and develop believers.** Paul said in Galatians

4:19, "*My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.*" He called the Galatians his children. This was because he had already travailed once for them. His first travail had resulted in their being born again. Then he said he was in travail again until Christ was formed in them. These people were already born again. Paul was travailing again for their maturing process. This is a kind of intercession we can do, too. We can help believers mature with our prayers.

Many hospitals have "Intensive Care Unit." Patients are there who are seriously ill, or who have had serious surgery. Sometimes the surgery is the transplant of vital parts of the body, such as liver, kidneys or even heart. It is a place where the specially trained staff is able to keep a close eye on the patients. Even when the operations are successful, these patients are said to be in "critical, but stable condition." They are kept in the "Intensive Care Unit" until they gain strength.

Spiritual replacements (transplants) of vital parts also happen as people become Christians and receive new hearts. To grow strong in the Lord, they must receive intensive care. It is exciting to be part of the birthing process. It is a thrill to pray people into the kingdom of God. However, it is also necessary to intercede for them in their "critical, but stable condition." When the Lord taught me this truth, I was counseling with four people who were in very difficult situations. Three of them were threatening to commit suicide. I was spending many hours each day with these people. I was trying to help them through their problems. Sometimes they would telephone me saying they were going to take their lives right then. I remember one of these people calling at 2:00 A.M. He said, "I have a gun pointed at my head right now, I'm going to blow my brains right now." Although he did not kill himself, it was a stressful time for me. During this time, the Lord showed me that our prayers release the Holy Spirit to hover around people, birthing life in them. He clearly spoke these words to my heart: "Spend your time releasing My Holy Spirit to go and hover around them, bringing life. Do this instead of talking to them so much. Then you will see much greater results." My spirit said, "Yes!" to this. I began to spend a couple of hours every day praying for them. Most of my praying was in the Spirit. I would say something like, "Father, I bring Jay before You now. I ask that the Holy Spirit would be released to go hover around him, bringing forth Christ." Then I would usually just begin to pray the Spirit (praying in tongues---see 1 Corinthians 14:14). I saw immediate results. Maturity came quickly. Almost overnight bondages began to fall off. Victories happened in these people's lives. It was wonderful. What was happening? The Holy Spirit was being released through my prayers to go hover around these individuals, releasing His power and life.

### **Releasing The Rain Of The Spirit**

The Bible speaks of travailing for other things as well. In 1 Kings 18, Elijah prayed seven times for rain. The posture he maintained while praying was the position of a woman giving birth. The symbolism is clear. Elijah was in travail. He was birthing something. The posture of Elijah is a symbol of birthing prayer for us. Why else would the Bible describe to us the position Elijah was in while praying? It was God's will to bring the rain. It was also God's time for the rain. However, someone on earth still had to "birth" the rain through prayer.

In this example, travail released rain. Now look at the picture in the story. The drought stands for Israel's spiritual dryness. The rain stands for God's blessing. We can say that our travail releases the "rain" of the Spirit on spiritually dry people and situations. The same power that created the universe through the Spirit's hovering has been placed in the Church. Like Elijah, we must believe that the prayers of mere men can do much!

There are millions of lost souls awaiting their birth into the kingdom of God. We must release the power of the Holy Spirit through our intercession. We must release the Spirit to hover. We are an important part of the Father's birthing process into the kingdom of God. As we travail in prayer, the Holy Spirit will bring forth the fruit of Christ's completed work.

### Questions for Reflection.

1. How has our poor idea of travail hindered intercession?
2. Explain the connection between Gen 1:1-2; Deut 32:10-18; Luke 1:35 and travail.
3. What do we mean when we speak of the moving of the Holy Spirit.
4. When and where can a person travail? For what can someone travail? Can you think of a situation in which God might want to do some birthing through your prayers.
5. Does God answer prayers?

## Chapter 9 - Professional Wrestlers

### Wonderful "Brother" And His Interpreter

I was preaching abroad and speaking through an interpreter. I would say a phrase in English, and she would repeat it in the local language. I thought I was doing a wonderful job of preaching. I felt as if I was God's latest addition to the *Wonderful Brothers Fraternity of World Changers International*. I had those people hanging on every word. Then I shouted in my best voice, "If you resist the devil he will flee from you! How many of you talk to the kingdom of darkness once in awhile?" I thought I was doing really well. However, there was a problem. My interpreter didn't seem to share my theology. She looked at me with anger and said, "I won't interpreter that!" Her words interrupted the flow of what I was preaching, "What?" I replied.

"I won't say that," she replied, with a frown on her face.

"What do you mean you won't say it? You're supposed to say what I say."

"Well, I won't say it"

"Why not? I asked.

"I don't believe in it she firmly stated.

"Well, the Bible says to do it. "

"Where? she challenged.

"James 4:7", I informed her.

"Look it up if you don't believe me!"

Now, keep in mind that we were standing in a church full of people. They were watching this unpleasant conversation between *Wonderful Brother* and his interpreter.

In Bible school the teachers hadn't prepared me for this. As I stood wondering what to do next, she began to look for James 4:7. It took her forever to find it. She then read it in their local language to the audience ... I think. She may have been telling them how stupid I was for all I know. We tried to continue. She wouldn't allow me to quote any other verses, though. As I would mention a verse, she would take her time finding it. Then she would read it ... I think. It didn't take me long to figure out she didn't know her Bible very well. Therefore I started saying verses without giving the scripture references. I didn't want her to recognize them as Scripture. She would unknowingly say the verse. Then I would, smile at her and say, "That was found in..." and I would give the reference. She would then stare at me with very unspiritual eyes. We just never did seem to get the flow of the meeting back! Do you or some of your congregation hold a similar altitude toward intercession and spiritual warfare? If so, this teaching should liberate you and cause you to join God's army of intercessor.

### What Is Happening In Intercession?

Intercession, according to our definition, involves two very different activities. Once is a **reconciling**, the other is a **separating**. One is a **tearing away**, the other a **joining**. One is a

**disuniting**, the other is **uniting**. These things are what Christ did through His work of intercession. It's what we do in our continuation of His work. It is important to realize that much of our intercession must be a combination of the two.

Most Christians' idea of prayer is to simply ask the Father to do something. But intercessory prayer is much more than that. Many times it is necessary to approach prayer as spiritual "warfare" or "wrestling." This kind of praying is what enforces the victory Jesus won at Calvary when He died for us on the cross. Or as someone phrased it: "To see both sides of Jesus is to see both sides of prayer. It is to see the need for compassion because of the hard things that are happening to people. It is also to learn the place and time for anger, when we see Satan's destructive ways. We must learn boldness when the Holy Spirit tells us to attack."

My interpreter had not been taught how to engage in spiritual warfare. Thus, she didn't believe in it. Many Christians are the same. They believe Jesus took care of the devil; therefore we don't need to bother ourselves with him. Others believe that our actions, holy lifestyles and obedience bind the devil. They believe we shouldn't speak to him or his demons. Still others believe we can speak to evil spirits, but only in people. They would say, we can't command or rebuke demons in places or situations. My intent in this study is to explain the connection between spiritual warfare and intercession. In the next chapter we will talk especially about warfare for the unsaved.

### **Paga Involves Warfare**

It is impossible to separate the word intercession (*paga*) from warfare. In the Bible *paga* is used 15 times connected with warfare. Violence and war are rooted in the very meaning of the word.

*Paga* is translated in various ways when speaking of warfare. It can mean: "attack," "fall upon" or "strike down" (see Judges 8:21; 1 Samuel 22:11-19; 2 Samuel 1:11-16). Don't ever forget it – intercession (*paga*) involves warfare!

"There is a way to face impossibility. Invade it!... not with speaking positive words... not in anger... not through self – control. Invade impossibility with violence!" This is not a violence of human strength against spiritual enemies. It is being violent in prayer. Do not try to separate warfare from intercession. In many situation the real cause of problem is spiritual or demonic. "*For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places*" (Eph. 6:12).

We acknowledge the wisdom in guarding against an overemphasis upon Satan and demons. Contrariwise, we must not make the mistake of pretending such beings don't exist to hinder, oppress, bind and torment. When reading Ephesians 6:12, many people stop after the words, "... *we wrestle not.*" They don't want war so they stop and won't read the rest of the verse.

### **Ignorance Is Costly**

Let us not be ignorant of Satan and his tactics, 2 Corinthians 2:11 tell us, "... *no advantage should be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes.*" The word "ignorant" is the Greek word "*agnoeo*". It means: "without knowledge or understanding." We get the word "ignore" from the same root. In this verse we're urged not to be ignorant nor ignore the enemy nor be without understanding where the devil is concerned. The word "schemes" is the Greek word "*noema*". It basically means: "thought." In other words, the verse is saying, "*Don't be without understanding of the way Satan thinks – Don't be ignorant of his plans, plots and schemes.*" To be otherwise is to allow him to get an advantage over us. Isn't there also a subtle promise here? If God suggests we are not to be ignorant of Satan's schemes, God must be willing to reveal them to us. What if we are unaware of his schemes? He'll take "*advantage*" of us. The Greek word for "advantage" is "*pleonekteo*". It means: "to have or hold the greater portion." The greater portion of what? Of just about everything – our homes, marriages, families communities, money, government, nation and more. Have you ever been taken advantage of? Have you ever received the smaller portion? *Pleonekteo* also means: "over reach". In boxing, the person who has the longer reach has the "advantage" and unusually gets in more blows. The word is also translated "make a gain". Satan makes a lot of gains on those who are unaware of his encroachments or schemes.

## **Paul taken Advantage Of**

The Apostle Paul was taken advantage of. At one point Satan gained on him in the ongoing war over spreading the gospel. In 1 Thessalonians 2:18 Paul said: “ *We would have come unto you... but Satan hindered us.* ” We know Paul won more battles than he lost. But he was at times Satan succeeded in frustrating his plans. Please notice that the verse doesn’t say God changed His mind about where Paul was to go. It clearly says that Satan hindered him.

There are those people who believe Satan can do nothing except what God allows. They say that we are to ignore Satan. Such should reread 2 Corinthians 2:11 and 2 Thessalonians 2:18. God doesn’t ignore the devil, and neither should we. Satan certainly does a lot of things God doesn’t “allow” him to do.

God created the laws and principles that govern the earth. Some of these are the laws of sowing and reaping, cause and effect and the free will of humans. We should honor these principles. How we use them determines how much we reap and what we experience. Satan, too, understands these laws and uses them to his advantage whenever possible.

## **Satan’s Hidden Schemes Prevail**

I heard a minister tell of the deliverance of a young man for whom he had prayed many times. It seems this young man had a very difficult life. He would find a job, then quickly lose it. He would walk with the Lord for a while, then turn away. This cycle repeated itself again and again. No amount of praying for him seemed to make a difference. One day as the minister was praying for this young man, the Lord showed him a picture of three demons. They were following the fellow everywhere he went. They were not in him, but always following him here and there to influence him. The minister saw names over each demon, describing what they did. One at a time, he bound them in Jesus’ name and commanded them to leave the young man alone. From that moment on, everything changed. The young man’s life straightened out. Success followed. Eventually he became a wealthy businessman, and was in ministry, too. He is still walking with God today.

It was always good and right to ask the Father to strengthen and mature individuals. However, this young man needed something more. Demonic influence caused all his problems. He couldn’t overcome this by himself. He needed someone to use authority and bring him deliverance from their influence. In this case Satan had the advantage. As long as his schemes remained hidden, he was largely controlling the man’s life.

The following things are certain:

- We are in a very real war (2 Cor. 10:4; 1 Tim. 1:18).
- We are soldiers in this war (Ps. 110:2-3; 2 Tim. 2: 3-4).
- We are to wrestle against all levels of the kingdom of darkness (Eph. 6:12).
- We are to resist the devil (and his demons) and he will flee from us (Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:9).
- We are to tread on Satan and his demons. This means to exercise authority over them (Luke 10:19; Rom. 16:20).
- We are to cast out demons (Mark 16:17).
- We have authority to bind (forbid) and loose (permit) when dealing with Satan and his demons (Matt. 16:19).
- We have powerful weapons designed to overcome the kingdom of darkness (2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-20).

God doesn’t give us detailed ways to do all these warfare acts. He does not give us detailed instructions. Instead, He gave us a *paraklete* – one called along side to help: the Holy Spirit Who “...abides in you... and teaches you of all things...” (1 John 2: 27).

Therefore, the principles He give us be applied as the Holy Spirit empowers, leads and teaches us. For example, the Lord does not give us a particular way to order a worship service. It is not important that we all worship in exactly the same way. But it is important that we worship in Spirit and in truth. He does not give an exact way to set up church government. Various parts of the Body of Christ do it differently. What matters is not that we all govern the same, but that we have godly



government. There are some very definite instructions in Scripture. However, the Bible seldom tells us how to do things. Rather, we are taught to allow the Holy Spirit to influence us and guide us. There is nothing sacred about most methods. But, it is important that we conduct our intercession and spiritual warfare according to the Scriptures and that we do this by the direction of the Holy Spirit. He alone knows exactly what needs to be done in each situation.

### **Be A Professional Wrestler**

In spiritual warfare it is not so important how we wrestle. It is important that we DO wrestle. We are to aggressively deal with the forces of darkness whenever we encounter them.

Ephesians 6:12 says: “*For we are not fighting against people made of flesh and blood, but against persons without bodies – the evil rulers of the unseen world, those mighty satanic beings and great evil princes of darkness who rule this world; and against huge numbers of wicked spirits in the spirit world.*”

The Greek word “*pros*” is translated: *against* in this verse. It comes from the word “*pro*”. *Pro* means: “in front of” or “superior to”. We use the idea today in the word professional. A professional athlete is one who is “in front of” or “superior to” others. “*Pros*” also means: “stepping forward; facing toward something or someone.” In Ephesians 6:12 the idea is of a wrestler stepping forward and facing his opponent. God is saying to us, “Step forward and face the powers of darkness. Be a professional wrestler!” Don’t be like the weight-lifting body-builder visiting abroad. He was asked by a village chief what he did with all his muscles. The body-builder thought he would impress this chief. He flexed his bulging muscles, showing how he performed in competition. After admiring this amazing display, the chief inquired, “what else do you use them for?” “That’s about it,” answered the muscular man. “That’s all you use those huge muscles for?” asked the chief. “Yes” “What a waste,” muttered the chief in disgust. “What a waste!”

So many of us are like this body-builder. We’re strong in the Lord. We’re well equipped to deal with our adversary. However, we never use our strength or our weapons. Wait upon the Lord. He will teach you and show you which strategy to use to win in your wrestling with the powers of darkness.

### **Devotion To Christ**

Warfare is often born from worship. Do you have simple and pure devotion to Christ? This must be the starting point for everything we do. “*But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ*” (2 Cor. 11:3). The more revelation about God that we have, the greater our need for simple, pure devotion to Christ. The larger the tree, the deeper must go the roots. The more we spread ourselves upwards and outward in the kingdom of God, the more we must allow our relationship with Christ to go deeper. We need these deep “roots.”

Satan tries to distract us from our relationship with Christ. If he can manage to do this, we may find ourselves walking in deception.

### **Learning To Wait – Before We Act**

Three Old Testament words for “waiting upon the Lord” have a different meaning. The first one is “*dumiyah*”, which means: “silently waiting with a quiet trust.” This carries the idea of a strong, calm, quiet trust in the Lord. David said in Psalm 62:1- 2, “*My soul waits in silence for God only; from him is my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation, my stronghold; I shall not be greatly shaken*”

The second word “*chakah*” means: “adhere to” or “long for.” Psalm 33:20 says, “*Our soul waits for the Lord; He is our help and our shield.*” This is what David felt when he said, “*My soul thirsts for God*” (see Psalm 42:2; 63:1). He was longing for God’s company.

The third word “*qavah*” means: “to wait for with eager expectation.” It also means: “to bind something together by twisting or braiding.” The idea of *qavah* is “eagerness for oneness; a joining, a braiding together.” The following verses are examples of this: “*Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord*” (Ps. 27:14). “*Yet those who wait for the Lord*

*will gain new strength; they will mount up with wings like eagles, they will run and not get tired, they will walk and not become weary.” (Is. 40:31).*

Let’s put the meaning of the three words for “waiting upon the Lord” together: Silently waiting for God with a strong, calm trust—longing for His presence and eagerly expecting Him, knowing He will show up—then becoming one with Him as your heart becomes entwined together with His. Hallelujah! That’s what it means to wait on the Lord.

### **Waiting And Warfare**

Psalm 37:34,40 contains the promise of victory to those who wait upon the Lord.

*“Wait for the Lord, and keep his way, and he will exalt you to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off... And the Lord shall help them, [that wait on Him] and deliver them: he shall deliver them... and save them, because they trust in him.”*

### **Looking Good, Lacking Anointing**

In Luke 10:40 Mary was seated at the feet of Jesus, and “*Martha was distracted with all her preparation*” in the kitchen. The Greek word translated *distracted* is “*perispao*”. It means: “to drag around in circles.” The word for *preparations* is also translated as *ministry*. Even ministry done for Jesus can become like “dragging around in circles”—lots of motion... but little progress. Our prayer and spiritual warfare can also become a weight we drag around. It can become legalistic and a chore. It can just be something required and endured. We become so busy **for** Him, we don’t have time to be **with** Him. We’re dragging our ministry around in circles. We’re going nowhere and accomplishing little for the kingdom of God.

Several years ago I was going through a difficult place in my life. A dear friend said to me, “I was praying for you with a friend this morning and God gave my friend a picture.” I thought, “Thank you, Jesus. Here comes the answer to my problem.” He continued, “in the picture, there was a circle on the ground. You were walking on that circle. You were just walking in circles.” “That’s my word from God?” I asked. He answered, “Yes, that’s it. I’m sorry.” I said, “I guess it’s true. That’s what I’m doing, Lord—walking in circles. I’m busy, but going nowhere.” Right then I stopped walking and started waiting. Immediately I came into the presence of the Lord.

Now let’s go back to the story of Jesus with Martha and Mary. Jesus looked at Martha and said, “*Mary has chosen the **good part**, which shall not be taken away from her*” (Luke 10:42). “Good part” comes from the Greek word “*agathos*”. It means: good and profitable; useful; beneficial. *Agathos* describes the “good part” that Mary chose. The Lord is saying, “If you spend time waiting upon Me, seated at My feet, My anointing will come into you. You will not **look** good, but you’ll also be good **for** something—useful in My service.”

We often look good, but lack anointing. We must wait in His presence and soak in the anointing oil that flows from Him. Allow all ministry to come out of your love-relationship with God. Even your warfare must be born out of times of waiting on the Lord, sitting at His feet and hearing His words.

### **God’s Timing, God’s Terms, God’s Method**

Waiting upon the Lord will keep us from responding to the devil. We must do nothing on Satan’s terms or times. God chooses the times and the terms of battle. At Jericho, Joshua was on his face in worship (see Joshua 6). God told him: “March six days before attacking. Wait till the seventh day. Don’t do it a moment before. Don’t do anything until I tell you. I choose the timing of battle.” God chose the terms, also “Take no prisoners. Only Rahab is to live. The spoils are to be given to Me. I the Lord choose the terms; you don’t: Satan doesn’t; no one else does. If you do it My way, you’ll always win. If you do it your way or the devil’s way, you will find yourself walking in circles.”

God chose the timing, the terms and the method. Warfare must be born from obedience, not necessity. We follow our captain, not our toe. At times, God may say that worship is the key, as it was for Jehoshaphat on the battlefield: (see 2 Chronicles 20:1-30). Worship was also the key for Paul and Silas in the Philippian jail (see Acts 16:16-36).

### **Carnival Time—Carnal Time**

Several years ago we were ministering on the noisy crowded street during carnival time. Carnival is a wild and sinful celebration involving much satanic activity. The Lord led all 200 of us to march silently down the street. An awesome fear the Lord and presence of God began to hover over the entire area. The Lord's awesome presence had silenced his foes. A very real hush came to the streets. At another time, however, the Lord led us in a different way. We were to march down the middle of the street singing a heartfelt worship song. This time a spirit of conviction began to hover over the street. As before, a silence came. It seemed as though the Lord had totally taken charge. At one point we gathered in a circle on our knees and continued to sing. As we knelt worshiping, a stranger ran into our circle. He cried out that he wanted to know God.

That's praise warfare! It's also intercession (*paga*). Remember this words means "to attack the enemy." As Christ is enthroned in worship, Satan is dethroned in the heavenlies (see Psalms 22:3 and 149:5-9). As we lift up the Son, we pull down the serpent.

### **Fighting By Forgiving**

At other times the Holy Spirit may lead us to win the war through acts of kindness, giving or forgiving. I was once part of reconciliation ceremony between Group A and several of Group B. Our plan was really quite simple. As those of Group B, we were to repent and ask those of Group A forgiveness for stealing their land. As the forefathers of those of group B had also broken promises and killed their ancestors. We needed to be forgiven. One of the members of Group A stood up to represent his people. He extended forgiveness to us and welcomed us to this land. This broke something in the spirit realm. It was a cold, dreary day, but the moment our brother of Group A spoke the words of forgiveness, the sun shot through the clouds and shone upon us! That day was the beginning of great work of reconciliation between these two people groups. Why? Our act of humility and love was also an act of warfare. It tore down spiritual strongholds. This was warfare through humility. It was violent love.

### **Unity In Battle**

The Holy Spirit sometimes leads a person to join with others to agree to break the back of the enemy. A well-known church planter in the first half of this century tells the following story of a fever epidemic that killed a fourth of the population in that region. There were not enough caskets to meet the need. Therefore people were being buried in blankets. It was terrible plague. A powerful intercessor began to pray. For days this intercession stayed under a tree and prayed against the plague. Several times he asked the man, "Are you getting through?" He would reply, "Not yet." But one day he said to the church planter, "I feel today that if I had just a little help in faith, my spirit would go through." He got on his knees and joined the man in prayer. What happened next is amazing. He said that as we prayed, the Spirit of the Lord came over our souls. I found myself no longer kneeling under the tree. Instead, in the Spirit I was moving away from the tree. My eyes slowly opened, and I saw in the Spirit a terrible scene. There was a huge crowd of demons like a flock of sheep! The Spirit had come upon the intercessor also. He rushed ahead of me, cursing that army of demons, driving them back to hell. The next morning when we awoke, that epidemic of fever was gone.

### **A Time To Shout**

Truly, there is a time for aggressive intercession. It is alright to be violent in spiritual warfare. I realize many would shrink from such extreme action in prayer. Running and shouting at the enemy is not normal for some. There is, however, a time for such spiritual intensity. More than once I have found myself shouting at spiritual powers while in intercession. I don't believe a certain volume level is required to rebuke evil forces. However, the Scriptures do allow for loudness. The Bible even suggests that, at times, loudness unleashes something in the Spirit.

- Zerubbabel shouted grace to a mountain (Zech. 4:7).
- Israel shouted at Jericho (Josh. 6:16)
- Gideon's army shouted before the battle (Judges 7:20)

- Jesus shouted on the cross (Matt. 27:50)
  - Jesus cried with a loud voice when He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43)
  - Paul spoke words of command with a loud voice to the cripple healed at Lystra (Acts 14:8-10).
- I am trying to show that sometimes loud, intense warfare is necessary. Joash, the king of Israel, was rebuked and suffered defeat. This was because of his lack of spiritual intensity in striking the arrows (see 2 Kings 13:14-19). At other times, the Lord's plan may be to simply speak His Word as a sword. He may want us to declare scriptural statements into the situation. When led by the Holy Spirit, this action is devastating to the enemy.

Once I was trying to help make peace between three people. One of them told me he was so angry that he planned to become physically violent with those he was conflict with. I knew he meant it. If he carried through with action, some one would be seriously injured, and others would be in jail. I was up quite late pleading with God to stop him. At 2:00 a.m. the Lord shocked me with these words: "Why are you begging Me to do this? You know My will in this situation. The problem is being caused by a spirit of anger and violence. Bind it! Declare My Word and will into the situation." I did what He told me, and went to bed. The next morning, everyone had a change of heart! Where violence and anger had reigned the night before, now peace and harmony ruled. What had happened? Intercession [*paga*] happened. Psalm 110:2 happened: "*The Lord will stretch forth your strong scepter from Zion, saying, 'Rule in the midst of your enemies'.*"

### **Seizing And Securing Our Inheritance**

A word of caution is necessary at this point. In spiritual warfare, we must remember we are not trying to defeat the devil. He is already defeated. We do not need to defeat him again. We re-present the victory of the Cross. All of our praying and intercession extends what Christ did through His intercession. Christ attacked the devil and crushed his headship. Just as was promised in the Garden of the Eden: "*And I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the women [Eve], and between your seed and her seed [Jesus]; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel*" (Gen. 3:15). The Hebrew word "*rosh*" is translated: *head* in the verse. It means headship or authority. Psalm 2:9 is a prophecy of Christ's victory over the devil and the demons: "*You shall break them with a rod of iron, you shall shatter them like earthenware*"

Both Genesis 3:15 and Psalm 2:9 carry the same message. When Messiah (Christ) comes, He will crush and break the authority of Satan and the powers of darkness into pieces, and scatter it. Hebrews 2:14 says of Jesus, "*...he became flesh and blood too by being born in human form; for only as a human being could he die and in dying break the power of the devil who had the power of death.*" Yes! Christ came and did that—shattered and scattered the headship of the serpent like broken pieces of glass. Satan and all the hosts of hell were totally defeated.

Timothy was told in 1 Timothy 6:12 "*Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life...*" Timothy already had eternal life, yet he was told to "take hold of" it. In the same manner, we are here to "take hold of" the victory Christ has already won. What He provided for us, we must seize by faith and with spiritual weapons enforce that victory against the power of darkness.

In the Old Testaments, Israel has been given their inheritance by God. However, they still had to go in and possess it. Israel's inheritance was not their possession until they went into the land and fought for it. It is the same with us. Our inheritance won't fall into our laps. We also must fight for it. We must wrestle, resist and obtain promises through faith and patient endurance in battle. In physical warfare, an army seizes and secures territory. We also must seize and secure our inheritance in Christ. Who are we to seize it from? Certainly not God! We must take it from the world, the flesh and the devil.

You will often meet a situation that has come straight from hell. When you do, you will face a decision as to whether you will or won't deal with it. What you decide to do is vital to the out come. God allows you to personally and consciously deal with the hellish situation on earth. You can bind on earth what has already been bound in heaven! (See Matthew 16:19; Luke 10:18.)

It is amazing! So much depends on our obedience and personal action. Our inheritance in Christ is not automatic. WE MUST FIGHT!

## She Stepped Forward

A young woman shared the following testimony regarding spiritual warfare in her city. I sensed the Lord wanted me, along with a team of intercessors, to go on a 'prayer walk.' This would mean walking and praying as a group through a certain part of the city. We were to take a specific route. Some preparation was necessary. First, I talked with my pastor about this. Then I went to drive along the route I knew we were to take. This was to be a practice rehearsal of what we would be doing in our prayer walk. I approached a theater which showed pornographic movies. The Holy Spirit started to give me specific instruction. He told me to cast out the spirit of pornography and lust. I did so. He also told me to pray in the spirit. After a short time He released me from praying, and I continued on the rest of the route.

Two days later the Lord showed me what had happened. I heard on the radio that this particular theater had been ordered by the city to close its doors. The day after I had prayed there, the city had a surprise inspection. The theater owners had gone against the law and were ordered to close permanently. What was so remarkable was that the city had already inspected the building a short time before. That time the theater had passed inspection! But without warning, it was being inspected again. I knew many 'charges' of the 'dynamite' of the Holy Spirit had been placed in the wall of this theater in the past. However, now was the "*kairos*" time. The wall 'fell' under the power of God.

May we all obey the spirit as this young lady did. May we bring down many "walls" by the power of the Holy Spirit!

## A Legal Breaking Of Headship

Many people ask, "If Christ defeated Satan and his demons, why would warfare ever be needed? Didn't Christ take Satan's power? Didn't He disarm Satan and destroy his works? Aren't we already delivered from Satan's power?"

To answer this question we need to digress to look at two Greek words. These are "*exousia*" and "*dunamis*". *Exousia* is usually translated as **authority (right)** and *dunamis* as **power (might)**.

What's the difference?

*Exousia* (authority) means: you have the **legal right** to do something.

*Dunamis* (power) means: you have the **ability** to do what you have the **right** to do.

An Example: a 150-pound policeman walks into a bar where 300-pound professional wrestler are involved in a drunken brawl. The policeman has the authority (legal right – *exousia*) to arrest the drunken wrestler. The question is does he have the ability (power *dunamis*) to do so. Probably not, unless he has others to help.

Another Example: You are driving an automobile in the city. You come to a signal light, which is red. The traffic law says all drivers are supposed to stop at red signals. Does the signal light have the power to stop you? No! The signal only has authority—but no power. When the signals turn green you have the authority (right) to proceed across the intersection. But, just at that moment the car motor quits. You look at the gasoline (petrol) gauge and it shows you have an empty tank. You have the authority [*exousia*] to proceed but you don't have the power [*dunamis*]. Your motor won't run without petrol—thus you have lost your power.

We need authority and power—and Jesus promised us both. "*Behold, I give into you authority [exousia] to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you*" (Luke 10:19)

*"But ye shall receive power [dunamis] after the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8).

Receive what He has promised. You can fight and win through the *exousia* and *dunamis* given by Jesus.

## Christ And Satan

We need to understand what Christ did when He defeated Satan. Satan's destruction was a legal breaking of his headship or authority. Nowhere does the Bible say Christ delivered us from Satan's

**power.** It says He delivered us from his authority (Greek: *exousia*). In other words, Satan no longer has the right [*exousia*] to use his power [*dunamis*] on us.

Colossians 1:13: “*For he delivered us from the domain [*exousia*] of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.*”

Colossians 2:15: “*when he had disarmed the rulers and authorities, he made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through the cross.*”

Power never was, and never will be, the issue between God and Satan. Authority was the issue. This is the authority Satan had obtained through Adam’s fall into sin. Jesus did not come to get back any power. He did not come to remove Satan’s power. He came to regain the authority Adam lost to serpent. He came to break Satan’s headship over the earth.

Satan still has the power [*dunamis*] he has always had. He “...*prowls about like a roaring lion...*” (1 Pet. 5:8). He still has “*fiery darts*” (Eph. 6:16). If you don’t believe this, try going against him without your armor (Eph. 6:13-17). What Satan lost was the right (authority—*exousia*) to use his power on those who make Jesus the Lord of their lives. However, Satan is a thief and a lawbreaker. He will try to use his power on us, anyway.

We need to understand that through Christ we now have authority over Satan and his power.

**Authority is the issue.** Power does the work, but **authority controls the power.**

This truth is well illustrated in the battle between Israel and Amalek in Exodus 17:8-13. In this famous passage Moses went to the top of a hill with rod of God in his hand. Meanwhile, Joshua led the army on the battlefield below. As long as Moses held up the rod, Israel was victorious. When he lowered it, Amalek was victorious. The victory was not decided by their morale; they weren’t watching Moses to inspire them while in battle. Instead, there was an unseen battle in the heavenlies. This battle actually decided the outcome of the war against Amalek.

Moses’ rod represented the rule or authority of God. It was lifted by Moses, God’s choice of leader for Israel. When Moses lifted the rod, Joshua and the army were victorious.

In other words, it was not power on the battlefield that decided the outcome. It was the authority on the mountain. Authority is the key issue: power never has been.

### **Approaching The Father**

It is important to know that, in our wrestling, we are not to wrestle with God.

Many have taught that we should wrestle with God. They use verses from Genesis 32:22-32. This is the passage where Jacob wrestle all night with the angel of the Lord.

Many sermons have been preached using the words of Jacob: “*I won’t let you go until you bless me.*” These have been set as an example for what we should do in prayer. However, Scripture does not present Jacob’s wrestling match as an example of how we are to pray. There are two reasons the wrestling lasted so long:

- (1) God allowed it. The angel could have beaten up Jacob had he wanted to.
- (2) God and Jacob were after different things. Jacob wanted protection from Esau; God desired a change of Jacob’s character.

Notice the question the angel asked: “*What is your name?*”

This might seem like a silly question. God was trying to get Jacob to see the truth about his own nature and character. Jacob’s nature was described by his name, which meant “trickster, schemer, swindler.” The Lord wanted Jacob to understand that his flawed character was not acceptable to God. His name defined that ungodly character. He needed to confess this and acknowledge it so God could change his name and nature. As soon as Jacob said his own name, God released grace to him and his nature changed. His name was also changed to Israel, which means: “a ruler with God.” A study of Jacob from this point on shows the great difference in his nature. Jacob was victorious in this wrestling match only by losing. The only way to win wrestling match with God is to lose. If you win, you lose. If you lose, you win.

The only way to find our lives is to lose them (see Matthew 16:24-26 and Luke 9:23-25). Jacob lost Jacob and found Israel. Such sweet defeat!

This story of Jacob is not an example of how we are to petition our heavenly Father. We are to approach God with bold confidence (see Hebrews 4:16), knowing He is our friend and Father. We are to ask “*according to his will*” (1 John 5:14). We are not to try to wrestle from Him something He might not want to give. We are laborers together with Him (2 Cor. 6:1), not warring against Him. We attack the gates of hell (Is. 28:6; Matt. 16:18), not the gates of heaven.

### Summary

The summary of this chapter is this Warfare or wrestling is necessary at times in our intercession. But we must NOT to “...*wrestle with God. Rather we are to wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places.*” We must do it with balance and understanding, but we must do it!

### Questions for Reflection

1. What are the two opposite activities usually needed in intercession. Why are both necessary.
2. Explain 2 Cor. 2:11. How does this verse strengthen the fact that the we’re not to ignore Satan?
3. Can you explain the connection between worship, waiting and warfare? How is Joshua a picture of this? What idea can be learned from Mary & Martha concerning this?
4. Why would spiritual warfare ever be necessary, if Christ defeated and destroyed the powers of darkness?
5. What is the difference between authority and power?
6. Are we supposed wrestle with God in prayer?

## Chapter 10 - Most High Man

This chapter is all about spiritual warfare for the lost. It is perhaps the most important chapter in this study. The main purpose of the previous chapter was to prepare us for this one.

### Peeling Off The Veils

I watched the “caesarean section” delivery of a baby on television once. This is done by surgery when mother can’t deliver the baby through the birth canal. It saves the life of both the mother and baby. The delivery of the baby on television fascinated me. I always figured they just cut the skin and out plopped the baby. No! It seemed they nearly turned that poor woman inside out. When they finally got to the baby, they had a hard time pulling it out.

In my mind, this somehow related to intercession. The Bible says there is a veil that keeps unbelievers from clearly seeing the gospel “*And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, in whose case the god of world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that they might not see the light of gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*” (2 Cor.4:3- 4) The Greek word “*kalupsis*” is translated: *veil* and means: to hide, cover up or wrap around. The inside of a tree is veiled by bark. The inside of a human body is veiled by skin.

The New Testaments word for a “revelation” is simply “*apokalupsis*”. In English it is *apocalypse*. The prefix “*apo*” means: “off or away.” So a revelation is an unveiling, or an uncovering. As I watched that delivery of that baby by caesarean section, I received a revelation of the inside of a human body.

### The Veil In The Unbeliever

We have part to play in lifting the veil off the mind of the unbeliever. 2 Corinthians 10:4 speaks of strongholds. These contribute to this veiling of the mind of the unbeliever. These are fortresses that Satan has built in the minds of unbelievers. We take part in the destruction of these strongholds. Strongholds are not demons themselves. They are the places from which demons rule. 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 further describes this veil or covering over the minds of unbelievers. This keeps

them from clearly seeing the light of the gospel. It is important to know they don't grasp the gospel because they can't see it. They must have an unveiling – a revelation (apocalypse).

Recently, I was visiting with a Christian brother who was telling me about a friend to whom he has been witnessing. He said, "It's just like you teach, pastor. The man actually said to me, 'I know that there is something to what you're saying. It's obvious what it has done for you. But I can't yet fully see it.'" It always seemed hard for me to understand how some people could hear and reject powerful preaching of the gospel. Now I know. When hearing it, they didn't really hear what I said. They didn't see what I saw. They didn't understand what I understood.

What the unbelievers heard came to them through their belief system. It was a veil that caused them to hear something totally different. 2 Corinthians 4:4 clearly states this: "...that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God." They simply do not see the same image of Christ that we do. To clearly see Him is to love and want Him.

### **A Veiled View**

The unbeliever has a veiled view of Jesus. This is illustrated by a story. A woman driving home alone one evening when she notice a man in a large truck following her. She grew increasingly fearful. She sped up, trying to lose her pursuer, but she could not. She then left the main highway and drove down a street. But the truck stayed with her. In a panic, the woman turned into a gasoline station. She jumped from her car and ran inside, screaming. The truck driver ran to her car and jerked the back door open. He pulled from the floor behind her seat a man who was hiding there. The lady was fleeing from the wrong person. She was running from her savior! The driver in the truck was seated high enough to see into her back seat. He had spied the would-be rapist crouching there. The truck driver was pursuing her to save her, even at his own peril. This lady's view was veiled. It is the same with the view of unbelievers. People run from a God Who is pursuing them. He desires to save them from destruction.

Those of us who know God love Him because He first loved us. He is a loving God Who wants only our best, and died to provide it. However, when sinners hear of this loving God, they often see only loss. They see only a lack of fulfillment. They fear they would have to give up all happiness by becoming believers.

### **Letting In The Light**

The "*light of the gospel*" in 2 Corinthians 4:4 is from the Greek word "photismos" which means: *illumination*. These words are very much like the English words "photo" or "photograph." What happens when one takes a photo? The shutter on the camera opens, letting in light. The light carries the image on the film. If the shutter on the camera does not open, there will be no image. No matter how beautiful the scenery may be, there will be no photograph. The same is true in the souls of human beings. This is exactly what is being said in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. It sounds like photography language. If the veil (camera shutter) is not removed, there will be no true image (photo) of Christ.

It makes no difference how glorious our Jesus or wonderful our message. Sometimes we can talk people into saying a salvation prayer without a true revelation (unveiling). However, there is usually no real change. That is why in some countries fewer than 10 percent of people who "make a decision for Christ" become true followers of Christ. The reason is that there is not true repentance which only comes from revelation. Repentance, as spoken of in the Bible, can come only from the Bible kind of revelation.

Repentance does not mean to turn and go another way. It is not a change of direction. *Change* is the Greek word "*epistrepho*". It is often translated: *converted* or *turn*. It is the result of repentance. Repentance is the Greek word "*metanoia*". It means: a new knowledge or understanding. It is a change of mind.

In the Bible, repentance is a new understanding that comes from God through an unveiling (revelation). It is the reversing of the effects of Adam's fall into sin. Humanity chose their own wisdom, their own knowledge of good and evil. They chose their own idea of right and wrong. Humanity now needs a new knowledge—from God. Paul said in Acts 26:18 he was called "...to open their eyes [revelation, repentance] so that they may turn from darkness to light."



## **Information Versus Revelation**

We need to understand the difference between information and revelation. **Information** is of the mind. **Revelation** involves and affects the mind, but comes from the heart.

Spiritual power is released only through revelation. The **written** Word in the Bible must become the **living** word. This is why even believers must not just read God's Word. We must meditate in the Word. We should pray as the psalmist: *"Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from thy law"* (Ps. 119:18). The Hebrew word *open* is "*galah*". It means: "unveil or uncover." The psalmist is praying. *"Unveil my eyes that I may behold wonderful things from thy law."* This is a prayer for revelation.

Paul also prayed for the Ephesians *"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him."* (Eph. 1:17). Information can come immediately, but revelation is sometimes a process. As the parable of the sower shows, Bible truth comes in seed form. Early in my walk with the Lord the wonderful truths I had heard from outstanding teachers were not working for me. When I heard the teachings, they had seemed powerful to me. I left the meetings saying, "I will never be the same!" But a few weeks and months later, I was just the same. I questioned the truth of what I had heard. I complained to God. Then He spoke words to me that have changed my life: "Son, all truth comes to you in seed form. It may be fruit in the person sharing it, but it is seed to you. Whether or not it bears fruit depends on what you do with it." Spiritual information seeds must grow into fruit-producing revelation.

Humans have glorified knowledge or information since the Fall. It was the *tree of knowledge of good and evil* to which Eve (and later Adam) was drawn. Academic knowledge does not produce salvation. It cannot lead to a true knowledge of God. Even studying the Bible does not always produce revelation of God. Jesus said to the Pharisees, *"You search the scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of me"* (John 5:39). The Pharisees probably knew the Scriptures better than you or I. However, they did not know God. Many theologians today know the Scriptures thoroughly. However, they don't know God well. Some do not know Him at all. They couldn't sit quietly in His presence for two hours without being completely bored. They have much information, but little or no revelation. Revelation makes the Scriptures *"spirit and life"* (John 6:63). Revelation makes the Scriptures live. Why is this so important? Because we are forever cutting short God's process. In doing this, we cut short the results. It is revelation that leads to faith and true change.

Without revelation we are simply appealing to a fallen, selfish mind. That mind is always asking, "what's in it for me?" We can preach a gospel that describes "What's in it for me." Such preaching only produces humanistic, self-centered converts.

On the other hand, we can preach a pure gospel that includes repentance and the laying down of a person's own life. This is preaching the lordship of Christ. Unbelievers are sure to reject it – unless they receive a Bible revelation. Our gospel is ridiculous to unbelievers: *"But the man who isn't a Christian can't understand and can't accept these thoughts from God, which the Holy Spirit teaches us. They sound foolish to him because only those who have the Holy Spirit within them can understand what the Holy Spirit means. Others just can't take it in."* (1 Cor. 2:14).

## **Birthing True Repentance**

How then can true repentance happen? What is the solution? We must allow the Holy Spirit time to birth true repentance in unbelievers through God-given revelation. This produces God-centered Christians, not self-centered ones.

Two years ago a lady named Sarah related to me a testimony of praying for her sister and brother-in-law. They were generally nice peoples. However, Sarah told me. "They were very anti-Christian. They persecuted my husband and me spiritually. They mocked us, and made fun of us."

Sarah had been praying for them for 20 years, but they had shown no interest in the gospel. "Because of their attitude toward God and the gospel," Sarah admits, "I had developed a hard heart against them. I prayed out of a wrong motive." Sarah listened to this teaching on intercession. Her hope was renewed for her relatives. The Holy Spirit asked her this question: "When are you going

to do this for your family? When will you intercede for them?" She repented of her attitude, and forgave them for their attitude toward God. Then she began to pray as I had instructed. Sarah's need to repent personally and change her own attitude is a valuable lesson for us. Attitudes in our own hearts often keep God from being able to answer our prayers, Isn't it sad that our own sin might hinder our prayers for another sinner? Jesus said, "First take the log out of Your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye" (Matt. 7:5). You may need to forgive your spouse, child or other loved one before God can use you to deliver him or her. Sarah remembers praying specifically in this way: "Father, lift the veil off of their eyes so they can see and understand the truth of the gospel." Also she prayed. "Bring them to Christ together, so one will not persecute the other."

Just a couple of months later Sarah spoke with her sister, She heard this amazing report: Earlier that very day her brother-in-law had awakened and felt they should go to church. They never went to church before! So they found a small church and went. During the salvation call, both of them gave their lives to Christ. The sister then apologized to Sarah for the way they had treated her. Their attitudes totally changed. They are still walking with the Lord. About nine months later, Sarah's father also came to the Lord. Remember, Sarah had prayed for 20 years before she applied these principles of intercession. She had prayed for 20 years before dealing with her own heart-20 years without seeing anything happen!

This can work for you, too!

### **Blinded By Pride**

How does Satan blind the mind of the unbeliever? What causes this veil over the unbeliever's eyes? I believe the Lord has shown me a valuable clue. The Greek word for "blinded" is "*tuphloo*". This means: "to dull the intellect; to make blind." It comes from a root word, "*tupho*", which means: "making smoke." The blindness in this verse (2 Cor. 4:4) is like a smoke screen. It clouds or darkens the air so that a person cannot see. From the same root comes another word: "*tuphoo*". This means "high-minded, proud or inflated with conceit." The picture is of one who is "puffed up" much as smoke puffs up or billows.

Then I saw the connection between the words "blindness" and "pride." I realized immediately it is the sin of pride that Satan uses to blind them. This is the same pride passed on from Lucifer (Satan) to humankind (Adam) in the Garden. Most rejection of Christ is due to pride. This pride can come from the belief in salvation by works. It can come from the fact that most people just don't want to give lordship of their lives to another.

Pride is the ultimate enemy of Christ. It will finally be dealt with. That will happen when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Christ is Lord (see Philippians 2:10-11). Pride will then be dealt its final blow!

### **Male Pride**

The captain of a ship on a dark night saw faint lights in the distance. He told his signalman to send the message: "Change your course 10 degrees south." Immediately he received the response: "Change your direction 10 degrees north." The proud captain was angry that he was being challenged. So he sent a further message: "Change your course 10 degrees south. This is the captain speaking!" He received the response: "Change your direction 10 degrees North. I'm Seaman Third Class." The proud captain thought he would terrify this disobedient sailor, He wired a third message: "Change your direction 10 degrees south. I am a battleship." The final reply came: "Change your course 10 degrees north. I am a lighthouse."

God is the "lighthouse" of the world. He is forever trying to get fallen humanity to alter their course. Proud humans have chosen to captain their own lives. They usually charge on to their own destruction. Understanding these things about pride answered for me the following question: Why do I find more women saved every-where than men? I knew it couldn't be because they were smarter! The reason is that this root of pride is stronger in most men than in most women.

There is a reason pride is stronger in men - our greatest pure strength before the Fall became our greatest perverted strength after the Fall. Before the Fall, man had a great desire to cover, nurture,

protect and care for what was around him. This flowed from the deep desire to be a servant. At the time of the Fall, this desire turned inward and became selfish. The desire to lead became a desire to dominate. A giving nature turned into a getting nature. A secure humility was changed into an insecure pride. To see how we men are supposed to lead, we need only to look at Jesus. He led and walked in amazing authority and power. Yet He had only a pure desire to serve.

Counselors work with many more women than men. This is because it is so difficult for a man to say, "I need help." Women are usually the first to say, "I'm sorry" or "I was wrong." Men usually want to compete with one another. Women are usually more willing to nurture, give and be selfless. Why are these things true? It is because of the greater pride in men.

### **Praying For The Lost**

This understanding of the blinding ability of pride is a tremendous clue in how to pray for the lost. It is mentioned again in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." Some Christians think these verses are encouraging us to do something for ourselves. However, we are dealing here with spiritual warfare for others. Another Bible translation states it this way: "It is true that I am an ordinary, weak human being, but I don't use human plans and methods to win my battles. I use God's mighty weapons, not those made by men, to knock down the devil's strongholds. These weapons can break down every proud argument against God and every wall that can be built to keep men from finding Him. With these weapons I can capture rebels and bring them back to God, and change them into men whose hearts' desire is obedience to Christ."

Let's look at these verses more closely. We'll see that the Lord gives us a solution to the pride problem. He also offers God's way for destroying strongholds.

First: God tells us that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal or fleshly. This simply means they aren't human. God knows we often overlook things that are easy to see. Therefore He states the truth clearly. We will never win people by trying to reach their intellect. Nor will we do it through interesting techniques alone. We certainly won't win them by nagging them. It will not help to put notes in their sandwiches. It will never work to scold them with statements such as, "When are you going to get right with God?"

When we approach people on a human level, we generally make things worse. If they feel we are pressuring them they only, put up a wall. This is because of the root of pride in them. Pride says, "I don't want anyone else controlling me or telling me what to do." Pride will always rise up and defend itself. If we attack this pride on a human level, we will only strengthen it.

### **God's Holy Detonators**

On the other hand, we have weapons that are "divinely powerful" to pull down strongholds. "...the weapons of our warfare are ...divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses". "*Dunatos*" is the Greek word for powerful. This word also describes a miracle. The weapons empowered by God will work miracles. *Dunatos* is also translated: possible. I like that. Do you know anyone who seems impossible? Will it take a miracle? With *dunatos* power, they become possible!

And, of course, *dunatos* is the Greek word from which we get the word "dynamite." The weapons of our warfare are explosive for the "destruction of fortresses." They are capable of "pulling down strongholds."

"Destruction" and "pull down" are from the Greek word "*kathairesis*". This important and powerful word has a couple of meanings. One of them is: "to bring down with violence, or ruin something." We can use this powerful, miracle working dynamite and become agents who violently tear down Satan's strongholds.

I remember as a small child watching the destruction of an old brick school building. I was fascinated as the huge cement ball, attached to a gigantic crane, was swung time after time into the building. It crashed through walls and ceilings, bringing unbelievable destruction. I suppose this would be a good picture of our warfare. We are like that huge cement ball. With one divine blow

after another, we work destruction on the strongholds of darkness. It is an ongoing, one-blow-at-a-time war against Satan's stronghold.

Yet, I saw another huge building ruined several years ago. This building was much larger than the school I had seen destroyed earlier. This one covered nearly an entire city block. The crew of men didn't use a cement ball on a crane for this one. It didn't take days - it took seconds. They used dynamite, carefully placed by experts. The building was completely brought down in less than 10 seconds when the dynamite charges were set off. I like to think that this can also be a picture of our intercession. Unlike this physical building, we don't usually see the answer in seconds.

Every time we use our spiritual weapons against the strongholds of the enemy, we are placing "explosive charges" in certain places. We may be carefully placing the dynamite of the Spirit for days, weeks or months. Sooner or later God is going to say. "Enough!" There will be a mighty explosion in the spirit! A stronghold will crumble to the ground - and a person will fall to their knees-free at last from spiritual blindness.

### **Satan's Strongholds Broken!**

A believing sister shared the following testimony with me. It shows an example of an intercessor placing "explosive charges" to cause a stronghold to crumble: My friend and I first saw a woman named Mary while we were visiting a nursing home. She was demon possessed. Whenever we came down the hall toward Mary, she would begin to shake. She made violent noises, and said things like, 'I know who you are. I know who you represent. I don't want you here.' She would use a lot of swearing and disgusting, vile language.

Everyone at the nursing home was afraid of Mary. No one would enter her room alone not even the cleaning staff and nurses. No one wanted to take care of her because of her violent nature. Thus she did not receive very good care. When it was absolutely necessary to enter her room several of the staff would go together. Mary would not allow anyone to touch her or get near to her. It was a couple of months before she would even allow us to enter her room. We regularly prayed and fasted for her. We prayed that God would remove all pain from her heart. This was so that the demons would no longer have anything to hang on to.

God showed us that Mary had been severely abused as a child. We would bind Satan from exercising power over her. We would declare that he could not speak to her. We asked for a 'hedge of protection' (see Job 1:9-10) to be around her. We prayed that God would give her dreams and visions, and angels to minister to her. We bound up the evil forces that were already in her so they could no longer act. Eight months passed after we were first able to enter her room. We consistently prayed and fasted for her. We also ministered to her. "At this time I give a testimony at our Church about reaching out to Mary. I asked everyone to please pray for her. We joined together in prayer for Mary during that service. Afterwards many continued to pray for Mary. We gave the pastor a photo of her to pray over. We continued to pray for God's perfect will to be done in Mary's life. We bound Satan, and prayed for all of his doors to be closed in her life.

We kept on ministering to Mary's hurts. She finally let go of her anger by an act of faith. She willed for her life to be changed. There was nothing left for the enemy to have as a stronghold in her. About two weeks later Mary gave her life to the Lord! Today she is dramatically different. She lets people love her and touch her. Her voice is becoming more and more soft and gentle. There is even a marked difference in her appearance. It seems that the real Mary is just now finally appearing. The presence of God is on her now.

The head nurse called us into her office to give us a thank-you gift for what we have done. She told us that all the staff had been asking, 'What have they been doing with Mary? She is so different!' Because she is no longer violent, the staff is no longer frightened of her. Therefore they are beginning to properly care for her. Hallelujah! That's intercession! That's a total destruction of strongholds!

## **The Stronghold, Satan's Prison Within**

What does this word "stronghold" really mean? The Greek for "stronghold" or "fortress" is "*ochuroma*". It comes from the root word "*echo*", which means: "to have or hold." The word for "stronghold" or "fortress" means: a place from which to hold something strongly. It is also the word for a fort, a castle or a prison. I've seen pictures of foxholes and trenches hastily dug in times of war. They are put there to hold a certain position for awhile. On the other hand, I toured a huge castle on top of a mountain several years ago. From this mighty fortress on a hill, someone had ruled the entire territory. That's a stronghold!

In this same way, Satan has a place of strength within unbelievers from which he can hold on to them. They are prisoners, captives and slaves.

Christ was sent "to proclaim release to the captives" (Luke 4: 18). As His people proclaim Him now, release of the captives will happen through the mouth of the Church! II Corinthians 10:5 says that "We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." It is important to know that "destruction" in-verse 4 and "destroying" in this verse are the same Greek word. Some Bible translations use a different word in each verse-such as "pulling down" in verse 4, and "casting down" in verse 5. However, it's necessary to know these are the same Greek word. We need to see that the Holy Spirit is carrying on the same thought. Verse 4 says our divinely empowered weapons can tear down strongholds. Verse 5 explains just what the strongholds are.

In other words, the Spirit describes for us exactly what the stronghold or prison is made of! This is vital information as we begin to war for the lost. The Holy Spirit shares with us three major parts of the fortress. These are the things we will begin to speak to and destroy in our spiritual warfare.

### **⇒ First Part Of Stronghold: Mind-Sets**

The first part of the stronghold mentioned is "speculations." This is the Greek word "*logismos*". It speaks of: careful human reasoning, or human wisdom. Logismos is the sum total of wisdom and information learned over time. It becomes what one really believes.

Adam and Eve, before the Fall, got their wisdom and beliefs from God. The Bible tells us human wisdom and beliefs come from the earth and the passions of men. They also come from demons. "This wisdom-descends not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish" (James 3:15).

These "speculations" [logismos] include: philosophies, religions, humanism, atheism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, racism, intellectualism, materialism, roots of rejection and perversions. They include anything that causes a person to think a certain way.

How do these speculations [logismos] blind individuals? How do they veil truth?

The human mind functions in a certain way. When people first hear the gospel, they don't have time to think or reason about it. It comes to them through the subconscious mind. This is where all other information is stored, too. This information includes the "speculations" explained above. This means that unbelievers don't hear only what we are saying. They hear what we are saying plus what they already believe.

For example, I was sharing the gospel with a girl who had been horribly abused. "God is love," I said to her. "He loves you so much He sent His Son to die for you." She did not hear only what I said. She told me, "Oh? If He is love, why would He have allowed me to have been so abused? That doesn't sound like a loving God to me." Her question revealed the "speculations" that were already in her mind. This was her logismos - a belief, a philosophy, her wisdom. Someone will need to intercede for her and help tear it down.

On another occasion I was sharing the gospel with a fellow who had a different kind of logismos. He was just too nice a guy to think he needed salvation. "I'm a pretty good guy," he said. "I'm not unfaithful to my wife. I don't beat my children, lie, curse or steal I don't think God would send me to hell." How does the gospel break through these arguments? Certainly the gospel of truth itself has power to break down some of this. However, it usually takes a long period of time - if you can get them to listen.

It is much wiser to plow the ground ahead of time through intercession. You can prepare for the seed by pulling down these strongholds in prayer. Perhaps you already know what these logismos are in a person for whom you are praying. If not, ask the Holy Spirit to reveal them to you. He will. When He does, call them by name, quoting 2 Corinthians 10:3-5. Say: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I am destroying you, stronghold of..." DO it daily until the person comes to Christ.

### ⇒ **Second Part Of Strongholds: All Pride That Rises Up**

The second part of the stronghold we must tear down is "every high thing ("hupsoma") raised up against the knowledge of God" (2 Cor. 10:5). Hupsoma is the same root word used for "Most High" God. It means: "any elevated place or thing." This is the same root of pride. We discovered hidden in the word "blinded" in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4. It is this "most high" characteristic that came to humanity at the Fall. That is when Adam and Eve believed the lie: "You too shall be as God" (Gen. 3:5). Humankind, like Satan, try to lift themselves to a place equal to the Most High God. However, we do not become the Most High God. Instead, we become our own "most high," filled with pride. The good news is that we can also tear down this stronghold in people. We can do it through the spiritual weapons of our warfare. Then they can humble themselves and bow their knees to Christ. Another Bible version of this entire verse reads: "These weapons can break down every proud argument against God. They can break every wall that can be built to keep men from finding Him. "With these weapons I can capture rebels and bring them back to God. I can change them into men whose hearts' desire is obedience to Christ."

Notice that the Lord doesn't just wish us luck. He doesn't tell us we will win a few battles once in a while. He lets us know we can break down every proud argument and every wall. We can capture rebels! And we must!

### ⇒ **Third Part Of Strongholds: Thoughts And Temptations**

Now, we will consider the third part of the stronghold. The Lord tells us we can "...take every thought ("noema") captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). *Noema* refers to: the sudden thoughts and temptations Satan uses to attack the unbelievers. *Noema* also means: "plan, scheme or plot--referring to the schemes and plans Satan uses to keep them in darkness.

In intercession we must declare boldly that no weapon of Satan will prosper. We bind his plans and stand against them through prayer. We should pray that the unbeliever we are battling for be shielded from Satan's thoughts and temptations.

*A woman had been praying for 12 years for her brother Kevin to be saved. There seemed to be no results. She prayed things such as: "Lord. come into, his life - Lord; reveal Yourself to him." She didn't realize there were more specific ways to pray. Many of us have this same problem.*

Also like the rest of us, she sometimes grew frustrated and tried to take things into her own hands. She would say things to Kevin such as: "You just need to give your life to the Lord - You have to quit doing the things you're doing." This would only result in her seeing the pride and rebellion in Kevin rise up. This actually made things worse. She told me, "Then I would really feel like I had made a terrible mistake. Kevin was heading down a rocky road. He had big problems, including drugs, depression and extreme anger.

Then she took a class of mine in which I taught these principles about praying for the lost. She shared them with her husband and their children. They began to pray these principles over Kevin.

They prayed the following:

- God, lift the veil over him, allow him to receive revelation and enlightenment;
- Holy Spirit, hover over him and protect him;
- Send godly people to be in his pathway each day;
- By faith we cast down anything that would lift itself up against the knowledge of God
  - especially pride and rebellion;
- By faith we take down all known strongholds-wrong thought patterns, opinions on religion, materialism and fear;

- In Jesus authority, we resist Satan from taking Kevin captive - we tear down all wicked thoughts and lies Satan would try to build into Kevin's mind;
- God, place your armor of God on him.

After two weeks of praying in this way, Kevin overdosed on drugs. In his time of need he cried out to God. She related to me: "The Lord met him in a powerful way. The veil was definitely lifted and he had a revelation of God. He now has an understanding of the Word and responds to it. The confusion is gone! "Kevin separated himself from the world and his former friends. He is now pursuing God and Christian relationships. His focus is on pleasing God and knowing Him more and more. He is even considering serving the Lord full-time."

"We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one" (1 John 5:19). Yet we have been given authority. We can turn unbelievers from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God (Acts 26:18). We are called to enforce the freedom Christ gained for us. The unbeliever cannot war for himself. He cannot and will not overcome the strongholds of darkness. He will not receive the gospel until the veil lifts. We must take our divinely dynamic weapons and fight. The powers of darkness will resist, but "...do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses" (Neh. 4:14).

#### Question for Reflection

1. What us meant by the word veil, in 2 Cor. 4:3. How does this apply to unsaved people? Can you explain how this is related to a true revelation?
2. What is meant by Satan "blinding the minds of unbelievers"? How is this connected to the fall of humanity?
3. Explain the meaning of enlightenment. Describe how enlightenment relates to photography.
4. What is the true meaning of rpenance?
5. Define a stronghold. Now describe the three parts of strongholds in unbelievers.
6. How can intercession be applied to each parts of a stronghold?
7. What unbelievers are you going to intercede for?

## Chapter 11 - The Lightning Of God

### Strike The Mark

When I was in the 5th standard in school I received a magnifying glass. I was really excited about it. I discovered I could hold it at just the right angle to the sun and make a piece of paper catch on fire. One day, I burned a piece of paper on the playground. Then I had what I thought was a brilliant idea. I called my friends over, telling them I had a great demonstration to show them. I picked Duncan, one of the mean guys in the class, to help with the demonstration. I said to him, Duncan, hold your hand out. I want to show you something." When his hand began to burn, he chased me all around that playground!

Is there a picture of intercession hidden anywhere in this story? Yes, there is.

One of the ways *paga*, the Hebrew word for "intercession," is translated is "strike the mark." Job 36:32 says, "He covers his hand with the lighting, and commands it to strike the mark."

When God releases His light He causes it to flash forth from His presence like lightning. Like intercession, it strikes the desired target. Habakkuk 3:4 also speaks of light flashing forth from the hand of God: "His radiance is like the sunlight; he has rays flashing from his hand, and there is the hiding of his power." Another Bible translation is also very descriptive: "And his brightness was like the sunlight; rays streamed from his hand, and there in the sun-like splendor was the hiding place of his power."

We are like a magnifying glass in one sense. We don't increase or magnify God's power, but we do let the "Son" shine forth through us. We can direct His light to certain situations, allowing it to "strike the mark."

I do a lot of praying in a forest near by. At times I come across trees struck by lightning. The lightning is so hot it twists the trunks until they look like the circular stripes on a candy cane or a barber pole. The temperature in a lightning bolt can reach 30,000 degrees Celsius (about 55,000 degrees Fahrenheit). That is hotter than the surface of the sun. God uses lightning to picture His judgments! The Creator is much greater than His creation. The power or energy in God is greater than a lightning bolt. No wonder the Scriptures say, "As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish before God... The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the Lord... He raised his voice, the earth melted" (Ps. 68:2; 97:5; 46:6). "Our God is a consuming fire!" (Heb. 12:29).

### **God Is Light**

The following verses associate God with light or lightning. There are numerous others that could be given:

1 John 1:5, "And this is the message we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him there is no darkness at all."

1 Timothy 6:16, "Jesus alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light; whom no man has seen or can see. To him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen." (See also James 1:17; Exodus 19:16; Ezekiel 1:14; Revelation 4:5)

At times God's light, or the release of it, is associated with His glory. The following verses are examples of this:

Luke 9:29,32', "And while he was praying, the appearance of his face became different, and his clothing became white and gleaming..."

"Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him." The word "gleaming" means literally: "flashing like lightning." No wonder Peter wanted to build tabernacles there on the mountain where Jesus was transfigured!

Revelation 21:23, "And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb." (See also 2 Corinthians 3:7.)

Sometimes this light, lightning or glory of God is released from His mouth. It is often called a sword. The first four verses below show God's words or mouth as His sword. The remaining verses make the connection to light or lightning.

Ephesians 6:17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Revelation 2:16, "Repent therefore; or else I am coming to you quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth."

Revelation 19:15, "And from his mouth comes a sharp sword, so that with it he may, smite the nations; and he will rule them with a rod of iron; and he treads the wine press of the fierce wrath of God, the Almighty." (See also Hebrews 4.12.)

Psalms 29:7, "The voice of the Lord strikes with flashes of lightning."

Ezekiel 21:9-10,15,28: "Son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord, a sword sharpened and also polished! Sharpened to make a slaughter, polished to flash like lightning!....' I have given the glittering sword. Ah! It is made for striking the lightning, it is wrapped up in readiness for slaughter. 'And you, son of man, prophesy and say, 'Thus says the Lord God concerning the sons of Ammon and concerning their reproach,' and say: 'A sword, a sword is drawn, polished for the slaughter, to cause it to consume, that it may be like lightning.'"

Deuteronomy 32:41, "If I whet my lightning sword and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will wreak vengeance on my foes and recompense those who hate me." (See also Psalms 18:13-14; Hosea 6:5.)

We have shown God connected with light or lightning. This sometimes shines forth as His glory. It is released from His mouth at times, becoming a powerful sword.

The following scriptures speak of God's light in the context of God dealing with His enemies, Psalm 97:3-4: "Fire goes before him, and burns up his adversaries round about. His lightning's lit up the world; the earth saw and trembled."



Revelation 8:5, "And the angel took the censer; and he filled it with the fire of the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake."

Revelation 16:18, "And there were flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder; and there was a great earthquake, such as there had not been since man came to be upon the earth, so great an earthquake was it, and so mighty." (See also Psalms 78:48; Revelation 11:19.)

The scriptures below connect the release of God's light with the deliverance of His people:

Psalm 18:14: "And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them, and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them."

Psalm 77:17-18: "The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth a sound! Thy arrows flashed here and there. The sound of thy thunder was in the whirlwind; The lightning's lit up the world; the earth trembled and shook."

Psalm 144:6: "Flash forth lightning and scatter them; send out your arrows and confuse them." (See also Psalms 21:1.)

According to all these scriptures, God is light. At times this light or glory flashes forth from Him as bolts of lightning. In order to deal with His enemies God simply releases this glory or light into a situation. It flashes forth like lightning and intercession (paga) happens! God's power "strikes the mark." This happened once several thousand years ago when there was an attempt to take over heaven. Proudful Lucifer decided he would exalt himself to God's position. This proved to be a very bad idea! This war didn't last long about as long as it takes for a lightning bolt to flash across the sky. Jesus told about it in Luke 10:18-20, "I was watching Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Behold, I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall injure you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are recorded in heaven." He was saying that they should not get excited just because demons tremble at their authority in Christ. After all, He had seen Satan fall from heaven. They were to get excited because they had a relationship with God.

### **Light Overcomes Darkness**

We don't know that a flash of lightning could be seen when Satan was thrown out of heaven. However, Jesus used this picture. He, said it was "like lightning." It doesn't really; matter whether it flashed or not. The idea is certainly given of light overcoming darkness. I don't think that all of the previously mentioned scriptures had to refer to lightning bolts. Perhaps they could not be seen by human sight. At times they certainly were, such as when Christ's clothes were flashing at His transfiguration. However, the point is not what can be seen with the human eye. The point is what happened in the spiritual realm. Light overcame darkness. Light is more than just a symbol of God's goodness or purity. It represents His power and energy.

Lightning speaks of God's power overcoming the kingdom of darkness. This picture of darkness and light is found through out Scripture.

Another powerful example of the victory of God's light over the darkness of Satan is found at the Cross. John 1:4,5 says, "In him was life and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend [*"katalambano"*] it. The Greek word *Katalambano* can mean: either "comprehend" or "apprehend". Many scholars believe it should be translated "apprehend" in this passage. This is because the powers of darkness were not trying to comprehend or understand Christ. They were trying to apprehend or overpower Him. Another way to translate John 1:5 is: "And the light in the darkness is constantly shining. And the darkness did not overwhelm it." Still another translation is: "Amid the darkness the light shone, but the darkness did not master it." The Cross was a war between light and darkness. Light won, and God's enemies were scattered (see Psalm 68:1).

There is a story of a couple who took their small son and daughter to a huge underground cave. They went with a tour group. When the tour reached the deepest point in the cave, the guide turned off all the lights. This was to show how completely dark and silent it is below the earth's surface.

The little girl was frightened and began to cry. Immediately the voice of her brother was heard in the darkness saying, "Don't cry, somebody here knows how to turn on the lights." After Adam's

Fall all creation was terrified, groping in the darkness of sin. Two thousand years ago, God announced to His frightened humans, "Don't cry. Somebody here knows how to turn on the lights." I believe Satan has some nightmares that come again and again. One of them is when the lightning flashed in heaven and kicked him out. He probably hates thunderstorms. They even sound like the majestic voice of God!

"The Lord also thundered in the heaven, and the Most High uttered his voice, hailstones and coals of fire. And he sent out his arrows, and scattered [my enemies] and lightning flashes in abundance, and routed them" (Ps 18:13-14).

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord is over many waters" (Ps 29:3).

Imagine Satan's horror when the light of God flashed forth at the Cross. This was the same light that had expelled him from heaven. I can just hear him screaming, "Oh, no. Here it comes again! God wouldn't let me have heaven and He won't let me have earth either."

### **The Lightning Anointing**

We could even say that God is "Mr. Light" Himself. Yes, at the Cross the false "angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14) met Mr. Light Himself; Nothing has been the same since! God even created for Himself a lot of little "lights" - "For you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light" (Eph. 5:8). He filled these little "lights" with His very glory when this happened, Satan understood Isaiah 60:1-3 for the first time: "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. For behold darkness will cover the earth, and deep darkness the peoples; But the Lord will rise upon you, and his glory will appear upon you. And nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising."

For the first time Satan understood that the Old Testament temple was a picture of us. Here was a new race of people called Christians ("little anointed ones"). The glory of God was in every one of them.

Intercession is pictured by God's lightning striking the mark. Christ's work of intercession when He met Satan was light overcoming darkness. Our praying intercession simply releases or re-presents Christ's work of intercession.

Our intercession releases the lightning of God to flash forth into situations. Some of the results of our intercession are:

- Devastation to the powers of darkness;
- The light of the world shining again (see John 8:12 and Matthew 5:14);
- The royal priesthood proclaiming the excellencies of God Who called them out of darkness into His marvelous light (see 1 Peter 2:9);
- The lightning sword of the Spirit flashing brightly;
- Jesus and the Father being glorified in the Church (see Ephesians 3:21)!

In John 1:5 the phrase "...the light shines in the darkness" could also be read, "... the light is constantly shining." Some translations do say it this way.

The light that overcame darkness is still shining-the victory lives on. Yet it must be released through the Church! We often forget how powerful the Holy Spirit is in us. We forget how destructive His lightning sword is to darkness. His sword has supernatural power to overcome the works of darkness, when we release it with confidence.

### **Meeting Goliath At Carnival Time**

I led a group of Bible school students to a famous carnival in some years ago. We focused most of our ministry on a certain street where most of the revelry occurs. I have seen few place where darkness rules so strongly. This continuous celebration of evil is ruled by Satan.

We had many hours of prayer before going there. We were assured in our hearts that we had established victory in the Spirit. The Light had gone before us. We felt we were going there only to reap the spoils. After we arrived we saw dozens of people come to Christ. We saw many people experience dramatic events in the Holy Spirit. Time and time again light triumphed over darkness. It did not happen without testing, however. One event especially touched me. It was an encounter

we had with a demonized man. He intended to harm and even kill some of us. I spent most of my time walking the length of the street interceding for the rest of our team. They went along witnessing and praying with folks. One evening my partner and I crossed the street to speak with two of our students. They were carrying, a sign that read, "God Loves You!"

As we stood talking, a giant of a man suddenly came at us. We'll call him Goliath." He was over six and a half feet tall and weighed at least 130 kilograms. He was dressed as a Roman soldier and carried a long whip. His lips were covered with bloody froth. Blood was trickling out of the corners of his mouth. He approached us cracking his whip and growling like a mad dog. The area around us cleared as people backed off and watched. Goliath then began to shout in a deep, raspy voice, "God is love, huh? I'm gonna kill you!"

I thought quickly that this was not good. I wanted to speak some powerful Scripture as a sword. The only verse that came to mind was, "To live is Christ; to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21). It just didn't seem like the verse I wanted at that time! I stood, wondering why one of the other three team members didn't do something. The reason suddenly occurred to me - I was the leader!

I wanted to shout, "Every man for himself!" and run away. I didn't really do that. However, here was a great fear that tried to rise up in me. What did I actually do? I interceded - strongly! When I glanced at the other three, their lips were silently moving. They were interceding, too! It was intercession multiplied four times. In my mind, I quickly compared my praying to my boyhood magnifying glass. It could cause the light of the sun to burn things here on earth-my prayers could bring God's power in on this situation. We stood and bound the powers of darkness in this man in the name of Jesus. Within seconds he began to change. The expression on his face changed. His voice changed and his attitude changed. The demons controlling him had been overcome. Light prevailed. The man actually appeared confused. He looked at us with a strange expression. He muttered something. Then he walked away slowly as the crowd watched in amazement.

Light overcame darkness. God's power had hit the mark. The evil spirits were quieted, and we were saved from almost certain injury, or even death. We had been afraid of Goliath, but we knew to intercede, and the Lord protected us.

### **Living Temples That Carry Glory**

My father saw light overcome darkness while on a trip abroad. He was preaching the gospel and praying for the sick according to Mark 16:15-18. The national religion of that country is voodoo. Therefore, demon activity is strong out there. The powers of darkness have been given free reign. In one meeting, Dad felt led by the Holy Spirit to pray for blind people. He invited them to come forward; 20 people responded. He stood before them one at a time, waiting for direction from the Holy Spirit. He was given the same instruction from the Holy Spirit for 19 of them: "Cast out the spirit causing the blindness. Each time he did, they were healed instantly. They could see perfectly. This was an example of light striking the mark. It penetrated darkened eyes, bringing sight.

There is something many believers are not aware of. We are filled with the very glory and light of God. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, said, "Do you not know that you are the temple [naos] of God, and that the spirit of God dwells in you?" (1 Cor. 3:16). The Greek word "naos" always refers to: the holy of holies in Moses' tabernacle and Solomon's temple. Paul was really saying, "Don't you know you are the holy of holies?" The word "dwells" is taken from the Old Testament word "shakan", which means: "abiding or dwelling." The Hebrew word "shekinah" comes from shakan. The "shekinah" was: the abiding glory that dwelt in the holy of holies. Paul was saying that the "shekinah" is in us (see 1 Samuel 4: 4 and 6:12-19). We are the new holy of holies. We are a temple of living stones not made with hands, but by God Himself (see Acts 7:48).

Second Corinthians 4:6-7 says it this way: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. "But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."

Israel carried the Ark of the Covenant into battle. The Ark represented the presence and glory of God (see Joshua 6:6). When the Ark set out, the shout would go up, "Rise up, O Lord! "And let your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate you flee before you" (Num. 10:35). That, same

presence and glory now abides in us. We must understand that the key to victory is carrying this presence of God into battle with us. He rises and scatters His enemies because we carry His glory in us. We are now His "Ark carriers!"

### **Release, The Light**

Arise, shine, Church, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you. Darkness, indeed, does cover the earth. Deep darkness covers the people, but it is a defeated darkness. Nations are looking for the light. Rulers are looking for the brightness of our rising (see Isaiah 60:1-3). We are soldiers of the light. We must boldly release the power of the Most High into situations. Christ has given us His light. He has given us His sword. He has given us His name. Use them! Set yourself toward the Son and allow Him to shine through you, striking the mark! Wield the sword of the Spirit. We often forget how powerful the Holy Spirit is in us. We forget how destructive His lightning sword is to darkness. It has supernatural power to overcome the works of darkness when we release it with confidence.

Parents, station yourself spiritually in front of your rebellious children. Ask God to send a bolt of meekness to them. Aim the light of liberty at their addictions. Be aggressive in the spirit.

Married ones, ask God to shine forth into the lives of (your mates. Ask Him to break through the darkness of deception and liberate them.

Pastors, call upon the Holy Spirit to flash. Ask Him to break strife and division over your congregations. Call upon Him to break their lack of zeal for the Lord. While you are waiting for God to do something, He may be waiting for you. Release the light! Call it forth in Jesus' name.

As the Israelites carried the presence and glory of God into battle, so must we. All that was in the Ark of the Covenant is in us. Its contents were manna (the Bread of Life), the rod of priestly authority and the law of God.

The glory that was upon the Ark now shines through us. Act like it! Strike with the sword -speak with the Word! Let God arise through your intercession, and His enemies will be scattered.

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

1. How is paga (the Hebrew word for intercession) related to lightning?
2. Explain the connection between God's light (or lightning) and His judgments. What did His light do at the Cross?
3. What is the relationship between God light, His sword and our intercession?
4. Where is the holy of holies today? How does this relate to intercession?
- 5: Think of a past situation where light overcame darkness. How did God do it? Now, think of a present situation-How can intercession be used to see the same results?

## **Chapter 12 - The Substance Of Prayer**

There is a story found in 2 Samuel 23:8-12 about three of David's mighty men: Shammah, Adino and Eleazar. Shammah had unwavering perseverance in the face of a humble assignment. His orders were to defend a small plot of lentils from an army of Philistines. Adino showed perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds. He killed 800 Philistines single-handedly. Eleazar had tremendous perseverance in the face of overwhelming fatigue. After fighting for several hours, his hand had to be pried from his sword. These three "mighty men" teach me the importance of perseverance. I rank it near the top of my list of most important spiritual traits.

Perseverance can even be found in the nine fruit of the Holy Spirit. The Greek word "*makrothumia*" is translated: "longsuffering" in Galatians 5:22. It is that quality that causes someone to keep at a task or situation for a long, long time. There is no giving up with makrothumia.

Today in some parts of the world people expect "instant everything." "Fast foods"-quick ways to

get rich-ways to have the biggest church in town overnight easy methods to get your prayers answered. All these things are very popular. Because of this way of thinking, we are rapidly losing the character trait of perseverance. We cook faster, travel faster, produce faster and spend faster. Somehow we expect God to keep us with us. This is true especially in the area of prayer. We are much like the African cheetah that must run down its prey in order to eat. It is well suited for the task. It can run at speeds of 70 miles per hour. The cheetah has only one problem. It has a very small heart, which causes it to tire quickly. If it doesn't catch its prey quickly, it must end the chase. How often we have the cheetah's approach in prayer. We speed into our prayer closets with great energy. We speed to the front of the church. We speed to someone else for prayer. But we lack the heart for long-term effort. We often stop before we accomplish what is needed. We need a bigger heart for prayer.

*George Muller was a man persevering in prayer. He said, "Never give up until the answer comes. I have been praying for over 63 years for one man's conversion. He is not saved yet, but he will be. How can he not be saved? – I am praying."* The day came when Muller's friend received Christ. It did not come until Muller's casket was lowered in the ground. There, beside his open grave, this friend gave his heart to God. Muller's success may be briefly explained in four powerful words: He did not quit!

### **Short And Easy Doesn't Work In Prayer**

Jesus spent many entire nights praying in order to fulfill His ministry. It took Him three difficult hours in Gethsemane to find strength to face the Cross. "He offered up both prayers and supplications with loud crying and tears." (Heb. 5:7).

We, on the other hand, have mastered the art of short prayers. "Short and easy" might be good advice in a few situations, but for most of life, "easy" doesn't work. This includes prayer.

A pilot, while in flight, went to the back of the plane to check why the warning light to the back door was lit up. The problem was an entry door that hadn't been completely closed. As he was trying to close it, the door flew open. He was immediately sucked out the open door of the aircraft. The copilot saw that a door was open. He turned the plane back toward the airport immediately. He radioed for a helicopter to search the area. "I believe our pilot was sucked out an open door of the plane," he said. The copilot landed the plane, and then was astonished at what he saw. The pilot was holding on to the rung of a ladder attached to the plane, which he had miraculously managed to grab. He had held on for 15 minutes. Still more amazing, he had managed to keep his head from hitting the runway. The ground was only six inches away from his head. When airport attendants found the pilot, they had to pry his fingers from ladder. That's perseverance!

Our problems in the Church do not result from a lack of information or physical strength. If we fail in achieving what God asks from us, it will be a failure of heart and spirit. Why is persistence required in prayer? Does God have a certain amount of prayers required for certain situations? Do we talk Him into things? Does God ever finally decide to do something? Do we earn answers through hard work or perseverance? The answer to all these questions is no.

"What about the story of the importunate widow? some will ask (See Luke 11:5-13). "Doesn't it teach that we persist against God until He decides to give us what we need."

The answer is an emphatic no! We do not persist against God.

The word "importunity" in Luke 11:8 is a poor translation of the Greek word "*anaideia*". This really means: "without shame." The idea of this story is the same as Hebrews 4:16. There we are told to approach the throne of grace boldly. We are not to come with a sense of unworthiness or shame. We are like the widow in the Story in Luke 11. We can approach God at any time, knowing we are accepted.

Is God using a delay in answering our prayer in order to teach us something? At times this is certainly the case. In other situations the delay might be because God has the right time for an answer to prayer. "And let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary." (Gal. 6:9).

Why is persistence or perseverance necessary in prayer? Why did it take me 30 hours of praying to get the cyst dissolved on my wife's ovary? Why did it take a year to obtain a miracle for the little

girl in the coma? Why does it sometimes demand many years of intercession to see someone saved? Why did Elijah have to pray seven times before the rain came? Why did Daniel have to pray 21 days before the angel broke through with his answer?

### **His Throne In Our Hearts**

I certainly don't have all the answers to these questions about prayer. However, I want to give one explanation for you to think about. I have become convinced of something called the "substance" of prayer. The idea is that our prayers do more than just motivate the Father to action. They actually release the power of the Holy Spirit from us to accomplish things. Certain types of praying do this more than others.

For example, in our chapter on travail we spoke of this release of power happening as we pray in the Spirit. Another way this occurs would be through speaking the Word of God as a sword into situations. General declarations or commands are other activities that release the power of the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 17:20; Mark 11:23). The practice of the laying on of hands is another scriptural method of releasing power (see Mark 16:18; Hebrews 6:2).

There is real power from the Holy Spirit which can be released for us. The power of God that brings life, healing and wholeness should flow out from the Church. Please don't picture some throne in heaven and think all the power is there. He has now made His throne in our hearts. We are the temple of the Holy Spirit We are now the holy of holies, the dwelling place of God upon the earth (see 1 Corinthians 3:16 and 6:19). When He moves to release power upon the earth, it doesn't have to shoot out of the sky somewhere. It comes from His people. That is where His Spirit dwells upon the earth.

### **The Church, God's Womb Upon The Earth**

When God's power starts flowing upon the earth, it is flowing through human vessels. Some of the ways it does this are through speaking, touching, worship or prayer.

We, the Body of Christ, are God's womb. From us His life is birthed or released upon the earth. The life that Christ produces flows from the womb of the Church.

In John 7:38 Jesus said, "He who believes in me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being shall flow rivers of life giving water'" The innermost being is the Greek word "*koilia*" which means: "womb." We could say, "Out of his womb shall flow rivers of living water." The word "womb" speaks of reproduction. It speaks of birthing.

A similar phrase is found in Revelation 22:1-2: "And he showed me a river of the water of life, clear as crystal, coming from the throne of God and of the Lamb, in the middle of its street. And on either side of the river was the tree of life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. The picture here is of Jesus as the source of life. Out of Him flows the river with trees on either side. Leaves are produced by the trees, which are fed by the river, which is fed by Jesus. People-the nations-eat the leaves and are made whole.

What I want to point out is that the phrase "river of the water of life" is the same phrase in Greek as the "rivers of living water" in John 7. There is no difference between the rivers of life that flow out of the Lamb, and the rivers of life-giving water that flow from the womb of the Church. They both are meant to bring healing and wholeness to the earth. We are Jesus' birthing vessels. Why should that surprise us? Are we not supposed to minister the very life of Jesus to the earth? John 7:39 tells us, "But this He spoke of the Spirit. " It is the Holy Spirit that sends out His power and presence as a river of life-giving water from our inmost being. The Spirit doesn't lay hands on the sick-we do it for Him. The Spirit inside of us releases a river to flow into a person. This anointing brings the blessings to them (see Luke 4:18). The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (see Romans 1:16). When He wants to bring the gospel forth, He does not echo it from the heavens. He speaks it through us. God's life, power and energy flow out of our mouths and penetrate the hearts of unbelievers. Then they are born again. We are the ones who wield the sword of the Spirit, the spoken Word of God. When the Spirit of God wants to bring judgment into situations, He doesn't speak from the clouds. He speaks from His people. We can release God's life. We are the womb of

God from which the river is supposed to flow.

### **Measurable Power**

It is important to know that God's power can be measured. The amount of it can grow according to our praying. There are also levels of faith that can be measured. Romans 12:3 says, "God has allotted to each a measure of faith." God has measured out to each believer a portion or seed of faith. From there it must grow. There are portions of righteousness and sin that can be measured.

In Genesis 15:16, God told Abraham He was going to give the land to his descendants in four generations. The reason He could not give it to him yet was because "...the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." God measured the Amorites' sin, and found it was not yet enough. More sin had to accumulate before God felt justified in judging the Amorites and giving what they had to Israel. He indicated it would take 400 more years of sin God is merciful.

There are levels of grace that can be measured. 2 Corinthians 9:8 says, "And God is able to make all grace abound to you." In Acts 4:33, we are told that "with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all." There is grace, there is great grace and there is all grace!

There are degrees of love that can be measured. John 15:13 speak of greater love. Matthew 24:12 talks of love that has grown cold. Philippians 1:9 refers to love abounding more and more.

There are degrees of the power of God that can be measured. In Mark 6:5 there was an amount of the power of God missing. The verse says that because of the unbelief of the people in Nazareth, "...He could do no miracle there." The Greek does not say, "He chose not to" or "He didn't." It says, "He could not." This was because their low level of faith had hindered the flow of the power of God. Although Jesus was able to heal a few sick people, He could not work a miracle there. The same verse that talks about a great amount of grace talks about a great amount of power (see Acts 4:33). The apostles had great power because they had great grace! In the natural you need different levels of power for different things. It is the same in the spirit realm. There is a difference between the amount of power it takes to light a flashlight and an office building It takes much more power to light a city than one building in the city. The same thing is true in the spirit. Different amounts of God's power are needed to accomplish certain things.

### **Different Measures Of Power**

Let's look again at Mark 6 where there was not enough faith in Nazareth to release Jesus to work a miracle. Enough power was flowing to get only a few healings. The belief level of the people was too low. The verse shows there is a difference between healings and miracles. Enough faith and power was present for one, but not the other. This implies that different amounts are needed for different things. The disciples in Matthew 17:14-21 had been casting out demons and healing the sick. Jesus had given them authority and power to do so. However, a lunatic boy was brought to them and they couldn't cast out this demon. Jesus came along, and it was no problem for Him to cast the demon out of the boy. The disciples had enough power in their ministry to deal with most demons and diseases, Then they came up against one that required more faith and power. They didn't have enough to overcome that one!

This illustrates the point. Sometimes it takes awhile to get prayers answered. These disciples were told that the answer to their insufficient faith was fasting and prayer. Receiving an instant miracle does not usually happen. Usually it is not just a matter of asking the Father to do something. It is a matter of having enough spiritual power to get the job done. Most Christians are not aware of this. After asking, we tend to sit back and wait on God. He is often waiting on us! We sometimes need to pray prayers which do more than just ask Him. When God answers prayer, it often appears He has finally decided to make something happen. The truth is that enough power has finally been released through prayer to accomplish it.

### **Prophets Who Persevered For The Power**

The prophet Elijah came to the widow's son who had died. He spread himself out on the boy's dead body face-to-face. Then he prayed three times (see 1 Kings 17:21). Why did he pray three times?

Was it because the man of God wasn't spiritual enough? Was it because he didn't have enough faith? Was it because he didn't do it right the first two times? I believe that each time he prayed, he released more life out of his spiritual "womb." It takes a good bit of life to raise the dead. In previous chapters we have looked at 1 Kings 18 where Elijah prayed for rain. We discussed the importance of God choosing to work through man. We saw the importance of man traveling to bring forth God's will. Let's look at this passage again. In 1 Kings 18:1 the Lord said to Elijah, "Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the face of the earth. God didn't say, "I might send rain." He didn't say, "I'll send rain if you pray hard enough." He just said, "I'm going to do it." It was God's timing, God's idea and God's will. But Elijah still had to labor in prayer diligently seven times before the rain came. He didn't casually walk to the top of the mountain and say, "Lord, send the rain." James tells us Elijah prayed fervently to first stop the rain and then fervently again to bring the rain (See James 5:16-18). If it was God's will, why did Elijah have to pray seven times until the rain came? I believe that it was necessary to persevere.

Elijah had to complete enough prayer until enough power had been released. This power was released through his intercession. Why did it take Daniel 21 days to get his answer to prayer? After all, God dispatched an angel to him the very first day he started praying (See Daniel 10:10-13). I would think if God wanted to send an angelic messenger, He could get it through immediately if He wanted. He has enough power, doesn't He? Then why was this angel kept from coming for 21 days? I believe Daniel's faithful praying everyday was releasing power into the realm of the spirit. Finally, enough power was released to break through the demonic opposition. Then God could get the angel released to come to Daniel! Please understand that I am not limiting God's power. I am fully aware that one word from God could crush every demon in hell. What must be realized is God's decision to work on the earth through man. A man's prayers were responsible for the angel being dispatched. A man's prayers were also the key to the angel's breaking through with God's message. As someone said, "The answer to Daniel's prayer was granted and already on the way. However, if Daniel had given up, we can assume it would never have arrived."

### **Releasing The River Of Power**

Why did it take Jesus three hours in the Garden of Gethsemane to break through? Why didn't the angels come immediately and comfort Him? Power was being released in the spirit to cause the break-through. I am not speaking to you about praying with vain repetition (see Matthew 6:7). I am not talking about asking God again, and again, and again. I am talking about understanding that the Holy Spirit seizes upon us and empowers our prayer as we yield to His action upon us, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words" (Rom 8:26). As we release this river of prayer, which has its source in the Holy Spirit-then we give birth to things from our spiritual womb.

When we cooperate with the Spirit of God, it releases Him to go out from us and hover over a situation. His life-birthing energies are released. Then that for which we are asking comes forth. Why did it take a month to get rid of the cyst on my wife's ovary? What was I doing as I prayed for her an hour every day? I was releasing the river from my womb! Some would say that God finally did it after I had persevered enough. No, that's wrong. Throughout the entire month her pain was decreasing. According to our doctor, this meant the cyst was shrinking. It didn't just suddenly happen. Power was being released in the spirit realm. It was doing something inside of her. Every day the power was released through prayer. Every day it was destroying the cyst just a little bit more... and more... and more. Why did I have to pray for a year for the young lady in the coma? I went to see her at least once a week. I spoke the Word of God over her, I wept, calling forth a new brain inside of her head. I was fighting the good fight of faith (See 2 Timothy 4:7) Why, did it take a year? Because it takes a lot of power to form a new brain. Why didn't God do it instantly? I don't know I tried everything I knew to get Him to do so. I did all the things I'd read about the heroes of faith doing. In faith, I even sat her up in the bed and commanded her to wake up. But she flopped back down on her pillow like a limp rag doll. I do not know why God chose not to do it as an instant miracle. Because He didn't, I'm fairly certain of this: A measured amount of the river had to flow until there was enough of it to produce that miracle.



Ephesians 3:20-21 says: "Now to him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and forever, Amen." The word for exceeding abundantly beyond is the same word for the abundant grace of God in Romans 5:20, The word is "*hyper-perissos*". "*Perissos*" means: "superabundant." "*Huper*" means: "beyond" or "more than." Together, they would mean: "superabundantly," with even more added to that. That's like saying "more than more than." Ephesians 3:20 says, He has enough power to do more than we can ask or think with more added to that. So, why do we often not have enough?

### **Operative Power**

The power source is not the problem. The rest of Ephesians 3:20 gives us a clue. It tells us He is able to do this "exceeding abundantly above and beyond" by "...the power that works within us." Another translation of this phrase is: "in the measure of the power which is able to operate in us," The word "measure" is the Greek word "*kata*". "*Kata*" can mean: "distribution." God is going to do things superabundantly more than we can ask or think. He is going to do them in the measure of the power that is distributed from us. Are you distributing power? Are you distributing the river? Please don't think you are releasing enough power to accomplish the miraculous by casual praying. Praying only once in awhile does not get the job done! You must release the power of God inside of you on a consistent basis. James 5:16 says, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much." It can also be translated this way: A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much as it operates," Notice the verse doesn't say, "A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much because it causes God to operate." It certainly does this. However, that's not what this verse is telling us. It says, "A prayer of a righteous person is able to do much as the prayer operates." The Amplified Bible reads, "The earnest heartfelt, continued prayer of a righteous man makes tremendous power available dynamic in its working." How wonderful! Our continued prayers work to release God's power. This is prayer that goes on and on.

We have the same power inside of us that created the world. We have the same power in us that went into the depths and took the keys from the kingdom of darkness! Release the power! Release the river! Release it, and release it, and release it, and release it some more-Again, and again, and again!

### **Tipping The Prayer Bowls Of Heaven**

As we release this power, our prayers add up. There are bowls in heaven in which our prayers are stored. There isn't one bowl for all of them but "bowls." We don't know how many. I think it very likely that each of us has our own bowl in heaven. I don't know if your bowl is real or symbolic. It doesn't matter. The principle is still the same. God has something, in which He stores our prayers for use at the proper time. We read about this in Revelation 5:8: "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp, and golden bowls full of incense which are the prayers of the saints." Also Revelation 8:3-5 says: "And another angel came and stood at the altar, holding a golden censor; and much incense was given to him, that he might add it to the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense with the prayers of the saints, went up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censor; and he filled it with the fire off the altar and threw it to the earth; and there followed peals of thunder and sounds and flashes of lightning and an earthquake." According to these verses, the release of God's power into the earth is the result of a divinely concocted recipe. It is made up of much incense, the prayers of all the saints and heavenly fire. This is the same fire that fell on Sinai. It is the same fire that burned up everything when Elijah was on the mountain. It is the same fire that fell at Pentecost. It is the same fire that destroys God's enemies. It is the very fire of almighty God! Completing this recipe may be contingent on enough prayer accumulating to be able to have sufficient ingredients to make this divine bomb. When enough prayer is gathered, God then mixes our bowls of prayers with His incense and fire! Then He pours it upon the earth. Lightning starts to flash, thunder crashes, the earthquakes. Something

awesome happens in the realm of the heaven lies, which then affects the earthly realm. This is what happened when Paul and Silas were in jail and began to sing praises late in the night. Prayerful worship started ascending to God. The bowls filled, and God poured it out. The earth started quaking. The jail door opened, and the chains of Paul and Silas and all the prisoners fell off. The prison doors were opened and the captives were set free. The jailer and his household were converted. Thus the gospel made its first advance into Asia.

Recently, I believe the Lord showed me what happens when we come to Him with a need. We ask Him to do what He said in His Word. In answer to our requests, He sends His angels to get our bowls of prayer. The angels mix our prayers with the incense and fire off the altar. But then there isn't enough in our bowls to meet the need! We might blame God. We might think it's not His will. Or we might think that His Word must not really mean what it says. Actually it's that sometimes He cannot do what we've asked. Why? Because we have not given Him enough ingredient in our prayer-times to get it done. He has poured out all there was to pour, and it wasn't enough! This is not just a faith issue, but also an issue of quantity or measure. The power of God that comes down and explodes in the earth involves HOW MUCH prayer we send up to heaven. You remember King David said "...You have collected all my tears and preserved them in your bottle!" (Ps. 56:8). When I was standing over the girl in a coma, every time I prayed or shed a tear, these were put in a bottle or a bowl. God was just watching until finally the bottle was full. My tears, which God gathered in His bottle, were mixed with His heavenly incense and fire. Then, this divine elixir was thrown by the angel to the earth. On a certain Saturday morning, the girl who had been in a coma for over a year was healed! It was as if God had said to His angels, "Do you see that girl? Take this bowl that's been filled. Mix it with My incense and fire and go pout it on her brain."

### **Get Radical-Pour On The Power**

Try this: If your child is not born again, go into his or her room. Do this when your child is not there. Put prayer power into everything your child touches. This power can go into things like clothing, wallets or toothbrushes. Then it ministers to the owner.

Anointing and power from God flowed out of Paul's innermost being and touched his clothing. It went into his sweat rags ("*soudarion*"). There was so much power that miracles took place when people were touched by those sweat rags (see Acts 19:12). Power was in Jesus robe. When the sick woman reached out and grabbed its *hem*, something flashed out of Him.

### **Anointing With Oil**

The Old Testament word "anoint" means: "to pour or smear with oil." "Smear" everything your children have with the anointing! It's alright to do unusual things in faith. Jesus liked it when people tore roofs off to bring the lame into His presence so they could be healed. He was pleased when others pressed through crowds to touch the hem of His garment. It pleased Him when Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus (Luke 19). He responded to the Canaanite women and the blind man who shouted out for mercy (Matt. 15:22; Mark 10:47). He loved it when the ex-prostitute bathed His feet with tears and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:38-44). He simply loves those who cry out for His mercy and help with their whole heart.

### **Training A Wild Horse**

Someone told about an interesting method used to break a wild horse by tying it to a burro (donkey). The powerful horse would take off bucking across the field. This caused the burro to be jerked about wildly. What a sight! The horse would run away, pulling the burro alongside. They would disappear out of sight-sometimes for days. Then they would return with the little burro in charge. The horse had worn himself out, fighting the presence of the burro. When he became too tired to fight anymore, the burro assumed the position of leader.

That's the way it is many times with prayer. Victory goes to the persistent, not to the angry. Victory goes to the dedicated, not to those who give great demonstrations of emotions and energy. It does not so much matter if we feel or act very spiritual in prayer. It only matters that we do it, believing that it works. We can be very plain in our language when we pray. But we must persevere. God hears committed, determined, continuous prayer, not something exciting but done only

occasionally.

### **Forgive Us Father**

Father, why is the thing we need the most, the thing we do the least? Why are most of us so busy we don't have time to pray? You must have many difficult days when Your eyes roam to and fro throughout the earth. They are looking for someone whose heart is completely Yours. (See 2 Chronicles 16:9). You must weep often when you seek for a man or woman to stand in the gap and find no one (see Ezekiel 22:30). Your heart must ache at times for us. How you desire Your people to rise up and be what You've called us to be! We humble ourselves before Your throne and ask You to forgive us for our lack of prayer. Forgive us as leaders, Lord, who have not told Your people the truth.

Forgive us as the Body of Christ for allowing evil to rule in this land. We have done this when You have "more than more than" enough power in our spiritual wombs to change the world.

Forgive us, Lord. Cleanse us now and break the curses we have allowed to rule over us. Forgive us and cleanse us from the sin of apathy ignorance and unbelief. We have tried to justify this lazy prayerlessness a thousand different ways. Break it off of us, we pray! Our problem is really disobedience, unbelief and sin.

Father, please forgive us and deliver us. Set us free from being hearers of the Word only, and not doers (See James 1:23). Give us homes and churches that are founded on the rock of obedience to Your Word. Rise up in Your people with the determination that the Early Church had. Cause us to cast off everything that would oppose Your Spirit. Move us into a realm that pays a price and lays hold of the kingdom of God. Fill us with Your Spirit. Baptize us in fire. Give us the Spirit of grace and supplication. Let there be an anointing that comes from Your throne.

We are hungry people who are tired of things the way they are. We are tired of death and destruction. We are tired of being defeated by a defeated enemy. We are tired of being held back from our destiny. We are tired of lack and disease. We are tired of sin. We are hungry for something-it is for You, the powerful God of the Bible!

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

1. Can you explain the real lesson being taught by the story in Luke 11:5-13?
2. What is meant by "the substance" of prayer? How does this relate to perseverance?
3. Provide some scriptures demonstrating that spiritual things can be measured. Now apply this truth to prayer using Ephesians 3:20-21 and James 5:16.
4. Can you think of any situations where you may have stopped praying before your "bowl" was filled? Are there any present situations in your life that need more power released in order to receive an answer?

## **Chapter 13 - Actions That Speak And Words That Perform**

### **Releasing Faith**

There is an interesting part of intercession few people understand. Still fewer do it. It is prophetic action and declaration.

What do we mean by this? When we say something is "prophetic" we mean: it is either foretelling or forth-telling. It can also be both of these things at the same time.

Foretelling is speaking about future things. Forth-telling is action or words that declare something for God. Forth-telling may not be dealing with future events at all.

Foretelling and forth-telling can have the purpose of preparing the people for something God is going to do. Prophetic words or actions prepare a way for God. We see this in John the Baptist who prepared the way for the Messiah. With his words and actions he showed the people about the glory that was going to be revealed in Jesus (Is. 40:1-5).

Prophetic ministry makes a way for the glory of the Lord. It releases the ministry of Jesus that follows. Prophetic actions and declarations prepare the way for God to work upon the earth. In a sense they release God to do something. God has already chosen to work, and He uses the prophetic as a means to reach His goals.

Prophetic actions and declarations do not release Him in the sense that He is bound. God obviously is not bound. However, they release Him in the following sense:

1. Obedience to God brings a response from God. Prophetic actions and declarations mean nothing if they are not directed by God. However, when He gives instruction, it must be obeyed. God chooses to have things done a certain way. When that way is used, it releases God to accomplish His purposes. He doesn't always explain why something must be done a particular way. Being God, He has that right. But when His chosen way is used, He does what He desires to do.
2. Faith releases God. Faith is "obedient action in response to what God has said to us." When He says, "Do this," we must obey and take the action He has told us to take. This releases Him to act.
3. When God is released, His creative power is also released upon the earth. We know God has tremendous creative power, energy and ability. These come forth through His words. His power, energy and ability are released upon the earth through prophetic declarations!

Here is how it works: God directs us to take prophetic action or make a declaration concerning something in the natural realm. Our obedience prepares the way for God to move in the spiritual realm. When God moves in the spiritual realm, this causes change in the natural realm. In this way, God and man become partners. God tells us to do or say something. We obey. Our words or actions affect the heavenly realm. The heavenly realm then affects the natural realm.

### **Prophetic Action**

Moses stretched forth his rod over the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:21). This is an example of prophetic action. Why did Moses have to stretch forth his rod? Because God said to. God wanted the symbolic rod of authority to be stretched over the Red Sea. If there had been no extending of the rod over the sea, the sea would not have rolled back. It is as if God needed someone to take prophetic action before He could be released to roll back the waters of the Red sea. Another example of prophetic action is Moses holding up the rod when Israel was battling with Amalek (see Exodus 17:9-13). This is a strong demonstration of prophetic action. You may remember the story. Moses was up on the mountain with the rod of authority. When he held it up, Israel prevailed in the battle. When he grew tired and lowered his arms, Amalek began to prevail against Israel. Moses was not just trying to give morale to his fighting men by holding the rod of God heavenward. Do you think those soldiers on the battlefield were watching Moses? They were too busy fighting to watch him. The lifting of the rod had nothing to do with morale. The soldiers probably didn't even see the rod going up and down. The lifting of the rod had to do with something happening in the spiritual realm or the realm of the spirit. This prophetic action was releasing something in the heavenlies. As it did, the authority of God flowed down to earth and caused the Israeli soldiers to prevail against the Amalekites.

### **God's Way, Even When It Makes No Sense**

Moses smiting the rock in Exodus 17: 6 is another example of prophetic action. He took the rod of authority, struck the rock and water came out! Why? Because God wanted it done that way. When God chooses to do something a certain way, someone has to perform an act upon the earth. This act often makes no sense. However, when it is performed, something is released in the spirit. This, in turn, releases something upon earth. People don't get water out of rocks when they hit them with a rod- unless God says to do it. You may recall that a few years later, Moses struck the Rock twice when God had said, "Speak to the Rock." Moses' failure to precisely obey God's word brought water to the people but judgment on Moses (see Numbers 20:7-12).

When God tells us to act, it affects both the spirit realm and the earthly or natural realm. Our obedience produces results-like bringing water out of rocks. In this case the smiting of the rock was prophetic action.

There are many examples of prophetic action in Scripture. In 2 Kings 13:4-19, Elisha was about to

die. The Assyrians were camped around Israel, and King Joash wanted some advice from the old prophet. Elisha said to Joash, "Take your arrow and shoot it out the window toward the enemy camp!" This was a declaration of war. The king and the prophet put their hands on the bow together. They shot the arrow. Elisha then said, "That's the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. Now, Joash, take these arrows and strike the ground." The king was about to be tested, His actions were going to be prophetic. He took the arrows and struck the ground three times. The prophet was grieved and angry. He said, "Three times you will have victory over your enemies, and then they will conquer you. You should have struck with the arrows at least five or six times, then you would have conquered them!" This story doesn't seem fair to me. King Joash wasn't told how many times to strike with the arrows. How was he supposed to know he should keep striking? I think this is the point: If God says to hit with the arrows three times, then you hit three time" But if God simply says to hit it you hit it until He says stop! God was after prophetic action, but He didn't get what He wanted. Neither did king Joash get the complete victory he wanted.

When God speaks to you, respond with vigor, enthusiasm and faith. Keep on doing what He said until He says to do differently. People were healed in Scripture through prophetic action. Jesus made clay with His own spit. He rubbed it in a blind man's eyes and told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam (see John 9:6-7). The man obeyed and could see! On another occasion, He just spoke the word of faith and the man was healed (Mark 10:49-52). It wasn't the method that healed but obedient action that Jesus took in response to what He saw and heard the Father doing and directing. In John 5:19 Jesus said, "The Son can do nothing by himself He does only what he sees the Father doing, and in the same way." Those important words, "and in the same way" illustrates Jesus' attention to detail in doing what He saw the Father doing. He didn't alter the Father's instructions. He did not take liberties and modify the instructions like Moses did some 13 centuries before. Jesus precisely implemented the Father's will. We should do likewise.

Naaman the leper was told to dip in the Jordan River seven times (see 2 Kings 5:10-14). "I don't want to", he said. Then you won't get healed of your leprosy," replied Naaman's servant. Why? Because God chose to work in that way. And when God chooses to do something by a certain method, no other means will work.

God often asked His people to do something that was not only prophetic. It also had great power as a form of intercession. It would bring deep changes when obeyed. Time and time again in Scripture we see how God told His children to perform an intercessory, prophetic act. Then He powerfully moved as a result. Again, let me urge you. If in prayer, you feel God is speaking to you to do something, try it out! As long as you or others will not come to bodily harm by doing it, try it out! Do NOT take any presumptuous leaps off high walls or take life-threatening actions. But, if what we feel God is telling us to do has no potential for harm to someone, then try it. It can't hurt. All we have to lose is our pride-and that is a good thing to lose. So, take prophetic actions. Try it, if you feel God is saying it and you know that no physical or spiritual harm will result. It might produce a mighty victory.

### **Prophetic Declaration**

Let's look at some Biblical examples of prophetic words that precede God doing something.

In Jeremiah 6:18-19, Jeremiah prophesied and said, "Therefore hear, O nations...Hear, O earth." Again, in Jeremiah 22:29 he prophesied, saying, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord." Many would think I was an utter fool if I suddenly said, "All the earth, hear me now! And all the nations, I'm speaking to you!" But that's what Jeremiah did. It was a prophetic declaration that made no sense in the natural.

Prophetic declaration is often not what we would normally say. It is rather speaking for God. This releases His power to accomplish something. Isn't this what happens as we preach? When preaching, we are declaring that the gospel is the power of God for salvation (see Romans 1:16). Our mouths speak God's Word-His power is released. This is also what happens when we speak His Word as a sword in spiritual warfare. He puts divine power into our words. Jeremiah said, "O Earth! Earth! Earth! Hear the Word of the Lord!" This was exactly the same as if God Himself were saying, "O Earth! Earth! Earth! Hear My Words!"

God told Jeremiah that He was going to use him "...to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to over through, to build and to plant" (see Jeremiah 1:10). Later, in Jeremiah 31:28 God says He has done just that. God has plucked up, broken down, over thrown and destroyed. It is important to see that God did these things through the words of His prophet. In Micah 1:2 the prophet said, "Hear, O peoples, all of you; listen, O earth and all it contains." Wouldn't you feel rather foolish saying, "O earth and everything in it, God wants me to talk to you. Are you listening?" Micah did just that, however. Obviously all the earth didn't hear him. Did the storm hear Jesus tell it to be still? Did the fig tree hear Him pronounce, "...Let no fruit grow on you hence forward for ever?" Apparently it did because "...presently the fig tree withered away" (Matt. 21:19). Whether anyone hears us or not isn't the point. Holy Spirit-inspired declarations release the power of God into situations and circumstances in the earthly realm.

### **We Become His Voice**

"But those were the prophets and Jesus," some might argue. Yes, but after rebuking the storm, Jesus rebuked the disciples for their fear and unbelief. He was implying that they should have rebuked the storm! Right after He cursed the fig tree, Jesus gave a promise that we could speak to a mountain and cast it into the sea (Matt 21:18-22). Jesus is describing the power of Holy Spirit-inspired declaration. We become the voice of God upon the earth.

Prayer surely does influence God. It does not influence His purpose-but it does influence His action. Every right thing that ever has been prayed for God has already purposed to do. But He does nothing without our consent. God has been hindered in His purposes by our lack of willingness. When we learn His purposes and make them our prayers, we are giving Him the chance to act.

Hosea 6:5 is a powerful verse about God bringing judgment. "Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth." How did He do this? Through His words spoken by the prophets. God's words were released for Him by humans.

To be effective, declarations must be the words or actions God commands. "So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Is. 55:11). When God said this, He was not talking about His Word coming down from the clouds. He was referring to Himself speaking through the prophet Isaiah. God was declaring, "Isaiah's words are My words. Isaiah is My voice. My words won't return to Me empty. They will return producing exactly what I send them to do through this man!"

### **Real life Example**

Many years ago a minister who served abroad told me this story. I will try to recount it to the best of my recollection. He said:

"I was in the city to spend a day interceding in a church building whose congregation was scattered due to the moral failure of its principal leader. After some hours of intercession, the Spirit of the Lord came upon me and I began to prophecy. No one else was in the building. But the principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness were listening. "I was prophesying that this place would once again be filled with the Glory of God and that the congregation would be restored. The prophecy continued for more than 15 minutes proclaiming all that God would do in restoring this church that was devastated by the enemy's influence.

"In the following six months, God began the work of restoration. A new pastor came and opened the closed building. Soon after, God visited the church and six months later they had a larger congregation than before. Miracles of healing and people coming to the Lord were commonplace in almost every service"

What happened? It seems evident that this Spirit-empowered prophetic declaration was used by God to defeat the enemy's desire to close this church. God can use you in similar ways if you pray and respond to the Spirit's action upon you. Of course, there are some who say God doesn't speak anything directly to us today. They say He only uses the Bible. This would mean the only thing we can speak for Him is Scripture. I do encourage us to speak the words of the Bible into situations! However, we can also listen for His direction as we pray. When He tells you what to do, boldly

Speak and do as He instructs. Of course, all that we do must be judged by the Scriptures. It must never violate the Bible. Always check with mature leaders before doing or saying anything in a public setting. Receive godly counsel before doing something that seems extremely strange. Don't run around town naked like the prophet Isaiah (see Isaiah 20:2-4). He probably wore a loincloth anyway! Use wisdom. When in doubt, always check with someone you respect in the Lord. That may not be possible. Therefore, when you are in doubt, don't do or say anything that seems very strange to you. Never do anything that goes against Scripture. Don't do anything that might bring shame to the name of the Lord.

### **Saying What God Says**

The Greek word in the New Testament for "confession" is "*homologia*". It means: "to say the same thing." Biblical confession is saying what God says-no more, no less. If certain words aren't what God is saying about a situation, they do nothing. But if they are what He is saying, they accomplish much. The Word of God is called a "seed" in the Scriptures. The root word in Greek is "*speiro*". "*Spora*" and "*sperma*" are variations of that root word. These words are translated "seed" in the New Testament. God uses His Word for reproducing or bringing forth life. By His Word we are: born again (1 Pet. 1:23), cleansed (John 15:3), matured (Matt. 13:23), freed (John 8:31-32), and healed (Ps. 107:20). There are also many other results of God's Word in us.

*When God speaks His word, He is sprinkling "seeds" that will bring forth life. The Word of God is always effective. It will always produce. When we speak God's words into situations, as the Holy Spirit directs, we are sprinkling the seeds of God. This then gives Him the ability to cause life to come forth!*

Job 22:28 declares, "You will also decree a thing, and it will be established for you." The word "decree" actually means: to decide a thing and then decree it. The Hebrew word for "thing" in this verse is "*omer*". It also means: "a word of command; a promise." "Establish" is the Hebrew word "*qum*". It means: to "arise or stand up." Here is what I believe God is saying in Job 22:28: "You shall decree a promise of God and it will rise up. You shall sprinkle My seed. It will grow and establish something in the earth."

Why don't you establish some salvation upon the earth by deciding to scatter salvation seeds? Establish freedom for someone by declaring freedom seeds. Establish unity in your church by commanding unity seeds. Establish God's future for your children by sowing God's seeds. Plant your own personal garden with God's seeds. Tend it well. Watch God's Word produce a harvest. Re-present the victory of Calvary from your mouth! Job 6:25 reads: "How forcible are right words". Forcible in Hebrew is "*marats*", which also means: "to press." In olden times, rulers wore a carved ring called a "signet ring." When a king wanted to firmly establish something he had written he would drip hot wax onto the paper. Then he would press his signet ring into the wax. The picture or words that were carved into the ring would then appear in the wax. As the special wax hardened, it would produce the king's permanent "seal" on the paper. Our words are "forcible" or "pressing." As the signet ring of a king presses his seal, our words also seal things. They seal our salvation, the promises of God, and our future.

Ecclesiastes 12:11 tells us, "The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies." Our words act as nails, constructing things in the spirit. Just as a nail is used to keep a board in place, words are used to keep God's promise" in place. In this way, our words are allowed to build and establish things in the spirit realm.

### **Prophecy To Bones And To Breath**

The story of Ezekiel and the valley of dry bones is another example of prophetic declaration (see Ezekiel 37:1-14). "Prophecy over these bones," God commanded Ezekiel. Can you imagine what Ezekiel thought.? "Speak to them? God, if you want something said to skeletons, why don't You just do it?" But Ezekiel obeyed and said, "O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord." And they did! Bone joined to bone, and flesh came on them. There was no life in them, however Ezekiel's next assignment is even more amazing than prophesying to the bones. The Lord said, "Prophecy to the breath." I believe the breath he was told to prophesy to is the Holy Spirit. If that is the case, then

God said, "prophesy to the Holy Spirit" (vs. 9). Ezekiel obeyed, and the Spirit of God did what Ezekiel told Him to do. Did the prophet actually command the Holy Spirit? Not really-he wasn't commanding God; he was commanding for God. It has been God's plan and heart from the Creation to partner with man. God's desire is to work through the prophetic declaration of a human being. Who can fully understand such a wonderful thing?

### **Whatever He Says, Do It!**

God is calling the Church to a new understanding of prophetic action and declaration. He is teaching us how to work as His voice and Body upon the earth. When He speaks His plan to us, He needs us to do it! It doesn't matter how foolish it may seem He may tell us to hold up a rod, or speak to the spiritually dead. He may instruct us to walk around our neighborhoods or march through our streets. We may be required to hit rocks, decree to the earth, or speak to walls. He may tell us to walk across our nation, or speak to those who are far outside the reach of our natural voice. The Lord may lead you to go to the bedroom of a rebellious child and anoint things with oil. You may need to pray over clothing, speak over the child's bed, or some other symbolic act. Others of you will be called to make declarations over your cities and governments. Some will be told to march on land, claiming it for the kingdom of God. Whatever He says to you, do it! Be bold to declare the Word of the Lord over situations. Sprinkle the seed of His Word into the earth and expect a harvest. It will be established. It will arise! Life will come!

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

1. What are prophetic action and declaration? Explain how they "release" God. Now give some Biblical examples.
2. Explain the connection between God's Word, seeds and our Holy Spirit-inspired declarations.
3. What are some verses of Scripture that would be good to decree for an individual's salvation?
4. What verses would be good for healing?
5. What verses could you decree over your city?

## **Chapter 14 - The Watchman Anointing**

### **Be On The Alert**

The Bible talks about watching: "...watch and pray..." (Mark 13:22). This chapter is about the "watchman anointing." This special anointing is for those called to be intercessors. By this anointing we are called and equipped to be warned of Satan's plans. The purpose of this calling is so that we can pray against the devil's desires in the same manner Jesus prayed for Peter. "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to have you, to sift you like wheat, but I have pleaded in prayer for you that your faith should not completely fail. .." (Luke 22:31-32). Ephesians 6:18 says, "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints." Some translations use the word "watching" for the phrase "be on the alert." I Peter 5:8 warns us about our enemy. It reads, "Be of sober spirit, and be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour." Other translations use the words "be watchful." The idea in both verses is that we must watch out for the enemy and neutralize him through intercessions. Each mentions our enemy. Each challenges us to alertness or watchfulness, both for ourselves and for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Another related verse is 2 Corinthians 2.11, "In order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes." Chapter 9 contains a careful explanation of this verse. I will repeat my interpretation of this verse given in Chapter 9. I base this on the Greek words used. "To the degree that we are ignorant of the way our adversary thinks and operates-to the degree we are ignorant of his plans, plots, schemes and devices-to that degree he will gain on us and try to take from us what is ours." In other words, it is dangerous to be ignorant of the ways of Satan!



I want to draw four conclusions from Ephesians 6:18, I Peter 5:8 and II Corinthians 2:11 ⇒

1. Protection from the attacks of our enemy is not automatic. This applies even for believers. Protection doesn't just happen. There is a part for us to play. Though God is sovereign, this does not mean He is in control of everything that happens. He has left much of the decisions and actions to humankind. If God were going to protect us from Satan's attacks regardless of what we do, these verses would be meaningless. Somewhere in our theology, we must find a place for human responsibility. At some point we must begin to believe that what we do matters.

2. God's plan is to alert us to Satan's tactics. God says to be aware of Satan's tactics. Therefore He must be willing to make us aware of them. He says to be on the alert. This must mean that if we are watching, He will alert us to trouble. God would not ask us to do something that He would not enable us to do.

3. We must remain watchful, or we won't notice God's attempts to warn us of Satan's attacks. If these attacks were always going to be easy to see, alertness would not be necessary. Isaiah 56:10 speaks of blind watchmen. What a picture! I'm afraid it has been a fairly good description of many of us. We're often, like the early disciples. "We have eyes, but we do not see" (see Mark 8:18). It's time we do more than just look. We must be alert and watch!

4. If we are not alert and watchful, Satan may prevail in his devilish desires towards us. He may gain on us, taking advantage of our ignorance. We can be destroyed due to ignorance (see Hosea 4:6). Don't be like the desert nomad who awoke hungry one night and he decided he'd have a midnight snack. Lighting a candle, he grabbed a date and took a bite. Holding the date close to the candle, he saw a worm. He threw the date out of the tent. Biting into a second date he found another worm, he threw it away also. He decided he might not get anything to eat if this continued. Therefore, he blew out the candle and ate the dates.

Sometimes we, too, prefer the darkness of denial to the light of truth, though the truth really does hurt at times, it is still truth. To deny the truth doesn't change it. Where Satan has made gains, let's admit it and decide to take back what he has stolen!

### **Two Greek Words For Watching**

Two New Testament Greek words for "watching" remind us of the Old Testament idea of watchmen. They are "*gregoreuo*" and "*agrupneo*". Both mean: "to stay awake." This carries the same idea as a soldier on guard He would need to stay awake.

Some of the verses where these two words are found are the following:

- "Devote yourself to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving" (Col. 4:2).
- Jesus said, "My soul is deeply grieved to the point of death; remain here and keep watch... Keep watching and praying, that you may not come into temptation..." (Mark 14:34,38)
- "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Pet. 5: 8)
- "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like, then, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).
- "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints" (Eph. 6:18)
- "But keep on the alert at all times, praying in order that you may have strength to escape all these things that are about to take place." (Luke 21:36)

The last two verses combine *agrupneo* with *kairos*. (See Chapter 6 for the discussion on *kairos*, which means "the strategic time.")

These verses challenge us to be on the alert for the *kairos* times. Then we are to pray.

### **Biblical Watchmen**

What was the purpose of Biblical watchmen?

The term "watchman" comes, from the Old Testament. It was used to describe "sentries", "guards" or "lookouts." These men were responsible for protecting two things. They protected fields from thieves and animals. They protected cities from invading armies. Those men watching fields of

crops were stationed on rocks, buildings or towers. This gave them a better range of vision. Towers in the fields usually had a place to sleep. This was because it was necessary to keep watch day and night during harvest. The watchman would take shifts – one working, one sleeping. In this way, there was a watch 24 hours a day.

This has great symbolism for us. In seasons of harvest, there is a more urgent need for watchmen. The “thief” is going to do all he can to steal the harvest, keeping the greater portion. I believe that right now is the beginning of the greatest harvest of souls the world has ever known. God is preceding this harvest with the greatest prayer awakening in history.

The Lord of the harvest is wise. He has 24-hour sentries "watching" the harvest. May we be able to say with our Lord, “Of those you have given me, not one of them perished" (John 17:12). The Old Testament watchmen were also posted on the city walls.

The following are a few Old Testament references:

- "For thus the Lord says to me, 'Go, station the lookout, let him report, what he sees. When he sees riders, horse, men in pairs, a train of donkeys, a train of camels, let him pay close attention, very close attention.'" "Then the lookout called, 'O Lord, I stand continually by day on the watchtower, and I am stationed every night at my guard post.'" (Is. 21:6-8)

- "Lift up a signal against the walls of Babylon; post a strong guard, station, sentries, place men in ambush!" (Jer. 51:12).

- "On, your walls, O Jerusalem, I have appointed watchmen; all day and all night they will never keep silent. You who remind the Lord, take no rest for yourselves" (Is. 62:6).

From the walls of the cities these watchmen would watch for two things: messengers and enemies.

### **Watchmen Look For Messengers**

The watchmen watched for messengers to inform the gatekeepers about when to open the gates-and when not to. In those days runners were used to carry messages from city to city. The watchmen would cry out when a friendly messenger was coming. Skilled watchmen could sometimes even recognize the runners by their stride before ever seeing their faces. In 2 Samuel 18:27 the watchman said, "The running... is like the running of Ahimaaz."

Recognizing the way something is done can alert us to danger from our spiritual enemy. It is important to know the enemy's ways. Seasoned "watchmen" are often alerted by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit warns them before they ever have any evidence that certain "messengers" are not to be trusted. They recognize "wolves" sent to devour the flock. They sense when there are "hirelings" with wrong motives. They bring warnings to those in leadership. They recognize the enemy's agents "by their stride." Something just doesn't seem right. They sense and discern.

We must guard against human suspicion and judging after the flesh. But I have learned to listen to my trusted "watchmen." One of them is my wife. My watchmen tell me when they are uneasy about someone. They are usually right

Watchmen need to watch, and the leaders need to listen! If they did, most false doctrine and division in the Body of Christ could be avoided. Peter speaks of this need in 2 Peter 2:1-2, "But false prophet also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them. They will bring swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their sensuality. Because of them the way of the truth will be maligned." Paul warned the Ephesians of the need to watch in Acts 20:28-31, "Be on the guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. From among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears." Evidently the Ephesians heeded Paul's advice, for the Lord praised them in Revelation 2:2, "I know your deeds and, your toil and perseverance, and that you cannot endure evil men. You put to the test those who call themselves apostles, and they are not and you found them to be false."

## **Watchmen Lock For The Enemy**

The watchmen on the wall also looked for the enemy. When they saw the potential danger approaching, they sounded an alarm. This alarm was either a shout or a trumpet blast. Soldiers could then prepare themselves for battle, and defend the city.

Watchmen do this today, in a spiritual sense. They alert the Body of Christ to the attacks of the enemy, sounding the alarm. When the watchmen stay alert we are not caught off guard by Satan and his forces. As good watchman we do not live in fear or ignorance of our enemy. Often the enemy will accuse Christians of a wrong emphasis. He tries to keep them from watching for him. This idea is often taught by well-meaning Christians. They say that Satan is to be ignored. They teach that little attention is to be paid him. No passage in the Bible supports this. Certainly we are not to concentrate on Satan. However, a good soldier is well-informed concerning his enemy.

Concentrate on Jesus. Be in awe of Him, but be aware of the enemy! Our first priority is to love Him whom we worship - not love warfare against the enemy whom we watch for. But when necessary, we must go to war.

There was a woman who was teaching on spiritual warfare in her church. Her pastor told her, "I don't think you should teach on spiritual warfare. Concentrate on Jesus and not the devil." Her respectful response showed her wisdom and experience. "Pastor, I do concentrate on Jesus and His victory. Jesus taught that we have authority over the evil one. "However, until I began to use Christ's authority in spiritual warfare, I had four children going to hell. I've learned to bind the enemy's work in my family's lives. "Today all my children and grandchildren serve the Lord. I've seen the results of spiritual warfare, and I want to help others".

## **Watchmen Look Ahead**

Watchmen did not only guard cities and fields in Scripture. The Hebrew words translated "to watch" are "natsar", "shamar" and "tsaphah". They mean: "to guard or protect by watching over." They also imply: "hedging around something," or "hiding or concealing something." The watchman - through intercession - creates the secret place of protection (see Psalm 91). Another interesting meaning of "tsaphah" is: "to lean forward and peer into the distance." This meaning speaks strongly of prayer. The watchman looks ahead, "peering into the distance." He foresees the attacks of the enemy. He acts, rather than reacts. This is the way it is in prophetic intercession!

Let's look at several scriptures where these words for "watch" are used. Each passage refers to guarding or protecting something different.

The first is in Genesis 2:15, "Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it." The word for "keep" is also one of the words used for "watch." This is the first time this word is used in the Bible. In hermeneutics (the principles used to rightly interpret the Bible) there is something called "the law of first mention." This principle suggests: we pay close attention to the first mention of a major subject in the Bible. When a subject is first mentioned, important facts are given concerning it. These facts help us understand subsequent references to the subject throughout the rest of the Bible. For example, the first mention of the serpent -Satan- is in Genesis 3:1, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made..." It is easy to see "the law of first mention" at work here. This verse speaks of Satan's deceitfulness or craftiness. God is telling us one of the most important things we must remember about Satan. He is far more dangerous to us as the crafty serpent than as a roaring lion.

## **Watchmen Keep The Serpent Out!**

Adam was told in Genesis 2:15 to keep (watch or guard) the garden. From what? It had to be from the serpent!

Why the serpent? The following reasons may explain why:

- (1) It is much in keeping with the nature of God to have warned Adam.
- (2) Neither Adam nor Eve seemed shocked when a snake talked to them. It did not come to as a total surprise.
- (3) What evil presence could there have been to guard from in the garden? Only the serpent.

The first mention of this term “keep” in Scripture explains one of the primary responsibilities of the watchman: Keep the serpent out! Guard or protect that which God has entrusted to your care from the subtle serpent. Keep him out of your garden! Keep him out of your home, family, church, city, nation! Keep him out!

The word "keep" is used again in Genesis 3:24 when God stationed an angel at the entrance of the garden. This was to keep man from the tree of life. Adam didn't keep the serpent out, so an angel had to keep man out.

### **Watchmen Guard The Sheep**

In Genesis 30:31 the watchmen guard a flock of sheep. We can guard the flock of God through intercession.

Ecclesiastes 12:3 refers to protecting a house.

Psalms 127:1 uses the idea of guarding a city.

1 Samuel 26:15 and 28:2 speak of guarding a person.

Proverbs 4:23 instructs us to guard our hearts.

These three Hebrew words are translated in several ways:

1. **Keep or keeper:** This is by far the most frequent usage of these words—at least 250 times. Watchmen keep things, places and individuals safe. They ensure against loss, theft or damage.
2. **Guard:** Watchmen are guards. This word is obviously similar to the next one.
3. **Bodyguard:** Watchmen guard individuals, protecting them from danger and harm. They are shields. Watchmen represent Jesus by watching over others.

Often intercessors in our fellowship inform me of times they have spent covering me in prayer. More than once I've been told, "Pastor, I was up most of the night praying for you." Occasionally they ask, "Was something wrong?" "No," I usually respond, "and your praying is probably why!" Often my problems are laid upon others and they carry them away from me. I am grateful enough to realize that much of my success is due to their faithfulness. What a comfort to know I have body guards in the spirit! There would be fewer disasters among Christian leaders if we had more faithful watchmen.

A leading professor offers five reasons pastors and other Christian leaders need watchmen to intercede for them:

#### **1. Leaders have more responsibility and accountability.**

James 3:1, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment."

#### **2. Leaders are more exposed to temptation.**

The higher up you go on the ladder of Christian leadership, the higher you go on Satan's list.

#### **3. Leaders are more targeted by spiritual warfare.**

Witches and other servants of darkness have entered into an evil covenant. They pray to Satan for the breakdown of marriages of Christian leaders.

#### **4. Leaders have more influence on others than most other Christians.**

#### **5. Leaders' lives are noticed and seen more than other Christians'.**

Pastors are often up in front of a roomful of people. They are also noticed in the community. Therefore they are constantly the objects of gossip and criticism.

Thus, to the degree the intercessors pray, the leaders gain protection. Yes, leaders are responsible to put on the whole armor of God (see Ephesians 6:11-17). However, the prayers of intercessors protect them even above the armor.

Here is a suggested daily guide to praying for spiritual leaders.

- **Sunday:** Favor with God (to give spiritual revelation, anointing, holiness).
- **Monday:** Favor with others (with Christians / believers and the unsaved).
- **Tuesday:** Increased vision (with wisdom, appropriate action and guidance to carry out the vision).

- **Wednesday:** Spirit, soul and body (attitudes, intentions, motives, aptitudes, health).
- **Thursday:** Protection (against temptation, deception and enemies).
- **Friday:** Finances (provision and blessings).
- **Saturday:** Family (spouse and children).

God is raising up prophetic intercessors -watchmen- to keep the serpent out! God is looking for men and women who will "lean forward, peering into the distance," watching for the enemy's attacks. It is, indeed, a high calling!

### **Be Offensive-Lay Siege!**

I have made a surprising discovery as I studied these Hebrew words for "keep" or "guard." They not only have protective or defensive meanings. They have offensive meanings as well. The words mean also: "to besiege, or lay siege to a city." This idea is to watch a city to keep people and supplies from coming or going. One meaning is "to spy on" or "lie in wait for someone." The words are actually translated this way in 2 Samuel 11:16, Isaiah 1:8, Jeremiah 4:16-17, Jeremiah 51:12 and Judges 1:24. Some years ago God clearly spoke in my heart that He was releasing the watchman anointing on the Church. This would enable individuals to "lay siege to" cities and nations through prayer. Satan had taken advantage and was holding on to that which had been promised to God's children. However, the people of God would be given instruction about how to lay siege to situations. They would cut off Satan's supply lines. They would take back people, cities and nations from him. The Body of Christ would learn to systematically pull down the strongholds of darkness. By His Spirit, God would give us the ability to discern the enemy's plans. We would learn to cut him off and take back nations, cities and individuals through prayer. The strongholds of darkness would be torn down. Those imprisoned in satanic fortresses would be freed. Sieges would be laid in the spirit realm. God would show us what to bind and loose, as well as how to do it.

### **Opposed But Victorious**

There is opposition, of course. Sometimes it takes a long time to get an answer from God. This can discourage people from praying. The very concept of laying siege implies a duration of time. It may take days, weeks or years of daily intercession to receive the breakthrough. I certainly believe this can be speeded up by better knowing how to pray. There is an increase of power when several intercessors agree together. This can speed the answer too. However, nothing can change the fact that some situations require time. I laid siege to the cyst in my wife for 30 days. The sister whom we spoke of in Chapter 10, laid siege to the bondages in her son for four years. God gave her and her friends many things to do as they prayed. He showed them what to "cut off" and what to "call forth." They "spied out" Satan's plans. Was it worth the effort and the long wait? Absolutely!

This idea of laying siege is shown in a story about an intercessor named Theresa. She and a friend had prayer-walked their neighborhood for a season. They stopped in front of each house, then they took each other's hands and agreed in prayer for the salvation of those who lived there. Soon reports started coming in.... a colonel's wife accepted Christ; the teenage daughter of a non-Christian family met Jesus; a woman suffering with arthritis made a commitment to Christ; the daughter of another family came to the Lord. That is laying siege! It is the watchman anointing at its best and anyone can do it.

### **Taking Cities And Nations For God**

"Ask of Me, and I will give you the nations for your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for your possession." (Ps. 2:8). I have put most of my attention in this teaching on intercession for individuals. I would now like to tell about intercession for cities and nations. This is also "laying siege." Scripture clearly shows that God relates to individuals. But He deals with not only individuals, but also groups of people. Why? Many of the decisions we make are made with people to whom we relate. For example, I make many decisions privately about my personal life. However, my wife and I make the decisions together for our children, finances and home. This same principle of shared authority can be expanded all the way up to a national level. Groups of

people are responsible for their actions together. In whatever way a group of people has rights and decision-making power, there is also responsibility. For example, I do not favor laws allowing abortion. God will eventually send judgments on nations due to this form of murder. Even though I am against abortion, I cannot personally escape the effects of God's judgment. If God brings drought that kills our crops, I too, will pay higher prices because of a food shortage. If the judgment is war, I too, pay for it in higher taxes, and share in the grief of lost lives.

No one can live as an island, separated from all that is around. We as believers can enjoy a certain degree of protection from these judgments. However, there is no way to totally avoid the principle of shared responsibility.

### **The Dealings Of God With Groups Of People**

There are several ways in which God dealt with groups of people:

1. Cities were prophesied to Jonah 1:2; Nahum 3:1; Micah 6:9; Revelation 2 and 3.
2. Cities and nations were judged: Nineveh, Sodom, Gomorrah, Tyre, Sidon, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Jericho, Jerusalem and others.
3. Cities and nations were forgiven or spared judgment: Nineveh and Israel.
4. Cities and nations had divine purposes or callings: Israel, Jerusalem, the seven cities of refuge and many others.
5. Cities were spoken of as being kept or preserved by God: Psalm 127:1.
6. Cities and nations had principalities ruling them. Tyre (Ezek. 28:12); Persia (Dan. 10: 13); Ephesus (Acts 19:28); Pergamum (Rev. 2:12).
7. People in groups share a common level of righteousness or sin. Any nation (Prov. 14:34); Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:20-21); the Amorites (Gen. 15:16).
8. A city's people can have a common faith or unbelief level. Nazareth (Mark 6:5-6).
9. A city's people can have a group peace (Jer. 29:7).
10. Cities can have revival: Nineveh (Jonah 3:5-10).
11. Cities can miss revival: Jerusalem (Luke 19:41-44).

### **God deals with people as groups, not just as individuals. This fact is the basis for interceding for people as groups.**

Abraham successfully interceded for a city (Gen. 18:22-33).

Moses successfully interceded for a nation (Ex. 32:9-14).

Exiles from Jerusalem were directed to intercede for the cities they now lived in (Jer. 29:7).

Our prayer, can cause healing for a nation (2 Chron. 7:14).

God is today releasing an anointing to lay siege to cities and nation to take them for Him! He is equipping us to "spy out" the enemies plans and strongholds. We are the Melchizedek order of priesthood prophesied in Psalm 110. We are a priestly army stretching forth the scepter of our conquering hero, Jesus. We are ruling in the midst of our enemies. Come on, join us! We can impact our cities and nations through intercession. We can impact our cities and nations through intercession. We can lay siege to them taking them for God. Strongholds of darkness can become strongholds of light.

### **Cities Transformed**

Canaan, a cursed land (see Genesis 9:25) became the Promised land of blessing. Jerusalem, once a stronghold of evil giants, became the city of peace.

There were seven cities once ruled by idolaters and wicked giants. They became "cities of refuge". People who had accidentally taken a life could flee there for safety.

Hebron, the most famous of the seven cities of refuge, was formerly called Kiriath-Arba. This means "the city of Arba." Arba was the greatest of the Anakim or giants (see Joshua 14:15). Hebron is its new name. It means: "friendship, fellowship, communion." Abraham, the friend of God, is buried there. Caleb was a man of faith and courage. He was used to transform Kiriath-Arba into a place where people ran to find safety. There they could meet with God in sweet fellowship. Through Caleb's faith and courage, the stronghold of the greatest giant was transformed! This can happen to our cities!

Also, as a city of refuge, Hebron was a picture of Christ. By the Law, one who killed accidentally could find safety in two places. He could flee to a city of refuge for long-term protection. For short-term protection, he could hold onto the horns of the altar in the Tabernacle. In Hebrews 6:18 the writer draws from both of these Old Testament types (pictures): "In order that by that by two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie we may have strong encouragement, we who have fled for refuge in laying hold of the hope set before us. Individuals who were in a city of refuge for safety had to remain there until the death of the current High Priest (see Numbers 35:28). After that, they were free to go out safely. What a picture of Jesus He is our great High Priest who died so we could go free from judgment and penalty.

This is a beautiful picture of Jesus. However, I have another reason for telling about it. A former stronghold of giants was transformed into a place of protection. It was a place of refuge and fellowship with God.

Can God do this again today? Can our cities and nations be so thoroughly transformed? Yes, if He can find some Calebs - if He can find some giant killers - if He can find some people with the attitude of "we are well able to overcome..." (Num. 13:30). God asked Ezekiel to look on the dry bones of Israel. He is asking us to look on the dry bones of our own nation. He wants us to see all kinds of people. They are men and women, young and old, rich and poor, the hurting and those who think they're healthy. He wants us to answer the same question He asked the prophet: "Can these bones live?" (Ezek. 37:3). I say they can. What do you say?

### **Are You Ready?**

There were two men named Aa and Bee. They heard that a monetary amount of 5,000 bounty (or reward) had been offered for the capture or killing of wolves. Therefore, they became "bounty hunters." Waking up one night, Aa saw that they were surrounded by 50 pairs of gleaming eyes! These belonged to 50 very hungry wolves circling them in the dark night. "Bee, wake up," he whispered to his sleeping partner. "We're rich! We need to be like these two bounty hunters. We need to see the crowds of unbelievers around us. They are not threats, but opportunities. Our task might seem overwhelming. It is, except for God's strength and ability. We can rely on His strength, not ours.

- "Though a host should encamp against me, my heart will not fear" (Ps. 27:3).
- Gideon's 300 men were more than enough to defeat 135,000 enemies – with God on their side. -
- If He is for us, who can successfully be against us (See Judges 7:7; Roman 8:31)
- Lets do it! "Let God arise and His enemies be scattered" (Ps. 68:1)

Like David, lets fill our bags with the stones of victory. Then we can run to meet Goliath. Let's take Kiriath-Arba. Let's run through some troops and leap over some walls (see 2 Samuel 22:30 and Psalm 18:29). Let's demonstrate the awesomeness of our God. Let's growl! Let's roar! Let's let Jesus live through us. He is ready-are you? Are you ready to walk in your calling as all intercessor? Are you ready to represent Jesus as the reconciler and the warrior? Are you ready to distribute His benefits and victory? Are you ready to meet, to carry away, to set boundaries? Are you ready to birth, to liberate, to strike the mark? Are you ready to fill some bowls, to make some declarations, to watch and pray? Are you ready?

### **QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION**

1. Describe the responsibilities of Old Testament watchmen. How did they carry out their responsibilities? How do they symbolize "watching intercession"?
2. Where does the Hebrew word for "watch" first appear in Scripture? What important thoughts can be drawn from this?
3. What is the "watchman anointing"? What are the defensive aspects of this anointing? How can you apply this to your family and church?
4. Describe the offensive side of the watchman anointing. How is this used in intercession for an individual? How is it used for a city?
5. Why does God deal with groups of people, not just with individuals? List three or four biblical examples.
6. What are some ways you and your prayer group can lay siege to your city? Now go out and do it!

## **UNDERSTANDING THE PROPHETIC IN THE CHURCH TODAY**

### **CHAPTER 1 - Identifying Prophets And The Gift of Prophecy**

#### **What is the Gift of Prophecy?**

“Would God that all the Lord's were prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them” (Num. 11:29). When Moses spoke these words about fourteen centuries before Jesus was born, he expressed the desire that was in his heart. This same desire was in the heart of God as well - God wants His people to prophesy. His deepest yearning is to pour out His Spirit upon His people.

Some seven centuries after Moses, the prophet Joel wrote, "And it shall come to pass... that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy..." (Joel 2:28). Therefore, what Moses had yearned for was prophesied by Joel with the promise that it would be fulfilled in the last days.

Fourteen centuries after Moses, the amazing happenings on the day of Pentecost at the birth of the Church were recorded. Amid supernatural wind and fire Jesus' disciples were prophesying and speaking in other languages (see Acts 2). The Holy Spirit had just been poured out on some 120 followers of Christ, both men and women. They had been waiting, in obedience to their Lord, in an upper Room. Suddenly, they found themselves speaking in other languages and glorifying God.

Many Jews of the Diaspora, assembled there from at least seventeen diverse nations, heard these Galilaeans speaking in the native tongue of the lands in which they lived. When Jewish onlookers asked Peter what this all meant, he replied, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy... " (Acts 2:16-17). Peter made it plain. These miraculous events -which took place at the festival of Pentecost 50 days after Jesus had been crucified at the



festival of Passover -were the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. Peter must have read Moses' words and thus concluded: "This is what we Israelites have been eagerly anticipating for 14 centuries! This is what Moses desired and what Joel prophesied would happen!"

For the last 2,000 years since that festival of Pentecost, God has been fulfilling this word of promise. He has poured out His Spirit. All over the world Christian believers have been prophesying.

### **What Is Prophecy?**

It is my impression that there are many among us who know very little about prophecy. So, I'm going to start with trying to define this gift. Let us go to I Corinthians 12:8-11 and take a look at the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit.

There are three gifts of speaking:

- [1] other tongues,
- [2] interpretation of tongues, and
- [3] prophecy.

There are three gifts of knowing or revelation:

- [1] the word of knowledge,
- [2] the word of wisdom, and
- [3] discerning of spirits.

There are three gifts of doing or power:

- [1] faith,
- [2] healings , and
- [3] working of miracles.

Prophecy is one of the three gifts of speaking by the Holy Spirit.

As we have already shown from prophetic scripture, the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to all believers in Christ. Every believer may have this gift of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter confirmed this when he said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission (forgiveness) of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is you and your children and your children and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38-39).

Peter and the 120 disciples who gathered to wait and pray in the upper room in Jerusalem had just receive this gift of the Holy Spirit. As part of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, they were speaking in languages that were unknown to them. The gift of the Spirit and speaking in other languages is available to every believer.

### **Any Spirit-filled Believer May Have And Use All Three Speaking Gifts**

#### **TONGUES:**

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians he stated, "I wish you all spoke with tongues." (1 Cor.14:5). Paul desired every believer to speak in tongues. Paul certainly would not want something for us that was contrary to God's will. And God would never give us a gift that was not for our benefit. So then, we may be confident that it is God's desire to give us this gift.

#### **INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES:**

In 1 Corinthians 14:13 Paul said, "Let him who speaks in any tongue pray that he may interpret." This is one of the primary commandments of the Spirit-filled life! If we speak in tongues, we are under commandment to pray that we may interpret. That means that everyone who speaks in tongues a message from God in a gathering (whether big or small) may interpret. Paul would not instruct us to pray for something that God was not wanting to give us, or tell us to pray for something contrary to the will of God. Interpreting tongues is the will of God for everyone who speaks in tongues a message from God to others. If you speak with tongues God's message to others, and do not interpret, pray that you may do so! Start asking in prayer today. If you ask for

this gift, the Lord will give it to you.

### **PROPHECY:**

Paul also says, "you may all prophesy one by one..." (1 Cor. 14:31). Thus, we may all speak with tongues (both: personal for our own edification, as well as to the church or group bringing God's message to them in tongues), we may all interpret (God's message to us given in tongues) and we may all prophesy. It is merely a matter of proper teaching which will release our faith to receive all these gifts so they can be operative in our churches.

### **A Look At A Simple Definition Of Prophecy**

The way (method) by which we prophesy is akin to speaking in tongues. Speaking in tongues is unpremeditated [not planned ahead of time] speaking in another language, the words given us by the Spirit. "...and they began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them the words to say" (Acts 2:4).

Prophecy is also a spontaneous speaking forth of words and ideas given at that moment by the Spirit, but in a language you know and understand. David said in 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and His Word was on my tongue". The Spirit gave the words and ideas and David spoke them. That is the way prophecy comes to us. We have a clear example of prophecy in the relationship between Moses and his brother Aaron. You remember that Moses was protesting God's call on his life to be a deliverer. He felt unqualified. "And Moses said unto the Lord... I am not eloquent... but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Ex. 4:10). But God had a remedy for Moses deficiency; He would give Moses a spokesman (Ex. 7:1). "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well... Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet... You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth... You shall speak [to Aaron] all that I command you. And Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh" (Ex. 4:14-15; 7:2). Moses put words in Aaron's mouth. Moses gave Aaron the words to say and Aaron spoke them to Pharaoh. In the same way, the Spirit gives us the words to say and by faith we speak them. This is called "prophecy"; or if the words are in another language that we do not understand this is called "speaking in tongues." "You may all prophesy one by one..." (1 Cor. 14:31). YES! These gifts are for you!

### **Prophecy Is NOT Preaching**

Preaching is normally the result of something we study, and on which we think and plan ahead of time. (However, there are times when the Holy Spirit might lift our preaching into a prophetic dimension.) But usually prophecy is not premeditated. It is something spoken forth which is spontaneously given by the Holy Spirit.

Most of David's Psalms are prophecies. They were given by the Spirit of the Lord and David wrote them down. Some of the most obvious prophetic Psalms are those that descriptively foretell Jesus life, ministry, death, and resurrection. These are called Messianic Psalms. Some good examples of these are Psalms 2; 16:10; 22; etc. Other of the psalmists also received Holy Spirit-inspired prophetic songs.

### **Tongues, Interpretation And Prophecy**

"I would like everyone of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified" (1 Cor. 14:5).

When you carefully examine this verse, you'll notice that Paul clearly implies that if we speak in tongues in a gathering or service speaking God's message, we can also choose to prophesy or interpret. This underscores the fact that you may speak in tongues, interpret or prophesy as the Holy Spirit leads. Other members of the Body can also be given the interpretation of a tongue (1 Cor. 12:10; 14:26) -again, as the Spirit leads. Also note: if we speak in tongues to others and interpret this message that is the same as prophecy. Tongues with interpretation is equal to prophecy.

If you understand how to speak in tongues God's message, it's easy to understand how to prophesy. They are both a spontaneous utterance given by the Spirit.

The main difference is that when speaking in other tongues, we are speaking words that we don't understand because they're from another language; hence, the need for interpretation of tongues, if

the message of tongues is for the believers assembled.

However, prophecy is speaking forth words given by the Spirit that we do understand. Therefore, in the congregation, prophecy is of greater value than tongues (when they are un-interpreted) because it can be understood by everyone, and everyone can receive the benefit of what's being spoken.

### **The Limitations Of Prophecy**

"He that prophesies speaks unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3).

Edification, exhortation and comfort are the three things that define the limits of the simple gift of prophecy. Edification is building up. Exhortation is stirring up. Comfort is cheering up.

In the Church, the simple gift of prophecy is to build up the people, stir up the believers (and sometimes the unbelievers) and cheer up those who are in need of comfort. The simple gift of prophecy never goes beyond these three things.

This gift is NOT foretelling the future, NOR is it for giving guidance. It is not to be confused with the ability to preach. It is words given by the Spirit at that moment to build up, stir up and cheer up the believes. These are the limits of the simple gift of prophecy. If you prophecy (especially if you are a new believer or one newly come to this gift), your manifestation of this gift should normally be limited to these three things.

### **A Suggestion For Humility**

There's a further important suggestion we would make. In the church where I spent a good many years of my life, often there were believers who would stand and prophesy in the meetings. They were not prophets or prophetesses (as we will later define these offices in this study), but were exercising the simple gift of prophecy. However, they would preface their prophetic words with, "Yea, yea, thus says the Lord..." Now that's a little dangerous, especially for those newly come to the faith. Under Old Testament rules, if you spoke presumptuously in the name of the Lord and it turned out to be you and not the Lord who was doing the speaking (and that's always a distinct possibility) - they would take you out and stone you! "But the prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak...even that prophet shall die." (Deut 18:20). There is no such punishment prescribed under New Testament rules. But this Old Testament punishment does illustrate the seriousness of prophesying improperly especially if you invoke the name of the Lord by saying, "Thus says the Lord".

It would be better to stand up and say something like this: "I feel the Lord has given me the following for you...", or, "I sense the Holy Spirit is unctioning me to say the following" and then go ahead and give your prophecy. You don't have to begin or end the prophecy with "thus says the Lord." That might be appropriate if you were a prophet or a prophetess. Since most of us are not, it would be better not to make pronouncements that God Almighty is the author of our prophecies. Speak words that build up! Speak words that stir up! Speak words that cheer up! - and leave it at that. That is safer. We don't want to bring blame or shame on the Lord. If we make a mistake, we stand ready to accept the correction of others who judge what we say. Thank God that He invites us to be used as His messengers of His word, even though we are imperfect.

### **The Difference Between Prophecy And The Office Of A Prophet**

Having looked at the simple gift of prophecy, we want to contrast that with the gift of the prophet. The word that is translated "prophet" in the New Testament comes from a Greek word that means "a forth-teller of the divine will". This is a whole different dimension of ministry than just simple prophecy. Ephesians 4:11 is the primary place in the Bible where we find listed the five leadership gifts that Jesus has given to the Church. The gift of the prophet is one of these.

In 1 Corinthians 12:9, Paul describes spiritual gifts using the Greek word "*charisma*". This is a derivative of the word "*charis*", which means: "grace" (in the sense of a divine or supernatural enablement). When a portion of God's infinite grace (*charis*) becomes a gift of the Spirit, it is translated "*charisma*". This would be the equivalent to "gracelet", or "a little grace". A gift of the Spirit that is given to a believer is a "little grace", or a small portion of God's infinite, unlimited grace and power.

However, Ephesians 4:7 uses a very different word for “gift”: “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ”. In this passage, Paul uses the word "gift" to describe the measure of God's grace needed to transform an ordinary man or woman into a prophet or prophetess of God. In Greek it is the word “*dorea*”, and it speaks of something far greater than a gift (charisma) of the Spirit like the gift of prophecy. The gift of a prophet requires a "big grace". How large a portion is that? Far larger than what is required to bestow the simple gift of prophecy upon a believer.

This role of the office of prophet in the New Testament differs greatly from the "gift of prophecy" (1 Corinthians 12) available to any and every believer "distributed as the Spirit wills" (1 Cor. 12:11). The office or function of the prophet involves a Christ-appointed ministry of a person. The simple gift of prophecy mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 is a Holy Spirit-distributed gift available to all.

### **You Cannot Make Yourself A Prophet**

It is impossible for someone to proclaim himself a prophet and thereby be one. "And no man takes this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God" (Heb 5:4). You don't take this honor to yourself. In recent years, we have observed hundreds of self-anointed, self-appointed apostles and prophets at work in the Church. It is a great tragedy that men take unto themselves something that God has not given. "No man takes this honor to himself"- it is a call of God. You cannot aspire to be an apostle or prophet. If God has not called you, you cannot be one. You can call yourself one, but that does not make you one.

It is very important to remember that we are all "members of one body" (1 Cor. 12:12). It is the Holy Spirit, directed by our Heavenly Father's will that gives the gifts and callings to each of us. God has specific gifts and functions for each member of His Body. And also knows what gifts are best suited to each of us. Therefore, we should seek to surrender ourselves for service, rather than seeking to possess a particular gift. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:11-30, clearly admonishes us to not value one gift above another. But rather to rejoice as each member of the Body functions in its God ordained role. These gifts are given by God. We cannot take this "honor" to ourselves! Note Paul's words in Galatians 1:1, " Paul, an apostle, not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father...". The simple gift of prophecy is for everyone. If you're saved and filled with the Spirit, you can prophesy, but that's much different than holding the office of a prophet.

### **How Do We Know A Prophet?**

How can we tell if someone is truly a prophet? Of what does his or her ministry consist?

By examining the whole of Scripture we can see the role of prophet functioning in three basic ways:

- exhortations to holy and righteous living (i.e., Isaiah 58:5-9; Micah 6:7-8).
- teaching by revelation (i.e., Isaiah 9:2, 6-7, Jer. 20:11-14).
- a pointing to the future (i.e., Daniel chapters 7 + 8; Isaiah 46:9-11; Acts 11:27-30).

Of these three functions, the primary one was to deliver messages that unveiled God's yet future purposes. Foretelling the future is not something very many people are good at. Most who try make big mistakes even many who call themselves prophets and prophetesses. But there will be times when a true prophet or prophetess will be able to foretell the future.

A true prophet will exercise not only the gifts of speaking, but also the gifts of knowing, or revelation. That is, he or she will be functioning in a word of knowledge, a word of wisdom and discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12:8-11). Those are the primary gifts that manifest themselves through the office of the prophet. The prophet will move in both the gifts of speaking and the gifts of revelation. Those of us, who simply speak in tongues, interpret and prophesy might, at times, move into some of the gifts of revelation as well. But that will not be the usual flow or gifting of our ministry. However, a prophet who is called to that office will not only function in tongues, interpretation and

simple prophecy, but will also manifest the word of knowledge, the word of wisdom and discerning of spirits.

### **The Gift Of A Word Of Knowledge**

You may be wondering how to define these three revelation gifts. The Scripture gives hints to recognize their operation.

A word of knowledge is something revealed supernaturally by the Holy Spirit that could not be known by the natural mind.

Here is an example. In John, Chapter 4, Jesus passes through Samaria and asks the woman there at the well to give Him a drink. As He engages her in conversation, He says, "Go bring your husband! I would like to talk to him, also." She replies, "I do not have a husband." Now what was Jesus' response? "You are telling the truth. You have had five husbands, and the man that you are living with is not your husband." How did He know that? By a word of knowledge. He knew this because the Holy Spirit supernaturally revealed it to Him.

### **The Gift Of A Word Of Wisdom**

What is a word of wisdom? A word of wisdom is instruction received supernaturally from the Holy Spirit concerning action required to solve a problem for which there seems no natural answer.

In Acts Chapter 15, we find that the apostles and elders of the church in Jerusalem were in a crisis dealing with circumcision and some other difficult issues. After deliberation and debate, James got up and spoke the word of wisdom that solved the problem (see Acts 15:19-20).

A word of wisdom often comes after a word of knowledge to instruct us as to what action should be taken in line with what we learned from the word of knowledge. The prophets operate in these giftings. They know things supernaturally by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will give them a word of wisdom to show them what action is required- as a result of what they know. When a word of wisdom comes, it opens the door for further blessing.

### **The Gift Of Discerning Of Spirits**

Let us look at another gift that some count as the most valuable gift of all. This is because it can protect us from all sorts of danger and error. This is the gift of discerning of spirits. Again, this gift is available to all through the Holy Spirit. But it will be a primary operation as a part of the ministry of the prophet.

By the discerning of spirits, a prophet will know whether a particular manifestation is from the Holy Spirit, from the human spirit or from an evil spirit. This is a much-needed gift. Those who are in church leadership will need the help of prophets who can move in this gift, because there can be all kinds of manifestations in the meetings. A pastor will often wonder, "Is it the Holy Spirit? Is the person just doing this out of their own spirit, or are we dealing with some kind of evil spirit?"

If you have the gift of discerning of spirits, and you are a prophet or a prophetess, the Lord will help you know the spiritual source of many manifestations you encounter. However, it is always wise to check with other spiritually sensitive leadership to confirm that what you are sensing about a person is correct before ministering to them.

### **Example Of How Gifts Help Us To Help Others**

Several years ago at a conference, we were having a day of personal ministry. There was a wonderful prophet who worked with us on our team. During this time of ministry, a friend of mine, who has a wonderful healing ministry, was praying with me for a minister and his wife from abroad. Theirs was a very sad story.

Before they left for abroad, the Lord warned the wife about what she would face when she got there. Through a series of dreams, He gave her clear instruction regarding the crisis she would encounter. And then He showed her what she was to do.

When she arrived in her home land, there was an evil man who saw her and coveted her for his wife. He hired a witch-doctor to use enchantments in order to turn her affections toward him. When this evil man made romantic advances toward her, she did not resist his seductions - even though she had been forewarned to do so! She did not obey the Lord, and this opened her up to the witch-

doctor's enchantments. Her disobedience to the Lord led her to become enchanted with this man, and she was drawn into an adulterous relationship.

This devastated her husband and did much damage to her soul. As we prayed for this desperate couple, the Lord gave me a picture of the wife. I saw her wounded soul in my mind. It was as if someone had pierced her with a sword and cut her open from her neck to her abdomen. She had a deep emotional wound far beyond human power to heal. King Solomon described her condition and the judgment that comes to the adulterer (or the adulteress): "But whoso commits adultery... lacks understanding; he that does it destroys his own soul. A wound and dishonor shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away" (Prov. 6:32-33). What could we do about her problem? We knew we were dealing with witchcraft and needed assistance. So we called upon one of our team members who was a prophet. He knew nothing of their situation, but the moment he walked up and looked at them, he instantly recognized the source of their problem. He spoke one word: "Witchcraft!" This prophet had never met this couple nor heard anything about them before. He knew nothing except what the Spirit of God was revealing to him, but he repeated every detail of what had happened to them. Not only did he understand by the discerning of spirits that we were dealing with witchcraft, but by a word of knowledge he knew everything that this couple had gone through.

And then a word of wisdom came. God, through this prophet, again gave clear instructions to this couple. And this time they were willing to obey. At that moment, God began a great work of healing in both their lives. A few days later, the healing power of Christ began to be evident. All that terrible darkness was gone and a radiance had come. There was a smile on their faces, and joy in their souls. The Holy Spirit's restoring power was healing their broken spirits and wounded souls. We sent them for a time of rest to give God time to heal their broken lives.

### **Philip's Four Daughters And The Prophet Agabus**

Act 21:8-11 contains a very clear story that brings a sharp contrast between the gift of prophecy and the gift (office) of the prophet.

This story took place while Paul was on his way from Asia Minor back to Jerusalem. At each stop along the way, the Spirit had been warning him not to go to Jerusalem (see Acts 20:23; 21:4; etc.). Finally Paul and his team arrived at the house of Philip, the evangelist (Acts 21:8). Philip had four daughters, "who did prophesy" (Acts 21:9). These young ladies had a prophetic anointing on their lives, and they operated in the gift of prophecy to build up, stir up and cheer up the saints. But, in contrast to these young women who had the simple gift of prophecy, "there came down from Judaea a certain prophet named Agabus." You'll notice that the Scripture makes a distinction between these daughters "who did prophesy," and "a certain prophet named Agabus".

When Agabus came, he gave an illustrated prophecy. He took Paul's belt off and bound his own hands and feet with it and said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owns this belt, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles" (Acts 21:11). Here Agabus was foretelling something definite that would happen in the future. That's quite different from the four virgins who prophesied. They could build up, stir up and cheer up, but they were not fulfilling the office of prophetesses.

[There are numerous examples in the Bible of women who were prophetesses: Miriam (Exodus 15:20-21); Deborah (Judges 4:4-5); Huldah (2 Kings 22:14); Anna (Luke 2:36-37).]

When Agabus came, he had a revelation of what was going to occur. He was foretelling, and he rightly said, "Thus says the Holy Spirit... (In the New Testament, the only examples we have of those who said "Thus says the Lord" or "Thus says the Holy Spirit" are the prophets, and that's why we advise that others not use that prefix to their prophecies - see Acts 21:11.) Agabus foretold what was going to happen to Paul with his illustrated prophecy. We see from this the big difference between the four virgin daughters of Philip who prophesied and the prophet Agabus. Agabus moved in a different, higher dimension involving foretelling the future and giving words of guidance and admonition to the Apostle Paul.

We have another insight into the life of the prophet Agabus in Acts 11:28: "One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire

Roman world..." Here again he was prophetically foretelling the future. He was a foreteller. And the verse goes on to say, "...This came to pass during the reign of Claudius Caesar [a Roman emperor]." So when you look at Agabus, you see a true New Testament prophet. He could see into the future as revealed by the Holy Spirit and tell events that were coming. And the proof of his ministry was this what he said came to pass.

### **Keep The Ox In The Stall!**

Solomon said, "Where no oxen are, the stall is clean: but much increase is by the strength of the ox" (Prov. 14:4).

The prophetic gifts are like oxen: Oxen bring "increase," but also create messes in the stall; the manifestations of the gift of prophecy brings blessing, but can also create problems in the church (see Chapter 2). But we have to make a choice. Do we want the "...strength of the ox" with the messy stall that results, or a "...stall that is clean?" You can have a clean stall or you can have the increase along with some of the messes that go with the ox. Because of problems that can result from the free function of the gifts of the Spirit, many churches have thrown the prophetic ministries out of the church. This leaves a very nice, sanitary, clean situation without some of the problems and difficulties the ox brings. But we lose a lot when we throw out the oxen. "Much increase is by the strength of the ox." If you have an ox in your stall, you are going to have to clean out the manure occasionally. Pastors! If we know what the problems with the gifts of the Spirit can be and how to deal with them, we can have these marvelous gifts functioning in the congregation with a minimum of difficulties. What follows may help you learn how to have the "oxen" and how to clean the "stall".

### **Judging Prophecy**

The first principle in dealing with the gift of prophecy and the prophet is this: prophecy must be judged. I'm talking now to those who are senior pastors and other leaders who carry responsibility for the church(es). Paul said, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. (I Cor. 14:29). There's a very clear principle delineated here. Words spoken by prophets, or prophecy, must be carefully examined and weighed as to their accuracy and agreement with Scripture and scriptural principles.

Why does Scripture command us to judge prophecies? Because prophets and prophecy are not infallible!+ Those who are speaking by prophecy can make serious mistakes. In 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21, Paul commands, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies." Then he goes on to say, "Test all things." That means that there are some things that can occur or be said that will not be true or right. Prophecies have to be tested and proven. And then Paul adds, "Hold fast what is good." That indicates there will sometimes be things that are not good. You do not hold those fast. You shovel those out of the stall. Just hold fast to that which is good.

If you are a church leader who is responsible for guarding and guiding the flock, you have to make decisions about questionable prophecy or prophets. This is one of the burdens of leadership for which God holds us responsible. In making those decisions, we can make mistakes, and that is why we need elders or other leaders to confirm or challenge what we may be feeling. However, to do nothing in the face of a false or untrue prophecy can only add to the problem.

All of those who move in the gifts of the Spirit, including the prophets, need governance leadership that helps to preserve balance and prevent confusion in the Body. All of us need it. If we do not bring governance to these gifts and ministries, we will have big problems and be in trouble with Jesus, the Head of the Church. Jesus rebuked the church at Thyatira for their lack of diligence in this matter: "Yet I have this against you: You are permitting that woman Jezebel. Who calls herself a prophetess, to teach my servants that sex sin is not a serious matter; she urges them to practice immorality and to eat meat that has been sacrificed to idols" (Rev. 2:20). This woman's teaching and prophecies should have been judged, because she was teaching that pagan practices were all right even though clearly contrary to Scripture.

If you have prophets that are part of your congregation, or a prophet visits your church, you can

quickly discover the validity of their gifts. There are two fairly simple tests that will help you judge prophets and prophecy:

1. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: you shall not be afraid of him." (Deut 18:22).

If a prophet is foretelling the future, and later the facts do not line up with the prophecy, he has spoken presumptuously. You have to deal with a prophet of this sort. You must have a talk with him (or her) and say, "We do not want you ministering for awhile until you seek the Lord and find out why this confusion is coming into your prophetic gift."

2. "To the law and to the testimony: if they seek not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." (Is. 8:20).

If, as in the church at Thyatira, someone calling themselves a prophet or prophetess teaches anything contrary to the Bible (the law and the testimony), such must be brought under scriptural discipline. (Please see Matthew 18:15-17 for steps in dealing correctly with any sin present within the local church.) If they will not accept correction, the principal shepherd (senior pastor) must not allow them to speak or teach until there is evidence of true repentance. (See also 2 Corinthians 11:5-15; 2 Peter 2:1-32; 1 John 4:1-3.)

These two principles are easy to maintain.

[1] What is foretold **MUST** come to pass.

[2] What is prophesied or taught **MUST** agree with the Bible.

Those who are responsible for the church (usually those in local leadership like a senior pastor and his ruling elders) have the responsibility in these situations to help administer and lead the church as outlined by Scripture. As a "Principal Shepherd" (Jer 25:35-36) you might be able to redeem the gift of a developing prophet or prophetess if they are willing to submit to correction and discipline. If they are not, they should not be allowed to prophesy or minister in the church.

### **Be Accountable!**

If we speak presumptuously as prophets, then we have to be accountable to the leadership of that church for what we have spoken. We have the warning in Jeremiah 28:9: "The prophet which prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophesies of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him. Jeremiah was prophesying judgment, but a lot of others at that time were prophesying peace. In essence, Jeremiah's response to the other prophets was, "Time will tell. If their prophecies come to pass, then I'm the false prophet; but if what I say comes to pass, then I'm the true prophet." That is always the test.

### **God's Concern: False Prophets**

God has continually demonstrated tremendous concern about false prophets and false prophecy throughout His Word. Jeremiah wrote, "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! Behold, the prophets say unto them, you shall not see the sword, neither shall you have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. "Then the Lord said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart. "Therefore thus says the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land. By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. "And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword; and they shall have none to bury them, their wives, nor their sons, nor their daughters: for I will pour their wickedness upon them" (Jer. 14:13-16).

Another passage that deals with false prophecy is Ezekiel Chapter 13. The entire chapter is a reproof against lying prophets. There is need for biblical leadership and balance in the Church. Pastors and other church leaders have the responsibility of guarding and guiding the flock. If



prophets prophesy falsely, they need to be held accountable. I am NOT suggesting that we do what Moses did when he ordered the stoning of false prophets. Do not do that, but at least restrain them from further prophesying. Do not let them hurt your flock; do not let them wound your sheep. Church leaders need to take a clear stand when false prophecies are found in the land. Let us be aware and continually remember that "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace" (1 Cor.14:33).

Despite the problems, let us not throw out the "oxen" (the gift of prophet). But neither let us put up with filthy stalls filled with the "manure" of false prophecy. Church leaders! Help clean up the mess. Identify false prophecy and pastor your flock. The safety this provides will be liberating to those whose motives are right in their desire to use the gifts of the Spirit. Their gifts will blossom as the springtime if you encourage them while pastoring them and their gift.

### **Conclusion**

"Do not smother the Holy Spirit. Do not scoff at those who prophesy, but test everything that is said to be sure it is true, and if it is, then accept it." (1 Thes. 5:19-21). "Now I would like all of you to speak in tongues..." (1 Cor. 14:5). "...since you are eager for spiritual gifts, strive to excel in them for building up the church. Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret" (1 Cor.14:12-13). "...ask also for the special abilities the Holy Spirit gives, and especially the gift of prophecy... For you can all prophesy..." (1 Cor. 14:1, 31).

## **CHAPTER 2 - Problems Of The Prophetic**

### **"Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19)**

We have seen in the previous chapter that there is a definite difference between the simple gift of prophecy and the office of a prophet. All who prophesy are not prophets. However, all prophets will prophesy.

We have also presented how to deal with problems that occur in the prophetic ministry. If as leaders, we are willing to deal with the problems that come with the prophetic, there is great gain and blessing to be had for the Church.

Therefore, what should be our attitude toward prophecy? "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thes. 5:19). We are never to quench the fire of the Holy Spirit or to stop His work. But, at the same time, we must not eliminate governance over those who seek to operate in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. God sets leaders in the Church to establish boundaries, give guidance and oversight to expressions of the prophetic gifts, and thus guard the flock of God from hurt or error. Because of the problems that result from those who exercise the gifts of the Spirit, we who are leaders could potentially end up despising prophecy and prophets. Some church leaders go so far as to forbid the manifestations of the Holy Spirit. To do so is disobedience to the Scriptures. "Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying" (1 Thes. 5:19-20). We should make room for prophetic giftings, but within these defined boundaries: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21). This implies that some prophecy will not be good. Therefore, leaders in the Church must test and prove the prophecy - to be sure it builds up, stirs up, cheers up, and is in line with what the Scriptures teach. That which does not meet the test must be discarded.

### **Problem 1: Prophesying From One's Own Spirit**

As we examine the prophetic giftings, we do so with a deep desire that the prophetic will be active in our churches. However, we also recognize that leadership has responsibility to remove from the church those things that are not good, and to keep carefully that which is good.

For example: Some prophesy out of their own heart. The Scriptures plainly address this error. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass... the prophet has spoken it presumptuously..." (Deut. 18:22). "Thus says the Lord of hosts, Listen not unto the words of the prophets that... speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of

the Lord" (Jer. 23:16). When this happens, it is not necessarily prompted by the devil; it's usually just someone speaking out of their own mind. However, we who are in leadership must deal (in a kindly way) with those who prophesy thus, and ask them not to speak in the church. Also remember that we are to pastor those who are in error by teaching, training and disciplining them. We should do this in order for them to grow in their gift to use it for God's glory and the Church's blessing (Gal 6:1). We must also inform the people to reject prophecy contrary to the Bible, or if the prophecy might be hurtful to one of the lambs or sheep.

### **Problem 2: Wrong Motives Lead to Deception**

Jeremiah warned against prophets who were prophesying "a false vision and divination" or were prophesying "the deceit of their own hearts" (Jer. 14:13-16). He pointed out that it is possible for those who move in prophetic giftings to be deceived if they allow idols in their heart. Such subtle idol-worship results from wrong motives.

Paul says, "...covetousness ...is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). When the motivation behind our ministry is to get money, or fame, or the praise of men, we become like Balaam, who was willing to sell his gift and market it to the highest bidder. Therefore, it is critical that our motives be right when we operate in the prophetic.

All of the thirteenth chapter of the Book of Ezekiel contains strong condemnation of false prophets. Verse 2 says, "Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy... out of their own hearts." In verse 3, these prophets of Israel are described as "foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing!" Further, in verse 5, Ezekiel defines one of their great failures: "You have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle. They have seen vanity and lying divination... Have you not seen a vain vision, and have you not spoken a lying divination? These prophets profess the Lord has said it, but God says, "I have not spoken"; they have seduced my people" (vv. 6,7,10).

Then Ezekiel describes the judgments that will come. God is going to send His wrath upon these false prophets (see verses 11-16). In this compelling chapter, the Lord through Ezekiel, is defining the dangers of mixing the uncleanness of idolatry and selfish motives with true Spirit-led ministry. If we do not maintain a standard of righteousness and holiness in our lives, we open doors to deception.

### **Problem 3: A Word of Knowledge Versus Divination**

It's important here that we examine the difference between the Holy Spirit's gift of a word of knowledge, and the spirit of divination.

When you tell people times, events, places and attitudes about themselves by the Spirit, outwardly it can have the same appearance as the spirit of divination. This is well illustrated by an incident in the Book of Acts. When Paul and Silas were ministering in Philippi, there was a woman who kept crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:16-18). This appears to be a good word. However, the woman's declaration sprang out of a spirit of divination and wrong motive her own material gain. The Bible says, "...a certain girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying" (Acts 16:16). A spirit of divination comes from Satan. Paul did not want his ministry affirmed by demonic divination, and subsequently cast the evil spirit out of her! A person with a spirit of divination, which comes from Satan, has the ability to tell people things about themselves that they have no way of knowing through human understanding. The Holy Spirit enables a person with the same ability by His gift of a word of knowledge (1 Cor. 12:8).

Motivation in ministry is extremely important. Leaders are warned more about covetousness (the lust for selfish gain) than any other sin. Paul said, "For we are not, like so many, peddling the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ." (2 Cor. 2:17).

Paul was not making a business out of the Word of God - like a peddler selling his wares. He was sincere and truthful. We must be the same.

### **Not Motivated By What People Want**

Do not let your ministry be governed by the pressure of the people. There was a prophet in the Old Testament named Balaam who said, "I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more" (Num. 22:18). And when he was told to curse Israel he could only bless them (Numbers 22- 25). What does that teach us? We shouldn't try to do anything that God is not doing. If the Lord has not anointed us for a particular situation, we have to accept that limitation.

When people come to you and want you to prophesy to them, and God has not given you a word, do not try to fake it. Do not give yourself over to another spirit; do not do what God is not doing. Be humble enough to acknowledge your fallibility. If God is not doing it, we cannot and should not either.

How can you tell the difference between the Holy Spirit-given word of knowledge and the demonic spirit of divination? We can use these basic principles to help us determine the source:

- 1) A spirit of divination draws attention -and glory- to itself... and away from Christ.
- 2) A spirit of divination will lead people away from dependence and trust in the Scriptures for guidance and spiritual nourishment.
- 3) A spirit of divination brings confusion and ever-deepening levels of deception to those who use it and to those who come under its influence.

Scripture exhorts us to "test the spirits" (1 John 4:1-3) by using the gift of discerning of spirits (1 Cor. 12:10) - not so that we may arrogantly judge others, but rather that we may all humbly receive "the pure milk of the Word" (1 Pet. 2:2).

#### **Problem 4: Unrighteous Prophets Will Be Deceived**

"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." Why? Paul says because they "did not believe the truth and took pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thes. 2:11-12). It is made clear in this passage that unrighteousness brings deception with it. God shall send strong delusion (deception) to those who take "...pleasure in unrighteousness" and do not love the truth.

What is the sequence of events described in these verses?

1. Leaders lose their love for the truth.
2. They take pleasure in unrighteousness.
3. Then God sends strong delusion (deception) into their minds and hearts.
4. They deceive others and damnation is their final end.

The English Dictionary says "delusion" is: "causing to believe wrongly by blinding to the truth". When you are in delusion (deception), you believe something that is false or wrong to be true or right, calling "...evil good, and good evil" (Is. 5:20).

How can we get into that kind of situation? None of us wants to be fooled, or deluded, or deceived. However, we can end up in deception when our motive is wrong. To continue to try to move in prophetic ministry with a selfish motive and self-serving agenda leads to delusion.

#### **Balaam**

Balaam's life confirms all of this. Balaam was not counted as a false prophet because his prophecies were wrong. His prophecies were true, but he was a false prophet because of motive. He was willing to market his gift for money. He was willing to sell his gift to unrighteous people and partner with them.

Ultimately, he taught the King of Moab and Midian how to bring God's judgment on Israel. He said, "Have your women seduce the men of Israel to fornication and that will bring God's wrath on them." And this evil ploy worked. Israel was judged and twenty-four thousand died (Num. 25:9). The Israelites finally slew Balaam with the sword because of his unrighteousness in leading the children of Israel astray (Num. 31:8; Josh. 13:22).

#### **Jezebel**

Jesus had a similar problem with the church at Thyatira. "...I have a few things against you, because you allow that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication..." (Rev. 2:20). This Jezebel was a false prophetess that should have been

judged and put out of the church. But the leaders at Thyatira were allowing her to corrupt biblical morality and correct doctrine. Jesus was displeased. "Behold, I will cast her upon a bed of sickness, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with pestilence..." (Rev. 2:21-23 ). Yes! The wages of sin are death - even for sinful, disobedient believers. Now that's a sad path to walk down. I hope that we who are in leadership will cry out to God to, keep us on the right path. I am not saying that we can have a sinless perfect life. But the Bible teaches us that when we sin, we need to immediately confess and forsake our sin and be cleansed from all unrighteousness. The forgiveness and cleansing of the blood of Jesus purchased for us is always available for this. If we truly repent of our sin and confess it, then we are forgiven and can go on in our lives, clean and whole (see 1 John 1:9). Every day, we need to confess any sin and receive forgiveness. This needs to be a constant, daily process in our lives.

Contrariwise, if you start making a practice of sinning, for instance by getting involved in continuing immorality, your ministry is finished. Deception will come, bringing with it great destruction to you and to the work of God. Therefore, we need to renounce these unfruitful works of darkness and walk in light and holiness, keeping our lives clean before the Lord (see Ephesians 5:8-11). If we mix unrighteousness with Holy Spirit giftings, we can open the door to deception and end up in all kinds of heresies. This can happen to any one. Paul warned, "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). We need to walk in awareness of our vulnerability!

### **Problem 5: Prophecy Which Contradicts The Bible**

As mentioned earlier, a problem exists when the prophet's words do not come to pass. Moses said not to fear that kind of prophet because they have spoken presumptuously out of their own hearts (see Deuteronomy 18:22).

But there is a more dangerous kind of prophet, described in Deuteronomy 13:1-3. "If they arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and gives you a sign or a wonder and the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto you, saying: 'Let us go after other gods, which you have not know, and let us serve them', You shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proves you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul!" Here Moses warns us about a prophet or a dreamer of dreams who gives a sign and a wonder which comes to pass, but whose teaching is contrary to the Bible. Normally, if a sign comes to pass that would validate the prophet's ministry. He would be considered a true prophet.

But Moses gives us a warning that this might not always be the case:

1. The prophet gives a prophecy concerning a sign or a wonder and it comes to pass.
2. After he's given the sign and wonder that comes to pass, he starts teaching the people to do something that does not agree with the Bible.

In this example the prophet exhorts the people, "Let us go after other gods." What is the clear Bible commandment concerning other gods? "You may worship no other god than Me" (Ex. 20:3).

This prophet prophesies correctly and what he says comes to pass. But afterward he teaches something totally different than what is in the Bible: "Let us go after other gods." Now that is the most dangerous kind of prophet! The Scriptures are very clear about our response to that kind of prophet. "Thou shall not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God proves [is testing] you, to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deut. 13:3).

This demonstrates why we as leaders must study the Bible and know the Scriptures, and be firmly committed to living our lives by what the Bible says. Otherwise, we can be deceived - and the flock of God that we are commissioned to guard, feed and protect, may suffer great harm.

"Check their words against the Word of God!" he says. 'If their messages are different than Mine, it is because I have not sent them; for they have no light or truth in them.' (Is. 8:20). [The phrase "Word of God" in this verse refers to the Bible.]

No matter how many signs and wonders someone can show you, if what they teach is different than what the Bible teaches, it is wrong, and must be rejected. That is why we need to know the Bible!

- Study the Bible!
- Memorize the Bible!
- Spend a lot of time in the Bible!
- Live in the Word until the Word lives in you!

Spend time in prayer and in the Bible every day and you will stay on the right track. The Bible is a lamp to your feet and a light to your pathway (Ps. 119:105). If we keep what the Bible says, we will be blessed. If we depart from its teachings, we are in big trouble. Jesus said to the Pharisees, "You do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matt. 22:29). Two things can make us vulnerable to deception and error:

- not knowing the Scriptures, and
- not knowing the power of God.

**We need to know both:** we need to know both the Scriptures and the power of God! When anyone teaches contrary to the Bible (no matter how many signs, wonders and miracles they can perform), what they teach, along with their ministry, has to be rejected.

**The teaching of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers MUST agree with the Bible!**

When Paul and Silas were at Berea they commended the people that attended their meetings in the synagogue. "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true." (Acts 17:11). Paul and Silas were both apostles. But the Bereans were commended because, after listening to these apostles they searched the Scriptures daily to discover whether what they had heard was right or not.

And how will we know if what we hear is right? By searching the Scriptures DAILY. Everyone of us has that responsibility, and doing that will keep us on the way of truth and blessings.

### **Problem 6: Prophecy Out Of Pride**

There are several areas that we should be especially careful of when exercising the prophetic gifts. When we talk about prophetic gifts we mean prophecy, word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits. Prophets may exercise other gifts as well, but these are their primary clusters of giftings they function in.

First, when a word of knowledge in prophecy is being given, we need to be cautious. In 1 Corinthians 14:25, a word of knowledge is well described: "The secrets of his heart will be laid bare...". When the Lord gives you a word of knowledge, it will often reveal things about a person (or circumstance or situation) that you have no way of knowing by your natural mind. If this happens, you should not present your revelation to the congregation (or individual) as an absolute truth. You should be humble and recognize that you can make mistakes. First, think about whether the word of knowledge is something that is appropriate to be shared in an open meeting. Some things that are revealed to us are better not spoken in public for all to hear. If it is something appropriate to share, then you could say something like this: "I feel this is what the Lord is showing me." Then you can go ahead and share it, and follow up (when it is possible and appropriate) with verifying whether it is true or not by asking: Is that true? If the person about whom you received the word of knowledge says no, then take the way of humility and reply: I am sorry, I made a mistake. We must be exceptionally careful here. Our words can cause people to make decisions or take actions that can seriously hurt their lives. And God will hold us responsible for the words we speak (Matt 12:36-37).

### **Humbly Admit Failure In Foretelling**

If God has given you a prophetic gift and you feel that, like Agabus, you can foretell a future event, this also is an area in which to be cautious. Acts 11:27- 28 tells us, "And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar." Agabus was foretelling a widespread famine, and the last part of the verse shows us that his prophecy came to pass. It was a true prophecy.

The greatest problem I have seen with the prophetic occurs when prophets give false predictions trying to tell the future. If you know God has given you a revelation and you declare it, be ready for the consequences if you are proven wrong. Being humble enough to acknowledge failure and receive correction graciously is also a gift from the Lord, perhaps as important as the prophetic gift itself. When you are wrong, you are wrong, so be willing to admit it! "Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Not being willing to admit failure can precede the end of a prophetic ministry. We need not be afraid to be bold and speak what we feel the Lord has given us. But let your boldness be tempered and balanced by the awesome responsibility we have in representing God and His Word correctly to His people.

### **Problem 7: Guidance By Prophecy Requires Confirmation**

We need to be cautious in trying to speak guidance into someone's life. There are two sides of this issue:

- [1] those who are receiving the prophecy, and
- [2] those who are giving the prophecy. Both have to be careful.

If someone is prophesying guidance for your life or ministry, there is a principle you must always acknowledge and honor. Any prophetic word must always be confirmed by two or three witnesses. The Bible is clear about this: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established" (Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1).

To insure that adequate confirmation for guidance is available, any prophecy of guidance should usually proceed from a presbytery of prophets. In Acts 13:1-3 we see this principle demonstrated: "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets [plural -several of them]... As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, 'Separate unto me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. "

Here is what we call a presbytery of prophets, a whole group of prophets working together. There should be agreement and confirming signs coming from various members of such a prophetic team to affirm the guidance.

Another beautiful illustration of the proper way to give and receive guidance by prophecy can be found in 1 Samuel 10:1-10. In this passage:

- [1] King Saul was first given a word of knowledge by Samuel, the prophet. Next,
- [2] Samuel foretold a series of events in great detail of what was going to happen, and then
- [3] he gave King Saul guidance.

The secret of Saul's heart was first disclosed by a word of knowledge when Samuel revealed to Saul, "...you are looking for your donkeys." Then, after speaking this word of knowledge, Samuel brought a foretelling word, giving Saul a whole series of signs he would encounter.

- [1] He said that Saul would meet two men who will say the donkeys are found.
- [2] Then Saul would meet three men with three goats, three loaves and a skin of wine, and they would give him two loaves. That's getting very specific!
- [3] Next he said that Saul would meet a company of prophets coming from the high place, what musical instruments they would be playing, and they would be prophesying.
- [4] And finally, Samuel said that the Spirit of the Lord would come on Saul.

Verses 9 and 10 explain that all these signs were fulfilled.

A clear directive of guidance came when Samuel told Saul to go down to Gilgal and wait there seven days until Samuel came to him there. He was speaking what to do and where to go. When this kind of guidance is given, combined with prophecy that has all the signs confirmed, it is not hard to accept the prophet's word. In a case like that, you can have some confidence that the guidance is true. Otherwise, there are some cautionary things you need to be careful about. We have already said that in most cases guidance should proceed out of a presbytery of prophets. Guidance needs to be spoken by the mouth of two or three prophets. If it comes from someone like Samuel who gives you a lot of signs, and those signs come to pass, then that might be an exception to the rule. However, generally speaking, if several prophets are not involved, then we need to be extremely careful about accepting a prophecy which gives guidance.

## **Confirmation Of What God Has Already Spoken**

There is another principle we must understand: Prophecy is normally not used for guidance. In the New Testament particularly, we find that prophecy is primarily for confirmation of something God has already spoken to a person.

Even in the case of the sending forth of Barnabas and Saul (Acts 13:1-3), the prophets were confirming something God had already made clear to Barnabas and Saul. The Holy Spirit said to one of the prophets present, "Separate unto Me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have already [past tense] called them." On some previous occasion the Spirit had already called them. The prophets were confirming something Saul and Barnabas already knew, and the prophecy given was confirming what God had already spoken to them. That is normally what prophecy is for. There are wonderful blessings that come with the true administration of the gift of the prophet when it is used for confirmation.

## **Problem 8: Using Prophecy To Govern**

There is yet another principle concerning the prophetic that is very important to pastors and leaders. In the New Testament, it's made clear that we are not governed by prophets and prophecy, we are governed by Christ. In Ephesians 1:22, Paul said that God has put all things under the feet of Jesus; and has given Him the authority to be "head over all things to the church."

As leaders under His headship, we can receive guidance from Him. He can give governance to us and, whether you believe this or not, He can do that for some of your church members as well! Sometimes leaders want to exercise too much control over their flock. I know that shepherds can have wandering-sheep-problem, sheep you have to discipline and correct. But you probably have some dedicated sheep that love and obey Jesus, too. If the member's life is clean and right, do not be afraid to allow Jesus, the Head of the Church, to be the One to give them their direction.

## **Ananias - A "Layman"**

There is a wonderful biblical example of an ordinary man hearing from God, and then being powerfully used as he obeys the word of the Lord. He was "a certain disciple", Ananias, who prayed for Saul of Tarsus (Paul) after he had fallen to the ground and was blinded after seeing Jesus on the road to Damascus (see Acts 9:10-17). As far as we know, Ananias was just a member of the Church. There is no indication he was a prophet, apostle, evangelist, pastor or teacher. However, the Lord spoke to him a clear word of direction, telling him how to find Saul and what to pray over him. When Ananias obeyed that word, Saul received his sight and was filled with the Holy Spirit. In today's language, we would call Ananias "a layman" (one not holding an official scriptural office).

## **A Prophet Seeks Confirmation**

One of my friends, a traveling minister with a prophetic gifting, tells this story about a transatlantic flight abroad. He was tired and weary from much ministry and travel and was praying to the Lord, "Lord, I speak for You. I give Your word to many others. But I need a word from You. I need someone to give me confirmation that this trip abroad is going to be profitable for the Kingdom of God." Just before takeoff, one of the flight attendants, a young woman whom he had never seen before, came down the aisle to his seat. She knelt down by him and quite dramatically and spontaneously began to prophesy over him. It was a very startling experience for him when the Holy Spirit suddenly entered this totally secular setting in the person of an airline stewardess with a strong message for him concerning his ministry abroad! Who was that flight attendant? As far as we know, she wasn't some famous prophetess, but merely a woman who was obeying God. This illustrates this truth: We need to allow those members of our churches who are walking rightly with the Lord, to be led by the Lord and used by the Lord. Of course, shepherds of the flock cannot "look the other way" concerning all that goes on in their churches. Troublemakers in a church must be dealt with. However, do not take too much authority over your sheep, or you may find you are interfering with the Holy Spirit's work in them. The Lord can talk to them, just as He talks to you.

## **Being Rightly Influenced By Prophecy**

The biblical norm is not to be governed (or ruled) by prophets or prophecy. Here is a quick example of this from the life of the Apostle Paul.

In Acts Chapter 20, we find Paul on his way to Jerusalem. He wants to go "win Jews for Jesus", but there is a small problem. He is not called by God to win Jews for Jesus; he is called to the Gentiles (see Acts 9:15; 13:47; 22:21; and Galatians 1:16 and 2:7). The only Jews that he might possibly win for Jesus would be those who had been dispersed outside Israel to the Gentile cities of the Roman Empire. These were the cities to which Paul had been called as a minister. Who was the apostle to the Jews? Peter! (See Galatians 1:16). But Paul loved his own Jewish people so much that he said he could wish himself cursed if he could only be allowed to influence them to believe on Jesus (see Acts 17:1-2; Romans 9:3).

Despite our personal desires and passions, we cannot do what we are not called to do. There are limitations God places on our ministry by ordaining and calling us to certain ethnic groups and / or to certain geographic areas of the world. Paul was under such a calling to the Gentiles. Whatever you're calling, stay within its limits! But, in the journey we will now follow, we see Paul on the way to Jerusalem with the intent to minister to the Jews there; "And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts 20:22-23). Paul was going, bound in his own spirit (lower case "s"), not in the Holy Spirit. He said that the Holy Spirit witnessed in every city that bonds and affliction were waiting for him in Jerusalem. Every church he visited, Spirit-led people were telling him, "Paul, the only thing waiting for you in Jerusalem is bonds and afflictions." But what did he do? He would not be governed by prophets or prophecy. He just kept on going.

In Acts 21: 4 we find Paul in Tyre, staying with certain disciples for 7 days. These good brothers said to him "through the Spirit" (capital "S", indicating the Holy Spirit) that he should not go up to Jerusalem. Isn't that plain? But, what did Paul do? He kept on going. He would not be governed by prophets or prophecy.

A little further on, Paul and his team came to Caesarea where they stayed with Philip the evangelist. While they were there, the prophet Agabus arrived and gave Paul a stern warning against traveling to Jerusalem (see Acts 21:8-14). So what did Paul do? He kept on going. He would not be governed by prophets or prophecy.

It is right not to be governed by prophets or prophecy. But when you receive as much witness as Paul had, you ought to be influenced by them. If every church is telling you the same thing, if there are brothers repeating the same message to you by the Spirit, if prophets repeat it again and again - pay attention. You ought to be influenced by what you have heard from so many reliable sources. I think Paul ought to have stopped, looked and listened, but he was determined to win Jews for Jesus, and he traveled on to Jerusalem. "When I [Paul] was come again to Jerusalem, even while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance; and saw the Lord saying unto me, 'Make haste, and get you quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me'" (Acts 22:17-18). Jesus actually appeared to Paul in the temple in Jerusalem while he was praying. The Lord told him to leave quickly because the Jews there would not receive his testimony. What does Paul do? He starts arguing with Jesus! Jesus' final response is, "Depart: for I will send you far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). In essence, the Lord was attempting to explain to a very stubborn Paul, "I did not call you to win Jews for Jesus, I sent you to the Gentiles! Gentiles, Paul, Gentiles! Gentiles! Gentiles!

What did Paul do? He stayed right there in Jerusalem. But as Jesus had said to him, the Jews later put him in chains and delivered him unto - the Gentiles. And where did the Gentiles take him? Where God wanted him to be: Rome. So, if you will not go freely to the place God intends for you, He may take you in chains. God intends for His will to be fulfilled, as in this case of God's will ultimately bringing Paul to Rome.

You "...are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation... wherein you greatly rejoice though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold trials" (1 Pet. 1:5-6). However, if you have had a strong stream of prophecy flowing into your life, this can be a signal to



take serious account of what is being told you. It is much more pleasant to allow yourself to be influenced than to be "chained".

### **Young Prophet Deceived By Old Prophet**

In 1 Kings Chapter 13, we read the story of a young prophet who was given a word from God. He was told what he was to do, and he went on a journey in obedience to the Lord. On his way back he met an old prophet who said, "Come home with me" The young man replied, "No God told me to go and come back without stopping or eating with anyone." The old prophet argued a bit and tried to convince the younger man by saying, " An angel appeared to me and told me you were to come home with me." So the young man went along and dined with him. While they were eating, the Spirit of the Lord came on the old prophet who prophesied, "Because you did not obey the Lord you are going to be eaten by a lion." When the young prophet left the old prophet's house, this tragic prophecy was fulfilled. The event actually happened! The young prophet was killed by a lion. What was the young prophet's problem? He let someone else persuade him to do other than what God had clearly told him to do.

God does not give others responsibility for your actions as a leader! When you have heard from God, you must do what He says.

### **Conclusion**

Prophetic giftings are wonderful, but we are not to be governed (or ruled) by them. If they confirm what God has said, then we can take comfort in the confirmation. If they contradict what God has spoken to us - we reject them.

In our zeal, we may want to do something that God has not called or anointed us to do. If we are warned (like Paul) to not go forward with our plans, we ought to stop and fast and pray and listen to what Jesus says to us.

These guidelines will enable us to receive from the prophetic giftings without becoming misled by their abuse or misuse.

## **CHAPTER 3 - Apostles / Prophets Working Together**

### **The Link Between Apostles And Prophets**

At the beginning of the last century there occurred a spiritual awakening. Conceived out of a great visitation by God, this movement inspired some of the most in-depth teaching on the office of the apostle and prophet of any that I have ever studied. The doctrinal beliefs of those involved in this revival, with respect to apostles and prophets, had a truly biblical basis. God gave these leaders unique insights into the ministry gifts spoken of in Ephesians 4:11 - "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers..." In the early years of this movement, God raised up many true apostles and prophets. Their doctrinal position held that apostles and prophets should work together. Apostles should not go out to minister unless accompanied by a prophet. Prophets would not go out unless accompanied by an apostle. These apostolic / prophetic teams were deployed all over the world, and they went out with great power.

- In Luke 11:49 Jesus taught, "Therefore... said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles... "

- 1 Corinthians 12:28 tells us: "God has set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets..." Note the linkage in these verses of apostles and prophets.

- Then in Ephesians 2:20, Paul says that the Church is "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." He joins these two ministries as working together in laying the foundations of the Church. The connection between the office of the apostle and prophet in all these verses is an indicator that the two offices function together.

### **Team Ministry**

Jesus never sent any of his disciples out in less than a team of two. He sent them out two by two in

every place that He himself would later come (see Luke 10:1). You will notice that Paul, who is the most well known of all apostles, went out with Barnabas. In Acts 13:1, Barnabas is named in a list of the prophets. "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas..." Later on, Barnabas is identified as an apostle. "Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes..." (Acts 14:14). But he was first identified as a prophet when part of a local church. When he got involved in missionary-evangelism and church planting, he was recognized as an apostle. He and Paul formed a powerful team.

Eventually Barnabas and Paul returned to Antioch where they ministered for a time. Unfortunately, they parted company and went separate ways because of a dispute over young John Mark (see Acts 15:36-39). Therefore, when Paul went out on his second missionary-evangelism journey, he took with him another prophet named Silas. "And... Silas, being a prophet also... Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God" (Acts 15:32, 40).

Sometimes Paul's team was large. On at least one occasion he had nine strong ministries traveling together with him. "And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus" (Acts 20:4). (There were seven men plus Paul, and Luke who wrote the account; nine men in all). No wonder they mightily impacted the cities of Asia Minor!

The Bible says "...one will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight..." (Deut. 32:30). If a warrior fights with the Lord, one can put a thousand of the enemy to flight. That is a great victory. But there is a five-fold multiplication of effectiveness if two warriors fight together. With just a second team member, your victory will be multiplied five times -two will put ten thousand of the enemy in retreat. You will have much greater success if two of you minister together as a team! Just think what happens if you have three, or four, or nine on your team. There is a great multiplication of power in proportion to the growth of the team. Having one apostle and one prophet going out together was a minimum team in New Testament times.

### **Three Kinds Of Apostles**

It is possible to become imbalanced in ministry, regardless of your gifts. Prophets seem the most vulnerable to this when not ministering alongside proven, experienced apostles. Therefore, we want to explain what an apostle is, and what an apostle is not.

It has become popular in the church today to grab on to the title of apostle. I believe many of them are self-anointed and self-appointed. They are not true apostles even though they call themselves by that title.

There are three kinds of apostles that can be found in the New Testament:

#### **1. The Twelve Apostles Of The Lamb**

Revelation 21:14 mentions "...the twelve apostles of the Lamb." These twelve apostles had a special relationship to Israel. "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter you not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'" (Matt 10:5-6). As He sent them out on their first ministry journey, Jesus gave them power over unclean spirits, to heal the sick and to raise the dead. But note: He told them specifically not to go to the Gentiles or the Samaritans, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

To understand this relationship, let us review a conversation that Peter held with the Lord Jesus. Peter asked, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed You. What shall we have therefore?" Jesus replied, "...when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of His glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." (Matt 19:27-28). Those twelve apostles of the Lamb, who had given up everything to follow Jesus, would be rewarded in Christ's future kingdom by sitting upon thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

#### **2. The Ascension Apostles**

The second group of apostles identified in the Bible are ascension apostles. When Jesus, ascended

up to Heaven, he gave gift ministries to the Church. These gifts were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (Eph 4:7,11). This is why we name them ascension apostles. They were given at Jesus' ascension. This was after the twelve apostles of the Lamb were chosen. They were not part of the twelve apostles of the Lamb who were called to Israel. Rather, they were given primarily to the Gentile Church. These ascension apostles had a special relationship to the Gentiles. Those named in the New Testament were Paul, Barnabas, Andronicus, Junia (a woman's name), James, Silas, Timothy and others. There are at least 20 specific apostles named in the New Testament just in these first two groups!

### **3. False Apostles**

The third group are false apostles. In Revelation 2:2 Jesus commends the church at Ephesus: "I know thy works... and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars..." Someone judiciously observed: "The first sign of a false apostle may be that they say they are apostles." In 2 Corinthians 11:13, Paul says, "Such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ."

We have a world abounding with false apostles, men who are making boastful claims about being apostles. In the Bible view, a true apostle will not try to convince people that he is one, but will serve humbly as a bond slave of Jesus Christ. The Greek word "*doulos*" is translated: "servant" or "bond slave" in the English New Testament. It speaks of one who is in complete obedience to a master. He does as the master says, and does not exercise his own will in most things. That is the word the apostles Paul, James and Peter used to describe themselves. "...a servant [*doulos*] of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated into the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1; Jas. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1).

Neither Paul, James nor Peter saw themselves in some ruling role as a lord over God's people. Rather they saw themselves as slaves of Christ and not only of Christ, but of the people. They were servant leaders. That is the proper attitude of a true apostle.

### **True Apostles Avoid Flattering Titles**

Let us now look at the five ministry gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher (Ephesians 4:11). It does not appear that even one of these five words were used as titles in the Bible! In the Church today, we have many declaring themselves as apostles, and they want to be addressed as "Apostle Jay" or "Apostle Aa". Recently I have been asked to participate in meetings where certain leaders were being "elevated" into apostleship. Even though these are friends of mine whom I love and respect, it seems to me that they are laboring under some illusions about the true meaning of "apostleship". I want to tell you that being a true apostle is not to be "elevated"! If you read Paul's description of his apostleship in 1 Corinthians 4:13, you will see that true apostles are usually seen as "...the scum of the earth, the refuse of the world." Sometimes, that is the difference between a true apostle and a false apostle. The false often want to be "elevated"; the true are willing to be looked on as "...the scum of the earth."

### **Not Titles - But Job Descriptions Of Ministries**

The terms apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher were never used as titles in the Bible. Instead they were job descriptions like architect, carpenter, painter or plumber. A job description defines a function that an individual carries out. It is the same with the words apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher, which define a function, or job, that someone carries out.

In most societies we do not use job descriptions as titles. We would not say, "Plumber Aa", or "Painter Bee". That would be making their job description a title. We would more likely say, "Aa, the plumber", or "Bee, the painter."

Of Jesus it was said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary... " (Mark 6:3). Jesus made no attempt to gain flattering titles or the honor and praise of men. Rather, He "...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant..." (Phil. 2:7). Jesus would leave it up to others

to decide who and what He was. His only claim was that He was the Son of God - a standing He graciously shares with us. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." (John 1:12).

### **Progress Through Humility**

We should take a close look at Paul's spiritual progression. All of this should make spiritual progress and grow in grace as we follow on to know the Lord. But Paul's progress may seem a bit odd in light of some present church leaders' viewpoint. Paul confessed his former opinion of himself by saying, "I was [past tense] not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles" (2 Cor. 11:5). In the early years of his ministry, he considered himself the chiefest apostle. But he also said, speaking of the present, "I am [present tense] the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle" (1 Cor. 15:9). (Note the past tense, and then the present tense. Between "I was" and "I am", some spiritual growth had taken place!) Finally, in one of his last letters, Paul ended it by saying, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim 1:15).

So Paul advanced from being the chiefest of apostles to being the chiefest of sinners. That is spiritual growth! We all need to recognize that Paul went through a time when the Lord adjusted his self-view, and he learned to walk in greater humility before God.

In Matthew 23:8 Jesus instructed His followers, "Be not called Rabbi." The Greek Concordance gives the following insight. The Greek word "*Rabbi*" literally means: "my master". As an official title of honor, it would thus be translated, "Master, Rabbi". However, Jesus told His disciples not to be called Rabbi. Jesus was opposed to self-exaltation springing from pride, by which men with good ministries could be destroyed. He said, "I do not receive honor from men... How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from only God?" (John 5:41,44). That is a challenging question upon which every leader ought to reflect.

Jesus later says, "He who works for the honor of the One who sent him is a man of truth" (John 7:18). Of course, we know that Jesus always gave all the glory to his Father, instead of claiming it for Himself.

Now in contrast to this, "...among the chief rulers many believed on Jesus, but because if the Pharisees they did not confess Him lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God" (John 12:42-43). Wanting honor and praise from men is an easy trap to fall into, but it will compromise your ministry and testimony. Paul added his voice to this theme: "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome as the apostles of Christ" (1 Thes. 2:6).

If you are a man-pleaser, one seeking honor of men, you cannot be a servant of Christ! Paul knew this when he wrote, "Do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." (Gal 1:10). Therefore, we need to be careful about desiring titles and the praise of people. According to James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:6, if you humble yourself, the Lord can and will lift you up. If He lifts you up, that is quite different from exalting yourself. All of us, then, should willingly and consistently take the path of humility.

### **A Practical Prescription Against Pride**

Solomon teaches us that, "only by pride cometh contention" (Prov. 13:10). Behind all strife and contention there is pride. When leaders are fighting each other, when families or churches are divided, pride is the cause. That is always where contention comes from.

Sometimes I have been called to help mediate strife and contention. When I try to deal with leaders who are fighting each other, I always insist that we have a foot washing service. We get bowls of water and towels, and have everyone wash each other's feet. That always breaks the pride and, because the pride has been broken, the contention ceases. This creates the mood James describes: "...the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality [favoritism], and without hypocrisy" (Jas. 3:17). In such an atmosphere of calm and reason, the differences are easily resolved.

In Jesus' time they did not have automobiles or buses. The streets were shared by animals as well

as people. Camels, oxen, goats, cows, horses and donkeys walked the same roads and paths as the people. So if you went down those ancient streets, you would be walking through a lot of dung, filth and dirt. Washing someone's feet in New Testament times was a task usually, reserved for the lowest slave in that household. Thus when the Lord Jesus washed His disciples' feet (John 13:5), He was taking the place of the lowest slave. Peter was astonished that the King of kings and Lord of lords would take the place of the lowest slave. But He was setting an example for His followers, then and now. I think Jesus' example should be good enough for all of us!

### **What Is Your Title?**

In Galatians 5:26, Paul said, "...let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Then we will not need to look for honors and popularity..." Peter, when he was referring to the great Apostle Paul, addressed him as simply "...our beloved brother, Paul" (2 Pet. 3:15). "Brother Paul" - doesn't that echo humility? Why don't we just use "brother" today? Matthew 23:8 is worth repeating here. Jesus said, "Do not be called Rabbi... all of you are brethren. "So what is wrong with church leaders just being called "brother"? That is enough honor. I know many leaders who love to be called "Reverend". But the Bible says, "...holy and reverend is His name" (Ps.111: 9). For church leaders to take an attribute that is ascribed to God alone and usurp it to themselves as a title strikes me as terribly dangerous and presumptuous.

### **The Good Example Of Billy Graham, World-Renowned Leader In The Church**

Billy Graham insists that whenever any member of his team introduces him or talks about him in public, they refer to him as "Mr. Graham". In the English language there is no prideful honor associated with the word "Mr." Some people who do not understand how he feels about it do call him "Reverend Graham", or even "The Right Reverend Dr. Graham". He cannot control how others in the public arena refer to him, but he will never let his own team do that! It is just "Mr. Graham". That is how he would prefer to be known. Others may bestow high titles on you. You cannot control that, but you can reject prideful seeking of honor. You can refuse to pursue fame and glory as your goal and god.

So when we talk about true apostles in comparison with false apostles, this issue of the pursuit of titles motivated by pride and self exaltation is crucial. A true apostle will present himself as a slave of Christ. A true apostle will not be trying to bring others under his apostleship. A true apostle will just function in dispensing help as a servant of God and the people.

### **Conclusion**

Perhaps one of the reasons we do not see more team ministry is because too many church leaders have selfish desires for fame or wealth.

Let us renounce these works of darkness and carnality and join ourselves with others of like precious faith and win the lost at any cost.

Let us continue to make Jesus' last command our first priority. "...Go you into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15).

## **CHAPTER 4 - How A Prophetic Mantle Comes Upon A Church**

### **Introduction**

Now we come to another important aspect of our study of the apostolic, prophetic ministry. It is important to understand how we and our churches can be covered by a prophetic mantle. If we understand how to receive this, it will release us and all the believers to participate, in varying degrees, in the anointing of the apostle and prophet.

This teaching has already shown that we need apostolic / prophetic teams to lay the foundations in

the churches as stated in Ephesians 2:19-22. Paul says the church should be "...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets..." (Eph 2:20). A church built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets will usually have a strong prophetic ministry operating within it. We certainly see that this was the case with New Testament-era churches.

### **The Prophetic Mantle On The Churches**

"And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Spirit witnesses in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me" (Acts 20:22-23). I was reading this passage several years ago when something leapt off the page. It struck me that in every church Paul visited a prophetic word came to him through the believers. They all warned him of what he would face at Jerusalem. I thought, "How was it, that all the churches had this prophetic mantle resting on them? Every church gave Paul the same message, saying that bonds and afflictions awaited him. How did they know?"

The only answer that makes sense is that every church was operating under a prophetic mantle. Paul describes such a church when it is having a meeting, " But if an unbeliever or someone who does not understand comes in while everybody is prophesying... the secrets of his heart will be laid bare. So he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, 'God is really among you!'" (1 Cor. 14:23-25). That describes a church where a prophetic mantle is resting over the assembly. It describes what happens to unbelievers who come into the meetings where that mantle is present.

As the stream of prophecy flows in the church, the secrets of the hearts of unbelievers are revealed. The word of knowledge, by which the secrets of lives are revealed, functioning along with the gift of prophecy, causes the unbeliever to fall down and worship God!

### **Personal Experience Concerning A Prophetic Mantle**

We may wonder what kind of prophecy was coming forth in the church in Corinth that caused unbelievers to fall down on their faces. I believe it was personal, revealing and timely.

When I was in my twenties I was starting a new church in the little town of our district. We were going through many, many trials and tribulations, largely because of my youthful inexperience. I knew less than nothing about everything, so I had plenty of problems. This was the second church - planting effort for me. I had turned over to another pastor the first church we had helped start in a nearby rural area. At the end of the first year in this town a certain woman showed up and began spreading malicious lies, slander and discord among the members. In two weeks we hardly had anyone left in the congregation. So we started over, and by the end of the second year we had a pretty good congregation again. The same woman showed up in the meetings. Three weeks later the same story: we hardly had anyone left in the congregation.

So I started over a third time. The church began to grow again and we were doing quite well, when a year later the same woman showed up. In a short while, hardly anyone was left in the congregation. Three failures in a row! Something was wrong. Thus I said to the Lord, "I'm giving it one more year; if it does not succeed this time, I am going to have to give up and leave here." We were moving along toward the end of the year of the fourth try when the same woman showed up again. Thinking about what was getting ready to happen, I was so scared my knees were shaking. In desperation, I cried out to the Lord to send me someone who could help me understand what in the world was going on. Why were we facing this church-destroying trial over and over?

In answer to our prayer, the Lord sent to us a dear brother and his wife. They did not call themselves an apostle and a prophetess, but that is how they functioned. Within three days of their arrival, they had identified a spirit of witchcraft in the church. They knew in whom it was resident, they had objective facts to prove it, so they brought the information to me. Now I had told them nothing about what we had been through in those four years. I wanted them to come and be free to simply be led of the Spirit and to see what God would show them. After the apostle and prophetess had identified the spirit of witchcraft, they gave me a Scriptural principle with which to deal with it, "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two

or three witnesses. If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." (Matt 18:15-20). Because this woman would not repent of her witchcraft, we were forced to "...tell it to the church; and... treat her as you would a pagan or a tax collector" (Matt 18:17).

As the church followed these scriptural principles, we found that what Jesus promised was true:

1. As a church, we could bind and we could loose. We bound the spirit of witchcraft. We loosed the offending woman from membership.
2. "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them." We found that Jesus was present to back us up. The influence of that spirit of witchcraft was rendered absolutely powerless.

As I was telling the matter to the church (as Jesus instructed), suddenly the Spirit of the Lord fell upon the people. They rose spontaneously to their feet and began to march in cadence like an army going to war. The Holy Spirit seized on us as a congregation, and we entered into a time of warring against and binding "the strong man". "No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house." This strong intercession, and speaking words of power against the strong man, lasted 20 or 25 minutes - all the time marching and singing worship songs with a military theme.

All of a sudden our war cry turned to a victory cry. We knew the battle was won. Everyone started to shout out victoriously and lift a mighty anthem of praise to the Lord, our Deliverer. This whole service was being orchestrated by the Holy Spirit. No one but the Spirit was leading the meeting while this was happening. It was a sovereign move of God!

In that service, a great outpouring of the Holy Spirit began. Six weeks later, there were four times as many people in attendance as before, and giving in the tithes and offerings had increased six-fold. We could now pay our church bills and had enough to support the pastor (me) and his family. At that same time, a great prophetic mantle came on the church. As cars would pass by on the main road next to our church, the Spirit of God would lay hold of the drivers and compel them to turn into our parking lot. They would come into our meetings, sometimes with a look of wonderment at what had taken hold of them.

With a prophetic mantle on the church, a spirit of prophecy would be released on the members. Through the prophecies, the secrets of these non-believers' hearts were revealed, with the consequences that Paul described. They would fall to the floor weeping and crying. Members of the church flock would move close around them to pray. All kinds of miraculous conversions, healings and deliverances took place.

In addition to the sinners and backsliders, some were fallen preachers whom God apprehended, forgave and restored. For nine months we had services seven nights a week. Hardly a meeting took place where these phenomena did not happen. We never planned to have meetings continuously for nine months, but that is the way it worked out. The Glory of God came down in every service. The people were drawn in by the Holy Spirit. God would move in a tremendous way and the people would say, "Brother / Pastor, we want to have another meeting tomorrow night." So we just announced the next meeting one night ahead. Things kept going that way for all those months. That is why I understand what Paul was writing about in 1 Corinthians 14:24-25. We experienced it.

But what was it that brought that prophetic mantle on the church? It was the team ministry of an apostle and prophetess ministering together. This church was finally established on a strong foundation of a true apostle and prophetess.

### **My Personal Problem Gets Dealt With**

I did not have the help of an apostolic and prophetic ministry in establishing the first church I

started. I was just a young novice pastor trying to figure out what the ministry was all about. The Lord graciously gave me some "sheep" on which to practice. Those poor sheep were sacrificed on the altar of my training! But the church survived my mistakes and it is still there today some decades later, being pastored by a fine man of God.

However, it was in the second church situation that the Lord sent us an apostle and prophetess who laid strong foundations in that church.

Yet this godly husband/wife team first had to deal with two big problems.

1. The first problem was that I did not know I had a problem.
2. And the second was that I did not know what the problem was.

At the time they came, I was the main pastor, leading a team of others who were helping. I thought the way I conducted the church service was biblical and right. From the time I was born, I had been raised in a certain denomination. Without realizing it, I was demonstrating my love for those denominational traditions by what I did. I conducted the services the same way I had always seen it done in our denomination. This was upsetting to the apostle visiting our church. He was trying to teach us the difference between being led by tradition and being led by the Spirit - the difference between just going through a ritual and hearing the voice of God. He wanted me to learn to receive the Holy Spirit's direction for each and every service!

I had not yet learned to hear God's voice concerning the conduct of a service. When this apostle would tell us we needed to hear the voice of God and be led of the Spirit, I would shout, "Amen!" But the next service, I would get up and function in the same old way following denominational traditions. Now I was not aware that this was going on. I was like, "...the horse and the mule, which have no understanding" (Ps. 32:9). The Lord had to "hit me with a brick" to get my attention, but that is not a good way to be. This godly apostle recognized my need. That Sunday morning I was conducting the meeting in the same old denominational, traditional way. About thirty minutes into the service the apostle was so frustrated and disturbed that he jumped to his feet. He strode to the platform and pounded on the pulpit, shouting, "Brother, for almost two weeks now I have been trying to teach you to hear the voice of God! When are you going to quit all this religious ritual and listen to the voice of God!" He rebuked and corrected me right in front of the whole congregation and that is what I needed. "Wounds from a friend are better than kisses from an enemy!" (Prov. 27:6). He got my attention, so I rather sheepishly said, "Sorry, what am I supposed to do?" He replied, "Brother, God wants you to preach by prophecy. He wants you to preach by revelation." I said, "Well, I would be happy to do that but I have never heard of it before. What is that?" There I was, getting my "Bible School Training" right in front of the congregation! So he turned in his Bible to I Corinthians 14: 6 and read – "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"

This is a very important verse for leaders (I Cor. 14: 6). Here the Apostle Paul describes four ways by which we speak, teach and preach:

1. By revelation,
2. knowledge,
3. prophesying and
4. doctrine.

Up until that time, I had never spoken except by knowledge or doctrine, sharing what I knew from studying the Bible, preaching the sound doctrine of the Scriptures. I had never heard of preaching by revelation, or preaching by prophecy. I had read this verse many times, but I had never noticed these four ways of preaching and teaching before.

Then the apostle said to me, "The Lord wants you to preach by revelation and by prophecy starting this morning." I replied, "I would love to be able to do that, but you know that I can't. That is a miraculous thing, something God has to do for me and through me."

## **Impartation By The Laying On Of Hands**



So the apostle said, "I am going to lay hands on you and pray for you that the Lord will give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation." You may remember that Paul prayed for the Ephesians. "That... the Father of glory may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation... that you may know what is the hope of his calling... the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints... And... the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe..." (Eph 1:17-19).

Then the apostle and his wife laid hands on me and they prayed. Immediately he said, "Now I want you to preach by prophecy; I mean - I want you to do it now." I prayed and said, "Lord, I have never done this before, I do not know what it is all about, but it is in the Bible and so I am for it so, help me now." As soon as I finished that prayer, the spirit of revelation suddenly hit me, and in less than a second the Holy Spirit filled my mind and spirit with fresh insights and understanding on the Bible the Word of God. It is hard to describe what happens when the Spirit of revelation comes on you, but for me it was like this: In a split second, the Spirit placed in my mind verses from Genesis to Revelation related to comprehending God's plan and His ways. Understanding came that I had never experienced before. What was given in that split second of time took me six months to teach the church. .

### **It was unbelievable!**

To more fully explain this requires a little background. I've had practically no formal "theology" training. But as a young man I had spent a lot of time in "knee-ology", that is - kneeling down beside my bed for an hour or more each day; spreading open my Bible and asking God to help me make sense of what was written as I read and prayed. Furthermore, one of my early mentors challenged me to begin memorizing five verses from the Bible every day. If you do that regularly, over years you can memorize whole books of the Bible. Five verses a day amounts to about 1,825 verses a year. You can memorize the whole New Testament in a few years.

The man who was challenging me to do this had memorized the New Testament by the time he was 12 years old. By the time he was 22 he had memorized the Old Testament as well. His father, who was a good pastor, had started him memorizing as a child. What a wonderful heritage! I never memorized as much of the Bible as my mentor, but by the time the apostle and prophetess visited us, I had memorized a lot of Scripture in both the Old and New Testament.

In spite of this, I must acknowledge I understood very little of the Bible after all those years of "knee-ology". I could not make sense of most of the Old or New Testament; but I read it, I meditated on it, I memorized it. Jesus told us that when the Holy Spirit comes, He will "...bring all things to your remembrance..." (John 14:26). In order for the Spirit to help you remember Scripture it first has to be stored away in your memory. You first have to memorize it if the Spirit is going to "...brings all things to your remembrance..."

David said, "I have thought much about your Words and stored them in my heart... I have recited your laws" (Ps 119:11,13). You recite only what you have memorized. We all need to do what David did store God's Word in our heart and recite His laws. The Word of the Lord had come to Jesus disciples through His words. He had spoken many teachings to them. Later, the Holy Spirit brought His words to their memory and they wrote the four Gospels.

In my case, this is what the Holy Spirit did after the apostle and prophetess prayed for me. He took all those years of memorizing, reading and studying the Bible and brought the verses back to me, organized in such a way that suddenly and supernaturally, I could remember them, understand them and teach them to others. Paul calls that supernatural enablement the spirit of revelation.

When that spirit of revelation came upon me, the Lord took all that had been stored in my memory and organized it in a flash a split second of time! From Genesis to Revelation, it came together like a great panorama of divine truth. And that miracle continued happening over the years on many subsequent occasions.

It is essential to put the Word of God into your memory before the Holy Spirit can bring it to your remembrance. No one is exempt from studying the Bible and memorizing the Scriptures. But even after you memorize and study, you can wind up like I was, not understanding it. However, the spirit of revelation can put it together and give you supernatural insight into the Scriptures. Most of what I have taught since receiving the spirit of wisdom and revelation has been the result of this gift that

God gave me.

### **After The Spirit Of Revelation - A Prophetic Mantle**

After the spirit of revelation came upon me, a prophetic mantle fell on the church with the results that I have already described. We had a tremendous time of revival following that. It came because of an apostle and prophetess who ministered to the church and who ministered to me.

Later, when I asked the Lord how the prophetic mantle comes on a church (as opposed to its coming on an individual), He reminded me of Ephesians 2:20: "...the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. "But I needed more insight to fully understand this process.

### **Apostles And Prophets Laying Foundations And Imparting A Prophetic Mantle To The Churches**

The apostles and prophets were heavily involved in foundation laying in the early church. As the gospel spread from Jerusalem out among the Gentiles, an interesting phenomenon occurred. Let us examine four examples:

1. Acts Chapter 8 is the story of Philip the evangelist's great miracle-healing crusade in Samaria. Almost the whole city turned to Christ with great joy, and Philip baptized the new believers in water. However, they had not yet received the Holy Spirit.

When the apostles in Jerusalem heard about what was happening in Samaria, what did they do? They journeyed there to lay foundations in this new church. Here is the scriptural account: "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Spirit: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus). Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit." (Acts 8:14-17).

Peter tells us to think of a church as a "spiritual house" constructed of "living stones": "And now you have become living building stones for God's use in building his house..." (1 Pet. 2:5).

Here is how the process works. Here is the means by which Jesus builds His church.

The evangelist comes to the unbelievers and preaches the Gospel to them. When he has finished his job of bringing salvation and healing the sinners, you now have a pile of "living stones".

### **A Pile Of Stones Is Not A Building**

You have to assemble stones together in right order on a good foundation before you have a house. That is where the work of the apostle and prophet begins at the foundational level. The pastor and teacher are involved later in raising up the walls and the completion of the house after the foundation is laid.

"What a foundation you stand on now: the apostles and the prophets; and the cornerstone of the building is Jesus Christ himself! We who believe are carefully joined together with Christ as parts of a beautiful, constantly growing temple for God. ..And you also are joined with him and with each other by the Spirit and are part of this dwelling place of God" (Eph 2:20-22). So how are these foundations built?

You will notice that the apostles first laid hands on the Samaritans to receive the Holy Spirit, Laying on of hands is for impartation, The new believers at Samaria needed the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit in prophetic dimensions. The prophet Joel said that this is what would take place when the Spirit was poured out on people in the last days. "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy..." (Acts 2:17). Prophecy is evidence of a prophetic mantle resting on those prophesying.

After the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Samaritan church and other churches mentioned in the Book of Acts received the Holy Spirit and had a prophetic mantle resting on them. Brand new believers throughout the Book of Acts began moving in the gifts of the Spirit, speaking in tongues, prophesying, speaking a word of knowledge, so that when non-believers would show up in their meetings, the secrets of their hearts would be revealed by these prophetic gifts. Later, when Paul

came among these churches, the members would know by the Spirit what was going to happen to him –and they told him -as we previously noted (Acts 20:22-23).

2. In Acts Chapter 10, we have another example of a new church having foundations laid and coming under a prophetic mantle with the help of apostles and prophets. An angel had supernaturally appeared to Peter while he was in prayer at Joppa. This angelic visit, and the miraculous visions that accompanied it, caused him to go to the house of Cornelius. Cornelius was a devout Gentile, a Roman Centurion (responsible for a military regiment of 100 men). From Acts 10:34 to the end of the chapter, there is a description of what happened when Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius.

While Peter was preaching to these Romans, the Holy Spirit fell on them. “While Peter yet spoke these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word.” (Acts 10:44). Now the Jews that were with Peter did not believe that Gentiles could be saved, much less be filled with the Holy Spirit; so when they saw, this, they could hardly believe it. They heard the household of Cornelius speaking in tongues and glorifying God, and exclaimed, "They have received the Holy Spirit just like we Jews!"

### **The Value Of Team Ministry**

The value of a team ministry is also illustrated here. We know Peter did not go to Cornelius' house alone, but "...certain brethren from Joppa accompanied him" (Acts 10:23). The record does not give us their names, but Peter was there with a team. We can thus conclude that just as an apostolic / prophetic team ministered in Samaria, so a team also ministered in Cornelius' house. Not only did the household receive the Holy Spirit, but gifts of the Spirit were released in their lives, a prophetic mantle descended on them, and they became a church that moved in the supernatural. The result of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit from apostolic ministry produced the same result among the Gentiles as it did at Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Later on, when Peter was defending his actions before the leaders at the Jewish Jerusalem church, he said, "Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as He did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17) The Gentiles had received the same gift with the same results.

"The Jews who came with Peter were amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit would be given to Gentiles too! But there could be no doubt about it, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God." (Acts 10:45-46).

3. In Acts 11:19-27, some brothers were going as far north as Antioch preaching the Gospel. In those days, that was considered a long way from Jerusalem. When they came to Antioch they preached Christ to the Greeks, of whom many believed and turned to the Lord.

Now let us notice: When the news of this came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, they immediately responded by sending Barnabas to Antioch. Why Barnabas? As noted previously in this study, Barnabas was both an apostle and a prophet but he did not go alone. Verse 25 tells us he traveled to Tarsus to find Paul (still called Saul at that time). "They departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul" (Acts 11:25). Barnabas realized the need for a team, so he sought Paul to help him. For a whole year, those two men assembled with the new church that was at Antioch and taught the believers. "And when Barnabas had found Saul, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

The next thing we read about the Antioch church is that "...in these days came prophets from Jerusalem unto Antioch" (Acts 11:27). Through the prophets coming from Jerusalem, the prophetic ministry is released in a remarkable way in this church. The record says: " And there stood up one of them named Agabus, and signified by the Spirit that there should be great drought throughout all the world: which came to pass in the days of Claudius Ceasar" (Acts 11:28).

Immediately after a body of believers was formed, apostles and prophets showed up because the church needed to be built on the foundation they alone could lay. The prophetic ministry was then released and imparted to the new believers. This released the new believing members to begin speaking by prophecy and the word of knowledge, so secrets of men's heart were revealed. We see

that pattern repeated right through the New Testament.

4. As told in Acts 19:1-8, Paul traveled to Ephesus. They did not know anything about the Holy Spirit, so Paul explained that they needed to receive Him. "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6). At this point there was no prophetic mantle or gifts of the Holy Spirit in this church. However, when Paul laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

All through the Book of Acts, when the apostles and prophets laid hands on the new believers, they received the Holy Spirit and power. There was a transfer of anointing from the apostles and prophets. This is what we are wanting to see happen in the 21st-Century church. The kind of miracle that changed my life can happen, and is happening, in the lives of believers today. Laying on hands and praying for people is not just a ritual. Something miraculous can be expected to take place.

### **Transfer Of The Anointing In The Old Testament**

In the Old Testament, the Lord instructed Moses to gather 70 men of the elders of Israel and said, "I will take of the Spirit which is upon you, and will put it upon them." (Num. 11:16-17). God promised to transfer the Spirit (anointing and giftings) that was upon Moses to those elders. It was only then that they were qualified to stand alongside Moses in a leadership role. God said to Moses that when the Spirit was transferred to the seventy elders, they would "...bear the burden of the people with you, that thou bear it not thyself alone." (Num 11:17). So the principle of transferring the anointing from one anointed leader to another is a valid biblical concept and practice.

### **Moses And Joshua**

Later, the Lord told Moses to lay his hands on his young successor, Joshua. In doing this, Moses would be putting some of his authority on Joshua. "And the Lord said to Moses: "Take Joshua the son of Nun with you, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay your hand on him... And you shall give some of your authority to him... " (Num. 27:18,20).

Moses had been given a spiritual authority and anointing that would transfer to Joshua as Moses laid hands on him. We see this confirmed later in Joshua's life. "Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him." (Deut. 34:9).

### **Paul And Timothy - A Pattern For Today**

It is obvious that Timothy was a very special young man who was disciplined by Paul's teaching and guidance. Paul was to speak prophetically into Timothy's life in a way which would forever affect the younger man's ministry. Paul reminded Timothy of "...the prophecies which went before on you, that you by them might war a good warfare." (1 Tim. 1:18). When a prophet prophesies, or when a prophetic presbytery ministers over someone, something of great significance can take place. This was very important in the ministry of Timothy. The success of his spiritual warfare would be dependent on that prophetic word.

In 1 Timothy 4:14, Paul admonished Timothy, "Neglect not the gift that is in you, which was given you by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." The word in the Greek language translated "gift" in this passage means "a supernatural enablement". A prophetic presbytery laid hands on Timothy, prophesied over him, and a spiritual gift was given to him. This was a supernatural ability that Paul admonished Timothy not to neglect. And so the Bible contains many examples of the anointing, the gifts, and the power of God coming upon people through the laying on of hands with prayer and prophecy.

Jesus told us we would lay hands on the sick and they would recover (Mark 16:18). Many of us have practiced that, but most of the churches of the world have never had anything like a prophetic presbytery to help lay foundations in the lives of leaders and the members of the congregation. It is essential that we do things the Bible way if we expect to have biblical results. If we want the 21<sup>st</sup> - Century church to be full of power and grace, we must concentrate on letting God be God and find out how He wants ministry to take place.

First and foremost is the need to lay spiritual foundations in churches, and transfer a prophetic mantle to the people. The Lord has ordained that teams made up of apostles and prophets carry out this work. We pray, O Lord, that this will happen again! Let us see a repeat of what happened when you first commissioned the 120 believers at Pentecost. "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with [supernatural] signs following." (Mark 16:20).

If you desire the same thing, you can! Pray a prayer like this one:

"Father, I ask for faith to be released so that my heart can receive from You, and then be able to minister to others what I have received. I believe that You do work with signs, wonders and miracles today. Lord, mightily meet with me as I pray. I am helpless and hopeless in myself but my trust is in You. Confirm Your Word with signs following, by transferring Your anointing and gifts to me and those for whom I pray. Amen."

## **THE RESTORATION AND RECOGNITION OF APOSTLES IN THE CHURCH TODAY**

### **I INTRODUCTION**

Some trace certain emphases of the Holy Spirit in the 20th Century as follows:

- 1900 - Beginning of the Pentecostal Movement
- 1950's - The rise of Evangelists like Billy Graham and others
- 1960's - Compassion for the Poor (plus The Charismatic Move with emphasis on teaching, Gifts of the Spirit, Body of Christ)
- 1970's - A great prayer movement
- 1980's - The office of the Prophet
- 1990's - The office of the Apostle (plus world-wide evangelisation)

Some believe that the Ministry of Apostles and Prophets as well as the Gifts of the Spirit ceased with the completion of the Canon of Scripture. This belief however is unsustainable in the light of Eph. 4: 11 that the Five-fold Ascension Gift Ministries were to continue UNTIL ..."we become mature attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ". We have yet to reach that level of maturity! Furthermore, the Gifts of the Spirit were to continue until "perfection comes" (I Cor 13: 10). So the Gifts of The Spirit also are to continue until the Second Coming of Christ.

### **II. MEANING OF THE WORD APOSTLE**

The word '*apostolos*' is used in the New Testament as follows:

Matthew, Mark, John (1 each); Luke (6); Acts (28); Paul's Epistles (34); Hebrews(1); Peter (3); Jude (1); Revelation (3). It means: one who is sent forth. "A delegate, messenger sent with orders".

Delegate, envoy, messenger, missionary.

(a) In one sense every Christian is a sent one. Consider the great Commission (Matt 28; Rom 10:14-15).

(b) The whole church is apostolic. The Nicene Creed states, "We believe in one holy catholic (meaning: universal) apostolic church."

(c) The New Testament usually is more specific. It speaks of an office. Luke 6: 12-13 states, "Jesus went out to a mountain side to pray and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, He called his disciples to Him and chose twelve of them whom He also designated apostles." (also: Eph 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28).

### III. CLASSIFICATION OF APOSTLES

It is instructive to classify the Apostles in the New Testament to demonstrate that all the Apostles were not: (a) of the same stature; (b) have the same prominence; (c) same extent of ministry; (d) exactly the same job description.

#### 1. Christ the Apostle (Heb. 3:1)

Jesus is called the Apostle and High Priest whom we confess. He is unique and the only perfect apostle.

#### 2. The Twelve Apostles of the Lamb

- A. These 12 were chosen by Christ after a night of prayer (Luke 6: 12-13)
- B. They are Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Nathaniel, Thomas, Matthew, James (Alphaeus), Simon (Zealot); Judas (or Thaddeus); Judas Iscariot. Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:12-16; Acts 1:13 (except Judas). All these lists begin with Peter, the Apostle to the Jews (Gal. 2:8) and they are spoken of as the Twelve (Matt. 26: 14; Mark 14:23; John 6:67).
- C. Mathias. The one who was chosen to replace Judas became one of the Twelve (Acts 1:26).
- D. These twelve "were those who had been with Jesus from the beginning of John's Baptism to the time of Christ's ascension and were witnesses of his resurrection. (Acts 1:21-22).
- E. These twelve were all Jews.
- F. Apostles were the first ministry chosen by Christ (Luke 6: 12-13). (See also 1 Cor. 12:28.)

#### 3. Paul

- A. Paul is called an Apostle (Rom. 1:1; Gal. 1:1; I Cor. 1:1; Eph. 1:1), etc.
- B. Paul is called an "Apostle to the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:8).
- C. It is noteworthy that Paul is not reluctant to call himself an apostle. Neither does he hesitate to call others of much lesser stature than himself apostles namely, Apollos (1 Cor. 3:6; I Cor. 4:9); Andronicus and Junias (Rom.16:7).
- D. Paul's apostleship was authenticated by the fruit of his ministry. He planted and strengthened churches where the Lord sent him (1 Cor. 9: 1-2).
- E. Arguably Paul was the greatest apostle (after Christ). Half of the book of Acts centers on him (Acts Chapters 13 to 28). Also Paul wrote almost half of the books of the New Testament (13 out of 27).

#### 4. Other Apostles

There are at least 10 other apostles specifically mentioned:

- ❖ James the Lord's brother (Gal. 1:19)
- ❖ Barnabas (Acts 14: 14)
- ❖ Apollos (1 Cor. 1:6-9)
- ❖ Andronicus (Rom. 16:7)
- ❖ Junias (Rom. 16:7)
- ❖ Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25) messenger is apostolos
- ❖ Titus (2 Cor. 8:23)
- ❖ Timothy (1 Thes. 2:6)
- ❖ Judas (Acts 15:23)
- ❖ Silas (Silvanus) (1 Thes. 2:6)

Many of these apostles did not pioneer churches but helped to establish them. Paul says, "I planted (church) Apollos watered (nurtured) (1 Cor. 3:6).

#### 5. Apostolic Teams

- Peter and John sent to Samaria (Acts 8: 14)
- Barnabas, Saul and Mark (Acts 13: 15)
- Paul and Silas (Acts 15:40)
- Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke, Erastus, Gaius, Aristochus (Acts 19)
  - (a) Ministers were interdependent
  - (b) Not everyone in the team was an apostle

### **IV. THE MINISTRY OF APOSTLES**

In order to identify apostles we must understand the function of apostles (what they do). A study of the Book of Acts and the Epistles reveal the following major functions of an Apostolic ministry:

#### 1. Planting Churches: Laying Foundations

Paul says he planted (1 Cor. 3:6).

He laid the foundation as an expert builder (1 Cor. 3:10)

#### 2. Nurturing Churches, establishing Churches

Apollos watered (1 Cor. 3:6)

Apollos built on the foundation (1 Cor. 3:10)

An apostle may plant a church and another may nurture it. Also not all apostles pioneer churches. Many plant as well as nurture churches.

#### 3. Overseeing Churches

Apostles carry a deep concern for their churches. Paul says, "besides everything else I face daily pressure of my concern for all the churches (2 Cor. 11:28).

#### 4. Equipping others for Ministry

The apostles together with other ascension gift ministries are engaged in equipping God's people for acts of service (Eph. 4: 11). Apostles mentor other leaders. Paul mentored Timothy, Titus and others (see 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus).

#### 5. Preaching and Teaching the Word of God

Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). Paul declares that he had not hesitated to proclaim to the Ephesian Christians the whole will of God (Acts 20:27). The church at Jerusalem devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching (Acts 2:42). This ministry overlaps with the ministry of the Teacher.

#### 6. Performing signs and wonders

It does not however necessarily mean that every apostle will have the ministry of signs and wonders (Acts 3: 1-8)

#### 7. Ordaining and Placement of Ministries

The appointment of deacons (Acts 6:1-6); The appointment of elders (Acts 14:23)

Paul sent Artemas to Titus and requested Titus to come to him at Nicopolis (Titus 3: 12).

#### 8. Exercising Church Discipline

Peter regarding Annanais and Sapphira (Acts 5: 11)

Paul regarding Hymaneus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20)

John regarding Diotrephes (3 John v.9-10)

#### 9. Ministry Combinations

Paul was a teacher- apostle (2 Tim. 1:11)

Peter was a pastor- apostle (John 21:15-17)

Timothy was probably an evangelist-apostle (2 Tim. 4:5)

#### 10. Ministry Spheres (Apportionments)

F. Peter was an Apostle to the Jews

G. Paul was an Apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:8)

H. Paul says to the Corinthians. "Even though I may not be an apostle to others surely am to you". Paul was not an apostle to every church.

## **V. RECOGNITION AND RECEPTION OF APOSTLES**

This is probably one of the most challenging issues we are facing today. Do we recognize Apostles and do we receive them?! Jesus said, "He who receives you (i.e. the Twelve). Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward." This would similarly apply to apostles (Matt. 10:40-42). I list below some of the reasons why we have difficulty in recognizing and receiving them.

### **1. Inadequate Understanding**

Of the ministry of Apostles from the Scriptures. We need to thoroughly subject our own thoughts to the revelation of the Scriptures.

### **2. Unrealistically High Expectations**

We have consciously or subconsciously raised the bar for apostleship so high that it is almost unattainable by anyone. Hence a study of the classification of Apostles (see III above) will help us set the bar at a more realistic level. We need to consider Titus, Timothy, Silas, Epaphroditus and others. Just as not every evangelist is like Billy Graham, and not every teacher is like Derek Prince, not every apostle is like Paul or Peter.

Consider the following: When as a little boy I was taken to church, there was a coloured window in the end of the building showing the twelve apostles. They were dressed in most elaborately decorated robes, and carried croziers, orbs, lambs and other unnatural symbols in their hands, while round their heads were great halos, something like Lancashire cheeses. I was looking at that window Sunday after Sunday, until I really thought that apostles were like that - but they were not. It was sheer imagination.

Let me give you a Bible picture of an apostle: He is a weak little chap (person) with a poor voice (2 Cor. 10: 10), a jailbird (Acts 16:23). He looks under-nourished and his clothing is disreputable (1 Cor. 4: 11). If you look at his hands, they are stained and cracked by the hard work of softening skins and sewing them into tents, for that is his livelihood (Acts 18: 3). At times he is very ill, even despairing of life (2 Cor. 1:8-11; Gal. 4: 13; 2 Cor. 11:30). Perhaps these infirmities have come from the terrible sufferings which he has undergone (2 Cor. 11:23- 28). That picture has not much in common with the twelve complacent old gentlemen looking benignly at one from the church window, has it!

The apostles whom Christ gives to the church are neither rogues nor super-saints. They are not relics of church history or figments of someone's imagination. They are men called of God to a foundational ministry.

### **3. Perception of Control or Fierce Independence**

Some perceive apostles as synonymous with control either because of their own bad experience with dictatorial leaders who abused their authority or due to their own fierce independence. They consider apostleship means an erosion of the autonomy of the local church. The answer to abuse is not 'no' use but right use.

### **4. Insecurity or Jealousy**

Some are reluctant to recognize and receive apostles because of their own insecurity or jealousy (1 Cor. 3). The authority of an apostle is essentially spiritual and relational. He is an apostle only to those who receive him. Like all in authority an apostle is to lead and not to 'lord it over' God's people (1 Peter 5:1-6).

### **5. Designating Apostles**

Some are prepared to accept the ministry of apostle but are reluctant to designate (name) them as apostles considering it to be presumptuous or arrogant, but Jesus himself designated the original twelve as apostles (Luke 6: 12-13). Paul called himself an apostle in most of his epistles (e.g. Rom.



1:1). It is worthy of note that the Epistle to the Romans begins, "I Paul a servant of Christ Jesus called to be an apostle". Paul was a servant-leader as all leaders should be. Furthermore, Paul did not hesitate to call others apostles who were of much lesser stature than himself, namely, Barnabas, Appollos, Timothy and Titus. Jesus said He who receives you receives me and he who receives me receives him who sent me. (Matt. 10:40). Peter also calls himself an apostle (1 Peter 1: 1).

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The bottom line is: There is no substitute for God's pattern for the growth of the church and the extension of His Kingdom, namely, the return to ALL the Ascension Gift ministries. (Eph. 4: 11). Many church movements are confronted with the need for restructuring. If we are concerned for the need to return to God's pattern, we will be committed to learn, to persevere, to discuss and to listen to each other. We will need to guard our hearts because the state of our hearts will determine how much we hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. (Matt. 13:13-17; Prov. 4:20-27). We need to create an environment of honest, multilateral communication in love, humility, trust and teachability and a passion for Christ, His Church and His Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14).

## **THE FINAL QUEST - Visions of the end-times**

### **How I Received The Vision**

One of the most common questions that I receive about this vision concerns how I received it. I believe that this is an important question, and therefore will attempt to briefly answer it here. First, I must explain what I mean by visions and "prophetic experiences." Prophetic "experiences" as I call them are numerous and diverse. They include all of the primary ways in which the Lord has spoken to His people in the Scriptures. Because the Lord is the same today as He was yesterday, He has never ceased to relate to His people in the same ways, and these experiences continue to be found throughout Church history. As the apostle Peter explained in his sermon recorded in Acts Chapter Two, dreams, visions and prophecy are primary signs of the last days, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As we are obviously getting closer to the end of this age, these are becoming increasingly common in our time. One reason why they are becoming so much more common now is because we will need them for accomplishing our purposes in these times. It is also true that Satan, who unfortunately knows the Scriptures better than many Christians, also understands the importance of prophetic revelation in God's relationship to His people, and he is therefore pouring out his own counterfeit gifts in great measure to those who serve him. However, there would be no counterfeit if there were no real ones!

Soon after I became a Christian over three decades ago I read this passage in Acts Two and understood that if these were the end times it was important to understand these ways that the Lord would be speaking to us. I do not remember praying to have the experiences myself at first, but I did begin to have them, which gave me even more impetus for understanding them. Since that time I have gone through periods of time when they would be very frequent. I have also gone through long periods of time when I would not have any such experiences. However, after each period of not having them they would return, and were either much more powerful, or much more frequent.

Lately they have been both. Through all of this I have learned a great deal about the prophetic gifts, experiences, and prophetic people.

There are many levels of prophetic revelation. The beginning levels include prophetic "impressions." These are genuine revelations. They can be extraordinarily specific and accurate when interpreted by those who are experienced and sensitive to them. However, it is on this level that our "revelations" can be affected by our own feelings, prejudices and doctrines. I have therefore resolved not to use such expressions as "thus saith the Lord" with any revelations that come on this level.

Visions can come on the impression level also. They are gentle and must be seen with "the eyes of our heart". These, too, can be very specific and accurate, especially when received and/or interpreted by those who are experienced. The more the "eyes of our hearts" are opened, as Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18, the more powerful and useful these can be.

The next level of revelation is a conscious sense of the presence of the Lord, or the anointing of the Holy Spirit, which gives special illumination to our minds. This often comes when I am writing, or speaking, and it gives me much greater confidence in the importance or accuracy of what I am saying. I believe that this was probably experienced by the apostles as they wrote the New Testament epistles. This will give us great confidence, but it is still a level where we can still be influenced by our prejudices, doctrines, etc. This is why I believe, in certain matters, Paul would say that he was giving his opinion, but that he thought he had [the agreement of] the Spirit of the Lord. In general, there is much more of a need for humility than dogmatism when we deal with the prophetic.

"Open visions" occur on a higher level than impressions; they tend to give us more clarity than we may have even when we feel the conscious presence of the Lord, or the anointing. Open visions are external, and are viewed with the clarity of a movie screen. Because they cannot be controlled by us I believe that there is far less possibility of mixture in revelations that come this way.

Another higher level prophetic experience is a trance, such as Peter had when he was first instructed to go to the house of Cornelius and preach the gospel to the Gentiles for the first time, and such as Paul had when he prayed in the temple in Acts 22. Trances were a common experience of the biblical prophets. Trances are like dreaming when you are awake. Instead of just seeing a "screen", like in an open vision, you feel like you are in the movie, that you are actually there in a strange way. Trances can range from those that are rather mild, so that you are still conscious of your physical surroundings, and can even still interact with them, to those where you feel like you are literally in the place of your vision. This seems to be what Ezekiel experienced rather frequently, and what John probably experienced when he had the visions recorded in the book of Revelation.

The visions contained in this book all began with a dream. Some of it came under a very intense sense of the presence of the Lord, but the overwhelming majority was received in some level of a trance. Most of it came on the level where I was still conscious of my surroundings, and could even interact with them, such as answering the phone, when they were interrupted, or when things got so intense that I would have to get up and walk around. When I sat back down I would immediately be right back where I had left off.

I have never known how to "turn on" such experiences, but I have almost always had the liberty to turn them off at will. Twice, large portions of this vision came at what I considered to be very inconvenient times, when I had gone to my cabin to get some important work done while facing a deadline. Two of our journal issues were a little late going out because of this. But the Lord does not seem to be very concerned about our deadlines!

In the dream and the trances, I had what I consider to be greatly magnified gifts of discernment and words of knowledge. Sometimes when I look at a person, or pray for a church or ministry, I just start to know things about them of which I have no natural knowledge. During these prophetic experiences these gifts were operating on a level that I have never personally experienced in "real life." That is, in this vision I could look at a division of the evil horde and know all its strategies and capabilities at once. I do not know how the knowledge came to me, but I just knew it, and in great detail. In some cases I would look at something or someone and know their past, present and

future all at once. To save time and space in this writing I have included this knowledge just as matter of fact without going into an explanation of how I got it.

### **Using Prophetic Revelations**

I must state emphatically that I do NOT believe that any kind of prophetic revelation is for the purpose of establishing doctrine! We have the Scriptures for that!

Therefore two basic uses for the prophetic: The first is for revealing the present or future strategic will of the Lord in certain matters. We have examples of this in Paul's dream to go to Macedonia, and the trance in which he was told to immediately leave Jerusalem. We, also, have examples of this in the ministry of Agabus. One of these related to a famine that was to come upon the whole world, and the other had to do with Paul's visit to Jerusalem.

We, also, see such revelations being given for illuminating doctrine that is taught in the Scripture, but is not clearly seen. The example of Peter's trance is one that illuminated both the will of the Lord, and sound biblical teaching that the Scriptures were very clear about (the Gentiles being able to receive the gospel), but which had not yet been understood by the church.

The visions in this writing do contain some strategic revelations, and they also illuminated some biblical doctrines that I had honestly not seen before, but now see quite clearly. However, most of the doctrine that was illuminated to me in these experiences I have known and taught for years, even though I cannot say that I have lived them all very well. Many times I thought about the warning that Paul gave to Timothy to pay attention to his own teachings. Many of the words spoken to me in these experiences I have, myself taught many times. I know that I fail to practice some of my own teachings the way I should, and, therefore, many of these I accepted as a personal rebuke. Even so, I also felt that they were general messages and I have included them here.

I was encouraged by some to write this vision as an allegory, in third person like in the all-time well-known book "The Pilgrim's Progress", but I decided against it for several reasons. First, I feel that some would have taken this to be the result of my own creativity, and that would have been wrong. I would like to be this creative, but I am not. Another reason was that I felt that I could be much more accurate if I related it just like I received it, and I did my best to convey these experiences just the way that they were received. However, I consider my memory of details to be one of my greatest weaknesses. At times I have questioned my own memory for certain details in this vision, and I think that you should therefore have the liberty to do the same. I think that this is right with any such messages. Only the Scriptures deserve to be considered infallible. As you read I pray that the Holy Spirit will lead you to the truth, and separate any chaff that may be present from the wheat!

## **PART 1 - THE HORDES OF HELL ARE MARCHING**

The demonic army was so large that it stretched as far as I could see. It was separated into divisions, with each carrying a different banner. The foremost divisions marched under the banners of Pride, Self-righteousness, Respectability, Selfish Ambition, Unrighteous Judgment, and Jealousy: There were many more of these evil divisions beyond my scope of vision, but those in the vanguard of this terrible horde from hell seemed to be the most powerful. The leader of this army was the Accuser of the Brethren himself.

The weapons carried by this horde were also named. The swords were named Intimidation; the spears were named Treachery; and the arrows were named Accusation, Gossip, Slander and Faultfinding, Scouts and smaller companies of demons with such name as Rejection, Bitterness, Impatience, Unforgiveness and Lust were sent in advance of this army to prepare for the main attack.

These smaller companies and scouts were much fewer in number, but they were no less powerful than some of the larger divisions that followed. They were smaller only for strategic reasons. Just as John the Baptist was a single man, but was given an extraordinary anointing for baptizing the masses to prepare them for the Lord, these smaller demonic companies were given extraordinary

evil powers for "baptizing the masses." A single demon of Bitterness could sow his poison into multitudes of people, even entire races or cultures. A demon of Lust would attach himself to a single performer, movie, or even advertisement, and send what appeared to be bolts of electric slime that would hit and desensitize great masses of people. All of this was to prepare for the great horde of evil which followed.

This army was marching specifically against the Church, but it was attacking everyone that it could. I knew that it was seeking to pre-empt a coming move of God which was destined to sweep masses of people into the Church.

The primary strategy of this army was to cause division on every possible level of relationship—churches with each other, congregations with their pastors, husbands and wives, children and parents, and even children with each other. The scouts were sent to locate the openings in churches, families or individuals that Rejection, Bitterness, Lust, etc., could exploit and make larger. Then the following divisions would pour through the openings to completely overcome their victims.

The most shocking part of this vision was that his horde was not riding on horses, but primarily on Christians! Most of them were well-dressed, respectable, and had the appearance of being refined and educated, but there also seemed to be representatives from almost every walk of life. These people professed Christian truths in order to appease their consciences, but they lived their lives in agreement with the powers of darkness. As they agreed with those powers their assigned demons grew and more easily directed their actions.

Many of these believers were host to more than one demon, but out would obviously be in charge. The nature of the one in charge dictated which division it was marching in. Even though the divisions were all marching together, it also seemed that at the same time the entire army was on the verge of chaos. For example, the demons of hate, hated the other divisions as much as they did the Christians. The demons of jealousy were all jealous of one another. The only way the leaders of this horde kept the demons from fighting each other was to keep their hatred, jealousy, etc., focused on the people they were riding. However, these people would often break out in fights with each other. I knew that this was how some of the armies that had come against Israel in the Scriptures had ended up destroying themselves. When their purpose against Israel was thwarted, their rage was uncontrollable, and they simply began fighting each other.

I noted that the demons were riding on these Christians, but were not in them as was the case with non-Christians. It was obvious that these believers had only to stop agreeing with their demons in order to get free of them. For example, if the Christian on whom a demon of jealousy was riding just started to question the jealousy, that demon would weaken very fast. When this happened the weakening demon would cry out and the leader of the division would direct all of the demons around that Christian to attack him until the bitterness, etc., would build up on him again. If this did not work, the demons would begin quoting Scriptures that were perverted in such a way that would justify the bitterness, accusations, etc. It was clear that the power of the demons was rooted almost entirely in the power of deception, but they had deceived these Christians to the point where they could use them and they would think they were being used by God. This was because banners of Self-righteousness were being carried by almost all of the individuals so that those marching could not even see the banners that marked the true nature of these divisions.

As I looked far to the rear of this army I saw the entourage of the Accuser himself. I began to understand his strategy, and I was amazed that it was so simple. He knew that a house divided cannot stand, and this army represented an attempt to bring such division to the church that she would completely fall from grace. It was apparent that the only way he could do this was to use Christians to war against their own brethren, and that is why almost everyone in the forward divisions were Christians, or at least professing Christians. Every step that these deceived believers took in obedience to the Accuser strengthened his power over them. This made his confidence and the confidence of all of his commanders grow with the progress of the army as it marched forward. It was apparent that the power of this army depended on the agreement of these Christians with the ways of evil.

## **The Prisoners**

Trailing behind these first divisions was a multitude of other Christians who were prisoners of this army. All of these were wounded, and were guarded by smaller demons of Fear. There seemed to be more prisoners than there were demons in the army. Surprisingly, these prisoners still had their swords and shields, but they did not use them. It was a shock to see that so many could be kept captive by so few of the little demons of Fear. If the Christians had just used their weapons they could have easily freed themselves, and probably done great damage to the entire evil horde. Instead they marched submissively along.

Above the prisoners the sky was black with vultures named Depression. Occasionally these would land on the shoulders of a prisoner and would vomit on him. The vomit was Condemnation. When the vomit hit a prisoner he would stand up and march a little straighter for a while, and then slump over, even weaker than before. Again, I wondered why the prisoners did not simply kill these vultures with their swords, which they could have easily done. Occasionally the weaker prisoners would stumble and fall. As soon as they hit the ground, the other prisoners would begin stabbing them with their swords, scorning them as they did this. The vultures would then come and begin devouring the fallen ones even before they were dead. The other Christian prisoners stood by and watched this approvingly, occasionally stabbing the fallen one again with their swords.

As I watched, I realized that these prisoners thought that the vomit of Condemnation was truth from God. Then I understood that these prisoners actually thought they were marching in the army of God! This is why they did not kill the little demons of fear, or the vultures - they thought these were messengers from God! The darkness from the cloud of vultures made it so hard for these prisoners to see that they natively accepted everything that happened to them as being from the Lord. They felt that those who stumbled were under God's judgment, which is why they attacked them the way they did - they thought that they were helping God!

The only food provided for these prisoners was the vomit from the vultures. Those who refused to eat it simply weakened until they fell. Those who did eat it were strengthened for a time, but with the strength of the evil one. Then they would weaken unless they would drink the waters of bitterness that were constantly being offered to them. After drinking the bitter waters they would then begin to vomit on the others. When one of the prisoners began to do this, a demon that was waiting for a ride would climb up on him, and would ride him up to one of the front divisions.

Even worse than the vomit from the vultures was a repulsive slime that these demons were urinating and defecating upon the Christians they rode. This slime was the pride, selfish ambition, etc., that was the nature of their division. However, this slime made the Christians feel so much better than the condemnation that they easily believed that the demons were messengers of God, and they actually thought this slime was the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I had been so repulsed by the evil army that I wanted to die. When the voice of the Lord came to me saying, *"This is the beginning of the enemy's last day army. This is Satan's ultimate deception. His ultimate power of destruction is released when he uses Christians to attack one another. Throughout the ages he has used this army, but never has he been able to use so many for his evil purposes as he is now. Do not fear. I have an army too. You must now stand and fight, because there is no longer any place to hide from this war. You must fight for My kingdom, for truth, and for those who have been deceived."*

This word from the Lord was so encouraging that I immediately began yelling to the Christian prisoners that they were deceived, thinking that they would listen to me. When I did this, it seemed that the whole army turned to look at me. The fear and depression that was over them started to come toward me. I still kept yelling because I thought that the Christians would wake up and realize what was happening to them, but instead many of them started reaching for their arrows to shoot at me. The others just hesitated as if they did not know what to make of me. I knew then that I had done this permanently, and that it had been a very foolish mistake.

### **The Battle Begins**

Then I turned and saw the army of the Lord standing behind me. There were thousands of soldiers, but they were still greatly outnumbered. I was shocked and disheartened as it seemed that there were actually many more Christians being used by the evil one than there were in the army of the

Lord. I also know that the battle that was about to begin was going to be viewed as The Great Christian Civil War because very few would understand the powers that were behind the impending conflict.

As I looked more closely at the army of the Lord the situation seemed even more discouraging. Only a small number were fully dressed in their armor. Many only had one or two pieces of their armor on; some did not have any at all. A large number were already wounded. Most of those who had all of their armor still had very small shields that I knew would not protect them from the onslaught that was coming. To my further surprise, the great majority of these soldiers were women and children. Very few of those who were fully armed were adequately trained to use their arms.

Behind this army there was a trailing mob similar to the prisoners who followed the evil horde, but these were very different in nature. They seemed overly happy, as if intoxicated. They were playing games, singing songs, feasting and roaming about from one little camp to the next.

I ran toward the army of the Lord to escape the onslaught that I knew would be coming at me from the evil horde. In every way it seemed that we were in for a most one-sided slaughter. I was especially concerned for this mob that was trailing the army, so I tried to raise my voice above the clamor to warn them that a battle was about to begin. Only a few could even hear me. Those who did, gave me the "peace sign" and said they did not believe in war, and that the Lord would not let anything bad happen to them. I tried to explain that the Lord had given us armor because we needed it for what was about to happen, but they just retorted that they had come to a place of peace and joy where nothing like that could happen to them. I began praying earnestly for the Lord to increase the shields of those with the armor to help protect those who were not ready for the battle.

When a messenger came up to me, gave me a trumpet and told me to blow it quickly. I did, and those who had on at least some of their armor immediately responded, snapping to attention. More armor was brought to them, which they quickly put on. I noticed that those who had wounds did not put armor over their wounds, but before I could say anything about this, enemy arrows began raining down on us. Everyone who did not have on all of his armor was wounded. Those who had not covered their wounds were struck again in that wound.

Those who were hit by arrows of slander immediately began to slander those who were not wounded. Those who were hit with gossip began to gossip, and soon a major division had been created within our own camp. I felt that we were on the verge of destroying ourselves just as some of the heathen armies in Scripture had done by rising up to kill each other. The feeling of helplessness was terrible. When vultures swooped down to pick up the wounded and deliver them into the camp of prisoners. The wounded still had swords and could have struck down the vultures easily, but they didn't. They were actually carried off willingly because they were so angry at those who were not wounded like they were.

I quickly thought about the mob behind the army and ran to see what had happened to them. It seemed impossible but the scene among them was even worse. Thousands lay on the ground wounded and groaning. The sky over them was darkened by the vultures which were carrying them off to become prisoners of the enemy. Many of those who were not wounded just sat in a stupor of unbelief, and they too were easily carried away by the vultures. A few had begun to try to fight off the vultures, but they did not have the proper weapons, and the vultures did not even pay them any attention. The wounded were so angry they would threaten and drive away anyone who tried to help them, but they became docile and submissive to the vultures.

Those from this mob who had not been wounded and had tried to fight off the vultures began running from the scene of battle. This first encounter with the enemy was so devastating that I was tempted to join them in their flight. Then, amazingly fast, some of those who had fled began reappearing with full suits of armor on, holding large shields. This was the first bit of encouragement that I remember seeing. These warriors who were returning no longer had the mirth of the party, but an awesome resolve had replaced it. I knew that these had been deceived once, but that they would not be easily deceived again. They began to take the places of those who had fallen, and even began forming new ranks to protect the rear and flanks. This caused great courage to spread through the army so that the determination of everyone to stand and fight again began to rise. Immediately three great angels named Faith, Hope and Love came and stood behind the army.

As we looked at them all of our shields began to grow. It was amazing how quickly despair had turned to faith. It was a solid faith, too, tempered by experience.

### **The High Way**

Now everyone had swords named the Word of God, and arrows that were named for different biblical truths. We wanted to shoot back, but we did not know how to avoid hitting the Christians that were being ridden by the demons. When it occurred to us that if these Christians were hit with truth they would wake up and fight off their oppressors. I fired off a few arrows, as did some of the others. Almost all of them hit Christians. However, when the arrow of Truth went into them, they did not wake up, or fall down wounded - they became enraged, and the demon riding on them grew much larger.

This shocked everyone, and we began to feel that this was an impossible battle to win. Even so, with Faith, Hope and Love we were confident that we could at least hold our own ground. Another great angel named Wisdom then appeared and directed us to fight from the mountain behind us. On the mountain there were ledges at different levels for as high as we could see. At each higher level the ledges became narrower, and more difficult to stand on. Each level was named for a biblical truth. The lower levels were named after foundational truths such as: "Salvation," "Sanctification," "Prayer," "Faith," etc., and the higher levels were named after deeper biblical truths. The higher we climbed, the larger both our shields and our swords grew, and fewer of the enemy arrows could reach our positions.

### **A Tragic Mistake**

Some who had stayed on the lower levels began picking up the enemy arrows and shooting them back. This was a very grave mistake. The demons easily dodged the arrows and let them hit the Christians. When a Christian was hit by one of the arrows of accusation or slander, a demon of bitterness or rage would fly in and perch on that arrow. He would then begin to urinate and defecate his poison upon that Christian. When a Christian had two or three of these demons added to the pride or self-righteousness he already had, he was transformed into the contorted image of the demons themselves.

We could see this happening from the higher levels, but those on the lower levels who were using the enemy's arrows could not see it. About half of us decided to keep climbing, while the other half descended back to the lower levels to explain to those below what was happening. Everyone was then warned to keep climbing and not to stop, except for a few who stationed themselves on each level to keep the other soldiers moving higher.

### **Safety**

When we reached the level called "The Unity of the Brethren," none of the enemy's arrows could reach us. Many in our camp decided that this was as far as they needed to climb. I understood this because with each new level the footing was more precarious. However, I also felt much stronger and more skillful with my weapons as I went higher, so I continued climbing.

Soon my skills were good enough to shoot and hit the demons without hitting the Christians. I felt that if I kept going higher I could shoot far enough to hit the main leaders of the evil horde who stayed behind their army. I regretted that so many had stopped on the lower levels where they were safe but could not hit the enemy. Even so, the strength and character that grew in those who kept climbing made them great champions, each one able to destroy many of the enemy.

At each level there were arrows of truth scattered about which I knew were left from those who had fallen from that position (many had fallen from each position). All of the arrows were named after the Truth of that level. Some were reluctant to pick up these arrows, but I knew we needed all that we would get to destroy the great horde below. I picked one up, shot it, and so easily hit a demon that the others started picking them up and shooting them. We began to decimate several of the enemy divisions. Because of this, the entire evil army focused its attention on us. For a time it seemed that the more we achieved, the more the enemy attacked us. Though our task seemed endless, it had become exhilarating.

Since the enemy could not hit us on the higher levels with its arrows, swarms of vultures would fly above us to vomit down on us, or to carry demons who would urinate or defecate upon the ledges, making them very slippery.

### **The Anchor**

Our swords grow after we reached each level, but I almost left mine behind because I did not seem to need it at the higher levels. I almost casually decided to keep it, thinking that it must have been given to me for a reason. Then, because the ledge I was standing on was so narrow, and becoming so slippery, I drove the sword into the ground and tied myself to it while I shot at the enemy. The voice of the Lord then came to me, saying: *"You have used the wisdom that will enable you to keep climbing. Many have fallen because they did not use their sword properly to anchor themselves."* No one else seemed to hear this voice, but many saw what I had done and did the same.

I wondered why the Lord had not spoken to me to do this sooner. I then knew that He had already spoken this to me somehow. As I pondered this, I began to understand that my whole life had been training for this hour. I knew that I was prepared to the degree that I had listened to the Lord and obeyed His voice throughout my life. I also knew that for some reason the wisdom and understanding I now had could not be increased or taken away while in this battle. I was very thankful for every trial I had experienced in my life, and I was sorry for not appreciating them more at the time.

Soon we were hitting the demons with almost perfect accuracy. Rage ascended from the enemy army like fire and brimstone. I knew that the Christians trapped in that army were now feeling the brunt of that rage. Some became so enraged that they were now shooting at each other. Normally this would have been very encouraging, but those who suffered the most were the deceived Christians who were in the camp of the enemy. I knew that to the world this was appearing as an incomprehensible meltdown of Christianity itself.

Some of those who had not used their swords as anchors were able to strike down many of the vultures, but they were also more easily knocked from the ledges where they were standing. Some of these landed on a lower level, but some fell all the way to the bottom and were picked up and carried off by the vultures. I spent every free moment that I got trying to drive my sword deeper into the ledge, or trying to tie myself more securely to it. Every time I did this, Wisdom would stand beside me so I knew that it was very important.

### **A New Weapon**

The arrows of Truth would seldom penetrate the vultures, but they hurt them enough to drive them back. Every time they were driven back far enough some of us would climb to the next level. When we reached the level called "Galatians Two Twenty," we were above the altitude that the vultures could withstand. At this level the sky above almost blinded us with its brightness and beauty. I felt peace like I had never felt it before. Until I reached this level much of my fighting spirit had been motivated almost as much from fear, hatred or disgust for the enemy as it had been for the sake of the Kingdom, truth, or love for the prisoners. But it was on this level I caught up to Faith, Hope and Love, which before I had only been able to see from a distance. Here I was almost overpowered by their glory. Even so, I felt that I could get close to them. When I got next to them they turned to me, and began repairing and shining my armor. Soon it was transformed and brilliantly reflected the glory that was coming from Faith, Hope and Love. When they touched my sword, great bolts of brilliant lightning began flashing from it. Love then said, "Those who reach this level are entrusted with the powers of the age to come." When, turning to me with a seriousness that was very sobering, he said, "I still must teach you how to use them."

The "Galatians Two Twenty" level was so wide that there did not seem to be any danger of falling. There were also unlimited arrows with the name Hope written on them. We shot some of them down at the vultures, and these arrows killing easily. About half who had reached this level kept shooting while the others began carrying these arrows down to those still on the lower levels.

The vultures kept coming in waves upon the levels below, but with each one there would be fewer than before. From "Galatians Two Twenty" we could hit any enemy in the army except the leaders



themselves, who remained just out of our range. We decided not to use the arrows of truth until we had destroyed all of the vultures, because the cloud of depression they created made the truth less effective. This took a very long time, but we did not get tired. Finally, it seemed as if the sky over the mountain was almost completely rid of the vultures.

Faith, Hope and Love, who had grown like our weapons with each level, were now so large that I knew people far beyond the battle area could see them. Their glory even radiated into the camp of prisoners who were still under a great cloud of vultures. I was very encouraged that they could now be seen this way. May be now the Christians who had been used by the enemy, and the prisoners who were held by them, would understand that we were not the enemy, but they in fact had been used by him.

But this was not to be the case, at least not yet. Those in the camp of the enemy who began to see the light of Faith, Hope and Love started calling them "angels of light" who were to deceive the weak or undiscerning. I knew then that their deception and bondage was much greater than I had realized. However, any who were not a part of either of these armies, the non-Christians, saw their glory and started to come closer to the mountain to get a better view. Those who came closer to see them also started to understand what the battle had really been about. This was a great encouragement.

The exhilaration of victory continued to grow in all of us. I felt that being in this army in this battle had to be one of the greatest adventures of all time. After destroying most of the vultures that had been attacking our mountain, we began picking off the vultures that still covered the prisoners. As the cloud of darkness began dissipating and the sun began to shine down on them, they, too, began to wake up as if they had been in dark sleep. They were immediately repulsed by their condition, especially by the vomit that still covered them, and started cleaning themselves up. As they beheld Faith, Hope and Love, they also saw the mountain and ran toward it.

The evil horde sent arrows of Accusation and Slander at their backs, but they did not stop. By the time they got to the mountain many had a dozen or more arrows stuck in them, yet they seemed not to even notice. As soon as they began to scale the mountain their wounds began to heal. With the cloud of depression having been dispelled it seemed as if everything was now getting much easier.

### **The Trap**

The former prisoners had great joy in their salvation, They seemed so overwhelmed with appreciation for each level as they began to scale the mountain that it gave us a greater appreciation for those truths. Soon a fierce resolve to fight the enemy also arose in the former prisoners. They put on the armor provided and begged to be allowed to go back and attack the enemy who had held them captive, and had abused them for so long. We thought about it, but then decided we should all stay on the mountain to fight. Again the voice of the Lord spoke, saying: "A second time you have chosen wisdom. You cannot win if you try to fight the enemy on his own ground, but you must remain on My Holy mountain."

I was stunned that we had made another decision of such importance just by thinking and briefly discussing it. I then resolved to do my best to not make another decision of any consequence without prayer. Wisdom then stepped up to me quickly, took both of my shoulders firmly and looked me straight in the eyes, saying: "You must do this!" As Wisdom said this to me he pulled me forward as if he were saving me from something. I looked back and saw that, even though I had been on the broad plateau of "Galatians Two Twenty," I had drifted to the very edge without even knowing it. I had come very close to falling off the mountain. I looked again into the eyes of Wisdom, and he said with the utmost seriousness, "Take heed when you think you stand, lest you fall. In this life you can fall from any level."

I thought about this for quite a while. In the exuberance of the victory we were starting to achieve, and the unity of the brethren, I had become careless. It was nobler to fall because of the onslaught of the enemy than to fall because of carelessness.

### **The Serpents**

For a long time we continued killing the vultures and picking off the demons that were riding the

Christians. We found that the arrows of different Truths would have greater impact on different demons. We knew that it was going to be a long battle, but we were not suffering any more casualties now, and we had continued to climb past the level of "Patience." Even so, after these Christians had the demons shot off of them, few would come to the mountain. Many had taken on the nature of the demons, and continued in their delusion without them. As the darkness of the demons dissipated we could see the ground moving around the feet of these Christians. Then I saw that their legs were bound by serpents. As I kept looking at the serpents I saw that they were all the same kind, and had name Shame written on them.

We shot arrows of Truth at the serpents, but they had little effect. We then tried the arrows of Hope, but without results. From "Galatians Two Twenty" it had been very easy to go higher because we all help other. Since there seem to be little that we could do not against the enemy we decided to just try to climb as far as we could until we found something that would work against serpents.

We past levels of truth very fast. On most of them we did not even bother to look around if there was not a weapon apparent that would work on the serpents. Faith, Hope and Love stayed right with us, but I did not noticed that we had left wisdom far behind. It would be a long time before I would understand what a mistake this was. He would catch up to us on the top, but leaving him behind cost us a much quicker and easier victory over the evil horde.

Almost without warning we came to a level that opened up into a garden. It was the most beautiful place I had ever seen. Over the entrance to this garden was written, "The Father's Unconditional Love." This entrance was so glorious and inviting that we just could not resist entering. As soon as I entered I saw a tree that I knew it was the Tree Of Life. It was in the middle of the garden, and it was still guarded by the angels of awesome power and authority. When I looked at them they looked back. They seemed friendly, as if they had been expecting us. I looked back and there was now a host of other warriors in the garden. This gave us all courage, and because of the Angels demeanor, we decided to pass them to get to the tree. One of the angels called out, "those who make it to this level, who know the Father's love, can eat."

I did not realize how hungry I was. When I tasted the fruit, it was better than anything I had ever tasted, but it was also, somehow familiar. It brought memories of sunshine, rain, beautiful fields, the sun setting over the ocean, but even more than that, of the people I loved. With every bite I loved everything and everyone more. Then my enemies started coming to mind, and I love them too. The feeling was soon greater than anything I had ever experienced, even the peace on "Galatians Two Twenty" when we had first reached that level. Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "*This is now your daily bread. It shall never be withheld from you. You may eat as much and as often as you like. There is no end to My love.*"

I looked up into the tree to see where the voice had come from and I saw that it was filled with pure white eagles. They had the most beautiful, penetrating eyes I have ever seen. They were looking at me as if waiting for instructions. One of the angels said, "They will do your bidding. These eagles eats snakes." I said, "Go! Devour the shame that has bound our brothers." They opened their wings and a great wind came that lifted them into the air. These eagles filled the sky with a blinding glory. Even as high as we were, I could hear the sounds of terror from the enemy camp at the sight of the eagles ascending.

### **The King Appears**

The Lord Jesus Himself then appeared right in our midst. He took the time to greet each one personally, congratulating us for reaching the top of the mountain. Then He said, "*I must now share with you what I shared with your brothers after My ascension – the message of My kingdom. The enemy's most powerful army has now been put to flight, but not destroyed. Now it is time for us to march forth with the gospel of My kingdom. The eagles have been released and will go with us. We will take arrows from every level, but I am your Sword, and I am your Captain. It is now time for the Sword of the Lord to be unsheathed.*"

I then turned and saw that the entire army of the Lord was standing in that garden. There were men, women, and children from all races and nations, each carrying their banners, which moved in the wind with perfect unity. I knew that nothing like this had been seen in the earth before. I knew that

the enemy had many more armies, and fortresses throughout the earth, but none could stand before this great army. I said almost under my breath, "This must be the day of the Lord." The whole host then answered in an awesome thunder, "The day of the Lord of Hosts has come."

### Summary

Months later I sat pondering this dream. Alarming, certain events and conditions in the Church had seemed to parallel just what I had seen when the horde from hell had begun to march. I was then reminded of Abraham Lincoln. The only way that he could become "the Emancipator," and preserve the Union, was to be willing to fight a Civil War. He not only had to fight it, but fight with the resolution not to compromise until the victory was complete. He also had to have the grace to fight the bloodiest war in U.S.A. history without "demonizing" the enemy with propaganda. If he had done that he might have been able to galvanize the resolve of the North much faster, and win a quicker military victory, but it would have made the reunion after the war much more difficult. Because he was truly fighting to preserve the Union, he never made the men and women of the South the enemy, but rather the evil that had them in bondage.

A great spiritual civil war now looms before the church. Many will do everything that they can to avoid it. This is understandable, and even noble. However, compromise will never maintain a lasting peace. It will only make the ultimate conflict that much more difficult when it comes, and it will come.

The Lord is now preparing a leadership that will be willing to fight a spiritual civil war in order to set men free. The main issue will be slavery verses freedom. The secondary issue, which will be the primary issue for some, will be money. Just as the American Civil War at times looked like it would destroy the entire nation, what is coming upon the church will at times appear as if it will be the end of the Church. However, just as the American nation not only survived, but went on to become the most powerful nation on earth, the same is going to happen to the Church. The Church will not be destroyed, but the institutions and doctrines that have kept men in spiritual slavery will be.

Even after this, perfect justice in the Church will not be attained overnight. There will still be struggles for women's rights, and so set the Church free from other forms of racism and exploitation. These are all causes that must be confronted. However, in the midst of the coming spiritual civil war, Faith, Hope and Love, and the Kingdom of God that they stand upon, will begin to be seen as they never have before. This will begin drawing all men to the Kingdom. God's government is about to be demonstrated as greater than any human government.

And let us always remember that, with the Lord "a thousand years is as a day." He can do in us in one day what we may think will take a thousand years. The work of liberation, and exaltation of the church, will be a work that is accomplished much quicker than we may think is humanly possible. However, we are not talking about human possibilities.

## PART II - THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

We stood in the Garden of God under the Tree of Life. It seemed that the entire army was there, many of them kneeling before the Lord Jesus. He had just given us the charge to return to the battle for the sake of our brothers who were still bound, and for the world that He loved. It was both a wonderful and a terrible command. It was wonderful because it came from Him. It was terrible because it implied that we would have to leave His manifest presence, and the Garden that was more beautiful than any place we had ever been before. To leave all of this to go into battle again seemed incomprehensible.

The Lord continued His exhortation: *"I have given you spiritual gifts and power, and an increasing understanding of My word and My kingdom, but the greatest weapon that you have been given is the Father's love. As long as you walk in My father's love you will never fail. The fruit of this tree is the Father's love that is manifested in Me. This love which is in Me must be your daily bread."*

In this setting of such beauty and glory it did not seem that the Lord was appearing in His glory. In

fact, His appearance was rather ordinary. Even so, the grace with which He moved and spoke made Him the most attractive person I had ever seen. He was beyond human definition in dignity and nobility. It was easy to understand why He was everything that the Father loves and esteems. He truly is full of grace and truth, to the point that it seemed that nothing but grace and truth should ever matter.

As I ate the fruit from the Tree of Life, the thought of every good thing I had ever known filled my soul. When Jesus spoke it was the same, only magnified. All I wanted to do was just stay in this place and listen to Him. I remembered how I had once thought it must have been boring for those angels who did nothing but worship Him continually before the throne. Now I knew that there was nothing more wonderful or exhilarating that we would ever do than simply worshiping Him. This was what we were created for, and would surely be the best part of heaven. I just could not imagine how wonderful it would be if all of the heavenly choirs were added. It was hard to believe that I had struggled so much with boredom during worship services. I knew that it was only because I had been almost completely out of touch with reality during those times.

I was almost overwhelmed with the desire to go back and make up those times during worship services when I had allowed my mind to wander, or had occupied myself with other things. The desire to express my adoration for Him became almost insatiable. I had to praise Him! As I opened my mouth I was shocked by the spontaneous worship that erupted from the entire army at the same time. I had almost forgotten that anyone else was there, but we were all in perfect unity. The glorious worship that followed could not be expressed in human language. As we worshiped, a golden glow began to emanate from the Lord. Then there was silver around the gold. Then colors, the richness of which I have never seen with my natural eyes, enveloped us all. With this glory I entered a realm of emotion that I had never experienced before. Somehow I understood that this glory had been there all along, but when we focused on Him the way that we did in worship, we began to see more of His glory. The more intensely we worshiped, the more glory we beheld. If this was heaven, it was much, much better than I had ever dreamed.

### **His Dwelling Place**

I have no idea how long this worship lasted. It could have been minutes or it could have been months. There was just no way to measure time in that kind of glory. I closed my eyes because the glory I was seeing with my heart was as great as what I was seeing with my physical eyes. When I opened my eyes I was surprised to see that the Lord was not there any longer, but a troop of angels was standing where He had been. One of them approached me and said, "Close your eyes again." When I did, I beheld the glory of the Lord. This was no small relief. I knew that I just could not live without the glory now that I had experienced it. Then the angel explained, "What you see with the eyes of your heart is more real than what you see with your physical eyes." I had myself made this statement many times, but how little I had walked in it! The angel continued, "It was for this reason that the Lord told His first disciples that it was better for Him to go away so that the Holy Spirit could come. The Lord dwells within you. You have taught this many times, but now you must live it, for you have eaten of the Tree of Life."

The angel then began to lead me back to the gate. I protested that I did not want to leave. Looking surprised, the angel took me by the shoulders and looked me in the eyes. This was when I recognized him: it was Wisdom. *"You never have to leave this garden. This garden is in your heart because the Creator Himself is within you. You have desired the best part, to worship and sit in His presence forever; and it will never be taken from you. But you must take it from here to where it is needed most."*

I knew he was right. I then looked past him to the Tree of Life. I had a compulsion to grab all of the fruit that I could before leaving. Knowing my thoughts, Wisdom gently shook me. "No, even this fruit, gathered in fear, would go bad. This fruit and this tree are within you because He is in you. You must believe." I closed my eyes and tried to see the Lord again but couldn't. When I opened my eyes, Wisdom was still staring at me. With great patience he continued, *"You have tasted of the heavenly realm, and no one ever wants to go back to the battle once they do. No one ever wants to leave the manifest presence of the Lord. When the apostle Paul came here he struggled for the rest*

*of his life as to whether he should stay and labor for the sake of the Church, or return here to enter into his inheritance. His inheritance was magnified the longer he stayed and served on earth. Now that you have the heart of a true worshiper you will always want to be here, but you can when you enter into true worship. The more focused you are on Him, the more glory you will see, regardless of where you are.*"

Wisdom's words had finally calmed me. Again I closed my eyes just to thank the Lord for this wonderful experience, and the life He had given to me. As I did, I started to see His glory again, and all of the emotion of the previous worship experience flooded my soul. The Lord's words to me were so loud and clear that I was sure they were audible; "*I will never leave or forsake you.*" "Lord, forgive my unbelief," I responded. "Please help me never to leave or forsake you." This was both a wonderful and trying time. Here the "real world" was not real, and the spiritual realm was so much more real that I just could not imagine going back to the other. I was gripped both with wonder and a terrible fear that I might wake up at any moment and find it was all just a dream. Wisdom understood what was going on inside of me. "You are dreaming," he said. "But this dream is more real than what you think of as a real. The Father gave men dreams to help them see the door to His dwelling place. He will only dwell in men's hearts, and dreams can be a door to your heart, which will lead you to Him. That is why His angels so often appear to men in their dreams. In dreams they can bypass the fallen mind of man and go straight to his heart."

As I opened my eyes, Wisdom was still gripping my shoulders. "I am the primary gift that has been given to you for your work", he said, " I will show you the way, and I still keep you on it, but only love will keep you faithful. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, but the highest wisdom is to love Him."

Then Wisdom released me and started to walk toward the gate. I followed with ambivalence. I remembered the exhilaration of the battle and the climb up the mountain, and it was compelling, but there was no comparison to the presence of the Lord and the worship I had just experienced. Leaving this would be the greatest sacrifice I had ever made. Then I remembered how it was all inside of me and was amazed that I could forget this so quickly. It was like there was a great battle raging within me, between what I saw with my physical eyes and what I saw with my heart.

I moved forward so that I was walking beside Wisdom, and asked, "I have prayed for twenty-five years to be caught up into the third heaven like the apostle Paul. Is this the third heaven?"

"This is part of it," he replied, "but there is much more."

"Will I be allowed to see more?" I asked.

"You will see much more. I am taking you to see more now," he replied.

I started thinking of the book of Revelation. "Was John's revelation part of the third heaven?" I asked. "Part of John's revelation was from the third heaven, but most of it was from the second heaven. The first heaven was before the fall of man. The second heaven is the spiritual realm during the reign of evil upon the earth. The third heaven is when the love and domain of the Father will again prevail over the earth through the King."

"What was the first heaven like?" I inquired, strangely feeling a cold chill as I asked.

"It is wisdom not to be concerned about that now," Wisdom responded with increased seriousness as my question seemed to jolt him. "Wisdom is to seek to know the third heaven just as you have. There is much more to know about the third heaven than you can know in this life, and it is the third heaven, the kingdom, that you must preach in this life. In the ages to come you will be told about the first heaven, but it is not profitable for you to know about it now."

I resolved to remember the cold chill I had just felt, and Wisdom nodded, which I knew to be an affirmation of that thought. "What a great companion you are," I had to say, as I realized the valuable gift that this angel was. "You really will keep me on the right path." "I will indeed," he replied.

I was sure I felt love coming from this angel, which was unique, since I had never felt this from other angels. They usually showed their concern more out of duty than love. Wisdom responded to my thoughts as if I had spoken them out loud.

"It is wisdom to love and I could not be wisdom if I did not love you. It is also wisdom to behold

the kindness and the severity of God. It is wisdom to love Him and to fear Him. You are in deception if you do otherwise. "This is the next lesson that you must learn," he said with unmistakable earnest. "I do know that, and have taught it many times," I responded, feeling for the first time that may be Wisdom did not fully know me.

"I have been your companion for a very long time, and I know your teachings," Wisdom replied. "Now you are about to learn what some of your own teachings mean. As you have said many times, "It is not by believing in your mind, but in your heart that results in righteousness."

I apologized, feeling a bit ashamed at having questioned Wisdom. He graciously accepted my apology. It was then that I realized I had been questioning and challenging him most of my life, and often to my injury.

### **The Other Half of Love**

"There are times to adore the Lord," Wisdom continued, "and there are times to honor Him with the greatest fear and respect just as there is a times to plant, and a time to reap. It is wisdom to know the time for each. True wisdom knows the times and seasons of God. I brought you here because it was time to worship the Lord in the glory of His love. This is what you needed the most after such a battle. In am now taking you to another place because it is time for you to worship Him in the fear of His judgment. Until you know both there is a danger that we can be separated from each other."

"Do you mean that if I had stayed back there in that glorious worship I would have lost you?" I asked in disbelief.

"Yes. I would have always visited with you when I could, but we would have rarely crossed paths. It is hard to leave such glory and peace, but that is not the whole revelation of the King. He is both a Lion and a Lamb. To the spiritual children He is the Lamb. To the maturing He is the Lion. To the fully mature He is both the Lion and the Lamb. Again, I know you understand this, but you have known it in your mind. Soon you will know it in your heart, for you are about to experience the judgment seat of Christ."

### **The Return to the Battle**

Before leaving the gates to the Garden, I asked Wisdom if I could just sit for a while to ponder all that I had just experienced. "Yes, you should do this," he replied, "but I have a better place for you to do it."

I followed Wisdom out of the gates and we began to go down the mountain. To my surprise the battle was still going on, but not as intensely as it was when we ascended. There were still arrows of accusation and slander flying about on the lower levels, but most of the enemy horde that was left was furiously attacking the great white eagles. The eagles were easily prevailing.

We kept descending until we were almost at the bottom. Just above the levels of "Salvation" and "Sanctification" was the level "Thanksgiving and Praise." I remembered this level very well because one of the greatest attacks of the enemy came when I had first tried to reach it. Once we got here the rest of the climb was much easier, and when an arrow penetrated our armor, healing came much faster.

As soon as my enemies spotted me on this level (they could not see Wisdom), a shower of arrows began to rain down on me. I knocked them down with my shield so easily they quit shooting. Their arrows were now almost gone and they could not afford to waste them. The soldiers who were still fighting from this level looked at me in astonishment with a deference that made me very uncomfortable. It was then that I first noticed that the glory of the Lord was emanating from my armor and shield. I told them to climb to the top of the mountain without stopping and they, too, would see the Lord. As soon as they agreed to go they saw Wisdom. They started to fall down to worship him but he restrained them, and sent them on their way.

### **The Faithful**

I was filled with love for these soldiers, many of whom were women and children. Their armor was a mess, and they were covered in blood, but they had not given up. In fact, they were still cheerful

and encouraged. I told them that they were deserving of more honor than I was, because they had borne the greatest burden of the battle, and had held their ground. They seemed not to believe me, but appreciated that I would say it. However, I really felt that it was true.

Every level on the mountain had to be occupied or the vultures that were left would come and desecrate it with vomit and excrement until it was difficult to stand on. Most of the ledges were occupied by soldiers who I recognized to be from different denominations or movements which emphasized the truth of the level they were defending. I was embarrassed by the attitude I had maintained toward some of these groups. I had considered them out of touch and backslidden at best, but here they were fighting faithfully against a terrible onslaught of the enemy. Their defense of these positions had probably enabled me to keep climbing as I had.

Some of these levels were situated so that there was a view of a good part of the mountain and the battlefield, but some were so isolated that the soldiers on them could see only their own position. These seemed unaware of the rest of the battle raging, or the rest of the army that was also fighting the battle. These were so wounded from the slander and accusations that they would resist anyone who came down to them from a higher level to encourage them to climb higher. However, when some began to come down from the top reflecting the glory of the Lord, they listened, most of them with great joy, and soon began to climb themselves with courage and resolve. As I beheld all of this, Wisdom did not say much, but he seemed very interested in my reactions.

### **Reality Discovered**

I watched as many soldiers who had been to the top began descending to all of the levels to relieve those who had been taking their stand on those truths. As they did each level began to shine with the glory they carried. Soon the, whole mountain was beginning to shine with a glory that was blinding to the vultures and demons that were left. After a time there was so much glory on the mountain that it began to have the same feel as the Garden. I started thanking and praising the Lord and immediately I was in His presence again. It was hard to contain the emotions and glory that I felt when I did this. The experience became so intense that I stopped. Wisdom was standing beside me. Putting his hand on my shoulder he said, "You enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courts with praise."

"But that was so real! I felt like I was there again," I exclaimed.

"You were there," replied Wisdom. "It was not gotten more real, but you have. Just as the Lord told the thief on the cross, 'Today you will be with Me in Paradise,' you can enter Paradise anytime. The Lord, His Paradise and this mountain are all abiding in you, because He is in you. What were but foretastes before, are now a reality to you because you have climbed the mountain. The reason that you can see me and others cannot is not because I have entered your realm, but because you have entered mine. This is the reality that the prophets knew which gave them great boldness even when they stood alone against armies. They saw the heavenly host that was for them, not just the earthly one arrayed against them."

### **The Deadly Trap**

I then looked out over the carnage below, and the slowly retreating demonic army. Behind me more of the glorious warriors were constantly taking their places on the mountain. I knew that were now strong enough to attack and destroy what was left of this enemy horde, "Not yet", said Wisdom. "Look over there." I looked in the direction in which he was pointing, but had to shield my eyes from the glory emanating from my own armor to see anything. Then I caught a glimpse of some movement in a small valley. I could not make out what I was seeing because the glory shining from my armor made it difficult to see into the darkness. I asked Wisdom if there was something that I could cover my armor with so I could see it. He then gave me a very plain mantel to put on. "What is this?" I inquired a little insulted by its drabness. "Humility," said Wisdom. "You will not be able to see very well without it." Reluctantly I put it on and immediately I saw many things that I could not see before. I looked toward the valley and the movement I had seen. To my astonishment there was an entire division of the enemy horde that was waiting to ambush anyone who ventured from the mountain.

"What army is that?" I asked, "and how did they escape the battle intact?"

"That is Pride," explained Wisdom. "That is the hardest enemy to see after you have been in the glory. Those who refuse to put on this cloak will suffer much at the hands of that most devious enemy."

As I looked back at the mountain I saw many of the glorious warriors crossing the plain to attack the remnant of the enemy horde. None of them were wearing the cloaks of humility and they had not seen the enemy that was ready to attack them from their rear. I started to run out to stop them, but Wisdom restrained me. "You cannot stop this," he said. "Only the soldiers who wear this cloak will recognize your authority. Come with me. There is something else that you must see before you can help lead in the great battle that is to come."

### **The foundation of Glory**

Wisdom led me down the mountain to the very lowest level, which was named "Salvation." "You think that this is the lowest level," declared Wisdom, "but this is the foundation of the whole mountain. In any journey, the first step is the most important and it is usually the most difficult. Without 'Salvation' there would be no mountain."

I was appalled by the carnage on this level. Every soldier was very badly wounded, but none of them were dead. Multitudes were barely clinging to the edge. Many seemed ready to fall off, but none did. Angels were everywhere ministering to the soldiers with such great joy that I had to ask, "Why are they so happy?"

"These angels have beheld the courage that it took for these to hold on. They may not have gone any further, but neither did they give up. They will soon be healed, and then they will behold the glory of the rest of the mountain, and they will begin to climb. These will be great warriors for the battle to come."

"But wouldn't they have been better off to climb the mountain with the rest of us?" I protested, seeing their present condition.

"It would have been better for them, but not for you. By staying here they made it easier for you to climb by keeping most of your enemies occupied. Very few from the higher levels ever reacted out to help others come to the mountain, but these did. Even when these were barely clinging the mountain themselves, they would reach out to pull others up. In fact, most of the mighty warriors were led to the mountain by these faithful ones. These are not less heroes than those who made it to the top. They brought great joy to heaven by leading others to Salvation. It was for this reason that all the angels in heaven wanted to come to minister to them, but only the most honored were permitted."

Again I felt shame for my previous attitude toward these great saints. Many of us had scorned them as we climbed to the higher levels. They had made many mistakes during the battle, but they had also displayed more of the Shepherd's heart than the rest of us. The Lord would leave the ninety-nine to go after the one who was lost. These had stayed in the place where they could still reach the lost, and they paid a dear price for it. I, too, wanted to help but did not know where to start.

Wisdom then said, "It is right for you to want to help, but you will help most by going on to what you have been called to do. These will all be healed and will climb the mountain. They can now climb faster because of you and the others who went before them, both destroying the enemy and marking the way. They will join you again in the battle. These are fearless ones who will never retreat before the enemy."

### **The Power of Pride**

I was pondering how I was learning as much by descending the mountain as I had by climbing it when the noise from the battlefield drew my attention. By now there were thousands of the mighty warriors who had crossed the plain to attack the remnant of the enemy horde. The enemy was fleeing in all directions, except for the one division, Pride. Completely undetected, it had marched right up to the rear of the advancing warriors, and was about to release a hail of arrows. It was then that I noticed the mighty warriors had no armor on their backsides. They were totally exposed and vulnerable to what was about to hit them.



Wisdom then remarked, *"You have taught that there was no armor for the backside, which meant that you were vulnerable if you ran from the enemy. However, you never saw how advancing in pride also made you vulnerable."*

I could only nod in acknowledgement. It was too late to do anything, and it was almost unbearable to watch, but Wisdom said that I must. I knew that the kingdom of God was about to suffer a major defeat. I had felt sorrow before, but I had never felt this kind of sorrow. To my amazement, when the arrows of pride struck the warriors they did not even notice. However, the enemy kept shooting. The warriors were bleeding and getting weaker fast, but they would not acknowledge it. Soon they were too weak to hold up their shields and swords; they cast them down, declaring that they no longer needed them. They started taking off their armor, saying it was not needed anymore either. Then another enemy division appeared and moved up swiftly. It was called Strong Delusion. Its members released a hail of arrows and they all seemed to hit their mark. Just a few of the demons of delusion who were all small and seemingly weak, led away this once great army of glorious warriors. They were taken to different prison camps, each named after a different doctrine of demons. I was astounded at how this great company of the righteous had been so easily defeated, and they still did not even know what had hit them.

I blurted out. "How could those who were so strong, who have been all the way to the top of the mountain, who have seen the Lord as they have, be so vulnerable?"

"Pride is the hardest enemy to see, and it always sneaks up behind you," Wisdom lamented. "In some ways, those who have been to the greatest heights are in the greatest danger of falling. You must always remember that in this life you can fall at any time from any level."

"Take heed when you think you stand, lest you fall," I replied. "How awesome these Scriptures seem to me now."

"When you think you are the least vulnerable to falling is in fact when you are the most vulnerable. Most men fall immediately after a great victory," Wisdom lamented.

"How can we keep from being attacked like this?" I asked.

"Stay close to me, inquire of the Lord before making major decisions, and keep that mantle of humility on. Then the enemy will not be able to easily blind side you as he did those."

I looked at my mantle. It looked so plain and insignificant. I felt that it made me look more like a homeless person than a warrior. Wisdom responded as if I had been speaking out loud.

"The Lord is closer to the homeless than to kings. You only have true strength to the degree that you walk in the grace of God, and 'He gives His grace to the humble.' No evil weapon can penetrate this mantle, because nothing can overpower His grace. As long as you wear this mantle you are safe from this kind of attack."

I then started to look up to see how many warriors were still on the mountain. I was shocked to see how few there were. I noticed, however, that they all had on the same mantle of humility. "How did that happen?" I inquired.

"When they saw the battle you just witnessed, they all came to me for help, and I gave them their mantles," Wisdom replied.

"But I thought you were with me that whole time?"

"I am with all who go forth to do the will of My Father," Wisdom answered.

"You're the Lord!" I cried.

"Yes," He answered. *"I told you that I would never leave you or forsake you. I am with all of My warriors just as I am with you. I will be to you whatever you need to accomplish My will, and you have needed wisdom."* Then He vanished.

### **Rank in the Kingdom**

I was left standing in the midst of the great company of angels who were ministering to the wounded on the level of "Salvation." As I began to walk past these angels, they bowed to one knee and showed me great respect. I finally asked one of them why they did this, as even the smallest was much more powerful than I was. "Because of the mantle," he replied. "That is the highest rank in the kingdom." "This is just a plain mantle," I protested.

"No!" the angel protested. "You are clothed in the grace of God. There is no greater power than that!"

"But there are thousands of us all wearing the same mantle. How could it represent rank?" I asked. "You are the dreaded champions, the sons and daughters of the King. He wore the same mantle when He walked on this earth. As long as you are clothed in that, there is no power in heaven or earth that can stand before you. Everyone in heaven and hell recognizes that mantle. We are indeed His servants, but He abides in you, and you are clothed in His grace."

Somehow I knew that if I had not been wearing the mantle and if my glorious armor had been exposed, that the angel's statement, and their behavior toward me, would have fed my pride. It was simply impossible to feel prideful or arrogant while wearing such a drab, plain cloak. However, my confidence in the mantle was growing fast.

## **PART III - THE RETURN OF THE EAGLES**

On the horizon I saw a great white cloud approaching. Hope rose in me just by seeing it. Soon it had filled the atmosphere with hope just as the sun rising chases away the darkness of night. As it grew closer I recognized the great white eagles that had flown from the Tree of Life. They began landing on the mountain, taking their place on every level beside the companies of warriors.

I carefully approached the eagle who had landed near me because his presence was so awesome. When he looked at me with his penetrating eyes, I knew I could hide nothing from him. His eyes were so fierce and resolute that I trembled as chills ran through me just from looking at them. Before I could even ask, he answered me.

"You want to know who we are. We are the hidden prophets who have been kept for this hour. We are the eyes of those who have been given the divinely powerful weapons. We have been shown all that the Lord is doing, and all that the enemy is planning against you. We have scoured the earth and together we know all that needs to be known for the battle."

"Did you not see the battle that just took place?" I asked with as much irritation as I dared to express. "Couldn't you have helped those warriors that were just taken captive?"

"Yes. We saw it all, and we could have helped if they had wanted our help. We would have helped them by holding them back, telling them to sit and be still. But we can only fight in the battles that the Father commands, and we can only help those who believe in us. Only those who receive us as who we are, the prophets, can receive the prophet's reward, or the benefit of our services. Those who were ambushed did not yet have the mantle that you are wearing, and those who do not have that mantle cannot understand who we are. We all need one another, including these here who are still wounded, and many others who you do not yet know."

### **The Heart of the Eagle**

As I talked to the eagle I started to think like him. After this short discussion I could see into the eagle's heart and I could blow him like he blew me. The eagle recognized this.

"You have some of our gifts," the eagle noted, "though they are not very well developed. You have not used them much. I am here to awaken these gifts in you, and many others like you, and I will teach you how to use them. In this way our communication will be sure. It must be sure or we will all suffer many unnecessary losses, not to mention missing many great opportunities for victory."

"Where did you just come from?" I asked.

"We eat snakes," the eagle replied. "The enemy is bread for us. Our sustenance comes from doing the Father's will, which is to destroy the work of the devil. Every snake that we eat helps to increase our vision. Every stronghold of the enemy that we tear down strengthens us so we can soar higher and stay in the air longer. We have just come from a feast, devouring the serpents of Shame who have bound many of your brothers and sisters. They will be here soon. They are coming with the eagles we left behind to help them find the way, and to protect them from the enemy's counterattacks."

These eagles were very sure of themselves, but not cocky. They knew who they were, and what they were called to do. They also knew us and they knew the future. Their confidence was reassuring to me, but even more so to the wounded that were still lying all around us. Those who had recently been too weak to talk were actually sitting up listening to my conversation with the eagle. They looked at him like lost children would look to their parents who had just found them.

### **The Wind of the Spirit**

When the eagle looked upon the wounded his countenance changed as well. In place of the fierce resolution before which I had previously stood, toward the wounded he was like a soft, compassionate old grandfather. The eagle opened his wings and began to gently flap them, stirring up a cool refreshing breeze that flowed over the wounded. It was unlike any other breeze I had ever felt before. With each breath I was gaining strength and clarity of mind. Soon the wounded were standing and worshiping God with a sincerity that brought tears to my eyes. Again I felt a profound shame at having scorned those who stayed on this level. They had seemed so weak and foolish to those of us who were ascending the mountain, but they had endured much more than we had and they remained faithful. God had kept them and they loved Him with a great love.

I looked up at the mountain. All of the eagles were gently flapping their wings. Everyone on the mountain was being refreshed by the breeze they were stirring up and they all began to worship the Lord. At first there was some discord between the worship that was coming from the different levels, but after a time everyone on every level was singing in perfect harmony.

Never on earth had I heard anything that beautiful. I never wanted it to end. Soon I recognized it as the same worship that we had known in the Garden, but now it sounded even more rich and full. I knew that it was because we were worshiping in the very presence of our enemies, in the midst of such darkness and evil surrounding the mountain, that it seemed so much more beautiful.

I do not know how long this worship lasted, but eventually the eagles stopped flapping their wings and it stopped. "Why did you stop?" I asked the eagle that I had been talking with.

"Because they are now whole," he replied, indicating the wounded who were now all standing and who appeared to be in perfect condition. "True worship can heal any wound", he added. "Please do it again," I begged.

"We will do this many times, but it is not for us to decide when. The breeze that you felt was the Holy Spirit. He directs us; we do not direct Him. He has healed the wounded and has begun to bring about the unity that is required for the battles ahead. True worship also pours the precious oil upon the Head, Jesus, which then flows down over the entire body, making us one with Him and with each other. No one who comes into union with Him will remain wounded or unclean. His blood is pure life, and it flows when we are joined to Him. When we are joined to Him we are also joined to the rest of the Body, so that His blood flows through all. Is that not how you heal a wound to your body, by closing the wound so that the blood can flow to the wounded member to bring regeneration? When a part of His body is wounded, we must join in unity with that part until it is fully restored. We are all one."

In the euphoria still left from the worship, this brief teaching seemed almost esoteric, yet I knew that it was very basic. When the Holy Spirit moved every word seemed glorious, regardless of how elementary it was. I was so filled with love that I wanted to hug everyone, including the fierce old eagles. Then, like a jolt, I remembered the mighty warriors who had just been captured. The eagle sensed this but did not say anything. He just watched me intently. Finally, I spoke up, "Can we recover those who were just lost?"

### **The Heart of the King**

"Yes. It is right for you to feel what you do," the eagle finally said. "We are not complete, and our worship is not complete, until the whole body is restored. Even in the most glorious worship, even in the very presence of the King, we will all feel this emptiness until all are one, because our King also feels it. We all grieve for our brothers in bondage, but we grieve even more for the heart of our King. Though you love all of your children, you would be grieved for the one that was sick or wounded. He, too, loves all of His children, but the wounded and oppressed have most of His

attention now. For His sake we must not quit until all have been recovered. As long as any are wounded, He is wounded."

### **Faith To Move The Mountain**

Sitting down by the eagle, I pondered his words. Finally I asked, "I know that Wisdom now speaks to me through you, because I hear His voice when you speak. I was so sure of myself before that last battle, but I was almost carried away with the same presumption that they were carried away with, and could very easily have been captured with them if Wisdom had not stopped me. I was motivated more by hatred for the enemy than by the desire to set my brothers free. Since first coming to this mountain, and fighting in the great battle, I now think that most of the right things I did, I did for the wrong reasons, and many of the wrong things I did, I had good motives for. The more I learn, the more unsure of myself I feel."

"You must have been with Wisdom a long time," the eagle responded.

"He was with me a long time before I began to recognize Him, but I am afraid that most of that time I was resisting Him. Somehow I now know that I am still lacking something very important, something that I must have before I go into battle again, but I do not know what it is."

The great eagle's eyes became even more penetrating as he responded, "You also know the voice of Wisdom when He speaks to you in your own heart. You are learning well because you have the mantle. What you are feeling now is the true faith." "Faith?" I shot back. "I'm talking about serious doubts!"

"You are wise to doubt yourself. But true faith depends on God, not yourself and not your faith. You are close to the kind of faith that can move this mountain, and move it we must. It is time to carry it to places where it has not traveled before. However, you are right. You are still lacking something very important. You must yet have a revelation. Even though you have climbed to the top of the mountain, and received from every truth along the way, and even though you have stood in the Garden of God, tasted of His unconditional love, and have seen His Son many times now, you still understand only a part of the whole counsel of God, and that only superficially."

I knew that this was so true that it was actually comforting to hear it. I have judged so many people and so many situation wrongly. Wisdom has saved my life many times now, but the voice of Wisdom is still a very small voice within me, and the clamor of my own thoughts and feelings are still far too loud, I hear Wisdom speaking through you much louder than I hear Him in my own heart, so I know I must stay very close to you.

"We are here because you need us," the eagle replied. "We are also here because we need you. You have been given gifts that I do not have, and I have been given gifts that you do not have. You have experienced things that I have not experienced, and I have experienced things that you have not. The eagles have been given to you until the end, and you have been given to us. I will be very close to you for a time, and then you must receive other eagles in my place. Every eagle is different. It is together, not individually, that we have been given to know the secrets of the Lord."

### **The Doors of Truth**

The eagle then rose up from the rock on which he had perched, and he soared over to the edge of the level on which we stood. "Come," he said. As I approached him I saw steps that led down to the very base of the mountain, and a small door.

"Why have I not seen this before?" I asked.

"When you first came to the mountain you did not stay on this level long enough to look around," he answered.

"How did you know that? Were you here when I first came to the mountain?"

"I would have known if I had not been here, because all who miss this door do so for the same reason, but in fact I was here," he responded. "I was one of the soldiers you so quickly passed on your way up the mountain."

It was then that I recognized the eagle as a man whom I had met soon after my conversion, whom I had actually had a few conversations with. He continued, "I wanted badly to follow you then. I had been on this level for so long that I needed a change. I just could not leave all of the lost souls that I

was still trying to lead here. When I finally committed myself to doing the Lord's will, whether it was to stay or go, Wisdom appeared to me and showed me this door. He said it was a shortcut to the top. That is how I got to the top before you did. There I was changed into an eagle."

I then remembered that I had seen doors like this on a couple of the levels. I had even peeked into one of them and remember how amazed I had been at what I saw. I did not venture very far into it because I was so focused on the battle and on trying to get to the top of the mountain. "Could I have entered any of those doors and gone right to the top?" I asked.

"It is not quite that easy," the eagle remarked, seeming a little irritated. "In every door there are passageways, one of which leads to the top." Anticipating my next question, he continued. "The other ones lead to the other levels on the mountain, The Father designed each passageway so that everyone would choose that which his level of maturity dictated."

"Incredible! How did He do that?" I thought to myself but the eagle heard my thoughts.

"It was very simple," continued the eagle as if I had spoken my thoughts out loud. "Spiritual maturity is always determined by our willingness to sacrifice our own desires for the interests of the Kingdom, or for the sake of others. The door that requires the most sacrifice to enter will always take us to the highest level."

I was trying to remember all that the eagle was saying to me. I knew that I must enter the door before me, and that it would be wise for me to learn all that I could from someone who had preceded me and had obviously chosen the correct door to the top.

"I did not go directly to the top, and I haven't met anyone who has," the eagle continued. "But I went there much faster than most because I had learned so much about self-sacrifice while fighting here on the level of Salvation. I have shown you this door because you wear the mantle and would have found it anyway, but the time is short and I am here to help you mature quickly."

"There are doors on every level, and every one leads to treasures that are beyond your comprehension," he continued. "They cannot be acquired physically, but every treasure that you hold in your hands you will be able to carry in your heart. Your heart is meant to be the treasure house of God. By the time you reach the top again, your heart will contain treasures more valuable than all of the treasures of the earth. They will never be taken from you, but they are yours for eternity. Go quickly. The storm clouds are now gathering, and another great battle is looming."

"Will you go with me?" I pleaded.

"No," he responded. "This is where I belong now. I must help these who were wounded. But I will see you here again. You will meet many of my brother and sister eagles before you return, and they will be able to help you better than I at the place where you meet them."

### **The Treasures of Heaven**

I already loved the eagle so much that I could hardly stand to leave him. I was glad to know I would see him again. Now the door was drawing me like a magnet. I opened it and entered.

The glory that I beheld was so stunning that I immediately fell to my knees. The gold, silver and precious stones were far more beautiful than can be described. They actually rivaled the glory of the Tree of Life. The room was so large that it seemed to be without end. The floor was silver, the pillars, gold, and the ceiling was a single pure diamond that reflected every color I had ever known and many that I had not known. Angels without number were all around, dressed in different robes and uniforms that were of no earthly origin.

As I began to walk through the room, the angels all bowed in salute. One stepped forward and welcomed me by name. He explained that I could go anywhere and see anything that I wanted in the room. Nothing was withheld from those who came through the door. I was so overwhelmed by the beauty that I could not even speak. I finally remarked that this was even more beautiful than the Garden had been. Surprised, the angel responded, "This is the Garden! This is one of the rooms in your Father's house. We are your servants."

As I walked, a great company of angels followed me. I turned and asked the leader why they were following. "Because of the mantle," he said. "We have been given to you, to serve you here and in the battle to come."

I did not know what to do with the angels so I just continued walking. I was attracted to a large blue

stone that appeared to have the sun and clouds inside of it. When I touched it the same feelings flooded over me as when I had eaten the fruit of the tree of Life. I felt energy, unearthly mental clarity, and love for everyone and everything being magnified. I started to behold the glory of the Lord. The longer I touched the stone the more the glory increased. I never wanted to take my hand off of the stone, but the glory became so intense that finally I had to draw away.

Then my eyes fell on a beautiful green stone. "What does that one have in it?" I asked the angel standing nearby.

"All of these stones are the treasures of salvation. You are now touching the heavenly realm, and that one is the restoration of life," he continued.

As I touched the green stone I began to see the earth in rich and spectacular colors. They grew in richness the longer I had my hand on the stone, and my love for all that I saw also grew. Then I began to see a harmony between all living things on a level that I had never seen before. Then I began to see the glory of the Lord in the creation. It began to grow until again I had to step away because of the intensity.

I realized that I had no idea how long I had been there. I did know that my comprehension of God and His universe had grown substantially by just touching these two stones, and there were many, many more to touch. There was more in that one room than a person could have absorbed in a whole lifetime. "How many more rooms are there?" I asked the angel. "There are rooms like this on every level of the mountain that you climbed."

"How can one ever experience all that is in just one of these rooms, much less all of them?" I asked. "You have forever to do this. The treasures contained in the most basic truths of the Lord Jesus are enough to last for more lifetimes than you can measure. No man can know all that there is to know about any of them in just one life, but you must take what you need and keep proceeding toward your destiny."

I started thinking about the impending battle again, and the warriors who had been captured. It was not a pleasant thought in such a glorious place, but I knew I would have forever to come back to this room; I had only a short time to find my way back to the top of the mountain, and then back to the battlefield again.

I turned back to the angel. "You must help me find the door that leads to the top."

The angel looked perplexed. "We are your servants," he responded, "but you must lead us. This whole mountain is a mystery to us. We all desired to look into this great mystery, but after we leave this room of which we have come to know just a little, we will be learning even more than you."

"Do you know where all of the doors are?" I asked.

"Yes, But we do not know where they lead. There are some that look very inviting, and some that are plain, and some that are actually repulsive. One is even terrible."

"In this place there are doors that are repulsive?" I asked in disbelief "And one that is terrible? How can that be?"

"We do not know, but I can show it to you," he responded.

"Please do," I said.

We walked for quite a while, passing treasures of unspeakable glory, all of which were difficult to bypass. There were also many doors, with different biblical truths over each one. When the angel had called them "inviting" I felt that he had quite understated their appeal. I badly wanted to go through each one, but my curiosity about the "terrible door" kept me moving.

Then I saw it. "Terrible" had also been an understatement. Fear gripped me until I thought that it would take my breath away.

### **Grace and Truth**

I turned away from that door and retreated fast. There was a beautiful red stone nearby, which I almost lunged at to lay my hands on. Immediately I was in the Garden of Gethsemane beholding the Lord in prayer. The agony I beheld was even more terrible than the door I had just seen, Shocked, I jerked my hand away from the stone and fell to the floor in exhaustion. I wanted so badly to return to the blue or green stones, but I had to re-gather my energy and my sense of direction. The angels were quickly all around me serving me. I was given a drink that began to

revive me. Soon I was feeling well enough to stand and begin walking back to the other stones. However, the recurring vision of the Lord praying finally compelled me to stop.

"What was that back there?" I asked.

"When you touch the stones we are able to see a little of what you see, and feel a little of what you feel," said the angel. "We know that all of these stones are great treasures, and all of the revelations they contain are priceless. We beheld for a moment the agony of the Lord before His crucifixion, and we felt briefly what He felt that terrible night. It is hard for us to understand how our God could ever suffer like that. It makes us appreciate much more what an honor it is to serve the men for whom He paid such a terrible price."

The angels' words were like lightning bolts straight to my soul. I had fought in the great battle. I had climbed to the top of the mountain. I had become so familiar with the spiritual realm that I hardly noticed angels anymore, and I could speak on nearly equal terms with the great eagles. Yet I could not bear to share even a moment of the sufferings of the Lord without wanting to flee to a more pleasurable experience. "I should not be here," I almost shouted. "I, more than anyone, deserve to be a prisoner of the evil one!"

"Sir," the angel said apprehensively. "We understand that no one is here because he deserves it. You are here because you were chosen before the foundation of the world for a purpose. We do not know what your specific purpose is, but we know that it is very great for everyone on this mountain."

"Thank you, you are helpful. My emotions are being greatly stretched by this place, and they tend to overcome my understanding. You are right. No one is here because he is worthy. Truly, the higher we climb on this mountain, the more unworthy we are to be here, and the more grace we need to stay here. How did I ever make it to the top the first time?" "Grace," my angel responded.

"If you want to help me," I said, "please keep repeating that word to me whenever you see me in confusion or despair. That word I am coming to understand better than any other."

"Now I must go back to the red stone. I know now that is the greatest treasure in this room, and I must not leave until I am carrying that treasure in my heart."

### **The Truth of Grace**

"The time that I spent at the red stone was the most painful that I have ever experienced. Many times I simply could not take anymore but had to withdraw my hand. Several times I went back to the blue or green stones to rejuvenate my soul before I returned. It was harder to return to the red stone each time, but my love and appreciation for the Lord was growing more through this than anything I had ever learned or experienced.

Finally, when the presence of the Father departed from Jesus on the cross, I could not stand it any longer. I quit. I could tell that the angels, who were also experiencing what I was to a degree, were in full agreement with me. The willpower to touch the stone again simply was no longer in me. I did not even feel like going back to the blue stone. I just laid prostrate on the floor. I was weeping over what the Lord had gone through. I wept also because I knew that I had deserted Him just like His disciples. I failed Him when He needed me the most, just like they did.

After what seemed like several days, I opened my eyes. Another eagle was standing beside me. In front of him were three stones, one blue, one green, and one red. "Eat them," he said. When I did, my whole being was renewed, and great joy and great soberness both flooded my soul.

When I stood up, I caught sight of the same three stones set into the handle of my sword, and then on each of my shoulders. "These are now yours forever," the eagle said. "They cannot be taken from you, and you cannot lose them."

"But I did not finish this last one," I protested.

"Christ alone will ever finish that test," he replied. "You have done well enough, and you must go on now."

"Where to?" I asked.

*"You must decide, but with the time getting shorter I will suggest that you try to get to the top soon." The eagle then departed, obviously in a hurry.*

I then remembered the doors. I started toward those that had been so appealing. When I reached the first one it simply did not appeal to me anymore. Then I went to another, and it felt the same. "Something seems to have changed," I remarked out loud.

"You have changed," the angels replied at once. I turned to look at them and was amazed at how much they had changed. They no longer had a naive look about them, but were now more regal and wise-looking. I knew they reflected what had also taken place in me, but I now felt uncomfortable just thinking about myself.

"I ask for your counsel," I said to the leader.

"Listen to your heart," he said. "That is where these great truths now abide."

"I have never been able to trust my own heart," I responded. "It is subject to so many conflicts. I am too subject to delusions, deceptions, and selfish ambitions. It is hard for me to even hear the Lord speaking to me above its clamor."

"Sir, with the red stone now in your heart, I do not believe that will continue to be the case," the leader offered with uncharacteristic confidence.

I leaned against the wall, thinking that the eagle was not here when I needed him the most. He had been this way before and would know which door to choose. But I knew he would not come back, and I knew that it was right that I choose. As I pondered, the "terrible door" was the only one that I could think of. Out of curiosity I decided to go back and look at it. I had departed from it so fast the first time that I had not even noticed which truth it represented.

As I approached it I could feel the fear welling up inside of me, but not nearly as intensely as the first time. Unlike the other doors, it was very dark around this one, and I had to get very close to read the truth over it. Mildly surprised, I read "THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST." "Why is this truth so fearful?" I asked aloud, knowing that the angels would not answer me. As I continued looking at it I knew that it was the one I should go through.

"There are many reasons that it is fearful," the familiar voice of the eagle responded.

"I'm very glad you came back," I replied. "Have I made a poor choice?"

"No! You have chosen well. This door will take you back to the top of the mountain faster than any other. It is fearful because the greatest fear in the creation has its source through that door. The greatest wisdom that men can know in this life, or in the life to come is also found through that door. Even so, very few will go through it."

"But why is this door so dark?" I asked.

"The light of these doors reflects the attention that the Church is presently giving to the truths behind them. The truth behind that door is one of the most neglected of these times, but it is one of the most important. You will understand when you enter. The greatest authority that men can receive will be entrusted only to those who will go through this door. When you see Christ Jesus sitting on this throne, you, too, will be prepared to sit with Him on it."

"Then this door would not be so dark and foreboding if we had just given more attention to this truth?" I asked.

"That is correct. If men knew the glory that is revealed behind that door, it would be one of the most brilliant," the eagle lamented. "However, it is still a difficult door to pass through. I was told to return and encourage you because soon you will need it. You will see a greater glory, but also a greater terror than you have ever known. But know that because you have chosen the difficult way now, it will be much easier for you later. Because you are willing to face this hard truth now, you will not suffer loss later. Many love to know His kindness, but very few are willing to know His severity. If you do not embrace both you will always be in danger of deception and of a fall from His great grace."

"I know that I would never come here if I had not spent the time that I did at the red stone. How could I keep trying to take the easy way when that is so contrary to the nature of the Lord?" I asked. "But now you have chosen, so go quickly. Another great battle is about to begin, and you are needed at the front," he said.

As I looked at the eagle, and the great resolution in his eyes, my confidence grew. Finally I turned toward the door.



## PART IV - THE WHITE THRONE

I gazed one last time around the huge room inside of the mountain. The gems and treasures that represented the truths of Salvation were breathtaking in their glory. It seemed that there was no end to their expanse, and no way to fully comprehend their beauty. I could not imagine that the rooms which contained the other great truths of the faith could be any more glorious. This helped me to understand why so many Christians never wanted to leave this level, being content to just marvel at the basic doctrines of the faith. I knew that I could stay there for eternity and never get bored.

Then the eagle that was standing next to me exhorted: "You must go on!" As I turned to look at him he lowered his voice, but continued, "There is no greater peace and safety than to abide in the Lord's salvation. You were brought here to know this because you will need this faith for where you are now going, but you must not stay here any longer." The eagle's statement about the peace and safety caused me to think about the courageous warriors who had fought in the battle from the first level of the mountain, Salvation. They had fought so well and delivered so many, but they had also all been badly wounded. It did not seem that they had found peace and safety here. Then the eagle interrupted my thoughts again as if he were listening to them.

"God has a different definition of peace and safety than we do. To be wounded in the fight is a great honor. It is by the Lord's stripes that we are healed, and it is through our stripes that we, too, are given the authority for healing. In the very place that the enemy wounds us, once we are healed, we are given the power to heal others. Healing was a basic part of the Lord's ministry, and it is also a basic part of ours. That is one reason why the Lord allows bad things to happen to His people, so that they can receive the compassion for others by which the power of healing operates. That is why the apostle Paul told of his beatings and stonings when his authority was questioned. Every wound, every bad thing that happens to us, can be turned into the authority to do good. Every beating that the great apostle took resulted in salvation for others. Every wound that every warrior takes will result in others being saved, healed, or restored."

The eagle's words were very encouraging. Standing here among the glory of the treasures of salvation made this truth even more clear and penetrating. I wanted to go shout it from the top of the mountain so that all who were still fighting would be encouraged by it.

Then the eagle continued, "There is another reason why the Lord allows us to be wounded. There is no courage unless there is real danger. The Lord said He would go with Joshua to fight for the Promised Land, but over and over He exhorted him to be strong and courageous. This was because he was going to have to fight, and there would be very real danger. It is in this way that the Lord proves those who are worthy of the promises."

I looked at the old eagle, and for the first time I noticed the scars amid his torn and broken feathers. However, the scars were not ugly, but were lined with gold that was somehow not metal, but rather flesh and feathers. Then I could see that it was this gold that gave off the glory that emanated from the eagle, making his presence so awesome.

"Why did I not see this before?" I inquired.

"Until you have beheld and appreciated the depths of the treasures of salvation, you cannot see the glory that comes from suffering for the sake of the gospel. Once you have seen it, you are ready for the tests that will release the highest levels of spiritual authority into your life. These scars are the glory that we will carry forever. This is why even the wounds our Lord suffered are with Him in heaven. You can still see His wounds, and the wounds that all of His chosen ones have taken for His sake. These are the medals of honor in heaven. All who carry them love God and His truth more than their own lives. These are the ones who followed the Lamb wherever He went, being willing to suffer for the sake of truth, righteousness and the salvation of men. True leaders of His people, who carry genuine spiritual authority, must have first proven their devotion this way."

I looked at the leader of the company of angels that followed me. I had never witnessed deep emotion in an angel before, but these words were unquestionably moving him greatly, as well as the rest. I really thought that they were about to cry. Then the leader spoke:

"We have witnessed many wonders since the creation. But the voluntary suffering of men for the Lord, and for their fellow men, is the greatest wonder of all. We, too, must fight at times, and we do suffer, but we dwell where there is such light and glory that it is very easy to do this. When men and women who dwell in such a place of darkness and evil with so little encouragement, not able to behold the glory but only having a hope in it, choose to suffer for that hope in which they can only see so dimly in their hearts, it causes even the greatest angels to bow their knee and gladly serve these heirs of salvation. At first we did not understand why the Father decreed that men would have to walk by faith, not beholding the reality and the glories of the heavenly realm, and suffering such opposition. But now we understand that through these sufferings their worthiness to receive the great authority that they will be given as members of His own household is surely proven. Now this walk of faith is the greatest wonder in heaven. Those who pass this test are worthy to sit with the Lamb on His throne, as He has made them worthy, and they have proven their love."

Then the eagle interjected, "Courage is a demonstration of faith. The Lord never promised that His way would be easy, but He has assured us that it would be worth it. The courage of those who fought from the level of Salvation moved the angels of heaven to esteem what God has wrought in fallen men. They took their wounds in the terrible onslaught, while only beholding darkness and a seeming defeat of the truth, just as our Lord did on His cross. Even so, they did not quit, and they did not retreat.

I was again starting to regret that I had not remained on the level of Salvation and fought with those other brave souls. Again, understanding my thoughts, the eagle interrupted them.

"By climbing the mountain you were also demonstrating faith, and wisdom, which does also release authority. Your faith freed many souls so that they could come to the mountains for salvation. You, too, received some wounds, but your authority in the kingdom has come more from acts of faith than by suffering. Because you have been faithful in a few things you will now be given the great honor of going back to suffer, that you may be made a ruler over many more. But remember that we all work together for the same purposes regardless of whether we are building or suffering. Many more souls will fill these rooms, to the great joy of heaven, if you go higher. You have now been called to climb, and to build, but later you will be given the honor of suffering if you are faithful in this."

I then turned and looked at the dark and foreboding door over which was written: "The Judgment Seat of Christ." Just as warmth and peace had flooded my soul each time I looked at the great treasures of Salvation, fear and insecurity gripped me when I looked at this door. Now it seemed that everything in me wanted to stay in this room, and nothing in me wanted to go through that door. Again the eagle answered my thoughts.

"Before you enter the door to any great truth you will have these same feelings. You even felt them when you entered into this room filled with the treasures of salvation. These fears are the result of the fall. They are the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The knowledge from that tree made us all insecure and self-centered. The knowledge of good and evil makes the true knowledge of God seem fearsome, when in fact every truth from God leads to an even greater peace and security. Even the judgments of God are to be desired, because all of His ways are perfect."

By now I had experienced enough to know that what seems right is usually the least fruitful path, and often the road to failure. Throughout my journey the path of greatest risk was the path that led to the greatest reward. Even so, each time it seemed that more was at stake. Therefore, to make the choice to go higher became more difficult each time. I started to sympathize with those who would stop at some point in their sojourn, and refuse to go on, even though I knew more than ever that this was a mistake. The only true security came from continually moving forward into the realms that required more faith, which was more dependence on the Lord.

"Yes, it takes more faith to walk in the higher realms of the Spirit," the eagle added. "The Lord gave us the map to His kingdom when He said: 'If you seek to save your life you will lose it, but if you will lose your life for My sake you will find it.' Those words alone can keep you on the path to the top of the mountain, and will lead you to victory in the great battle ahead. They will also help you to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ."

I knew that it was time for me to go. I resolved to always remember the glory of this chamber that contained the treasures of salvation, but I also knew that I had to move beyond them. I had to go on. I turned and with all of the courage I could muster, opened the door to the Judgment Seat of Christ and stepped through it. The company of angels that had been assigned to me took positions all around the door, but did not enter.

"What's the matter? Aren't you coming?" I demanded.

"Where you are going now you must go alone. We will be waiting for you on the other side."

Without responding, I turned and started walking before I could change my mind. Somehow I knew that it was right that I not put my security in the company of angels. As I walked into the darkness I heard the eagle's last words, "After this you will not have your trust in anyone else, even yourself, but only in the Lord."

I was in the most frightening darkness I had ever experienced. To take each step became a terrible battle with fear. Soon I began to think that I had stepped into hell itself. Finally I decided to retreat, but when I turned to go back I could not see anything. The door was closed and I could not even see where it was located. I started to feel that everything that had happened to me, and everything that had been said to me by the eagles and the angels had been a ruse to entrap me in this hell. I had been deceived! I cried to the Lord to forgive me, and to help me. Immediately I began to see Him on the cross, just as when I had laid my hand on the red stone in the chamber I had just left. Again, I beheld the darkness of His soul as He stood alone bearing the sin of the world. In that chamber this had been a terrible darkness to behold, but now it was a light. I resolved that I hold to go on, fixing my mind on Him. As I did, with each step peace began to grow in my heart, and it became easier than it had been just a few minutes earlier.

Soon I was not even aware of the dark, and I no longer felt cold. Then I started to see a dim light. Gradually it became a glorious light. Then it became so wonderful that I felt that I was entering into heaven itself. The glory increased with every step. I wondered how anything this wonderful could have an entrance so dark and foreboding. Now I was so enjoying every step.

Then the path opened into a hall so large that I did not think that the earth itself could contain it. The beauty of it could not even be imagined by any reference to human architecture. This exceeded the wonder of anything I had yet experienced, including the garden, or the chamber that held the treasures of salvation. I was, at this point, just as over whelmed with joy and beauty as I had previously been overwhelmed by the darkness and fear just minutes before. I then understood that every time I had experienced great pain or darkness of soul, it had been followed by a much greater revelation of glory and peace.

At the far end was the Source of the glory that was emanating from everything else in the room. I knew that it was the Lord Himself and though I had now seen Him many times, I began to be a little bit afraid as I walked toward Him. However, this fear was a holy fear that only magnified the great joy and peace that I also felt. I knew that the judgment seat of Christ was a source of more security than I had ever experienced, but at the same time it was the source of a greater but more pure fear. I did not notice how great the distance was to the throne. It was so wonderful to just walk here that I did not care if it took me a thousand years to get there. In earthly terms, it did take me a very long time. In one sense I felt that it was days, and in another, years. But somehow earthly time had no relevance here.

My eyes were so fixed on the glory of the Lord that I walked a long time before I noticed that I was passing multitudes of people who were standing in ranks to my left (there were just as many to my right, but they were so far away that I could not see them until I reached the throne). As I looked at them I had to stop. They were dazzling more regal than anyone I had ever seen. Their countenance was captivating. Never had such peace and confidence graced a human face. Each one was beautiful beyond any earthly comparison. As I turned toward those who were close to me they bowed in a greeting as though they recognized me.

"How is it that you know me?" I asked, surprised at my own boldness to ask them a question.

"You are one of the saints fighting in the last battle," a man close by responded. "Everyone here knows you, as well as all of those who are now fighting on the earth. We are the saints who have served the Lord in the generations before you. We are the great cloud of witnesses who have been

given the right to behold the last battle. We know all of you, and we see all that you do."

To my surprise, I recognized someone I had known on earth. He had been a faithful believer, but I did not think he had ever done anything of significance. He was so unattractive physically on earth that it made him shy. Here he had the same features, but was somehow more handsome than any person I had known on earth. He stepped up to me with an assurance and dignity that I had never seen before in him, or in any man.

"Heaven is much greater than we could have dreamed while on earth," he began. "This room is but the threshold of realms of glory that are far beyond the ability we had to comprehend. It is also true that the second death is much more terrible than we understood. Neither heaven nor hell are like we thought they were. If I had known on earth what I know here I would not have lived the way that I did. You are greatly blessed to have come here before you have died," he said, looking at my garments.

I then looked at myself I still had the old mantle of humility on, and the armor was still under it. I felt both foul and crude standing before those who were so glorious. I began to think that I was in serious trouble if I was planning to appear before the Lord like this. Like the eagles, my old acquaintance could understand my thoughts, and he replied to them.

"Those who come here wearing that mantle have nothing to fear. That mantle is the highest rank of honor, and it is why they all bowed to you while you passed."

"I did not notice anyone bowing to me," I replied, a bit disconcerted. "In fact, I didn't even notice anyone until just now."

"It is not improper," he continued. "Here we show each other the respect that is due. Even the angels serve us here, but only our God and His Christ are worshipped! There is a marked difference between honoring one another in love, and worshiping them. If we had understood this on earth, we would have treated others very differently. It is here, in the light of His glory, that we can fully perceive and understand one another, and therefore properly relate to each other."

I was still ashamed. I had to restrain myself to keep from bowing to them, while at the same time wanting to hide myself because I felt so lowly. Then I began lamenting the fact that my thoughts here were just as foolish as they were on the earth, and here everyone knew them! I felt both stained and stupid standing before these who were so awesome and pure. Again my old acquaintance responded to these thoughts.

"We have our incorruptible bodies now, and you do not. Our minds are no longer hindered by sin. We are therefore able to comprehend many times what even the greatest earthly mind can fathom, and we will spend eternity growing in our ability to understand. This is so that we can know the Father, and understand the glory of His creation. On earth you cannot even begin to understand what the least of these here knows, and we are the least of those here."

"How could you be the least?" I asked with disbelief.

"There is an aristocracy of sorts here. The rewards for our earthly lives are the eternal positions that we will have forever. This great multitude are those whom the Lord called 'foolish virgins.' We knew the Lord, and trusted in His cross for salvation, but we did not really live for Him, but for ourselves. We did not keep our vessels filled with the oil of the Holy Spirit. We have eternal life, but we wasted our lives on earth."

I was really surprised by this, but I also knew that no one could lie in that place.

"The foolish virgins gnashed their teeth in the outer darkness," I protested.

"And that we did. The grief that we experienced when we understood how we had so wasted our lives was beyond any grief possible on earth. The darkness of that grief can only be understood by those who have experienced it. Such darkness is magnified when it is revealed next to the glory of the One we failed. You are standing now among the lowest rank in heaven. There is no greater folly than to know the great salvation of God, but to then go on living for yourself. To come here and learn the reality of that is a grief beyond what an earthly soul can experience. We are those who suffered this outer darkness because of this greatest of follies."

I was still incredulous, "But you are more glorious and full of more joy and peace than I even imagined, even for those in heaven. I do not feel any remorse in you, and yet I know that here you cannot lie. This does not make sense to me."

Looking at me straight in the eyes, he continued, "The Lord also loves us with a love greater than you can yet understand. Before His judgment seat I tasted the greatest darkness of soul and remorse that can be experienced. Though here we do not measure time as you do, it seemed to last for as long as my life on earth had lasted. All of my sins and follies of which I had not repented passed before me, and before all who are here. You cannot understand the grief of this until you have experienced it. I felt that I was in the deepest dungeon of hell, even as I stood before the glory of the Lord. He was resolute until my life had been completely reviewed. When I said I was sorry and asked for the mercy of His cross, He wiped away my tears and took away the darkness. I no longer feel the bitterness that I knew as I stood before Him, but I remember it. Only here can you remember such things without continuing to feel the pain. A moment in the lowest part of heaven is much greater than a thousand years of the highest life on earth. Now my mourning at my folly has been turned into joy, and I know that I will know joy forever, even if I am in the lowest place in heaven."

I began to think again of the treasures of salvation. Somehow I knew that all that this man had told me was revealed by those treasures. Every step I had taken up the mountain, or into it, had revealed that His ways are both more fearful and more wonderful than I had ever been able to comprehend before.

Looking at me intently, my former acquaintance continued. "You are not here to just gain understanding, but to experience and be changed. The next level of rank here is many times greater than what we have. Each level after is that much greater than the previous one. It is not just that each level has an even more glorious spiritual body, but that each level is closer to the throne from where all of the glory comes.

Even so, I no longer feel the grief of my failure. I really deserve nothing. I am here by grace alone, and I am so thankful for what I have. He is so worthy to be loved. I could be doing many wondrous things now in the different realms of heaven, but I would rather stay here and just behold His glory, even if I am on the outer fringes. "

Then, with a distant look in his eyes, he added, "Everyone in heaven is now in this room to watch His great mystery unfold, and to watch those of you who will fight the last battle."

"Can you see Him from here?" I asked. "I see His glory far away, but I cannot see Him."

"I can see many times better than you can," he answered. "And yes, I can see Him, and all that He is doing, even from here. I can also hear Him. I can also behold the earth. He gave us all that power. We are the great cloud of witnesses who are beholding you," he repeated.

He bowed and then returned to the rank". I began walking again, trying to understand all that he had said to me. As I looked over the great host that he had said were the foolish virgins, the ones who had spiritually slept away their lives on earth, I knew that if anyone of them appeared on earth now that they would be worshiped as gods. Yet, they were the very least of those who were here!

I then began to think of all of the time that I had wasted in my own life. It was such an overwhelming thought that I stopped. Then parts of my life began to pass before me. I began to experience a terrible grief over this one sin. I, too, had been one of the greatest of fools! I may have kept more oil in my lamp than others, but now I knew how foolish I had been to measure what was required of me by how others were doing. I, too, was one of the foolish virgins!

Just when I thought I would collapse under the weight of this terrible discovery, a man who I had known and esteemed as a great man of God came forward to steady me. Somehow his touch revived me. He then greeted me warmly. This was a man by whom I had wanted to be discipled. I had met him, but we did not get along well. Like a number of others I had tried to get close enough to learn from, I was an irritation to him finally asked me to leave. For years I had felt guilty about this, feeling that I had missed a great opportunity because of some flaw in my character. Even though I had put it out of my mind, I still carried the weight of this failure. When I saw him it all surfaced, and a sick feeling came over me. Now he was so regal that I felt even more repulsive and embarrassed by my poor condition. I wanted to hide but there was no way I could avoid him here. To my surprise his warmth toward me was so genuine that he soon put me at ease. There did not seem to be any barriers between us. In fact, the love I felt coming from him almost completely took away my self-consciousness.

"I have waited eagerly for this meeting," he said.

"You were waiting for me?" I asked. "Why?"

"You are just one of many that I am waiting for. I did not understand until my judgment that you were one that I was called to help, to even disciple, but I rejected you."

"Sir," I protested. "It would have been a great honor to be disciplined by you, and I am very thankful for the time that I did have with you, but I was so arrogant that I deserved the rejection. I know that my rebellion and pride has kept me from having a real spiritual father. This was not your fault, but mine."

"It is true that you were prideful, but that is not why I was offended with you. I was offended because of my insecurity, which made me want to control everyone around me. I was offended that you would not accept everything that I said without questioning it. I then started to look for anything that was wrong with you to justify my rejection of you. I began to feel that if I could not control you that you would one day embarrass me and my ministry. I esteemed my ministry more than I did the people for whom it was given to me, so I drove you and many others like you away," he said.

"At times I must admit that I thought you had turned into a . . ." and I stopped myself embarrassed by what I was about to say.

"And you were right," he said with a genuineness that is unknown in the realms of earth. "I had been given the grace to be a spiritual father, but I was a very bad one. All children are rebellious. They are all self-centered, and think that the world revolves around them. That is why they need parents to raise them. Almost every child will at times bring reproach on his family, but he is still a part of the family. I turned away many of God's own children that he had entrusted to me for getting them safely to maturity. I failed with many of those who stayed with me. Most of them suffered terrible and unnecessary wounds and failures that I could have helped them to avoid. Many of them are now prisoners of the enemy. I built a large organization, and had considerable influence in the church, but the greatest gifts that the Lord trusted to me were the ones who were sent to me for disciplining, many of whom I rejected. Had I not been so self-centered and concerned with my own reputation I would be a king here. I was called to sit on one of the highest thrones. All that you have and will accomplish would have been in my heavenly account as well. Instead, much of what I gave my attention to was of very little true eternal significance." "What you accomplished was astounding," I interjected.

"What looks good on earth looks very different here. What will make you a king on earth will often be a stumbling block to keep you from being a king here. What will make you a king here is lowly and un-esteemed on earth, I failed some of the greatest tests and greatest opportunities that were given to me, one of which was you. Will you forgive me?"

"Of course," I said, embarrassed. "But I, too, am in need of your forgiveness. I still think that it was my awkwardness and rebellion that made it difficult for you. In fact, I, too, have not let some get close to me who wanted to for the same reasons that you did not want me around you."

"It is true that you were not perfect, and I discerned some of your problems rightly, but that is never reason to reject someone," he replied. "The Lord did not reject the world when He saw its failures. He did not reject me when He saw my sin. He laid down His life for us. It is always the greater who must lay down his life for the lesser. I was more mature. I had more authority than you, but I became like one of the goats in the parable; I rejected the Lord by rejecting you and the others whom He sent to me."

As he talked, his words were striking me deeply. I, too, was guilty of everything that he mentioned. Many young men and women who I had brushed off as not being important enough for my time were now passing through my mind. I wanted desperately to return and gather them together! The grief that I began to feel was even worse than I had felt about wasting my time. I had wasted people! Now many of these were prisoners of the enemy, wounded and captured during the battle on the mountain. This whole battle was for the people, and yet people were often regarded as the least important. We will fight for truths more than for the people for whom they are given. We will fight for ministries while running rough shod over the people in them.

"And many people think of me as a spiritual leader! I am truly the least of the saints," I thought out

loud.

"I understand how you feel," remarked another man, I recognized him as one I had considered as one of the greatest Christian leaders of all time. "Paul the apostle said near the end of his life that he was the least of the saints. Then, just before his death, he even called himself 'the greatest of sinners.' Had he not learned that in his life on earth, he, too, would have been in jeopardy of becoming one of the least of the saints in heaven. Because he learned it on earth he is now one of those closest to the Lord, and will be one of the highest in rank for all of eternity."

Seeing this man in the company of "the foolish virgins" was the greatest surprise I had yet. "I cannot believe that you, too, are one of the foolish who slept away their lives on earth. Why are you here?"

"I am here because I made one of the gravest mistakes you can make as one entrusted with the glorious gospel of our Savior. Just as the apostle Paul progressed from not considering himself inferior to the greatest apostles, to being the greatest of sinners, I took the opposite course. I started out knowing that I had been one of the greatest of sinners who had found grace, but ended up thinking that I was one of the greatest apostles. It was because of my great pride, not insecurity like our friend here, that I began to attack everyone who did not see everything just the way I did. Those who followed me I stripped of their own callings, and even their personalities, pressuring them to all become just like me. No one around me could be himself No one dared to question me because I would crush him into powder. I thought that by making others smaller I made myself greater. I thought that I was supposed to be the Holy Spirit to everyone. From the outside my ministry looked like a smooth running machine where everyone was in unity and there was perfect order, but it was the order of a concentration camp. I took the Lord's own children and made them automatons in my own image instead of His. In the end I was not even serving the Lord, but the idol I had built to myself. By the end of my life I was actually an enemy of the true gospel, at least in practice, even if my teachings and writings seemed impeccably biblical."

This was so astounding, coming from this person, I began to wonder if every meeting that I had here was meant to give me a greater shock than the previous one.

"If that is true, that you became an enemy of the gospel, how is it that you are still here?" I questioned.

"By the grace of God, I did trust in the cross for my own salvation, even though I actually kept other men from it, leading them to myself rather than to the Lord. Even so, the blessed Savior remains faithful to us even when we are unfaithful. It was also by his grace that the Lord took me from the earth sooner than He would have just so those who were under me could find Him and come to know Him."

I could not have been more stunned to think that this was true of this particular man. History had given us a very different picture of him. Reading what was going on in my heart, he continued:

"God does have a different set of history books than those on the earth. You have had a glimpse of this, but you do not yet know how different they are. Earthly histories will pass away, but the books that are kept here will last forever. If you can rejoice in what heaven is recording about your life, you are blessed indeed. Men see through a glass darkly, so their histories will always be clouded, and sometimes completely wrong."

"How was it that so many other leaders esteemed you so?" I inquired, still having trouble absorbing what I was hearing.

"Very few, even very few Christians, have the true gift of discernment. Without this gift it is impossible to accurately discern truth in those of the present or the past. Even with this gift it is difficult. Until you have been here, and been stripped, you will judge others through distorted prejudices, either positive or negative. That is why we were warned not to judge before the time. Until we have been here we just cannot really know what is in the heart of others, whether they are performing good or evil deeds. There have been good motives in even the worst of men, and evil motives in even the best of them. Only here can men be judged by both their deeds and their motives."

"When I return to earth, will I be able to discern history accurately because I have been here?" "You are here because you prayed for the Lord to judge you severely, to correct you ruthlessly, so

that you could serve Him more perfectly. This was one of the wisest requests you have ever made. The wise judge themselves lest they be judged. The even wiser ask for the judgments of the Lord, because they realize that they cannot even judge themselves well. Having come here you will leave with far more wisdom and discernment, but on earth you will always see through a glass darkly at least to some degree. Your experience here will help you to know men better, but only when you are fully here can you know them fully. When you leave here you will be more impressed by how little you know men rather than be how well you know them. This is just as true in relation to the histories of men. I have been allowed to talk with you because I have in a sense disciplined you through my writings, and to know the truth about me will help you," the famous Reformer concluded.

Then a woman stepped forward who I did not know. Her beauty and grace were breathtaking, but it was not sensual or seductive in any way.

"I was his wife on earth," she began. "Much of what you know of him actually came from me, therefore, what I am about to say is not just about him, but about us. You can reform the church without reforming your own soul. You can dictate the course of history, and yet not do the Father's will, or glorify His Son. If you commit yourself to making human history, you may do it, but it is a fleeting accomplishment that will evaporate like a wisp of smoke."

"But your husband's work, or your work, greatly impacted every generation after him for good. It is hard to imagine how dark the world would have been without him," I protested.

"True. But you can gain the whole world and still lose your own soul. Only if you keep your own soul pure can you impact the world for the truly lasting eternal purposes of God. My husband lost his soul to me, and he only gained it at the end of his life because I was taken from the earth so that he could. Much of what he did he did more for me than for the Lord. I pressured him and even gave him much of the knowledge that he taught. I used him as an extension of my own ego, because as a woman at the time I could not be recognized as I spiritual leader myself. I took over his life so that I could live my life through him. Soon I had him doing everything just to prove himself to me."

"You must have loved her very much," I said looking at him.

"No. I did not love her at all. Neither did she love me. In fact, after just a few years of marriage we did not even like each other. But we both needed each other, so we found a way to work together. Our marriage was not a yoke of love, but of bondage. The more successful we became the more unhappy we became, and the more deception we used to fool those who followed us. We were empty wretches by the end of our lives. The more influence that you gain by your own self-promotion, the more you must strive to retain your influence, and the more dark and cruel your life will become. Kings feared us, but we feared everyone from the kings to the peasants. We could trust on one because we were living in such deception ourselves and we did not even trust each other. We preached love and trust, because we wanted everyone to love and trust us, but we, ourselves, feared and secretly despised everyone. If you preach the greatest truths but do not live them, you are only the greatest hypocrite, and the most tormented soul."

Their words began to pound me like a hammer. I could see that already my life was heading in the same direction. How much was I doing to promote myself rather than Christ? I began to see how much I did just to prove myself to others, especially those who disliked me, who rejected me, or who I felt in competition with in some way. I began to see how much of my own life was built on the facades of a projected image that believed who I really was. But here I could not hide. His great cloud of witnesses all knew who I was beyond the evil of my projected motives.

I looked again at this couple. They were now so guileless and so noble that it was impossible to question their motives.

They were gladly exposing their most devious sins for my sake, and were genuinely happy to be able to do it.

"I may have had a wrong concept of you by your history and your writings, but I have even more esteem for you now. I pray that I can carry from this place the integrity and freedom that you now have. I am tired of trying to live up to projected images of myself. How I long for that freedom!" I lamented, wanting desperately to remember every detail of this encounter. Then the famous Reformer offered a final exhortation:



"Do not try to teach others to do what you, yourself are not doing. Reformation is not just a doctrine. True reformation only comes from union with the Savior. When you are yoked with Christ, carrying the burdens that He gives you, He will be with you and carry them for you. You can only do His work when you are doing it with Him, not just for Him. Only the Spirit can beget that which is Spirit. If you are yoked with Him you will do nothing for the sake of politics or history. Anything that you do because of political pressures, or opportunities, will only lead you to the end of your true ministry. The things that are done in an effort to make history will at best confine your accomplishments to history, and you will fail to impact eternity. If you do not live what you preach to others you disqualify yourself from the high calling of God, just as we did."

"I do not even think that I could consider seeking a high calling," I interrupted. "I do not even deserve to sit here in this place that you say is the lowest place in heaven. How could I ever consider seeking a high calling?"

"The high calling is not out of reach for anyone that the Lord has called. I will tell you what will keep you on the path of life: love the Savior and seek His glory alone. Everything that you do to exalt yourself will one day bring you the most terrible humiliation. Everything that you do out of true love for the Savior, to glorify His name, will extend the limits of His eternal Kingdom, and ultimately will result in a much higher place for yourself. Live for what is recorded here. Care nothing for what is recorded on earth."

The couple then parted with a cheerful embrace, yet I felt anything but cheerful. As they walked away I was again overwhelmed by my own sin. The times that I had used people for my own purposes, or even used the name of Jesus, to further my own ambitions, or to make myself look better, began to cascade down upon me. Here, in this place where I could behold the power and glory of the One I had so used, it became more repulsive than I could stand. I fell on my face in the worst despair I had ever known. After what seemed like an eternity of seeing these people and events pass before me, I felt the Reformer's wife lifting me to my feet again. I was overcome by her purity, especially as I now felt so evil and corrupt. I had the strongest desire to worship her because she was so pure.

"Turn to the Son," she said emphatically. "Your desire to worship me, or anyone else at this time, is only an attempt to turn the attention away from yourself and justify yourself by serving what you are not. I am pure now because I turned to I Him. You need to see the corruption that is in your own soul, but then you must not dwell on yourself or seek to justify yourself with dead works, but turn to Him."

This was said in such genuine love that it was impossible to be hurt or offended by it. When she saw that I understood, she continued: The purity that you saw in me was what my husband first saw in me when we were young. I was relatively pure in my motives then, but I corrupted his love and my own purity by allowing him to worship me wrongly. You can never become pure just by worshiping those who are more pure than yourself. You must go beyond them to find the One who has made them pure, and in Whom alone there is no sin. The more people praised us, and the more we accepted their praises, the further we drifted from the path of life. Then we started living for the praises of men, and to gain power over those who would not praise us. That was our demise, and was the same for many who are here in the lowest place."

Wanting to simply prolong our conversation, I asked the next question that came to my mind, "Is it difficult for you and your husband to be here together?"

"Not at all. All of the relationships that you have on earth are continued here, and they are all purified by the judgment, and by the fact that they are now spiritual just as we are now spirit. The more that you are forgiven the more that you love. After we forgave each other we loved each other more. Now our relationship is continuing in much greater depth and richness because we are joint heirs of this salvation. As deep as the wounds went that we afflicted upon each other, the love was able to go when we were healed. We could have experienced this on earth, but we did not learn forgiveness in time. If we had learned forgiveness the competition that entered our relationship, and sidetracked our life, would not have been able to take root in us. If you truly love, you will truly forgive. The harder it is for you to forgive, the further you are from true love. Forgiveness is essential, or you will stumble, and in many ways will stray from the course chosen for you.

At the same time I realized that this woman, who had brought me into this confrontation with such pain at my own depravity, was also the most attractive person I could ever remember meeting. It was not romantic attraction, but just did not want to leave her. Perceiving my thoughts, she withdrew a step, indicating that she was about to go, but offered me one last insight.

"The pure truth, spoken in pure love, will always attract. You will remember the pain you feel here, and it will help you through the rest of your life. Pain is good; it shows you where there is a problem. Do not try to reduce the pain until you find that problem. God's truth often brings pain as it highlights a problem that we have, but His truth will always show us the way to freedom, too. When you know this you will even begin to rejoice in your trials, which are all allowed to help keep you on the path of life."

"Also, your attraction to me is not out of order. It is the attraction between male and female that was given in the beginning, which is always pure in its true form. When pure truth is combined with pure love, men can be the men they were created to be without having to dominate out of insecurity. This is nothing but lust, which is the lowest depth to which love falls because of our sin. With true love, men become true men, and women can be the women they were created to be, because their love has replaced their fear. Love will never manipulate or try to control out of insecurity, because love casts out all fear. The very place where relationships can be the most corrupted is also where they can be the most fulfilling, after redemption has worked in them. True love is a taste of heaven, and lust is the enemy's ultimate perversion of the glory of heaven. To the degree that you are free of lust on earth, to that degree you will begin to experience heaven.

"But I do not think that I have felt any lust here, or for you," I mildly protested. "On the contrary, I was marveling that I could behold one with your beauty and not feel lust."

"That is because you are here. The light of His glory here casts out all darkness. But if you were not here, lust would be gripping you now," she said.

"I'm sure you are right. Can we ever be free from this terrible perversion on earth?" I begged.

"Yes. As your mind is renewed by the Spirit of Truth you will not see relationships as an opportunity to get from others, but to give. Giving provides the greatest fulfillment that we can ever know. The most wonderful human relationships are but a fleeting glimpse of the ecstasy that comes when we give ourselves to the Lord in pure worship. What we experience in worship here your frail unglorified body could not endure. The true worship of God will purify the soul for the glories of true relationships. Therefore, you must not seek relationships, but true worship. Only then can relationships start to be what they are supposed to be. True love never seeks to be first, or to be in control, but rather the place of service. If my husband and I had kept this in our marriage, we would be sitting next to the King now, and this great hall would be filled with many more souls."

With that she disappeared back into the ranks of the glorified saints. I looked again towards the throne and was taken aback because the glory appeared so much more beautiful than it had before. Another man standing close to me explained:

"With each encounter, a veil is being removed so that you can see Him more clearly. You are not changed just by seeing His glory, but by seeing it with an unveiled face. Everyone who comes to the true judgments of God walks a corridor such as this to meet those who can help them remove whatever veils they are still wearing, those veils that will distort their vision of Him."

I had already absorbed more understanding than I felt like my many years of ministry on earth had given me. I then began to feel that all of my study and seeking on earth had only lead me forward at a snail's pace. How could many lifetimes prepare me for the judgment? My life had already disqualified me more than all of those whom I had met, and they had barely made it here!

"How could all of those who had not been given the grace of this experience have any hope at all?" I asked.

I heard a new voice: "What you are experiencing here has been given you on earth. Every relationship, every encounter with another person, could teach you what you are learning here if you will keep that cloak of humility on, and learn to always keep your attention fixed on His glory. You are being given this experience now because you will write the vision, and those who read it will understand it. Many will then be able to carry the glory and the power that they must carry into the last battle."

I was amazed to recognize this man as a contemporary of mine, and I did not know that he had died. I had never met him on earth, but he had a great ministry which I respected very much. Through men that he had trained thousands had been led to salvation, and many large churches had been raised up that were almost all devoted to evangelism.

He asked if he could just embrace me for a minute, and I agreed, feeling quite awkward. When we embraced I felt such love coming from him that a great pain that was deep within me stopped hurting. I had become so used to the pain that I did not even notice it until it stopped. After he released me I told him that his embrace had healed me of something. His joy at this was profound. Then he began to tell me why he was in the lowest rank in heaven.

"I became so proud near the end of my life that I could not imagine that the Lord would do anything of significance unless He did it through me. I began to touch the Lord's anointed, and to do His prophets harm. I was selfishly proud when the Lord used one of my own disciples, and I became jealous when the Lord moved through anyone who was outside of my own ministry. I would search for anything that was wrong with them in order to expose them. I did not know that every time I did this I only demoted myself further."

"I never knew that you had done anything like that," I said, surprised.

"I did not do it myself, but I incited men under me to investigate others and do my dirty work. I had them scour the earth to find any error or sin in the life of others to expose them. I became the worst thing that a man can become on the earth—a stumbling block who produced other stumbling blocks. We sowed fear and division throughout the church, all in the name of protecting the truth. In my self-righteousness I was headed for perdition. In His great mercy the Lord allowed me to be struck by a disease that would bring about a slow and humiliating death. Just before I died I came to my senses and repented. I am just thankful to be here at all. I may be one of the least of His here, but it is much more than I deserve. I just could not leave this room until I had a chance to apologize to those of you that I so wronged."

"But you never wronged me," I said.

"Oh, but I did indeed," he replied. "Many of the attacks that came against you were from those whom I had agitated and encouraged in their assaults on others. Even though I may not have personally carried out the attacks, the Lord holds me as responsible as those who did."

"I see. Of course I forgive you. "

I was already beginning to remember how I had done this same thing, even though on a smaller scale. I recalled how I had allowed disgruntled former members of a church to spread their poison about that church without stopping them. I knew that by just allowing them to do this without correcting them I had encouraged them to continue. I remember thinking that this was justified because of the errors of that church. I then began to remember how I had even repeated many of their stories, justifying it under the guise of enlisting prayers for them. Soon a great flood of other such incidents began to arise in my heart. Again, I was starting to be overwhelmed by the evil and darkness of my own soul.

"I, too, have been a stumbling block!" I wailed. I knew that I deserved death, that I deserved the worst kind of hell. I had never seen such ruthlessness and cruelty as I was now seeing in my own heart.

"And we always comforted ourselves by actually thinking that we were doing God a favor when we attacked His own children," came the understanding voice of his man. "It is good for you to see this here, because you can go back. Please warn my disciples of their impending doom if they do not repent. Many of them are called to be kings here, but if they do not repent they will face the worst judgment of all - the judgment of the stumbling block. My humbling disease was grace from God. When I stood before the throne I asked the Lord to send such grace to my disciples. I cannot cross back over to them, but He has allowed me this time with you. Please forgive and release those who have attacked you. They really do not understand that they are doing the work of the Accuser. Thank you for forgiving me, but please also forgive them. It is in your power to retain sins or to cover them with love. I entreat you to love those who are now your enemies."

I could hardly hear this man I was so overwhelmed with my own sin. He was so glorious, pure and obviously now had powers that were not known on the earth. Yet, he was entreating me with a

great humility. I felt such love coming from him that I could not imagine refusing him. But even without the impact of his love, I felt far more guilty than anyone could possibly be who was attacking me.

"Certainly I must deserve anything they have done to me, and much more," I replied.

"That is true but it is not the point here," he entreated. "Everyone on earth is deserving of the second death, but our Savior brought us grace and truth. If we are to do His work we must do everything in both grace and truth. Truth without grace is what the enemy brings when he comes as an 'angel of light.'"

"If I can be delivered from this maybe I will be able to help them," I replied. "But can't you recognize that I am far worse than they could possibly be?"

"I know that what just passed through your memory was bad," he answered, but with a love and grace that was profound. I knew that he had now become as concerned for me and my condition as he had been for his own disciples.

"This really is heaven," I blurted out. "This really is light and truth. How could we who live in such darkness become so proud, thinking that we know so much about God? Lord!" I yelled in the direction of the throne, "Please let me go and carry this light back to earth!"

Immediately the entire host of heaven seemed to stand at attention, and I knew that I was the center of their attention. I felt so insignificant before just one of these glorious ones, but when I knew they were all looking at me, fear came like a tidal wave. I felt that there could be no doom like I was about to experience. I felt like the greatest enemy of the glory and truth that so filled that place.

Then I thought about my request to go back. I was too corrupted. I could never adequately represent such glory and truth. There was no way that I could in my corruption convey the reality of that glorious place and Presence. I felt that even Satan had not fallen as far as I had. "This is hell," I thought. There could be no worse pain than to be as evil as I am and to know that this kind of glory exists, to be banned from here would be a torture worse than I ever feared. "No wonder the demons are so angry and demented," I said under my breath.

Just when I felt that I was about to be sent to the deepest regions of hell, I simply cried, "JESUS!" Quickly a peace came over me, I knew I had to move on toward the glory again, and somehow I had the confidence to do it. I kept moving until I saw a man who I considered to be one of the greatest writers of all time. I had counted his depth of insight into the truth to be possibly the greatest that I had encountered in all of my studies.

"Sir, I have always looked forward to this meeting," I almost blurted out.

"As have I," he replied with genuine sincerity.

I was surprised by his comment, but I was so excited to meet him that I continued: "I feel that I know you, and in your writings I almost felt like you somehow knew me, I think that I owe more to you than to anyone else who was not canonized in Scripture:" I continued.

"You are very gracious," he replied. But I am sorry that I did not serve you better, I was a shallow person, and my writings were shallow, and filled more with worldly wisdom than divine truth."

"Since I have been here, and learned all that I have learned, I know that this must be true because you can only speak the truth here, but that is hard for me to understand. I think your writings are some of the best that we have on earth," I answered.

"You are right," this famous writer admitted, with sincerity. "It is so sad. Everyone here, even those who sit closest to the King, would live their lives differently if they had them to live over, but I think that I would live mine even more differently than most. I was honored by kings, but failed the King of Kings. I used the great gifts and insights that were given to me to draw men more to myself and my wisdom than to Him. Besides, I only knew Him by the hearing of the ear, which is the way I compelled other men to know Him. I made them dependent on me, and others like me. I turned them more to deductive reasoning than to the Holy Spirit, Who I hardly knew. I did not point men to Jesus, but to myself and others like me: who pretended to know Him. When I beheld Him here, I wanted to ground my writings into powder, just as Moses did to the golden calf. My mind was my idol, and I wanted everyone to worship my mind with me. Your esteem for me does not cause me to rejoice. If I had spent as much time seeking to know Him as I did seeking to know about Him in order to impress others with my knowledge, many of those who are in this lowest of companies

would be sitting in the thrones that were prepared for them, and many others would be in this room." "I know that what you are saying about your work must be true, but are you not being a little too hard on yourself?" I questioned. "Your works fed me spiritually for many years, as I know they have multitudes of others."

"I am not being too hard on myself. All that I have said is true as it was confirmed when I stood before the throne. I produced a lot, but I was given more talents than almost anyone here, and I buried them beneath my own spiritual pride and ambitions. Just as Adam could have carried the whole human race into a most glorious future, but by his failure led billions of souls into the worst of dooms, with authority comes responsibility. The more authority you are given, the more potential for both good and evil you will have. Those who will rule with Him for the ages will know responsibility of the most profound kind. No man stands alone, and every human failure, or victory, resonates far beyond our comprehension, even to generations to come."

I was thinking about how this man had written with the most beautiful and articulate phrases, feeling that he was the very definition of a "word smith," a craftsman who turned words into works of art. But here, he was speaking as a common man, without the flair for which his writings were so well known. I knew that he knew what I was thinking, as everyone did here, but he continued with what he obviously thought was more important.

"Had I sought the Lord instead of knowledge about Him, many thousands who I could have led successfully would have resulted in many more millions being here now. Anyone who understands the true nature of authority would never seek it, but only accept it when they know they are yoked with the Lord, the only One who can carry authority without stumbling. Never seek influence for yourself but only seek the Lord and be willing to take His yoke. My influence did not feed your heart, but rather your pride in knowledge."

"How can I know that I am not doing the same?" I asked as I began to think of my own writings.

"Study to show yourself approved unto God, not men," he replied as he walked back into the ranks. Before he disappeared he turned and with the slightest smile, offered one last bit of advice: "And do not follow me."

In this first multitude I saw many other men and women of God from both my own time and history. I stopped and talked to many more. I was continually shocked that so many whom I expected to be in the highest positions were in the lowest rank of the kingdom. Many shared the same basic story - they all had fallen to the deadly sin of pride after their great victories, or fallen to jealousy when other men were anointed as much as they were. Others had fallen to lust, discouragement, or bitterness near the end of their lives and had to be taken before they crossed the line into perdition. They all gave me the same warning: the higher the spiritual authority that you walk in, the further you can fall if you are without love and humility.

As I continued toward the judgment seat I began to pass those who were of higher rank in the kingdom. After many more veils had been stripped away from me by meetings with those who had stumbled over the same problems that I had, I began to meet some who had overcome. I met couples who had served the Lord and each other faithfully to the end. Their glory here was unspeakable, and their victory encouraged me that it was possible to stay on the path of life, and to serve Him in faithfulness. Those who stumbled, stumbled in many different ways. Those who prevailed all did it the same way they did not deviate from their devotion to the first and greatest commandment - loving the Lord. By this their service was done unto Him, not to men, not even for spiritual men. These were the ones who worshiped the Lamb, and followed Him wherever He went. When I was still not even halfway to the throne, what had been the indescribable glory of the first rank now seemed to be the outer darkness in comparison to the glory of those I was now passing. The greatest beauty on earth would not qualify to be found anywhere in heaven. And I was told that this room was just the threshold of realms indescribable!

My march to the throne may have taken days, months or even years. There was no way to measure time in that place. Everyone there showed respect to me, not because of who I was or anything that I had done, but simply because I was a warrior in the battle of the last days. Somehow, through this

last battle, the glory of God was to be revealed in such a way that it would be a witness to every power and authority, created or yet to be created, for all of eternity. During this battle the glory of the cross would be revealed, and the wisdom of God would be known in a special way. To be in that battle was to be given one of the greatest honors possible.

I approached the judgment Seat of Christ those in the highest ranks were also sitting on thrones that were all a part of His throne. Even the least of these thrones was more glorious than any earthly throne many times over. Some of these were rulers over cities on earth who would soon take their places. Others were rulers over the affairs of heaven, and others over the affairs of the physical creation, such as star systems and galaxies. However, it was apparent that those who were given authority over cities were esteemed above those who had even been given authority over galaxies. The value of a single child surpassed that of a galaxy of stars, because the Holy Spirit dwelt in men, and the Lord had chosen men as His eternal dwelling place. In the presence of His glory the whole earth seemed as insignificant as a speck of dust; and yet it was so infinitely esteemed that the attention of the whole creation was upon it.

Now that I stood before the throne, I felt even lower than a speck of dust. Even so, I felt the Holy Spirit upon me in a greater way than I ever had. It was by His power alone that I was able to stand. It was here that I truly came to understand His ministry as the Comforter. He had led me through the entire journey even though I had been, for the most part, unaware of His presence.

The Lord was both more gentle and more terrible than I had ever imagined. In Him I saw Wisdom who had accompanied me on the mountain. I also felt somehow the familiarity of many of my friends on earth, which I understood to be because He had often spoken to me through them. I also recognized Him as the One that I had often rejected when He had come to me in others. I saw both a Lion and a Lamb, the Shepherd and the Bridegroom, but most of all I saw Him as the Judge.

Even in His awesome presence, the Comforter was so mightily with me I was comfortable. It was clear that the Lord in no way wanted me to be uncomfortable; He only wanted me to know the truth. Human words are not adequate to describe either how awesome, or how relieving it was to stand before Him. I had passed the point where I was concerned if the judgment was going to be good or bad; I just knew it would be right, and that I could trust my judge.

At one point the Lord looked toward the galleries of thrones around Him. Many were occupied, but many were empty. He then said, "These thrones are for the over-comers who have served Me faithfully in every generation. My Father and I prepared them before the foundation of the world. Are you worthy to sit on one of these?"

I remembered what a friend had once said, "When the omniscient God asks you a question, it is not because He is seeking information." I looked at the thrones. I looked at those who were now seated. I could recognize some of the great heroes of the faith, but most of those seated I knew had not even been well known on earth. Many I knew had been missionaries who had expended their lives in obscurity. They had never cared to be remembered on earth, but wanted only to be remembered by Him. I was a bit surprised to see some who had been wealthy, or rulers who had been faithful with what they had been given. However, it seemed that faithful, praying women and mothers occupied more thrones than any other single group.

There was no way that I could answer "yes" to the Lord's question if I considered myself worthy to sit here. I was not worthy to sit in the company of any who were there. I knew I had been given the opportunity to run for the greatest prize in heaven on earth, and I had failed. I was desperate, but there was still one hope. Even though most of my life had been a failure, I knew that I was here before I had finished my life on earth. When I confessed that I was not worthy, He asked:

"But do you want this seat?"

"I do with all of my heart," I responded.

The Lord then looked at the galleries and said, "Those empty seats could have been filled in any generation. I gave the invitation to sit here to everyone who has called upon My Name. They are still available. Now the last battle has come, and many who are last shall be first. These seats will be filled before the battle is over. Those who will sit here will be known by two things: they will wear the mantle of humility, and they will have My likeness. You now have the mantle. If you can keep it and do not lose it in the battle, when you return you will also have My likeness. Then you

will be worthy to sit with these, because I will have made you worthy. All authority and power has been given to Me, and I alone can wield it. You will prevail, and you will be trusted with My authority only when you have come to fully abide in Me. Now turn and look at My household."

I turned and looked back in the direction I had come from. From before His throne I could see the entire room. The spectacle was beyond any comparison in its glory. Millions filled the ranks. Each individual in the lowest rank was more awesome than an army, and had more power. It was far beyond my capacity to absorb such a panorama of glory. Even so, I could see that only a very small portion of the great room was occupied.

I then looked back at the Lord and was astonished to see tears in His eyes. He had wiped the tears away from every eye here, except His own. As a tear ran down His cheek He caught it in His hand. He then offered it to me.

"This is My cup. Will you drink it with Me?"

There was no way that I could refuse Him. As the Lord continued to look at Me I began to feel His great love. Even as foul as I was He still loved me. As undeserving as I was He wanted me to be close to Him. Then He said:

*"I love all of these with a love that you cannot now understand. I also love all who are supposed to be here but did not come. I have left the ninety-nine to go after the one who was lost. My shepherds would not leave the one to go after the ninety-nine who are still lost. I came to save the lost. Will you share My heart to go to save the lost? Will you help to fill this room? Will you help to fill these thrones, and every other seat in this hall? Will you take up this quest to bring joy to heaven, to Me and to My Father? This judgment is for My own household, and My own house is not full. The last battle will not be over until My house is full. Only then will it be time for us to redeem the earth, and remove the evil from My creation. If you drink My cup you will love the lost the way that I love them."*

He then took a cup so plain that it seemed out of place in a room of such glory, and He placed His tear in it. He then gave it to me. I have never tasted anything so bitter. I knew that I could in no way drink it all, or even much of it, but I was determined to drink as much as I could. The Lord patiently waited until I finally erupted into such crying that I felt like rivers of tears were flowing from me. I was crying for the lost, but even more I was crying for the Lord.

I looked to Him in desperation as I could not take any more of the great pain. Then His peace began to fill me and to flow together with His love that I was feeling. Never had I felt anything so wonderful. This was the living water that I knew could spring up for eternity. Then I felt as if the waters flowing within me caught on fire. I began to feel that this fire would consume me if I could not begin declaring the majesty of His glory. I had never felt such an urge to preach, to worship Him, and to breathe every breath that I was given for the sake of His gospel.

"Lord!" I shouted, forgetting everyone but Him. "I now know that this throne of judgment is also the throne of grace, and I ask You now for the grace to serve You. Above all things I ask You for grace! I ask You for the grace to finish my course. I ask You for the grace to love You like this so that I can be delivered from the delusions and self-centeredness that have so perverted my life. I call upon You for salvation from myself and the evil of my own heart, and for this love that I now feel to flow continually in my heart. I ask You to give me Your heart, Your love. I ask You for the grace of the Holy Spirit to convict me of my sin. I ask You for the grace of the Holy Spirit to testify of You, as You really are. I ask You for the grace to testify of all that You have prepared for those who come to You. I ask for the grace to be upon me to preach the reality of this judgment. I ask for the grace to share with those who are called to occupy these empty thrones, to give them words of life that will keep them on the path of life, that will impart to them the faith to do what they have been called to do. Lord, I beg You for this grace."

The Lord then stood up, and all of those who were seated upon the thrones for as far as I could see also stood up. His eyes burned with a fire I had not seen before.

*"You have called upon Me for grace. This request I never deny. You shall return, and the Holy Spirit shall be with you. Here you have tasted of both My kindness and My severity. You must remember both if you are to stay on the path of life. The true love of God includes the judgment of God. You must know both my kindness and severity or you will fall to deception. This is the grace*

*that you have been given here, to know both. The conversations you had with your brethren here were My grace. Remember them."*

He then pointed His sword toward my heart, then my mouth, then my hands. When He did this fire came from His sword and burned me. The pain was very great. *"This, too, is grace," He said. "You are but one of many who have been prepared for this hour. Preach and write about all that you have seen here. What I have said to you say to My brethren. Go and call My captains to the last battle. Go and defend the poor and the oppressed, the widows and the orphans. This is the com-mission of My captains, and it is where you will find them. My children are worth more to Me than the stars in the heavens. Feed My lambs. Watch over My little ones. Give the Word of God to them that they may live. Go to the battle. Go and do not retreat. Go quickly for I will come quickly. Obey Me and hasten the day of My coming."*

A company of angels then came and escorted me away from the throne. The leader walked beside me and began to speak.

Now that He has stood He will not sit again until the last battle is over. He has been seated until the time when His enemies are to be put under His feet. The time has now come. The legions of angels that have been standing ready since the night of His passion have now been released upon the earth. The hordes of hell have also been released. This is the time for which all of creation has been waiting. The great mystery of God will soon be finished. We will now fight until the end. We will fight with you and with your brethren."

## **PART V - THE OVER-COMERS**

As I continued walking away from the judgment seat I began to reflect on all that I had just experienced. It had been both terrible and wonderful. As challenging and heart rending as it had been, I felt more secure than I ever had. It was not easy at first to be stripped so bare in front of so many, unable to hide even a single thought, but when I just relaxed and accepted it, knowing that it was cleaning my very soul, it became profoundly liberating. Not having anything to hide was like taking off the heaviest yoke and shackles. I began to feel like I could breathe like I had never breathed before. The more at ease I became, the more my mind seemed to multiply in its capacity. Then I began to sense a communication that was going on of which no human words could articulate. I thought of the apostle Paul's comments about his visit to the third heaven where he had heard inexpressible words. There is a spiritual communication that greatly transcends any form of human communication. It is more profound and meaningful than human words are able to articulate. Somehow it is a pure communication of the heart and mind together, and it is so pure that there is no possibility of misunderstanding.

As I looked at someone in the room I began to understand what he was thinking just as he had been able to understand me. When I looked at the Lord I began to understand Him in the same way. We continued to use words, but the meaning of each one had a depth that no dictionary could have ever captured. My mind had been freed so that its capacity was multiplied many times over. It was exhilarating beyond any previous experience. It was also obvious that the Lord was enjoying being able to communicate this way with me as much as I was with Him. Never before had I understood so deeply what it meant for Him to be the Word of God. Jesus is the Communication of God to His creation. His words are spirit and life, and their meaning and power far exceeds our present human definitions. Human words are a very superficial form of the communication of the spirit. He made us able to communicate on a level that far transcends human words, but because of the fall, and the debacle at the Tower of Babel, we have lost this capacity. We cannot be who we were created to be until we regain this, and we can only attain it when we are freed in His presence.

I began to understand that when Adam's transgression caused him to hide from God, it was the beginning of a most terrible distortion of what man was created to be, as well as a severe reduction of his intellectual and spiritual capacities. These could only be restored when we come out of "hiding," opening ourselves to God and to each other, becoming genuinely transparent. It is as we



behold the glory of the Lord with an "unveiled face" that we are changed into His image. The veils are caused by our hiding.

When the Lord asked Adam where he was after the transgression, it was His very first question to man, and it is the first one that we must answer if we are to be fully restored to Him. Of course, the Lord knew where Adam was. The question was for Adam's sake. That question was the beginning of God's quest for man. The story of redemption is God's pursuit of man, not man's pursuit of God. When we can fully answer this question, knowing where we are in relation to God, we will have been fully restored to Him. We can only know the answer to this question when we are in His presence. That was the essence of my entire judgment seat experience. The Lord already knew all that there was to know about me. It was all for my sake, so that I would know where I was. It was all to bring me out of hiding, to bring me out of darkness into the light.

I also began to understand just how much the Lord desired to be one with His people. Through the entire judgment He was not trying to get me to see something as good or bad as much as to see it in union with Him. The Lord was seeking me more than I was seeking Him. His judgments set me free, and His Judgment of the world will set the world free. When God's judgment day comes it will bring the final deliverance of Adam from his hiding place. This will be the final liberation of Adam, and it will also begin the final liberation of the creation that was subject to bondage because of Adam. The darkness in the world was perpetuated by the compulsion to hide that began after the fall. "Walking in the light" is more than just knowing and obeying certain truths--it is being true and it is being free from the compulsion to hide. "Walking in the light" means no more hiding, from God or anyone else. The nakedness of Adam and Eve before the fall was not just physical, but spiritual as well. When our salvation is complete we will know this kind of freedom again. To be completely open to others really will open our own hearts and minds to realms we do not now even know exist. This is what Satan is attempting to counterfeit through the New Age Movement.

As I walked, pondering all that I had learned, suddenly the Lord appeared by my side in the form of Wisdom again. Only He now appeared far more glorious than I had ever seen Him, even when He was on the judgment seat. I was both stunned and overjoyed, "Lord, are you returning with me like this?" I asked.

*"I will always be with you like this. However, I want to be even more to you than the way you see Me now. You have seen My kindness and My severity here, but you still do not fully know Me as the Righteous Judge."*

This surprised me since I had just spent all of this time before His judgment seat, and felt that all I had been learning was about His judgment. He paused to let this sink in, and then continued.

*"There is a freedom that comes when you perceive truth, but whoever I set free is free indeed. The freedom of My presence is greater than just knowing truth. You have experienced liberation in My presence, but there is yet much more for you to understand about My judgments. When I judge I am not seeking to condemn, or to justify, but to bring forth righteousness. Righteousness is only found in union with Me. That is the righteous judgment, bringing men into unity with Me.*

*"My church is now clothed with shame because she does not have judges. She does not have judges because she does not know Me as the Judge. I will now raise up judges for My people who know My judgment. They will not just decide between people or issues, but to make things right, which is to bring them into agreement with Me.*

*"When I appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Host, I declared that I was for neither him nor his enemies. I never come to take sides. When I come it is to take over, not to take sides. I appeared as the Captain of the Host before Israel could enter her Promised Land. The Church is now about to enter her Promised Land, and I am again about to appear as the Captain of the Host. When I do I will remove all who have been forcing My people to take sides against their brothers. My justice does not take sides in human conflicts, even those of My own people. What I was doing through Israel I was doing for their enemies, too, not against them. It is only because you see from the earthly, temporal perspective that you do not see My justice. You Must see My justice to walk in My authority, because righteousness and justice are the foundation of My throne.*

*"I have imputed righteousness to the people I have chosen, but like Israel in the wilderness, even the greatest saints of the Church age have only aligned themselves with My ways a small part of the*

time, or with a small part of their minds and hearts. I am not for them or against their enemies, but I am coming to use My people to save their enemies. I love all men, and desire for all to be saved. " I could not help thinking of the great battle that we had fought on the mountain. We did wound many of our own brethren as we fought against the evil controlling them. There were still many of them in the camp of the enemy, either being used by him, or kept as his prisoners. I started to wonder if the next battle would be against our own brothers again. The Lord was watching me ponder all of this, and then He continued.

*"Until the last battle is over, there will always be some of our brothers who are being used by the enemy. But that is not why I am telling you this now. I am telling you this to help you see how the enemy gets into your own heart and mind, and how he uses you! Even now you still do not see everything the way that I do.*

*"This is common with My people. At this time, even My greatest leaders are seldom in harmony with Me. Many are doing good works, but very few are doing what I have called them to do. This is the result of divisions among you. I am not coming to take sides with any one group, but I am calling for those who will come over to My side.*

*"You are impressed when I give you a 'word of knowledge' about someone's physical illness, or other knowledge that is not known to you. This knowledge comes when you touch My mind to just a small degree. I know all things. If you were to fully have My mind you would be able to know everything about everything about everyone that you encounter, just as you have begun to experience here. You would see all men just the way that I see them. But even then there is more to fully abiding in Me. You must have My heart to know how to use such knowledge rightly. Only then will you have My judgment.*

*"I can only trust you with My supernatural knowledge to the degree that you know My heart. The gifts of the Spirit that I have released to My Church are but small tokens of the powers of the age to come. I have called you to be messengers of that age, and you must, therefore, know its powers. You should earnestly desire the gifts because they are a part of Me, and I have given them to you so that you can be like Me. You are right to seek to know My mind, My ways and My purposes, but you must also earnestly desire to know My heart! When you know My heart, then the eyes of your heart will be opened. Then you will see as I see, and you will do what I do.*

*"I am about to entrust much more of the powers of the age to come in My Church. However, there is a great deception that often comes upon those who are trusted with great power, and if you do not understand what I am about to show you, you too will fall to this deception.*

*"You have asked for My grace and you shall have it. The first grace that will keep you on the path of life is to know the level of your present deception. Deception involves anything that you do not understand as I do. Knowing the level of your present deception brings humility, and I give My grace to the humble. That is why I said, 'Who is so blind but My servant...' That is why I said to the Pharisees, 'It is for judgment that I came into the world... to give sight to those who do not see, and to make blind those who see... If you were blind you would not be guilty, but because you claim to see, your guilt remains.' That is why, when I called My servant Paul, My light struck him blind. My light only revealed his true condition. Like him, you must be struck blind in the natural so that you can see by My Spirit."*

I then felt compelled to look at those who were sitting on the thrones we were passing. As I did, my gaze fell upon a man whom I knew was the apostle Paul. As I looked back at the Lord, He motioned for me to speak to him.

"I have so looked forward to this," I said, feeling awkward but excited by this meeting. "I know that you are aware of just how much your letters have guided the Church, and they are probably still accomplishing more than all of the rest of us put together. You are still one of the greatest lights on earth."

"Thank you," he said graciously. "But you do not understand just how much we have looked forward to meeting you. You are a soldier in the last battle; you are the ones whom everyone here is waiting to meet. We only saw these days dimly through our limited prophetic vision, but you have been chosen to live in them. You are a soldier preparing for the last battle. You are the ones for whom we are all waiting."

Still feeling awkward, I continued, "But there is no way that I can convey the appreciation that we feel for you, and all who helped to set our course with their lives and their writings. I also know that we will have an eternity for exchanging our appreciation, so please, while I am here, let me ask, 'What would you say to my generation that will help us in this battle?'"

"I can only say to you now what I have already said to you through writings. I would have you to understand them better by knowing that I fell short of all that I was called to do," Paul started, looking me resolutely in the eyes.

"But you are here, in one of the greatest thrones. You are still reaping more fruit for eternal life than any of us could ever hope to reap," I protested.

"By the grace of God I was able to finish my course, but I still did not walk in all that I was called to. I fell short of the highest purposes that I could have walked in. Everyone has. I know that some think that it is blasphemy to think of me as anything less than the greatest example of Christian ministry, but I was the greatest of sinners. I was not saying that I had been the greatest of sinners, but I was the greatest of sinners then. I had been given so much to understand, and I walked in so little of it."

"How could that possibly be? I thought you were just being humble," I asked.

"True humility is agreement with the truth. Do not fear. My letters were true, and they were written by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. However, I was given so much, and I did not use all that I was given. I, too, fell short. Everyone here has fallen short, except One. But you must especially see this about me, because many are still distorting my teachings, because they have a distorted view of me."

"As you saw the progression in my letters, I went from feeling that I was not inferior to even the most imminent apostles, acknowledging that I was the least of the apostles, then the least of the saints, to finally realizing that I was the greatest of sinners. I was not just being humble, I was speaking sober truth. I was trusted with much, much more than I used. There is only One here who fully believed, who fully obeyed, and who truly finished all that He was given to do, but you can walk in much more than I did."

My reply was feeble, "I know that what you are saying is true, but are you sure that this is the most important message that you would give to us for the last battle?"

"I am sure," he replied with utter conviction. "I so appreciate the grace of the Lord to use my letters as He has. But I am concerned with the way many of you are using them wrongly. They are the truth of the Holy Spirit, and they are Scripture. The Lord did give me great stones to set into the structure of His eternal Church, but they are not foundation stones. The foundation stones were laid by Jesus alone. My life and ministry are not the example of what you are called to be, Jesus alone is that. If what I have written is used as a foundation, it will not be able to hold the weight of that which needs to be built upon it. What I have written must be built upon the only Foundation that can withstand what you are about to endure; it must not be used as the foundation. You must see my teachings through the Lord's teachings, not try to understand Him from my perspective. His words are the foundation, I have only built upon them by elaborating on His words. The greatest wisdom, and the most powerful truths, are His words, not mine."

"You must also know that I did not walk in all that was available to me. There is much more available for every believer to walk in than I did. Every true believer was the Holy Spirit in them. The power of the One who created all things lives within them. The least of the saints has the power in them to move mountains, to stop armies, or to raise the dead. If you are to accomplish all that you are called to in your day, my ministry must not be viewed as the ultimate, but as a starting place. Your goal must not be to be like me, but to be like the Lord. You can be like Him, and you can do everything that He did, and even more, because He saved His best wine for last."

I knew that only truth could be spoken here. I knew that what Paul was saying was true about the way many had been wrongly using his teachings as a foundation, rather than building upon the foundation of the gospels, but it was still hard for me to accept that Paul had fallen short of his calling. I looked at Paul's throne and the glory of his being. It was much more than I dreamed the greatest saints in heaven would have. He was every bit as forthright and resolute as I had expected him to be. It struck me how obvious it was that he still carried his great concern for all of the

churches. I had idolized him and that was a transgression that he was trying to set me free from. Even so, he was much greater than the Paul I had idolized. Knowing what I was thinking, he put both hands on my shoulders and looked me even more resolutely straight in the eyes.

"I am your brother, I love you as everyone here does, but you must understand. Our course is now finished. We can neither add to nor take away from what we planted in the earth, but you can. We are not your hope. You are now our hope, even in this conversation I can only confirm what I have already written, but you still have much writing to do. Worship only God, and grow up in all things into Him. Never make any man your goal, but only Him. Many will soon walk the earth who will do much greater works than we did. The first shall be last, and the last, first. We do not mind this. It is the joy of our hearts, because we are one with you. My generation was used to lay and begin building upon the foundation, and we will always have the honor of that. But every floor built upon the foundation should go higher. We will not be the building we are supposed to be unless you go higher." As I pondered this he watched me closely. Then he continued, "There are two more things that we attained in our time, that were lost very quickly by the Church, and they have not yet been recovered. You must recover them."

"What are they?" I inquired, feeling that what he was about to say was more than just an addendum to what he had already said.

"You must recover the ministry, and the message," he said emphatically.

I looked at the Lord, and He nodded His affirmation, adding, "It is right that Paul should say this to you. Until this time he has been the most faithful with both of these." "Please explain," I implored Paul.

"Alright," he replied. "Except for a few small places in the world where there is great persecution or difficulties now, we can hardly recognize either the ministry or the message that is being preached today. Therefore, the church is now but a phantom of what it was even in our time, and we were far from all that we were called to be. When we served, being in ministry was the greatest sacrifice that one could make, and this reflected the message of the greatest sacrifice that was made - the cross. The cross is the power of God, and it is the center of all that we are called to live by. You have so little power to transform the minds and hearts of the disciples now because you do not live, and do not preach, the cross. Therefore, we have difficulty seeing much difference between the disciples and the heathen. That is not the gospel or the salvation with which we were entrusted. You must return to the cross."

With those words he squeezed my shoulders like a father, and then returned to his seat. I felt like I had received both an incredible blessing and a profound rebuke. As I walked away I began thinking of the level of salvation on the mountain, and the treasures of salvation that I had seen inside the mountain. I began to see that most of my own decisions, even the decision to enter the door that led me here, was based mostly on what would get me further, not on a consideration for the will of the Lord. In all that I had done I was still living for myself and not for Him. Even in my desire to embrace the judgments here, I was motivated by what would help me to make it back in victory without suffering loss. I was still walking much more in self-centeredness than Christ-centeredness. I know that the short talk with Paul would have consequences that would take a long time to fully understand. In a way I felt that I had received a blessing from the entire, eternal Church. The great cloud of witnesses really were cheering us on. They looked at us like proud parents who wanted better things for their children than they had known. Their greatest joy would be to see the Church in the last days become everything that the Church in their day had failed to attain. I also knew that I was still falling far short of what they had prepared for us to walk in.

"The last day Church will not be greater than their generation, even if you do greater work," the Lord interjected. "All that is done is done by My grace. However, I will make more of My grace, and more of My power available to the last day Church, because she must accomplish more than the Church in any age has yet accomplished. The last day believers will walk in all of the power that I demonstrated, and more, because they will be the final representatives of all who have gone before them. The last day Church will demonstrate My nature and My ways as they have never been demonstrated before by men. It is because I am giving you more grace, and to whom much is

given much will be required.

This just made me think even more about Paul. "How would we even become as dedicated and faithful as he had been?" I thought to myself.

"I am not asking you to attain that," the Lord answered. "I am asking you to abide in Me. You cannot continue to measure yourself by others, even Paul. You will always fall short of the one you look to, but if you are looking to Me you will go far beyond what you would have otherwise accomplished. As you yourself have taught, it was when the two on the road to Emmaus saw Me break the bread that their eyes were opened. When you read Paul's letters, or anyone's you must hear Me. Only when you receive your bread directly from Me will the eyes of your heart be opened.

"You can be distracted the most by those who are the most like Me if you do not see through them to see Me. There is also another trap for those who come to know more of My anointing and power than others. They are often distracted by looking at themselves. As I was saying before you talked to Paul, My servants must become blind so that they can see. I let you talk to him then because he is one of My best examples of this. It was because of My grace that I allowed him to persecute My Church. When he saw My light he understood that his own reasoning had led him into direct conflict with the very truth he claimed to be serving. Your reasoning will always do that. It will lead you to do that which is exactly contrary to My will. Greater anointing brings greater danger of this happening to you, if you do not learn what Paul did. If you do not take up your cross every day, putting all that you are and all that you have before it, you will fall because of the authority and power that I will give you. Until you learn to do all things for the sake of the gospel, the more influence that you have, the greater the danger that you will be in.

"One of the greatest deceptions that comes upon My anointed ones is that they began to think that because I give them a little supernatural knowledge or power, that their ways must therefore be My ways, and that everything that they think is what I think. This is a great deception, and many have stumbled because of it. You think like Me when you are in perfect union with Me. Even with the most anointed who have yet walked the earth, even for Paul, this union has only been partial, and for brief periods of time.

"Paul did walk with Me as close as any man ever has yet. Even so, he was also beset by fears and weaknesses that were not from Me. I could have delivered him from these, and he did request it several times, but I had a reason for not delivering him. Paul's great wisdom was to embrace his weaknesses, understanding that if I had delivered him from them I would not have been able to trust him with the level of revelation and power that I did. Paul learned to distinguish between his own weaknesses and the revelation of the Spirit. He knew that when he was beset with weakness, or fears, that he was not seeing from My perspective, but from his own. This caused him to seek Me, and to depend on Me, even more. He was also careful not to attribute to Me that which arose from his own heart. Therefore I could trust Him with revelations that I could not trust others with. Paul knew his own weaknesses, and he knew My anointing, and he distinguished between them. He did not confuse what came from his own mind and heart with My mind and heart."

I began to think about how clear all of this was here, but how very often, even after I have had a great experience like this, I still forgot it so easily. It is easy to understand and to walk in the light here, but back in the battle it becomes cloudy again. I thought about how I was not so beset with fears as much as with impatience and anger, which was just as much a distortion of the perspective that we should have by abiding in the Holy Spirit.

Wisdoms stopped and turned to me. "You are an earthen vessel, and that is all that you will be while you walk the earth. However, you can see me just as clearly there as you do here, if you will look with the eyes of your heart. You can be just as close to Me there as anyone has ever been to Me, and even more so. I have made the way for everyone to be as close to Me as they thoroughly desire to Me. If you really desire to be even closer to Me than Paul was, you can. Some will want this, and they will do it badly enough to lay aside anything that hinders their intimacy with Me to give themselves fully to it, and they will have what they seek.

"If it is your quest to walk there just as you can walk with Me here, I will be just as close to you there as I am now. If you seek me you will find me. If you draw near to Me, I will draw near to

you. It is my desire to set a table for you right in the midst of your enemies. This is not just my desire for my leaders, but for all who call upon my name. I want to be much closer to you, and to everyone who calls upon Me, then I have yet been able to be with anyone who has lived. You determine how close we will be, not I. I will be found by those who seek Me.

“You are here because you asked for my judgment in your life. You sought Me as the judge and now you are finding me. But you must not think that because you have seen my judgment seat that now all of your judgment will be My judgment. You will only have My judgments as you walk in unity with Me, and seek the anointing of My Spirit. This can be gained or lost everyday.

“I have let you see angels, and given you many dreams and visions, because you kept asking for them. I love to give my children the good gifts that they ask for. For years you asked me for wisdom, so you are receiving it. You have asked for Me to judge you, so you are receiving it. But these experiences do not make you fully wise, or a righteous judge. You will only have wisdom and judgment as you abide in Me. Do not ever stop seeking Me. The more you truly mature the more you will know your desperate need for Me. The more you mature, the less you will seek to hide, from Me or others, so that you can always walk in the light.

“You have seen me as a Savior, Lord, Wisdom and Judge. When you return to the battle, you can still see my judgment seat with the eyes of your heart. When you walk in the truth of knowing that all that you think and do are fully revealed here, you will have the freedom to live there just as you do here. It is only when you hide from Me or others, that the veils return to hide Me from you. I am truth, and those who worship Me must do so in Spirit and truth. Truth is never found hiding in the darkness, but always seek to remain in the light. Light exposes and makes manifest, only when you seek to be exposed, allow who you are in your heart to be exposed, will you walk in the light as I am in the light. True fellowship with Me requires complete exposure. True fellowship with MY people requires the same.

“When you stood before the judgment seat you felt more freedom and security than you have ever felt because you did not have to hide any more. You felt more security because you knew that My judgments were true and righteous. The moral and spiritual order of My universe is just as sure as the natural order established upon the natural laws. You trust My law of gravity without even thinking about it. You must learn to trust My judgments in the same way. My standards of righteousness are unchanging, and are just as sure. To live by this truth is to walk in faith. True faith is to have confidence in whom I am.

“You seek to know and walk in My power so that you can heal the sick and perform miracles, but you have not even begun to comprehend the power of My Word. To restore all of the dead who have ever lived on the earth will not even cause Me to strain. I uphold all things by the power of my Word. The creation exists because of My Word, and it is held together by My Word.

“Before the end, I must reveal My power on earth. Even so, the greatest power that I have ever revealed on the earth, or ever will, is still a very small demonstration of My power. I do not reveal my power to get men to believe in My power, but to get men to believe in My love. If I had wanted to save the world with My power when I walked the earth, I could have moved mountains by pointing a finger. Then all men had bowed to Me, but not because they love Me, or loved the truth, but because they feared My power. I do not want to obey Me because they fear My power, but because they love Me, and they love the truth.

“If you do not know My love, then My power will corrupt you. I do not give you love so that you can know my power, but I give you power so that you can know my love. The goal of your life must be love, not power, then I will give you power to love with. I will give you the power to heal the sick because you love them, and I love them, and I do not want them to be sick.

“So must seek first love, and then faith. You cannot please Me without faith. But faith is not just the knowledge of My power, but the knowledge of My love and the power of My love. Faith must first be for love. Seek faith to love more, and to do more with your love. Only when you seek faith to love can I trust you with My power. Faith works by love.

My Word is the power that upholds all things. To the degree that you believe that My Word is true you can do all things. Those who really believe that My words are true will also be true to their own words. It is My nature to be true, and the creation trusts My word because I am faithful to it. Those

who are like Me are also true to their own words. Their word is sure, and their commitments are trustworthy. Their ‘Yes’ means ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ means ‘No’. If your own words are not true you will also begin to doubt My words, because disputation is in your heart. If you are not faithful to your own words it is because you did not really know Me. To have faith, you must be faithful. I have called you to walk by faith because I am faithful. It is My nature.

“That is why you will be judged because of the careless words that you speak. To be careless is to care less. Words have power, and those careless with words cannot be trusted with the power of My Word. It is wisdom to be careful with your words, and to keep them as I do Mine.”

The Lord’s words were rolling over me like great waves from the sea. I felt like Job before the whirlwind. I thought that I was getting smaller and smaller and then realized that He was getting larger. I had never felt so presumptuous. How could I have been so casual with God? I felt like an ant starting up at a mountain range. I was less than dust, yet He was taking the time to speak to me. I could not stand any more, and turned away.

After a few moments I felt a reassuring hand on my shoulder. It was wisdom. His glory was ever greater now, but he was again my size. “Do you understand what happen just then?” He asked.

Knowing very well that when the Lord asked a question he is not seeking information, I began to ponder it. I knew that it was reality, compared to Him I am less than a speck of dust would be to the earth, and for some reason He wanted me to experience it. Answering my thoughts, He elaborated.

“What you are thinking is true, but this comparison of man to God is not just in size. You begin to experience the power of My Word. To be entrusted with My words is to be entrusted with the power by which the universe is held together. I did not do this to make you feel small, but to help you to understand the seriousness and the power of that with which you have been entrusted – the Word of God. In all of your endeavors remember that the importance of a single word from God to men is of more value than all of the treasures on earth. You must understand and teach My brethren to respect the value of My Word as those who are called to carry My words, you must also respect the values of your own words. Those who will carry the truth must be true.

As I was listening I felt compelled to look up toward one of the thrones beside us. Immediately I saw a man that I recognize. He had been a great evangelist when I was child, and many felt that he had worked more power than anyone since the early Church. I had read about him and listen to some of his record messages. It was hard not to be touched by his genuine humility, and the obvious love he had for the Lord and people. Even so I also felt that some of his teachings have gone seriously awry. I was surprised, but also relieved to see him sitting on a great throne. I was captured by the humility and love that still exuded from him.

As I turned to the Lord to ask if I could talk to him, I could see how much the Lord obviously loved this man. However, the Lord would not permit me to speak with him, but motioned for me to continue walking.

“I just wanted you to see him, “the Lord explained, “and understand the position that he has with Me. There is much for you to understand about him. He was a messenger to My last day Church, but the Church could not hear him for reasons that you must understand in due time. He did fall into discouragement and delusion for a time, and his message was distorted. It must be recovered, as well as the parts that I have given to others which were also distorted.”

I knew that everything here happened in perfect timing with all that I was meant to learn, and begin to think about how seeing this man must be related to what we had just talked about – the potential of power to corrupt.

“Yes. There is a great danger in walking in great power,” the Lord responded. “It has happened to many of my messengers, and that is part of the message they are to give to My last day Church. You must walk in my power, and even much greater power than these experiences, but if you’re ever start to think that the power is my endorsing you, and even your message, you will open the door to the same delusion. The Holy Spirit is given to testify only of Me. If you are wise, like Paul, you will learn to glory more in your weakness than in your strengths.

“True faith is the true recognition of who I am. It is nothing more and nothing less. But you must always remember, even, if you abide in My presence, even if you see Me as I am, you can still fall if you turn from Me to look back at yourself. That is how Lucifer fell. He dwelt in this room. He

behold My glory and the glory of My father. However, he began to look at himself more than he looked to us. He then began to take pride in his position and power. This has also happened to many of My servants who were allowed to see My glory, and who were trusted with power. If you begin to think that it is because of your wisdom, your righteousness, or even your devotion to pure doctrine, you will stumble.

I knew that this was as severe a warning as anything that I had received or had been told here. I wanted to go back and fight in the last battle, but I was having serious questions about being able to do so without falling into the traps that now seemed to be everywhere. I looked back at the Lord. He was wisdom and I thought of how badly I needed to know Him as Wisdom when I returned.

“It is good for you to lose confidence in yourself. I cannot trust you with the powers of the age to come until you do. The more confidence you lose in yourself, the more power I will be able to trust you with, if ...”

I waited a long time for the Lord to continue, but He didn't. Somehow I know that He wanted me to continue the sentence, but I did not know what to say. However, the more I looked at Him the more confidence I felt. Finally I did know what to say.

“If I put my confidence in You,” I added.

Yes. You must have faith to do what you are called to do, but it must be faith in Me. It is not enough for you to just lose confidence in yourself. That only leads to insecurity if you do not fill the void with confidence in Me. That is how many of these men fell to their delusions. Many of these men and women were prophets. But some of them, out of insecurity, would not let men call them prophets. But that was not the truth because they were. False humility is also a deception. If the enemy could deceive them into thinking that they were not really prophets, he could also deceive them into thinking that they were greater prophets than they were just by nurturing their self-confidence. False humility will not cast out pride. It is just another form of self-centeredness, which the enemy has a right to exploit.“

“All of your failures will be the result of this one thing, self-centeredness. The only way to be delivered from this is to walk in love. Love does not seek its own.”

As I was thinking about all of this a wonderful clarity began to come. I could see the whole experience from beginning to end, having as its focus this single, simple message. “How easily I am beguiled from the simplicity of devotion to You,” I lamented.

The Lord then stopped and looked at me with an expression I pray that I will never forget. He smiled. I did not want to abuse this opportunity, but I somehow felt that when He smiled like that I could ask Him anything and He would give it to me, so I took the chance.

“Lord, when you said, ‘Let there be light,’ there was light. You prayed in John 17 that we would love you with the same love that the Father loved you with. Will you please say to me now, ‘Let there be love in you,’ so that I will love you with the Father's love?”

He did not quit smiling, but rather put His arm around me like friend. “I said this to you before the creation of the world when I called you. I have also said it to your brethren who will fight with you in the last battle. You will know My Father's love for Me. It is a perfect love that will cast out all of your fears. This love will enable you to believe Me so that you can do the works that I did, and even greater work, because I am with My Father, and you will know His love for Me, and the works you will be given to do will glorify Me. Now, for your sake, I say again, ‘let there be My Father's love in you.’”

I was overwhelmed with appreciation for this whole experience. “I love your judgments,” I said as I started to turn and look back at the judgment seat, but the Lord stopped me.

“Don't look back. I am not there for you now; I am here. I will lead you from this room and back to your place in the battle, but you must not look back. You must see My judgment seat in your own heart, because that is where it is now.”

“Just like the Garden, and like the treasures of salvation. ..” I thought to myself.

“Yes, Everything that I am doing, I am doing in your heart. That is where the living water flow. That is where I am.”

He then gestured toward me, so I looked at myself pulling back the cloak of humility. I was stunned by what I saw. My armor contained the same glory that surrounded Him. I quickly covered it again



with my cloak.

"I also prayed to My father on the night before My crucifixion, that the glory I had with Him in the beginning would be with My people, so that you will be one. It is My glory that unifies. As you come together with others who love Me, My glory will be magnified. The more that My glory is magnified by the joining of these who love Me, the more the world will know that I was sent by the Father. Now the world really will know that you are My disciples because you will love Me, and you will love each other."

As I kept looking at Him, my confidence continued to grow. It was like being washed on the inside. Soon I was feeling ready to do anything He asked.

"There is still someone who you must meet before you returned to the battle," He said as we walked. As we did, I continued to be astonished by how much more glorious He had become than even a few minutes before.

"Every time you see Me with the eyes of your heart, your mind is renewed a little bit more," He proceeded. "One day you will be able to abide in My presence continually. When you do that, all that you have learned by My Spirit will be readily available to you."

I could hear everything He said, and understood it, but I was so captured by His glory that I just had to ask Him, "Lord, why are you so much more glorious now than the other times when You first appeared to me as Wisdom?"

"I have never changed, but you have. You are changed as you behold My glory with an unveiled face. The experiences that you have had are removing the veils from your face so that you can see Me more clearly, but nothing removes them as quickly as when you behold My love."

He then stopped and I turned to look at those in the thrones next to us. We were still in the place where the very highest kings were sitting. Then I recognized a man who was close by. "Sir, I know you from somewhere, but I just cannot remember where."

"You once saw me in a vision," he replied.

I immediately, remembered, and was shocked! "So you were a real person?"

"Yes," he replied.

I then began to remember the day when, as a young Christian I had become frustrated with some issues in my life. I went out into the middle of a park near my apartment and determined to wait until the Lord spoke to me. As I sat reading my Bible I was caught up into a vision, one of the first that I ever had. In the vision I saw a man who was zealously serving the Lord. He was continually witnessing to people, teaching, and visiting the sick to pray for them. He was very zealous for the Lord, and had a genuine love for people. Then I saw another man who was obviously a tramp or a homeless man. A small kitten wandered into his path and he started to kick it, but restrained himself, but still shoved it rather harshly out of the way with his foot. Then the Lord asked me which of these men pleased Him the most.

"The first," I said without hesitating.

"No, the second," He responded, and began to tell me their stories.

The first man had been raised in a wonderful family, which had always known the Lord. He grew up in a thriving church, and then attended one of the best Bible colleges. He had been given one hundred portions of His love, but he was using only seventy-five.

The second man had been born deaf. He was abused and kept in a dark, cold attic until he was found by the authorities when he was eight years old. He had then been shifted, from one institution to another where the abuse continued. Finally he was turned out on the streets. To overcome all of this the Lord had only given him three portions of His love, but he had mustered every bit of it to fight the rage in his heart to keep from hurting the kitten.

I now looked at that man, a king sitting on a throne far more glorious than Solomon could have even imagined. Hosts of angels were arrayed about him, waiting to do his bidding. I turned to the Lord in awe. I still just could not believe he was real, much less one of the great kings.

"Lord, please tell me the rest of His story," I begged"

"Of course, that is why we are here. The man, whose name was Angelo, was so faithful with the little that I had given to him, that I gave him three more portions of My love. He used all of that to quit stealing. He almost starved, but he refused to take anything that was not his. He bought his

food with what he could make collecting bottles, and occasionally finding someone who would let him do yard work. He could not hear, but he had learned to read so I sent him a gospel tract. As he read it the Spirit opened his heart and he gave his life to Me. I again doubled the portions of My love to him and faithfully used all of them. He wanted to share Me with others, but he could not speak. Even though he lived in such poverty, he started spending over half of everything he made on gospel tracts to give out on street corners."

"How many did he lead to You?" I asked, thinking that it must have been multitudes for him to be sitting with the kings.

"One", the Lord answered. "I let him lead a dying alcoholic to Me to encourage him. It encouraged him so much he would have stood on that corner for many more years just to bring another soul to repentance. But all of heaven was entreating Me to bring him here, and I too, wanted him to receive his reward."

"But what did he do to become a king?" I asked.

"He was faithful with all that he was given. He overcame all until he became like Me, and he died a martyr."

"But what did he overcome, and how was he martyred?"

"He overcame the world with My love. Very few have overcome so much with so little. Many of My people dwell in homes that kings would have envied just a century ago, because of their conveniences, but do not appreciate them, while Angelo would so appreciate a cardboard box on a cold night that he would turn it into a glorious temple of My presence. He began to love everyone and everything. He would rejoice more over an apple than some of My people do over a great feast. He was faithful with all that I gave him, even though it was not very much compared to what all that I gave others, including you. I showed him to you in a vision because you passed him many times. You even once pointed him out to one of your friends and spoke of him." "I did? What did I say?"

"You said, 'There is another one of those Elijah's who must have escaped from the bus station.' You said that he was 'a religious nut' who was sent by the enemy to turn people off to the gospel."

This was the worst blow that I had yet suffered in this experience. I was more than shocked; I was appalled. I tried to remember the specific incident, but couldn't, simply because there were so many others like it. I had never had much compassion for filthy street preachers who seemed to me that they were specifically sent to turn people off to the gospel. "I'm sorry Lord. I'm really sorry."

"And you are forgiven", He quickly responded. "And you are right. There are many who try to preach the gospel on the street for wrong, and even perverted reasons. Even so, there are many who are sincere even if they are untrained and unlearned. You must not judge by appearances. There are as many true servants who look like he did as there are among the polished professionals in the great cathedrals and organization that men have built in My Name."

He then motioned for me to look up at Angelo. When I turned he had descended the steps to his throne and was right, in front of me. Opening his arms he gave me a great hug, and kissed my forehead like a father. Love poured over me and through me until I felt that it would overload my nervous system. When he finally released me I was staggering as if were drunk, but it was a wonderful feeling. It was love like had never felt it.

"He could have imparted that to you on earth", the Lord continued. "He had much to give to My people, but they would not come near him. Even My prophets avoided him. He grew in the faith by buying a Bible and a couple of books that he read over and over. He tried to go to churches, but he could not find one that would receive him. If they would have taken him in they would have taken Me in. He was My knock upon their door."

I was learning a new definition of grief. "How did he die?" I asked, remembering that he had been martyred, half-expecting that I was somehow even responsible for it.

"He froze to death trying to keep an old drunkard alive who had passed out in the cold."

As I looked at Angelo I just could not believe how hard my heart was. Even so, I did not understand how this made him a martyr, which I had thought was a title reserved for those who died because they would not compromise their testimony.

"Lord, I know that he is truly an over-comer," I remarked. "And, it is so just for him to be here. But are those who die that way also considered martyrs?"

"Angelo was a martyr everyday that he lived. He would only do enough for himself to stay alive, and he gladly sacrificed his life to save a needy friend. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, even if you give your body to be burned, but do not have love, it counts as nothing. But, when you give yourself with love, it counts for much. Angelo died every day because he did not live for himself, but for others. While on earth he always considered himself the least of the saints, but he was one of the greatest. As you have already learned, many of those who consider themselves the greatest, and are considered by others to be the greatest, end up being the least here. Angelo did not die for a doctrine, or even his testimony, but he did die for Me."

"Lord, please help me to remember this. Please do not let me forget what I am seeing here when I return," I begged.

"That is why I am with you here, and I will be with you when you return. Wisdom is to see with My eyes, and not to judge by appearances. I showed you Angelo in the vision so that you would recognize him when you passed him on the street. If you had shared with him the knowledge of his past that I had shown you in the vision, he would have given his life to Me then. You could have then discipled this great king, and he would have had a great impact on My church. If My people would look at others the way I do, Angelo and many others like him, would have been recognized. They would have been paraded into the greatest pulpits, and My people would have come from the ends of the earth to sit at their feet, because by doing this they would have sat at My feet. He would have taught you to love, and how to invest the gifts that I have given you so that you could bear much more fruit." I was so ashamed that I did not want to even look at the Lord, but finally I turned back to Him as I felt the pain driving me toward self-centeredness again. When I looked at Him I was virtually blinded by His glory. It took a while, but gradually my eyes adjusted so that I could see Him.

"Remember that you are forgiven", He said. "I am not showing you these things to condemn you, but to teach you. Always remember that compassion will remove the veils from your soul faster than anything else.

As we began to walk again, Angelo spoke for the time, "Please remember my friends, the homeless. Many will love our Savior if someone will go to them." His words had such power in them that I was too moved to answer, so I just nodded. I knew that those words were the decree of a great king, and a great friend of the King of Kings. "Lord, will you help me to help the homeless?" "I will help any who help them," He responded. "When you love those whom I love you will always know My help." They will be given the Helper by the measure of their love. You have asked many times for more of My anointing; that is how you will receive it. Love those for more of My anointing; that is how you will receive it. Love those whom I love. As you love them you love Me. As you give to them you have given to Me, and I will give more to you in return."

My mind drifted to my nice home and all of the other possessions I had. I was not wealthy, but by earthly standards I knew that I did live much better than kings had just a century before. I had never felt guilty about it before, but I did now. Somehow it was a good feeling, but at the same time it did not feel right. Again I looked back to the Lord as I knew He would help me.

"Remember what I said about how My perfect law of love made light and darkness distinct. When confusion such as you are now feeling comes, you know that what you are experiencing is not My perfect law of love. I delight in giving My family good gifts, just as you do yours. I want you to enjoy them, and appreciate them. Only you must not worship them, and you must freely share them when I call you to. I could wave My hand and instantly remove all poverty from the earth. However, in the day of reckoning, when the mountains and high places are brought down, and the poor and oppressed are raised up, but I must do it. Human compassion is just as contrary to Me as human oppression. Human compassion is used as a substitute for the power of My cross. I have not called you to sacrifice, but to obey! Sometimes, you will have to sacrifice to obey Me, but if your sacrifice is not done in obedience, it will separate us.

"You are guilty for the way you misjudged and treated this great king when he was My servant on earth. Do not judge anyone without inquiring of Me. You have missed more encounters that I have

set up for you than you have ever imagined, simply because you were not sensitive to Me. However, I did not show you this to just make you feel guilty, but to bring you to repentance so that you will not continue to miss them. If you just react in guilt you will begin to do things to compensate for your guilt, which is an affront to My cross. My cross alone can remove your guilt, and because I went to the cross to remove your guilt, whatever is done in guilt is not done for Me.

“I do not enjoy seeing men suffer,” Wisdom continued. “But human compassion will not lead them to the cross which alone can relieve their real suffering. You missed Angelo because you were not walking in compassion. You will have more when you return, but your compassion must still be subject to My Spirit. Even I did not heal all those for whom I had compassion, but I only did what I saw My Father doing. You must not just do things out of compassion, but in obedience to My Spirit. Only then will your compassion have the power of redemption.

“I have trusted you with the gifts of My Spirit. You have known My anointing in your preaching and writing, but you have known it much less than you realize. Rarely do you really see with My eyes, or hear with My ears, or understand with My Heart. Without Me you can do nothing that will benefit My kingdom or promote My gospel. You have fought in My battles, and you have even seen the top of My mountain. You have learned to shoot arrows of truth and hit the enemy. You have learned a little about using My sword. But love is My greatest weapon. Love will never fail. Love will be the power that destroys the works of the devil. And love will be what brings My Kingdom. Love is the banner over My army. Under this banner you must now fight.”

With this we turned into a corridor and were no longer in the great hall of judgment. The glory of wisdom was all around me, but I could no longer see Him distinctly. Suddenly I came to a door. I turned because I did not want to leave, but I immediately knew that I had to. This was the door that Wisdom had led me to. I had to go through it. “He who has ears let him hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church!”

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