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This book is dedicated to all those who genuinely and sincerely want to have an encounter with God that will enable them to accomplish the vision and purposes of God for their lives in the 21st century.

Every Individual
And Church Needs . . .

An Encounter with God!



By Rodney W. Francis
Founder/Director: The Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry

Acknowledgements:

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This book is dedicated to those wonderful Holy Spirit-filled Christians who believed in me enough to give me the opportunity to obey God ~ and especially the late Pastor Peter Morrow (Christchurch, New Zealand) whom God used on several occasions to speak the Prophetic Word into my life. I am very happy to be living in the fulfilment of those words today.

- Special thanks to my younger sister, Joan Emery (Hamilton, NZ) for her help in editing this book.

Foreword

Reading this book was for me one of those “Divine appointment times” that God arranges in our lives! **“An Encounter with God”** carries a message for today, a message for you and me. If you are interested in being encouraged, refreshed and revived in your need and expectancy of an encounter with God, then this is a book for you.

Rodney’s ability to bring teaching and instruction with Holy Spirit demonstration, gives life-changing opportunities to help the reader press in and reconnect with the Living God, Who so earnestly wants to connect with us.

The thing I liked about this book, is that I came away knowing, *“I can do that”*. Sure, there is plenty to be challenged about, but even the challenges are possible with the help of the Holy Spirit. I know the desire of our Father is to draw us to Himself, and to release us into all that He has planned and purposed for us. I can’t think of anyone who will not be blessed and rekindled by reading this book as they allow God to catch their attention. ~ *John Traill* (Pastor, Featherston Assembly of God, New Zealand).

People are crying out for something fresh in their lives. They are not satisfied at where they are in God. This book is more than Rodney’s testimony but his desire to see all people have a fresh encounter with the Living God. Through intimacy we come to know the voice of God. Only by hearing and obeying God’s voice can we really be fruitful in the Kingdom of God. Please don’t wait for a disaster before you have an encounter with God. Allow this book to motivate you. Thank you, Rodney, for a book which is simple and practical for all to understand. ~ *Harvey Walker* (Founder: Mission Impart, Tauranga, New Zealand).

It is my privilege to be one of those who do a Foreword for this book. This book is a must for every one of us who desires to grow in the purposes of God.

Rodney makes his books practical and gives some great practical guides to having and maintaining a relationship with God that will permit Him to be able to take each one of us into greater heights in His purposes.

There are certain things that we can do to enhance our walk with God. This book addresses in a practical way those things. This book will also make us aware that there are other things that we need to avoid.

We all need to be shown practical ways that help us to be established as a believer in a vital exciting relationship with God, but also how to keep from the pitfalls that can cause us to stumble in our walk.

Everything that makes our lives exciting with God begins with an encounter with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. The most fundamental principle of everything that we have become ~ and what we will become in the days ahead ~ has to do with our relationship with God by His Spirit. Many of the casualties in a Christian's life can be avoided by someone giving us some wisdom and practical guidance.

Aren't you pleased that Christianity begins with a divine encounter? It has never been about another religious system where rules and laws dominate. It is about the person of Christ who becomes our new life.

Relationships that become vital and kept alive are based on certain things and are kept vital by the principles taught in this book.

God is encountering each one of us again in this very hour for the purpose of showing His power to this generation ~ *Ross Monk* (Ministry of 'My Fathers House' Wellington New Zealand).

Introduction

I HAVE been actively involved in Pentecostal ministry for 50 years, being one who loves the work of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. What you are about to read has been one of the most convicting, challenging, motivating and exciting things to happen to me in all my Christian experience. As you read, I trust that you, too, will catch the same challenge to become more and more committed to a disciplined daily walk with our Almighty God. This inspires me to press on and to obtain God's very best for me, that I might be a more effective instrument in His hands to bless my generation.

You and I have come to the Kingdom for such a time as this (Esther 4:14) ~ let us not miss the glorious opportunity that is ours right now to fulfil all the desires God has for us in the risen Christ, knowing that the same Holy Spirit that raised Him from the dead now lives in us continually.

As I remember how this book came about in the first place, I am still somewhat amazed about it. I was actually on holiday in Taupo, New Zealand, and was having my early morning prayer time with Jesus under some pine trees near the airport. As I sought the Lord, I heard His voice saying to me, "*I want you to put into writing the things I have been teaching you over the previous months, and this is how you will start, 'The year was 1984'.*" I thought that it would be a short article at the most. But when I obeyed God (back at the house where we were staying), and picked up a pen and paper and wrote "The year was 1984" . . . something was released in my spirit and I wrote for five days! The message flowed into me and out of me onto paper. Now the book is in its third printing. Over the years I have had many Christian leaders contact me and say that this book has been compulsory reading for them; some were reading it every year because it had spoken to them so much! It pays to obey!

May the coming years be saturated with the rising of a Church ~ that is not led by men and women filled with some humanistic viewpoint or vision ~ but may we be led by those whose hearts

are enflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit. Such burning hearts having been ignited from those fires that burn before the Throne of God, caught alight as God's people seek Him. May this book speak to you also ~ *Rodney W. Francis.*

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Chapter 1: **My Encounter**

THE YEAR WAS 1984. I had been preaching the Gospel for more than 24 years; was actively involved in full-time pastoring, counselling and a growing literature ministry that was reaching into 80 countries. In so many ways I had everything going for me. Yet, inside of me, I knew all was not well ~ something was causing me to lose out on what I felt God had for me.

- **But what?**
- **I just could not put my finger on it.**

As one who had known the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit for all those 24 years and had been used by Him in many different ways, it seemed I was losing my grip on God. At 18 years of age I had been sovereignly filled with the Holy Spirit at 5:30 a.m. one dark morning while rounding up my father's cows for milking (we lived on a dairy farm). I began speaking in other tongues as freely and clearly as though I had been speaking them all my life. With this experience came the call of God to minister ~ and I have been preaching ever since.

But now, though outwardly successful to others, I was struggling to maintain any real enthusiasm to continue ministering. I started to dread Sundays! I did not want to be like this, but I seemed powerless to change things. And I knew the Lord would not, and could not, be glorified with that attitude prevailing. Instead of being inspired and challenged by the Holy Spirit, I felt I was functioning "mechanically." In Holy Spirit ministry one cannot do this for long without something going wrong. And I knew it!

GOD BEGAN TO SPEAK

During this time I became conscious of God trying to get through to me. I recognized the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking to me the following:

- ***You used to get up at 5:30 in the morning to make money ~ why do you not do it for Me?"***

Those words would be brushed aside as it seemed to be an impossibility for me to rise up that early. In the type of ministry I am involved with, there are often late nights to contend with. And tiredness was already a problem that annoyed me! So the ministry became a kind of justification not to listen too hard to that particular call to arise for my Lord.

A CRISIS STRIKES

By 1984 "The Gospel Faith Messenger" Ministry had been operating for over 20 years. We had clearly seen God's blessings upon it and scores have been won to Christ through it. Five offices were functioning at that point: Palmerston North, Nelson, Whakatane and Morrinsville (New Zealand) and Tanzania (East Africa). We do not ask people to support us in this work, believing the promise of Scripture in Philippians 4:19, which says, ***"But my God SHALL SUPPLY ALL YOUR NEED according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus"*** (emphasis mine).

That is our testimony. Surely ***"God's riches in glory by Christ Jesus"*** are unlimited, so He can provide for our needs to fulfil His will. (The problem is we Christians so often do not give Him the opportunity to show us what He can do for us, and we revert to methods of fund raising that make us no better than the unbelievers).

In all those 20 years we had sought to run "The GFM" Ministry as free of debt as possible. God honoured that stand. But then, it seemed, that overnight the funds dried up and suddenly I was

confronted with bills of over \$5,000.00 with no money to pay. This brought imagination attacks upon my mind. I saw myself as a failure, winding-up the ministry and crashing into the ranks of the "has-beens." In my mind I could hear Christians laughing, pointing the finger, and saying, "How are the mighty fallen," etc. I seemed trapped, with no answers for me and my now obvious problems.

To tide me over, I borrowed from a fellow Christian the aforementioned amount so as to pay the bills. I hated doing it. Then I began to cry out to God for help to get the ministry out of debt. Very clearly I heard God's reply to me:

"It's all your fault. If you will do what I ask of you, I will show you how I can supply your needs."

I was shocked!

"All my fault?"

(Now GOD was getting at me)!!

"What's wrong with me, Lord?"

"You used to get up at 5:30 in the morning to make money ~ why do you not do it for Me?"

"What are You asking of me, Lord? What's wrong with me?"

Then I received a run-down on MY life as God saw me . . .

"You are suffering from a sleepy spirit!" (I had never heard of such a thing). **"This sleepy spirit has caused you to get your priorities as a Christian wrong. Your priorities are not My priorities. This is what a sleepy spirit has done to you . . .**

- 1. "You are frustrated and confused over the will of God for your life."** (At that time I was struggling over a major decision as to whether I would remain in New Zealand, or to move overseas).

2. ***"It is causing you to die spiritually."*** (That is why I was functioning mechanically).
3. ***"Because of your dying spiritually, in your position as a pastor, the church will also die spiritually."***
4. ***"The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are 'drying up' in your life."*** (They were too!)
5. ***"The GFM' Ministry is in debt."***
6. ***"You are physically unfit! This makes it more difficult for you to discern clearly what My Spirit says to you."*** I was more shocked!

Suddenly I was made aware of the condition of my own heart before the God I had loved and served for 24 years. It was true and I knew it. I now knew my condition and the cause of why I had been like I was. **But I had no answers as to how to get free of this sleepy spirit.**

THE ANSWER IS IN THE BIBLE

So I got my Bible out and began to try and trace down this sleepy spirit ~ it must be there somewhere. Sure enough, it was ~ and is!

Proverbs 19:15 ~ ***"Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep"***(KJV). ***"Laziness casts one into a deep sleep, and an idle person will suffer hunger"*** (NKJV).

- **What is slothfulness?**

It means “to be slow, sluggish, tardy, lazy.” In spiritual terminology it can simply be summed up in the word “undisciplined.” Slothfulness is undisciplined living, and undisciplined living puts one to sleep spiritually.

Proverbs 10:5 ~ ***"He who gathers in summer is a wise son; he who sleeps in harvest is a son who causes shame."***

- **For the Church it is harvest time NOW!**
- **But too many are spiritually asleep and not able to motivate themselves to gather it in!**

That is a sleepy spirit! And, the Bible says, it causes shame.

Proverbs 6:4-11 ~

4. ***"Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids.***
5. ***Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler*** ("one who ensnares").
6. ***Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise,***
7. ***Which, having no captain, overseer, or ruler,***
8. ***Provides her supplies ("bread") in the summer, and gathers her food in the harvest.***
9. ***How long will you slumber, O sluggard? When will you rise from your sleep?***
10. ***A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep -***
11. ***So shall your poverty come on you like a prowler, and your need like an armed man."***

Proverbs 24:30-34 ~

30. ***"I went by the field of the lazy man, and by the vineyard of the man devoid of understanding;***
31. ***And there it was, all overgrown with thorns; its surface was covered with nettles; its stone wall was broken down.***
32. ***When I saw it, I considered it well; I looked on it and received instruction:***
33. ***A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest;***
34. ***So shall your poverty come like a prowler, and your need like an armed man."***

Ecclesiastes 10:18 (KJV) ~

"By much slothfulness ("laziness") the building decayeth; and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through." The New Living Translation says: "**Laziness lets the roof leak, and soon the rafters begin to rot.**"

Isaiah 56:10 ~

"His watchmen are blind, they are all ignorant; they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber."

Romans 11:8 (concerning Israel) ~

Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day."

Romans 13:11 ~

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation ("safety, soundness") is nearer than when we first believed."

Hebrews 6:12 ~

"That you do not become sluggish ("lazy"), but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises."

In the parable of the Ten Virgins we are told that, while the Bridegroom tarried, **"they ALL slumbered and slept"** (Matthew 25: 1-13, emphasis mine).

In the parable of The Talents, Jesus told us that the real reason why we bury our talents and do not realize our full potential is because the fear of man makes us lazy ("slothful") and wicked (Matthew 25:24-30). That fearful, slothful servant lost out with God, causing great grief of weeping and gnashing of teeth in outer darkness.

- When we bury our talents, we rob God, others, and ourselves, of so much.
- We cannot afford to do this any longer.
- Have an encounter with God!

For further Scriptures on a sleepy spirit I suggest a study on the words “sleep, slumber, slothful and sluggard” by using a Bible Concordance and dictionary.

Ephesians 5:14-17 ~

Therefore He says: “Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See then that you walk circumspectly (“accurately, pointedly, discreetly”), not as fools but as wise, redeeming (“buying up”) the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand (“grasp, be earnestly occupied with, comprehend”) what the will of the Lord is.”

ON A COAT HANGER

I now knew what was wrong with me as far as God was concerned. I knew what a sleepy spirit was doing to me. But I was still unsure of what God’s Number One priority was.

- For a period of two to three weeks I felt like I was on a coat hanger in a cupboard ~ with my feet unable to touch the floor!

What was worse, this sleepy spirit had had a bad effect upon my motivation. I could not motivate myself to make any changes. This really concerned me as I knew spiritual death to me, the church, and the ministry, would be the result.

- ***“You used to get up at 5:30 in the morning to make money ~ why do you not do it for Me?”***

God was calling me to a new commitment to seeking His face ~ but I could not get motivated to do it!

GOD SENDS A PROPHET

A short time later, on October 18th, 1984, a man of God came to spend one night in my home. He had been a personal friend for all my Christian life and one who I had the utmost respect and admiration for ~ his name was Peter Morrow (a man who sought God, and has now gone to his eternal reward with Jesus).

Over supper that night, as we talked about the ministry, Peter asked the question: "*Rodney, how often do we ministers only seek God when we are to minister, and not for Who He is?*" That challenged me.

The next morning Peter walked into our kitchen, pointed that famous finger expression of his at me, and said very firmly: "*Rodney, you cannot afford to spend less than two hours a day in prayer with God!*"

As soon as he had finished saying that, the Holy Spirit seemed to speak louder than Peter, and said to me: "***Yes, Rodney, I want you to spend two hours a day in prayer with Me, starting at 5:30 in the morning!***"

A loud utterance of absolute surprise came forth from my lips as I honestly felt that, knowing me, I would not be able to do this for very long. But, in my heart, I just knew that God's Number One priority for my life now was to be this daily communion with Him. That was a Friday morning when this was given to me. I commenced this new commitment to my Lord at 5:30 the following morning (October 20th) and kept it up for a number of years (when God then released me from that commitment to incorporate other aspects of ministry He has called me to). I have been gloriously set free from a sleepy spirit ~ not through an instant deliverance, but through a disciplined commitment of that time to God every day.

Many asked me what I did in that two-hour prayer time, whether or not I read the Bible during that time, and how is it structured?

Those two hours were taken up entirely with prayer, praise, speaking in the Holy Spirit language, meditation, waiting before God, spiritual warfare, and so on. I did not read my Bible during that time ~ that came later, when I use the Daily Bible Reading Guide (produced by "The GFM"), which takes the reader through the Old Testament once a year and the New Testament twice a year. I like to read the Bible out aloud, as I can then read, speak (confess) and hear it. This helps to generate my faith, for "**faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God**" (Romans 10:17).

I have certain structures that I build my prayer times around, as follows: family, developing of prophetic ministry, churches, church leaderships, raising up of leaders, the call of God, meetings, literature translating and printings, E-Mail (goes into more than 100 countries as at end of 2009), and Internet Ministries, our Web Page, our three free Bible Correspondence Courses Ministry (several thousand students as at end of 2009), "The GFM" voluntary workers, offices and finances, other relevant matters which continually come up in our full-time faith life, people needing prayer, releasing of the will of God in my life and others, stirring up the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, binding the prince spirits of unbelief and infidelity ("lack of faith or constancy, especially sexual faithfulness; lack of religious faith, disbelief; an act or instance of disloyalty" – Collins), our national leaders, etc., (not necessarily in that order). At all times I seek to be flexible to the Holy Spirit rather than to become repetitious (this has to be worked on, as we so easily can become creatures of habit). **And prayer must be more than a habit, even though it is a very good habit!**

- **Each Christian has to discover his/her own field of prayer burden, and pray accordingly.**
- **The Holy Spirit is there to help you to overcome every disappointment and mental blockage, if only we will persevere in the place of prayer.**

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9).

Chapter 2:

Like A New Beginning

I WAS scheduled to speak in my home church on the Sunday evening of October 21st. The effect of the encounter I have described was that I was left feeling like a brand new person, one who had been emptied out of everything. This was especially so with regards to preaching. I felt like I had never preached before and was about to preach for the first time in my life. I went through the anxiety of what to preach on, etc., and felt totally inadequate. Strangely, I was struggling over what to preach on. None of my "best messages" over 24 years seemed to fit.

"Lord, what am I to preach on? I NEED YOU!"

The Holy Spirit spoke to me again:

"I want you to stand before your congregation and confess to the people your failures because of that sleepy spirit. Ask them to forgive you."

"I can't do that, Lord!"

"Why not?"

"I haven't had time to prove this new challenge to me" (about the two hour daily prayer commitment). "Lord, I need to know that this is not going to be a temporary 'flash in the pan.' Please give me a good message from the Word."

Nothing came.

Each time I pleaded with God for a message for that Sunday night, all I got was to "**Stand and confess . . .**"

So that is what I did. I shared the six areas of my life God had dealt with me on and of the new prayer commitment I was being called to. At the finish I wept as I asked my congregation to forgive me ~ it was a time of public repentance for me. Having obeyed God, I did not have a prayer-line or altar call that night, but told the congregation that if God was speaking to them, then to go home and seek Him alone. I then closed the meeting in prayer. When I opened my eyes the aisles in the church were filled with people who had come to either thank me, hug me, or express what God was saying to them. Tears flowed freely.

- **That night something broke in the spirit realm in our church ~ we were about to enter a new phase in God's purpose.**

GOD FULFILS HIS PROMISE

The more I sought to obey God through daily, disciplined prayer commitment, the more the Holy Spirit wanted to talk to me. Actually He speaks all the time, but far too often we are either not listening, or not in a place of spiritual awareness to hear.

God's purpose for my life (which I have sought to follow most of my Christian life) was now clearer than ever.

- **I knew where I was going!**
- **I knew what was expected of me!**

And I had the desire and motivation to want to please God more than anything else. Everything ~ including the ministries I am involved with ~ went afresh upon the altar.

- **Nothing matters more than the doing of the will of God!**
- **Our DOING is obedience to the Word of God and the voice of the Lord!**

I want to share with you some of those things that I believe the Holy Spirit has been saying to me, but first let me tell you about the debt problem.

A very short time after getting my priorities sorted out, a young lady who, as far as I am aware, knew nothing of the financial debt of "The GFM," walked into my office and gave me a cheque for \$6,000.00. That was the largest single gift we had ever received for the ministry. I went to the Christian from whom I had borrowed the \$5,000.00 and said I was now able to pay back the money. That person spoke out and said, "*I've been praying about that money, and I believe God has told me to give it to the ministry.*" In one day over \$11,000.00 was released to us (without any public appealings) and the literature work was out of debt, even with surplus in the account! The Lord fulfilled His promise. Not only that, but God gave us three new offices ~ at Wanganui, Kumeu and Taumarunui ~ to bring our total at that time up to eight "GFM" literature offices functioning in faith to bring the Gospel to scores of people world-wide, especially in African nations. God is so good to them who obey Him. 1985 proved to be one of the best years ever for "The GFM"!

Chapter 3: The Power of Prayer

PRAYER CHANGES ATTITUDES

THROUGH spending specific time each day with God I soon discovered how much work He wanted to do in me. Certain attitudes had to change, especially my attitudes to what prayer is all about.

- **Our attitude to prayer can be the biggest hindrance to effective prayer.**

So often we have such a negative attitude towards it. It has become a burden rather than a delight. I have come to discover the privilege that is mine to spend time alone in the very presence of the King of kings, that He and I can talk together, share together, do things together; to know He personally craves my fellowship with Him ~ perhaps more so than I His.

- **Prayer is a joy when we know what we are there for!**
- **Prayer gives God time to change me so I may change things around me.**
- **Persistent prayer enables me to hear the voice of God more clearly.**
- **Are your attitudes to prayer right?**

PRAYER CHANGES VALUES

Another area of change is that of values. Before I had my last encounter with God (I have had several over the years) my values concerning the need for committed prayer were not strong enough to bring about a daily set time of discipline that would see my life becoming a life of prayer.

PRAYER BRINGS DISCIPLINE

In giving myself to God each day in a specific time of prayer, I have discovered a new discipline has come into my life. To keep my 5:30 a.m. appointment each day has meant a more conscious discipline of my time. I cannot afford to waste time with unnecessary late nights, and TV has virtually gone by the board. It is important to me that I am as fresh as possible when I am alone with God ~ that I am not wasting that time because of "sleeping on my knees" owing to not disciplining my time.

- **What a joy it is to go out to face each day knowing I've done that which God has asked of me!**

PRAYER STILL MY SPIRIT

Often, in times past, when I went to pray and seek God, I would be hounded by a restless spirit demanding that there were 101 jobs out there all needing my urgent attention, and here I was sitting still praying! Many times I could not stay long enough in the prayer closet to get my spirit still, submitted, or disciplined sufficiently to gain the benefits of prayer.

I have written this book because I believe the Holy Spirit spoke to me to share with you what He is saying. This book was born in the prayer closet, and has come into being as a direct result of my being there and hearing what God is saying.

For me, a two hour prayer period gave me time enough to get still before God. (Each Christian has to discover his/her own slot and time-length before God. If you do not have one, I encourage you to get one so that at the same time each day you have an appointment with the greatest Friend you'll ever know).

The Psalmist declared: "**Be still, and know that I am God**" (Psalm 46:10).

"He leads me besides the still waters" (literally "waters of rest") (Psalm 23:2).

COMMITTED PRAYER BRINGS VICTORY OVER A CARNAL MIND

For many years, as a Holy Spirit-filled Christian and preacher, I battled with carnal thoughts. The world, the flesh and the devil had all been contending for certain areas of my life ~ and I was getting sick of it!

One morning in prayer I laid it all out before the Lord: "*Lord, if You want these things out of my life ~ even things that are right and honourable ~ then I am willing to place them all at the foot of the Cross: I want Your will to be done in my life.*"

My life had been hassled with thoughts of wrong sexual desires, and I knew those thoughts did not have to be put up with ~ worse than that they were robbing me of the confidence in the Holy Spirit that is necessary to release the power of God in a meeting (or anywhere else for that matter). A Christian with a carnal mind is unable to rise up in great faith because every time one seeks to do so, the enemy points his finger right at us and says, "*But you do this*" and reminds us of our weak "problem" area. This causes us to draw back, because we feel everyone will find out what we are really like. The Bible is very clear on what a carnal mind does: **it makes us an enemy of God!**

"For to be carnally ("fleshly") minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be" (see Romans 8:1-14).

When I laid those carnal thoughts on the altar with all my heart, I felt something "give" inside of me. The victory I enjoy now has been marvellous in comparison to what it was before.

As a Christian Leader who has counselled many people I have come to understand something of the hassles Christians go through in the area of the mind. The answer is not always in deliverance (as much as I believe in deliverance), but rather in disciplined spiritual life-styles.

- **It is no use sweeping the cobwebs away if the spider is still alive!**
- **Kill the spider (carnal mind), sweep the cobwebs, and then enjoy true freedom.**

Chapter 4:

Those Six Areas

IN PUTTING God's priorities first in my life I have enjoyed hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit more than ever. The six areas of my life have been worked on, and I am happy to share with you what has happened.

1. "You are frustrated and confused over the will of your life."

The frustration and confusion has gone. I knew I was to stay in New Zealand, with Palmerston North as my home base for a season. A few years later, after a season of some "mysterious" sickness, I was forced to lay down the pastorate position in Palmerston North. In early 1992 Jean and I moved to Hamilton to become an Associate Pastor, which allowed me more time to develop the growing international ministry that "The GFM" was becoming. We stayed in Hamilton for just over 15 years before moving to our present location in Paraparaumu, New Zealand. I travel out and minister from home base. The Holy Spirit has made me to know that I am a "spear-head" ministry. I have had a new release in the ministry, and I have never been more sure or excited about where I'm going in God. And the ministry continues to grow in its impact in the nations.

2. "A sleepy spirit is causing you to die spiritually."

This has been dealt with through the daily prayer commitment. I am alive in my risen Lord!

3. "Because of your dying spiritually, the church will die spiritually."

Through that meeting I earlier described, when I repented publicly before the congregation, and through the guidance of the Holy

Spirit's purpose for us as a church, there came a new challenge and strength into the people. We enjoyed good years of growth.

4. "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are 'drying up' in your life."

After a period of soul searching, I am pleased to say there has been a reviving in the area of the gifts. In my Spirit-filled life I have known experiences where each of the nine gifts (I Corinthians 12:1-11) have manifested at one time or another. They are so important to be functioning in our lives that I now call them "the Christians' tools of the trade." We are nowhere near as effective without them! So many "doors of opportunity" open to us when we are flowing in Spiritual Gifts.

- These gifts are one of the "keys" for the Church in the next move of God!**

We have also seen a good releasing of the Spiritual Gifts in many people, both here in New Zealand and around the world. For several years I have been conducting "**The Gift of Prophecy Seminars**" throughout New Zealand, and overseas, where I have had the joy of seeing many people prophesy for the first time in their life. After my encounter with the Lord, He spoke to me one day and said:
"You have been conducting these seminars for several years, not really knowing My purpose for them. But I want you to know that I have been using them to release 'keys' in My people, as prophecy will be fulfilling a major role in that which I am about to do. I am using you to specifically prepare some of My people for the next visitation."

I tell you I was excited to realize that God was using me as a "spear-head" ministry, which has continued to grow over the years. I have never yet seen less than three people prophesy for the first time in one of these seminars, and often 20 or more will prophesy. It is always a great joy to me to see others released in the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Lord is now using me to release people into many Gifts of the Holy Spirit. To Him be all the praise and glory.

5. “The Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry is in debt.”

You have already read how God honoured His Word to me. My desire is to see His will for the printed page expanded, and I have a growing conviction that I need to put time aside to share more of what God is saying through the printed page. Multiplied thousands can be effectively ministered to by anointed Gospel literature. Also, a new visitation will demand a new expression of **“being obedient to the heavenly vision”** (see Acts 26:16-23). (At the time of updating this book, I have had the privilege of authoring 34 books, booklets and manuals, many of which are now printed in other languages. God is good!)

Financially wise, “The GFM” is still a growing faith ministry, and these days has a lot more prayer backing than ever before. Praise God!

6. “You are physically unfit! This makes it more difficult for you to ‘pick up’ clearly what My Spirit says to you.”

Our body is **“the temple of the Holy Spirit”** (1 Corinthians 6:15-20; 2 Corinthians 6:16-18), and in the ministry it is important that we present ourselves as best as possible before the people to the glory of God. I knew I needed to be fitter than I had been over recent years, so when the church started a social indoor basketball team I was invited to join in. At the ripe old age of 42 I started playing this fast, physically-demanding game for the first time ever ~ as an incentive to get fit! This made me discipline myself to do some street running, as well as attend the practices. This was to be only a temporary measure (obviously!) until God got me disciplined in an area of life I had avoided for years ~ that of fasting. Regular one-day-a-week fasting (it varies between 24 to 48 hours) has given my body “the lift” it needed and I’m feeling great, spiritually and physically.

So there it is. God has been sorting me out ~ and will continue to do so, no doubt.

What about the things He wants to do among His people in our nation? I will try, with His help, to be as clear as possible. It is over to you to accept or reject what I am saying. At the time of writing this I have had opportunity to share this message around several parts of New Zealand, and Christians everywhere believe it to be true.

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TODAY?

From this chapter on I will seek to share with you those things that I believe God is saying to us today. I ask that you consider these things with an open, prayerful heart, **as it is important to understand clearly enough the voice of the Lord in order that we can be those who will respond with “simple obedience” ~ and usher in the greatest visitation of the Holy Spirit we have ever known or read about.**

- **Are you willing?**
- **Are you available?**
- **Are you ready?**

“. . . God will surely visit you” (Genesis 50:24-25).

Chapter 5: The Secret Place

I AM convinced that God's dealings in my life are not (and will not be) limited to one mere mortal like me. There is a principle at work here. What God is saying to me, He is saying to others, and to the Church.

THE CALL TO PRAYER COMMITMENT

The Number One call of God to His Church today is the call to the place of a new prayer commitment. For years prayer has been talked about, but the lack of power and spirituality confirms we have not really been effective in it. This has got to change.

- **Men of the Bible who accomplished great things were men of prayer!**

Abraham had an early morning prayer appointment with God regularly:

"And Abraham went early in the morning to the place where he had stood before the Lord" (Genesis 19:27).

Moses, Samuel, Elijah and Daniel were all great men of prayer (just to name a few). Elijah is held up to us as an example of what continual fervent prayer can accomplish:

"The effective ("capable or successful in producing an intended result"), ***fervent*** ("intensely passionate; ardent: a fervent desire to change things") ***prayer of a righteous man avails*** ("profits") ***much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land***

for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced her fruit”

(James 5:16-18).

- **Elijah was not a superman ~ he was just like you and me!**
- **Look what he accomplished when he gave himself to prayer!**

These things are written in Scripture as an example and challenge to us. We can do what Elijah did ~ through prayer! It is prayer that makes the difference!

Our greatest example, of course, is Jesus Himself. He was a Man of prayer:

“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary (“deserted”) place; and there He prayed” (Mark 1:35). (See also Matthew 14:23; Mark 6:46; Luke 5:16; Luke 6:12; Luke 9:18, 28-29, and Luke 11:1).

In Gethsemane, where Jesus prayed through in victory regarding the will of God (which meant rejection, suffering, humiliation and death by crucifixion), He gave His sleeping disciples a very challenging question:

“What, could you not watch (“to watch, be awake, vigilant”) with Me one hour?” (Matthew 26:36-46).

What an indictment upon us Christians if we are unable to give one hour of our time in alert attention to our Lord. God wants us to give Him the “first-fruits” of our time each day ~ is one hour out of 24 too much to ask of us? Are we so sleepy (spiritually) that we have to be busying ourselves in everything else except what God desires most from us? He wants us ~ our time and attention ~ for a part of each day so He can instruct us, and we get to really know Him.

"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41).

The choice is ours ~ we can be awake and praying (sowing to the Spirit), or we can be yielding to temptation (doing other less important things) and be sleeping spiritually (sowing to the flesh).

Prayer commitment is the place of sorting. If we Christians cannot become committed pray-ers, then we will not move on to some of the other disciplines required for the next visitation of God. The Holy Spirit told me that He is calling His people to a new commitment of prayer, and that commitment would be followed by a challenge to pray and fast. This is now happening.

- **Those who will not pray for spiritual power are unlikely to fast for it!**

If you read Matthew Six, you will discover three things Jesus taught us to do in secret:

1. Charitable deeds ("acts of kindness"):

"Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father Who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly" (Matthew 6:1-4).

2. Prayer ("to speak out, utter aloud; to pray, wish strongly; restricted to prayer towards God"):

"But you, when (referring to an oft-repeated action) **you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to**

your Father Who is in the secret place; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:5-15).

3. Fasting (“to abstain from eating”):

“But you, when (not if) you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father Who is in the secret place; and your Father Who sees in secret will reward you openly” (Matthew 6:16-18).

The Church, generally, is weak in all these three areas because (1) we are either not doing it, or (2) we are not doing it according to how Jesus taught us to. The secret is found in the closet, i.e. “The secret in praying is praying in secret.” “In secret” . . . it is between you and God alone. Yet it is there in the secret place where God looks, and He has promised open rewards to those who know the secret place of service. Let me ask you:

- ***“Is God’s open reward clearly seen upon the Church today?”***

We know why, don’t we?

Chapter 6: **Fasting to Please God**

I BELIEVE we are presently in a time of transition ~ the old move is dying and the new is coming to birth. The old has to die because it can never accomplish what God wants to do in the new. Unfortunately it is usually the people of the old (the previous move) who become the greatest opposers to the people of the new. So many cannot accept the fact that God has much more to do yet before Jesus returns. This time of transition is a time of God calling out and preparing those He wants to use in the new.

- **One of the things about this new move is the fact that the Holy Spirit will ask us to do things we have never done before.**
- **Hence the need for simple obedience.**
- **Fasting is one of those things.**

PREPARATION

Preparation time in any battle strategy is always done “under wraps” ~ in secret. God’s preparations in our life are done through prayer and fasting ~ in the secret place. **There we discover discipline, the stilling or calming of our own spirit, and the cleaning up of our lives under the Holy Spirit’s standards** (because the standards belong to the Holy Spirit, and are not our own).

How can God trust us in public with His **power** if we will not allow Him to **deal** with our sins, secret and otherwise? We would fall in the battle, and God gets no glory out of that.

The Psalmist declared:

"Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous ("proud") sins; let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, and I shall be innocent of great (or "much") transgression ("rebellion"). Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer"
(Psalm 19:12-14).

"Hide Your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your generous Spirit. THEN (emphasis mine) I will teach transgressors Your ways, and sinners shall be converted to You . . . O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Your praise. For You do not desire sacrifice, or else I would give it; You do not delight in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart ~ these, O God, You will not despise"
(Psalm 51:9-17).

Proverbs 16:32 (NASB) tells us:

"He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city."

And Proverbs 25:28 says this:

"Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls."

- Our strength and safety depends on the condition of our spirit ~ not the size of our muscles!
- It is what is on the inside that really counts.

Question: Do you rule your spirit, or does your spirit rule you?

Remember, committed prayer time each day can still your spirit as you wait in the presence of a mighty, loving, holy God.

"He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalm 91; read the whole Psalm to see the benefits).

The Church will never usher in the new move of God without a commitment to prayer and fasting. When the Holy Spirit spoke to me about prayer and fasting He showed me the reason why it is necessary. If God could do what He wants to do through the Church in her present condition **He would have already done it! The problem is not primarily the world conditions ~ it is the Church; a sleepy, undisciplined, materialistic Church that is crippled by the fear of man. Prayer and fasting will change that ~ especially in those who will do it!**

There was a period of eight months from the time God challenged me to my daily two-hour appointment with Him to when I was led to begin fasting in a committed way. Fasting did not appeal to me. I never really had preached it, other than in passing. But the conviction to do it began to grow. In doing a **"Kingdom Living"** series of messages in Matthew Chapters Five and Six I had to face it; to preach it as well as practice it ("Kingdom Living" is available in manual form). I read Isaiah 58 and, to my amazement, saw that through fasting God's way we could have the answers to everything we will come up against in our Christian walk.

Let the Bible speak:

"Is this not the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds ("pains") of wickedness ("to be wicked or do wrong; unjust, guilty, wrong-doer; wicked, ungodly, impious; spoken of those who forsake the way of righteousness, and follow after many evil ways" – Wilson's), to undo the heavy burdens ("something that is exacting, oppressive, or difficult to bear" – Collins), to let the oppressed ("to break, to break in or down; to treat with violence, to vex; to be

shattered, bruised, or crushed" – Wilson's) ***go free, and that you break every yoke*** ("an immense oppressive force, or burden" – Collins)?

"Is it not to share your bread with the hungry ("famished"), and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; when you see the naked, that you cover ("clothe") him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? (the Amplified Bible says, 'that you hide not yourself from [the needs of] your own flesh and blood?')

"Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard ("gathered unto you"). Then shall you call, and the Lord shall answer; you shall cry, and He will say, 'Here I am.' If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness ("iniquity; empty, meaningless, fruitless words"); if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted ("to cause suffering or unhappiness to; distress greatly" – Collins) soul, then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday.

"The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought ("a prolonged shortage"), and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail" (Isaiah 58:6-11).

Notice the "open reward" of God on those who fast according to the Bible. We need to take time to meditate upon Isaiah 58, for surely it contains important keys for us today.

Fasting is self-denial. But it is also a means (in God) of causing greater things to happen than the normal day-to-day accomplishments we attain as Christians. In the light of what the Scriptures mention on fasting, let us ask ourselves these questions:

- 1. Do I need to fast more?**
- 2. Does the Church need to fast more?**
- 3. Have we proved the truth of Isaiah 58 yet?**

HOW LONG SHOULD WE FAST?

For the benefit of those readers who are unfamiliar with the subject of fasting, the following may make an interesting Bible study on lengths of fasts mentioned in its pages ~ there can be fasts from one day to 40 days (much wisdom is required for longer than three-day fasts):

One Day: Judges 20:26; 1 Samuel 7:6; 2 Samuel 1:12 and 2 Chronicles 20:3-4, 16.

The Fasting Day: Jeremiah 36:6; Joel 1:14; Joel 2:12, 15 and Zechariah 8:19.

Three Days: Esther 4:15-17 and Acts 9:8-9.

Seven Days: 1 Samuel 31:13 and 2 Samuel 12:16-23.

14 Days: Acts 27:33.

21 Days: Daniel 10:2-3.

40 Days: Exodus 34:28 (Moses); 1 Kings 19:6-8 (Elijah); Matthew 4:2 and Luke 4:2 (Jesus).

Regular Fasting: Psalm 109:24; Luke 2:37; Luke 5:33-35; 1 Corinthians 7:5; 2 Corinthians 6:5 and 2 Corinthians 11:27.

SOME OTHER REASONS FOR FASTING

- 1. To know the right way to go for help and victory:** Ezra 8:21-23 and Acts 13:1-4.
- 2. When God's people are in sin, bondage and defeat:** Nehemiah 1:3-5; Esther 4; Ezra 10:6 and Daniel 9:2-6.
- 3. To humble our soul:** Psalm 35:13 and Psalm 69:10.
- 4. To help us rise above unbelief:** Matthew 17:19-21.

5. **To give us victorious power over Satanic forces:** Matthew 17:14-21 and Mark 9:14-29.
6. **In choosing church leadership positions:** Acts 13:1-4 and Acts 14:23.

During a time of fasting we need to make the best possible use of it by seeking to spend extra time in effective prayer, confession, thanksgiving, spiritual warfare and Bible study. We deprive ourselves of natural food in order to gain definite spiritual progress in God, in this world, and in His service. If this were not so, there would be no mention of the need to fast in the Scriptures.

Question: **Do we really want more power with God, and can we get it without fasting?**

To me it is important that if we are representing God in the world . . . are Christ's ambassadors . . . are filled with the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead . . . **then we need supernatural power in our life to demonstrate Who we are representing.** God's Word declares fasting, and the Holy Spirit was speaking about it, so I began. Sometimes it is hard, sometimes not so hard. Again, the sense of doing what God asks brings great satisfaction. I feel so much better in my body because of it. And the joy of knowing God's open reward upon my life just puts "the icing on the cake."

Chapter 7:

The Prince Spirit of Unbelief

DURING 1985 a nasty influenza bug swept through New Zealand. Many Christians were affected by it. Just when you thought you were over it, a new relapse came along and down you went again. Much to my annoyance I got it four times! I even had to cancel some out-of-town meetings (only the second time in 24 years). The Holy Spirit spoke to me one day and showed me that Satan was behind this 'flu bug. He (Satan) was having so much effect against the Christian Church because the Church was paralyzed by a prince spirit of unbelief. It seemed Satan overplayed himself (he usually does) and in my determination to press through to God on the matter I saw what unbelief was doing to us. Unbelief has had far too much rule over Christians in the area of divine healing ~ so many just cannot believe for it anymore. This has got to change.

When God speaks it is always for a purpose. **He always has eternal purposes in mind. He works in us in time to prepare us for all eternity.** Some Christians are so glib when they proclaim, "The Lord told me," and then next week God is saying something completely different to them. That is not God's voice.

One of the purposes of God in calling His people to prayer and fasting is that we might break this cursed prince spirit of unbelief. It has robbed us for far too long! Look what it did to the ten spies (every one of them leaders!). They submitted themselves to unbelief when spying out the promised land of Canaan (Numbers 13 and 14). **Unbelief is choosing to believe the natural vision more so than the spiritual vision ~ and the natural rarely agrees with the spiritual.** The Apostle Paul said, "*We walk by faith, not by sight*" (2 Corinthians 5:7).

Through their unbelief the whole nation of Israel suffered terribly for the next 40 years (Numbers 26:64-65)! They were overthrown one by one in the wilderness. Joshua and Caleb, who chose to believe God and refused to be dominated by unbelief, had to endure persecution as they sought to encourage the people to **"go up at once and possess the land."** It got so bad that the congregation wanted to stone them ~ but God intervened!

In Numbers 14:11 we read:

Then the Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people reject ("to despise, blaspheme, anger, infuriate, incite") Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs ("miraculous signs") which I have performed among them?"

- **God leaves us in no doubt as to what He thinks of unbelief!**
- **We choose to believe, or not to believe!**
- **Our life will be radically affected by what ever decision we make!**

In the midst of such overwhelming unbelief, how did Joshua and Caleb survive? Because they were committed men ~ committed to God's purpose. Joshua was a man who **"did not depart out of the tabernacle"** (Exodus 33:11) and a man **"in whom is the Spirit (of God)"** (Numbers 27:18).

God Himself said this of Caleb:

"But My servant Caleb, because he has a different spirit in him and has followed Me fully, I will bring into the land where he went, and his descendants shall inherit it" (Numbers 14:24; also Joshua 14:14).

They stood unflinchingly in faith against impossible odds because they knew their God and were totally committed to Him. It can be no different for us today if we want to see God's best for our nation.

There is an interesting observation here about Caleb: God said he had "**a different spirit**" to the rest of Israel. We, too, must have another spirit ~ a different spirit ~ to that generally existing amongst the Christian community today. The standards for our daily living must be God's ones ~ not those laid down by the Church suffocating in its own unbelief!

WHAT UNBELIEF DOES TO US

Let us never under-estimate the power of unbelief ~ it is the cancer of the soul. One of the Scriptural passages that has become so meaningful to me on this subject is Hebrews Chapters Three and Four. I noticed that three times in these chapters the following words are written:

"Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion . . ." (Hebrews 3:7-8, 15 and Hebrews 4:7).

- **What does unbelief do to us? It effectively stops us from hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is speaking today ~ but we are not always listening. We cannot hear if unbelief is reigning.**
- **Unbelief has to be dealt with!**

The spirit of unbelief has to be broken over our life and over the Church. We who are totally committed to God must do this in the All-powerful name of Jesus. What does unbelief do?

Unbelief:

- **Stops us from hearing the Holy Spirit** (Hebrews 3:7).
- **Hardens our heart** (Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15 and Hebrews 4:7).
- **Makes us provoke God** (Numbers 14:11 and Hebrews 3:8, 15, KJV). To "provoke" means "to treat with scorn; to be provoked to anger by such treatment; the word implies contempt, joined with hatred and malignity" (Wilson's).
- **Makes us test God** (Hebrews 3:8-9).

- **Grieves God** (makes Him feel disgusted with us) (Hebrews 3:10, 17).
- **Makes us go astray** ("wander") **in our heart** (Hebrews 3:10).
- **Makes us ignorant of God's ways** (Hebrews 3:10).
- **Robs us of entering into our rest** (of faith) (Hebrews 3:11, 18-19 and Hebrews 4:1-11).
- **Gives us an evil heart** (Hebrews 3:12).
- **Causes us to depart from the Living God** (Hebrews 3:12).
- **Deceitfully drags us into sin** (Hebrews 3:13).
- **Produces nothing good!**
- **Is a curse!**

Through the avenues of religion, modernism, materialism and humanism, unbelief is "waxing fat" amongst professing Christians today. No wonder the fear of God in our midst is at such a low ebb!

- **Unbelief has blinded us to the effects it has upon us, and causes us to drift along through life without true divine purpose as to why we are called to be sons and daughters of God.**

The Bible is so true:

"In whom the god of this world has blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is [the] image of God, should not shine forth [for them]" (2 Corinthians 4:4, Darby Translation).

- **Wake up saints! It is time to arise and seek the Lord while He may be found!**

UNBELIEF'S MAIN PURPOSE

Unbelief's main purpose is to stop us from recognizing and hearing God's voice. As long as we doubt God's voice we can never really be effective in our warfare against the world, the flesh and the

devil. Do you remember Eve in the garden of Eden? Satan turned the affirmative "**God has said**" into a doubtful negative, "**Has God said?**" and caused Eve to succumb to his lies. Her doubt and unbelief cost her and all mankind very dearly (Genesis 3).

How many times do we hear Christians saying, "*I wish God spoke to me*," or "*I would love to hear God's voice*," or "*God never speaks to me*," etc. God wants to speak to us all. He is no respecter of persons. **He wants YOU to know His voice clearly.**

Jesus said:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (John 10:3-4, 14, 16, 27).

Hearing and knowing God's voice is so important for the next visitation of God.

- **How can an army respond if it does not recognize the voice of its Captain?**

We must not only know the Word of God, we must know the God of the Word. He speaks by His Spirit and makes alive the principles of the written Word. Knowing God's voice is a key to simple obedience. God's voice is always right ~ He is very truth. He does not tell lies, nor lead us astray. That is why Satan has used the spirit of unbelief so subtilly against us.

- **He only has to make us doubt!**

The first purpose of prayer and fasting in our outward warfare is to defeat the prince spirit of unbelief. Even Jesus felt the power of unbelief in people of His day so much at times that it restricted His healing power amongst them (Mark 6:5-6). They were the losers, not He.

Praise God! Unbelief shall be broken and the power of Bible faith will be demonstrated before the curtain falls on this old world. It

is my strong conviction that the Church will write the final chapter in history through the mighty power of the Holy Spirit. And in a rather glorious way too.

* For further reading on the subject of unbelief, see my book "***Unbelief ~ The Power That Needs To Be Broken.***"

Chapter 8:

Knowing God's Voice

ADAILY commitment to God in prayer, and learning how to cultivate His presence in our lives, helps us to know God's voice. In Hebrews Three we discovered that the Holy Spirit is saying things to us, but unbelief prevents us from hearing. We need to realize this fact: it is not that God is not speaking to us but rather that we are not hearing what He is saying.

- **Unbelief takes away our sensitivity to what the Holy Spirit is saying!**

To be sensitive to the things of God means we are able to carefully and delicately register small differences or changes in quality. Most of us are sensitive, but unfortunately our sensitivity is usually "programmed" in a self-conscious way, and tends to make us negative. Christians, through knowing who they are as new creations in Christ, can "re-programme" their sensitivity towards God in a very positive way. We then are able to definitely reject that which is not of Him, and accept that which is of Him.

- **To know God's voice is to first hear God's voice.**
- **What is God saying today?**
- **That which He has been saying all along in His Word!**

Sixteen times in the New Testament we read:

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear" (Matthew 11:15; Matthew 13:9, 43; Mark 4:9, 23; Mark 7:16; Luke 8:8; Luke 14:35; Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; Revelation 3:6, 13, 22; Revelation 13:9).

Of those 16 times, seven times in the Book of Revelation ~ one for every church ~ we have specific promises of an overcoming

life for those who do hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. Living the overcoming life only comes out of hearing what the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church.

- **We must specifically hear what the Holy Spirit is saying today!**
- **What is He saying to you today?**
- **Are you listening?**
- **Listening in the secret place?**

The real impact of an encounter with God is the fact that you KNOW you have heard God speak, and that He is speaking to YOU as an individual. Think about this: the God of the whole earth speaking to Y-O-U! This is tremendous! I think it is about the most joyful and meaningful experience next to salvation and the Holy Spirit baptism. I value it very highly, as I have seen the results of encounters with God. Oh, how He longs to include us in His plans in this hour of time! **God has given us this generation to make His deeds known among the people.** And only as we hear from Him can we be victorious against the odds stacked against us.

In each encounter with God that I have had, it is because I have recognized His voice to me that I have known how to carry out His will. For example, in 1968 God gave me an encounter with Himself where I saw myself as described in Isaiah 54:1-5 . . . Barren, sterile and fruitless in comparison to what He wanted me to be. He challenged me that if I would "**break forth into singing,**" my life would "**break forth on the right hand and on the left.**" Naturally speaking, "I could not sing to save myself," so I knew there was something more to it than what met my eyes. Then it "clicked." If I would cultivate a positive attitude towards the grace of God within me ~ and stop putting myself down ~ God would cause me to "**break forth.**" So I began to cultivate a positive attitude of praise, and believed I could accomplish greater things than ever before. Guess what? True to the promise of God I began to break forth in the ministries I am involved with. **In fact in the following 10 years we saw "The GFM" Ministry multiply 16 times over.**

I began to break forth ~ and have continued to break forth ever since.

The Scriptural basis of that encounter was put into tract form, entitled **"Sing O Barren . . . For You Shall Break Forth."** That tract has circulated the world ever since. Multiplied thousands have been ministered to through it. One of those tracts found its way to Hawaii (we had no one on our mailing list in Hawaii at that time and, to this day, we do not know how it got there). However, a Christian lady in Hawaii received a copy, and on reading that tract, was so challenged by it that she felt God spoke to her to travel about Hawaii singing the Gospel. She was so encouraged by the results of her ministry that she decided to go to the United States of America to sing the Gospel. She took the tract with her and showed it to the editor of a Christian magazine-cum-newspaper. The tract was reprinted on the front page and circulated worldwide. A second paper published it a few years later, again with a wide circulation. One never knows just how far the effects of an encounter with God can go. Through just one little tract message, multiplied thousands and thousands of people have been ministered to. The fact that the same message spoke to me spiritually, and to that lady literally, shows just how important it is to **"hear what the Spirit is saying"** to US as individuals within the Church. Isaiah 54:1-5 declares:

"Sing, O barren ("rooted, sterile, dry, bereaved"), you who have not borne! Break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who have not laboured with child! For more are the children of the desolate ("deserted, dry, waste, alone") than the children of the married woman," says the Lord.

"Enlarge ("to make broad, wide") the place of your tent, and let them stretch out the curtains of your dwellings; do not spare; lengthen your cords, and strengthen your stakes. For you shall expand to the right and to the left, and your descendants will inherit the nations, and make the desolate cities inhabited.

"Do not fear, for you will not be ashamed ("overcome with shame, guilt or remorse; suffering from feelings of inferiority" – Collins); **neither be disgraced** ("a condition of shame, loss of reputation, or dishonour" – Collins), **for you will not be put to shame; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and will not remember the reproach** ("disgrace, shame") **of your widowhood any more.**

"For your Maker is your husband, the Lord of hosts ("warfare, service" – Young's) **is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth."**

Because the message of that tract is still very relevant I am going to share it with you now so you can be challenged afresh to **"break forth on the right hand and on the left"** (KJV) in your life.

SING O BARREN . . . FOR YOU SHALL BREAK FORTH!

ISAIAH 54:1-5 presents to all Christians a mighty challenge to **"ENLARGE the place of their tents"** ~ to increase in the realm of experience ~ to see God use us each one in dynamic ways to the glory of Jesus and the extension of His Kingdom.

- **God has a work for every person.**
- **GOD HAS A WORK FOR YOU!**

I believe these few verses reveal to us the reason why many are unfruitful in the Christian experience: too many are living in a state of barrenness ~ spiritual barrenness! (Barren means "to be rooted, sterile, dry, bereaved"). This makes the spirit of such a person to be sorrowful, depressed, cast down. It robs one of the spiritual liberty and joy which is so rightfully ours.

This is a message to the Church of Jesus Christ; therefore is also a message to the individuals who make up that Church. God is concerned at the amount of barrenness in His people ~ this is one

reason why He has given instruction as to how we can be delivered from this wasteful condition. **It is not God's will for your life to be spiritually barren!**

BREAK FORTH INTO SINGING

What is God's first instruction to the barren? Simply to start SINGING . . . yes . . . break forth into singing and cry aloud. If you are cast down in spirit, God says to start singing; break forth and cry aloud.

It is a fact that this is where many miss out on the deeper realms of the Eternal. They never learn the secret and joy of praise through singing unto the Lord.

A barren Christian is one who is in a rut ~ rooted in the wrong place! GOD wants you to get out of that rut by your learning to sing aloud and breaking forth into singing. Hallelujah!

PRAISE LIBERATES

Many people are against audible praise, but praise is definitely involved in the sort of singing that is encouraged in this first verse of Isaiah 54. It refers to being filled in your spirit by "**SPEAKING to yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord**" (Ephesians 5:18-20). Learn the secret of these verses by experiencing a breaking forth into singing. This will cause you to be liberated in your innermost being and flood your life with the joy of the Lord!

MOVE ON

None of us can ever expect to move on to the next step God places before us if we are not walking "**in the liberty** ("freedom") **by which Christ has made us free"!** (Galatians 5:1). When God's

people move into the realm of liberty through this breaking forth into singing, the foundation is laid in our life for us to enter into a new dimension of faith and victory.

We should also be conscious of a growing desire towards our responsibilities in the work of God.

IT'S TIME TO ENLARGE!

After the liberty comes the direct challenge from the heart of God: **"ENLARGE the place of YOUR tent"** (that other barren saints may come into the same precious liberty you have found); **"SPARE NOT, LENGTHEN YOUR CORDS"** (emphasis mine).

This challenge from God says we are too small like we are. Our present realm of experience and blessing is too small. It's time to get BIGGER. Time to become a man or woman for Jesus Christ! God has challenged YOU and ME to do this! **You need to ENLARGE! You have to GROW BIGGER IN GOD!**

ACTIVATE YOUR FAITH!

Notice also He says: **"And strengthen your stakes."** Only those who are **"STRONG in the LORD and in the power of His might"** (Ephesians 6:10-20) can stand the opposition that comes against all who dare to accept this challenge to ENLARGE.

To accept this challenge will demand faith ~ not an idle faith, but ACTIVE faith. **"Strengthen your stakes,"** for the powers of darkness are out to conquer and discourage all who dare to take God at His Word!

YOU SHALL BREAK FORTH!

The Lord not only tells us these things, but He also reveals the results of those who will "step out in faith" **and ENLARGE . . . STRETCH FORTH . . . SPARE NOT . . . LENGTHEN . . . and STRENGTHEN THEIR STAKES.** He has promised: "**FOR YOU SHALL BREAK FORTH on the right hand and on the left.**" We will start moving in God in ways we have never done before. God will begin using us in new realms of faith, victory and deliverance.

YOU SHALL BREAK FORTH!

Not only the great "name" preachers on the other side of the world, **but . . . YOU!** Not only your pastor and minister, **but . . . YOU!** Not the person sitting next to you, **but . . . YOU!** "**YOU SHALL BREAK FORTH ON THE RIGHT HAND AND ON THE LEFT.**" Your life and ministry will become effective, more fruitful. You shall inherit the Gentiles. Glory to God! That's the promise of God to **YOU.** Let these mighty promises thrill your soul.

DO NOT BE AFRAID!

After the promise comes the encouragement:

"Do not fear, for you shall not be ashamed: neither be disgraced, for YOU WILL NOT be put to shame" (emphasis mine).

To accept this mighty challenge from God will mean breaking through the fear barrier: the fear of man, the fear of failure, etc. God says we shall not be put to shame! We shall even forget the shame and failure of our youthful days! (It is a shame for a Christian to remain a spiritual baby). Let us, each one, GROW BIGGER by accepting this Divine challenge to ENLARGE.

YOU HAVE A BIG GOD!

Verse 5 of this chapter tells how God is with us, even as a Husband. He is our Redeemer, and the God of the whole earth shall He be called. **OUR GOD IS A BIG GOD. And our BIG GOD wants to DO BIG THINGS through the lives of ALL who will come out of their barrenness.**

This verse also reveals the relationship the child of God has with his Redeemer. It is a personal, intimate relationship which brings us into a oneness . . . even as Jesus Christ enjoyed oneness with the Father when He walked the earth. This is the portion of the Lord's people ~ this wonderful, precious communion and life with the God of the whole earth. Without this relationship we cannot stand; we have no strength; we know not how to conduct ourselves; we know not in which direction to move and work.

It is the lack of this sacred relationship which makes Christians dry and barren, unfruitful and sorrowful, pressed down in spirit, and silent in their expression of the mercies of God. There is something wrong if Christians cannot sing and rejoice ALOUD unto God daily.

JABEZ

In I Chronicles 4:9-10 we have this same theme demonstrated in a man by the name of Jabez (Jabez means "sorrowful," and also "height"). He was an honourable man, but sorrowful ~ barren in his experience with God. He was not enjoying the blessings of God, nor was he satisfied with his present position. So he began to call upon God. He prayed:

"Oh, that You would bless me indeed, and ENLARGE MY TERRITORY ("border"), that Your hand would be with me, and that You would keep me from evil, that I may not cause pain!"
(emphasis mine).

The Living Bible says: "***Oh, that you would wonderfully bless me and help me in my work; please be with me in all that I do, and keep me from all evil and disaster!***" And God granted him his request.

What a prayer! If he was enjoying the blessing of God he would not have needed to pray for it, would he? He prayed for God to MAKE HIM A BIGGER MAN! Please note God's answer to his prayer:

- ***"God granted him what he requested!"***

Jabez saw his need to be more effective for God. And as Jabez meant "business" with God and began to pray for a better experience and bigger things, God began to move with him. Jabez experienced both meanings of his name ~ he was changed from a sorrowful man to one of greater heights in his God.

DAVID

Let us turn now to Psalm 118:1-17. Here we find David speaking dynamically, because when he cried unto God, "***the Lord set him in a LARGE place***" (verse 5, KJV). He broke through the fear barrier ~ God was on his side. He stood in victory against all who compassed him about. God was his strength and SONG ~ he had the voice of rejoicing and salvation. He said:

"I shall not die, but LIVE, and DECLARE THE WORKS OF THE LORD" (verse 17, emphasis mine).

- **He was NOT going to live a wasteful, barren life, but one of victory and song, because he had been set in a LARGE PLACE.**

HOW ABOUT YOU?

This must be YOUR experience if you are to make progress. It is not good enough to remain as you are. You must press onwards, upwards and outwards through faith in the promises of the Living God.

Let this message challenge you to ENLARGE IN GOD . . . to SING and REJOICE . . . for **YOU SHALL BREAK FORTH on the right hand and on the left. The WORD OF GOD PLACES THIS CHALLENGE AT YOUR FEET ~ WHAT WILL YOU DO ABOUT IT?** God bless you mightily. (End of tract).

SOME BIBLE EXAMPLES OF HEARING GOD'S VOICE

Those in the Scriptures who had an encounter with God always seemed to know the voice of God more clearly as a result of that encounter. A little while back the Holy Spirit spoke these words to me: ***"Every great man and woman in the Bible started out as an 'unknown nobody,' until one event happened in the life of them all ~ they all heard the voice of God, and obeyed that voice. The result was that those 'unknown nobodies' were turned into 'great somebodies' for God."***

MOSES

Moses, at 80 years of age, had an encounter with an angel of God at the burning bush (Exodus 3). Through the sign of the burning bush God got his attention.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert ("wilderness"), and came to Horeb ("waste"), the

mountain of God. And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed ("destroyed"). Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn".

So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father ~ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God (Exodus 3:1-6).

- **God got Moses' attention!**
- **Has God got YOUR attention?**

Please do not rush on reading ~ stop a minute or two, and really answer that question honestly in your own heart.

- **Has God got YOUR attention?**

When God got Moses' attention, HE SPOKE. He kept speaking . . . and speaking . . . and speaking. How God craves our fellowship! Prayer is not all our talking to Him, but also giving Him a chance to talk to us. It is interesting to me that, before Moses had that encounter with God, we read very little of God talking to him. But after that encounter 38 of the 40 chapters of the Book of Exodus are taken up mainly with conversations between God and Moses, and Moses and God. How we need regular encounters with God!

ABRAHAM

Abraham, the father of the faith, became just that because he knew the voice of God. Encounters with the Lord at different times in his life all enabled him to know very clearly God's will for his life. For example:

Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, from your family and from your father's house, to a land that I will show you. I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came into the land of Canaan.

Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land.

Then the Lord appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants ("seed") I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the Lord, Who had appeared to him (Genesis 12:1-7).

Approximately eight years later, Abraham had this encounter:

After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord God, what

will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?"

Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!"

And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you be able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be."

And he (Abraham) believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

Then He said to him, "I am the Lord, Who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to inherit it"
(Genesis 15:1-7).

Fifteen years on, and Abraham hears from God again:

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, "I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be blameless ("whole, complete"). And I will make My covenant between Me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly."

Then Abram fell on his face, and God talked with him, saying: "As for Me, behold, My covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations* (literally "multitude of nations"). ***No longer shall your name be called Abram ("father of height; exalted father"), ***but your name shall be Abraham*** ("father of a multitude"); ***for I have made you a father of many nations.*****

I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. And I will establish ("to raise up, confirm") My covenant ("a binding agreement, contract") between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I will give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God" (Genesis 17:1-18). (See also Genesis 18:1-22 and Genesis 22:1-18).

The New Testament holds Abraham up to us as a great example to follow (Romans 4). Why? **Because he heard from God ~ and obeyed!**

JOSEPH

As a young man of 17 Joseph dreamed a dream for God (Genesis Chapters 37 to 50). His family rejected his dream ~ and him with it. He was cast out, and became a stranger in Egypt. But in every situation Joseph found himself in ~ mostly unjustly ~ God was with him and prospered him, until the time came when Joseph was raised up to be governor over all Egypt. He became the "saviour" of Israel, proving that what he had "dreamed" many years before was in fact an encounter with God.

SIMEON

This just and devout man knew the voice of God, because when the Holy Spirit revealed to him that he would not die until "**he had seen the Lord's Christ,**" he was in such a place (with God) as to recognize the baby Jesus as that Christ (that would have to be a

spiritual revelation). On recognizing the Christ, Simeon prayed that God would let him die in peace, according to His word (Luke 2:25-35).

To be “devout” means “taking well hold of, i.e. carefully, circumspectly, hence, cautious, careful as to what is right in religion; avoidance through godly fear of doing anything contrary to right, the fulfilling of all the duties of piety and humanity” – Bullinger’s).

PAUL

Before his conversion Paul was known as Saul (Acts 9:1-22). On the road to Damascus, that stubborn, religious bigot, full of threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, was knocked down to the earth by a sovereign act of God. He had a divine encounter. As religious as Saul was, he did not know Jesus before that encounter. (Sadly, so many church-going people today are like it too). When Saul fell to the ground he heard the voice of Jesus saying: ***“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”*** Saul did not know who the voice belonged to, but knew it was Someone much much bigger than he was.

- ***“Who are You, Lord?”***
- ***“I AM JESUS, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads”*** (emphasis mine).

Trembling with fear, Saul said: ***“Lord, what do You want me to do?”***

- ***One reason why Paul became the great apostle he was, was because at the time of his first encounter with God HE SUBMITTED HIMSELF TO THE WILL OF GOD TOTALLY! “Lord, what do You want me to do?”***

Some of us take years and years to come to that resignation of our will to His. Until He has it (our will), we are pretty ineffective, really, in our Christian impact.

God tested Paul's submissiveness to His will. Paul had hated the disciples of the Lord ~ now he has met the Lord of the disciples Who tells him to go into Damascus where one disciple by the name of Ananias would give him the instructions he needed!

- **Paul did it! He obeyed Jesus!**
- **The hatred was gone!**
- **He was now a brother!**

What did God tell Ananias about Paul?

- **That Paul was a chosen vessel unto Him** to bear the Lord's name before the Gentiles (a new thing for an Israelite), and kings, and the children of Israel (Acts 9:15-16).
- **That Paul needed to be healed and filled with the Holy Spirit** (Acts 9:17).

Like Simeon, Ananias was a devout man (Acts 22:12).

What did Ananias tell Paul?

The things mentioned above, plus more. Ananias shared with Paul the purposes of God as to why he was a chosen vessel (do we know we are chosen vessels ~ and why?). Let us read it together:

***"The God of our fathers has chosen you:
(1) That you should know His will;
(2) That you should see that Just One (Jesus);
(3) That you should hear the voice of His mouth;
(4) So that you should be His witness to all men of what you have seen and heard"*** (Acts 22:14-15).

Unfortunately the evangelical arm of the Church concentrates on No. 4 before the other three ~ then we wonder why we have such

puny results (as compared to the early Church). I believe it is important that we follow the order as above ~ and to do that, **we must have an encounter with God!**

Actually the above is quite in keeping with New Testament teaching. Jesus told Nicodemus we who are born of the Holy Spirit "**speak what we know and testify what we have seen**" (John 3:11). The early Church, in the face of persecution, said, "**For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard**" (Acts 4:20). So did Jesus commission Paul: "**But rise and stand on your feet; for I have appeared to you for this purpose, to make you a minister and a witness both of the things which you have seen and of the things which I will yet reveal to you**" (Acts 26:16-23).

A "witness" is "one who remembers; one who has information or knowledge of a thing, and can therefore give information concerning; to bring to light or confirm anything" (Bullinger's). It is becoming more and more clear: **it takes JESUS to make us effective Christians.** That is why we need a personal encounter with Him, so we can share and witness those things we know and hear of from Him ~ from Him personally!

- **Have you seen and heard from Jesus?**

Chapter 9: A New Authority

THE PURPOSE of God in His working in us at this time is so He might be glorified through us. In His dealings with me He has shown me how the result of our commitment to Him brings about change ~ both in us and in the Church. One thing is for sure: **the Lord is tightening the reins on His people.** Things we could perhaps get away with in the past can no longer be accepted. We are being called to greater discipline, to cut off those things that do not profit, to deny ourselves ~ God wants to move in a new way.

"Truly, these times of ignorance ("lack of knowledge of what God is saying and doing") ***God overlooked, but NOW commands all men everywhere to repent"*** (Acts 17:30, emphasis mine).

This is a very relevant verse for Christians right now.

- **God is calling THE CHURCH to repentance!**

It is time to put away every hindrance and weakness and excuse, and be available to the Captain of our Salvation.

- **He wants to move by His powerful Holy Spirit!**
- **He wants His army to prepare to march!**
- **We have a job to do!**
- **Are you ready?**

The Holy Spirit showed me that a whole new authority would shortly come forth in His Church when His people pray and fast. Up to the present, the standard of authority has been too low.
It is time to raise it!

Right now the Church, generally, is the “laughing stock” of the world. They really do not take us seriously. To them we are a “hang-over from the dark ages.” This has got to change!

- **True authority demands attention!**

When the Church rises up in Her true authority ~ backed by mighty signs, wonders and miracles ~ the world will stand in awe of our God. This next visitation will be powerful in authority (I am not talking about legalistic authoritarianism). When the Holy Spirit told me I would be a spear-head ministry, He said this next move would go to the very top in “The Beehive” in Wellington (our New Zealand house of parliament). The effects of godless humanism have crippled our nation and has infiltrated right through parliament. God wants to change that too! Please do not ask me how it is all going to exactly happen (as I do not fully know) ~ except that tremendous things will happen when the Holy Spirit-filled believers start obeying His voice.

- **Yes, simple obedience!**
- **God will arrange it perfectly.**

HOW DOES AUTHORITY COME?

Authority comes when we submit to God's will; when we pray, fast and seek His face; when we choose to believe His word more than the opinions of men ~ religious or otherwise. When there is sin and disobedience in our life there is no true authority. We are always defeated at our point of weakness. Authority comes through discipline, even the crucifixion of the flesh. **The more we die to self, the more we live unto Him.** Since this last encounter with God, I have never known such crucifixion in my life. I even named 1985 “My best worst year yet!” The benefits of self-denial are wonderful, but oh how the flesh protests . . . “he” is getting a raw deal (and so he is!) ~ the “flesh” must die.

John the Baptist said it this way: "***He (Jesus) must increase, but I must decrease***" (John 3:30).

- **True faith is authority, because true faith produces results. To produce results one has to press through and rise above all obstacles in order to lay hold on what God has promised us. We must have "another spirit" like Caleb did** (Numbers 14:24).

Authority comes from being under authority. The word "authority" here is from the Greek word "exousia" and means "power (delegated), authority to do anything; permission, license" (Bullinger's); "privilege" (Young's); "competency, freedom, delegated influence, right, strength" (Strong's). The centurion in Matthew 8:5-13 demonstrated the benefits of such, and recognized how authority works. He had come up through the ranks learning discipline, obedience, taking orders, etc. from those in authority over him. Now that he was in a position of authority himself he understood the principles of how it works. "***Just speak a word*** (of authority), ***and my servant will be healed.***"

- **Surely Jesus is the highest Word of authority to the Christian!** And when He speaks we respond in obedience. Well, supposedly anyway.

Being under authority determines how teachable our spirit is. Many lose it at this point, being unteachable. If we will not obey Jesus, then it is obvious that we will run into trouble obeying those whom God places over us. The Bible says:

"Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17).

- **God watches our behaviour and re-actions continually.**

Authority is born out of relationship ~ relationship with Jesus Christ. The more time we spend with Him, the better we will know Him. Only those who know Him will overcome in this next move.

HOW WILL GOD MANIFEST AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH?

One way that I am aware of will be in the area of the dealings of God with us.

- **Sin must be faced, confessed, repented of, and turned from.**
- **Excuses must be put aside. There is no room for excuses when we are committed to obedience to the voice of God.**
- **We Christians have to be totally honest with God, ourselves and others.**
- **Everything that is not of the nature and character of God has to go to the Cross.**
- **Righteousness must reign in us ~ all unrighteousness turned away from.**

In Acts 5:1-11 we read the tragic account of Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple who agreed together to subtilly deceive the Church by withholding promised money. They under-estimated the authority of God in the Church, and the authority of Holy Spirit-filled leaders. That day they came separately to church (if the setting was a church meeting?). Ananias was first to arrive, fully intent on covering up the full facts of the sale of his property. The Holy Spirit, through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Peter's life, enabled Peter to discern that Ananias had yielded to Satanic temptation and was telling lies (**Lies to men are lies to God, Christian!**). By a word of knowledge, Peter knew what was going on, and, through the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit, revealed it. Ananias was publicly questioned and challenged, and then the authority of God was demonstrated in an act of judgment! The lies, the deeds, and Ananias were exposed for what they were. On hearing this, Ananias suddenly dropped dead, bringing great fear into the place.

About three hours later, Sapphira arrived on the scene, not knowing what had happened, nor the fact that her husband was already buried! Peter challenged her about their doings, and then pronounced the death sentence on her as well (publicly):

Then Peter said to her, "How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and will carry you out." Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband (Acts 5:9-10).

A further wave of great fear swept through the Church as again **the visible demonstration of the authority of God and Church was made clear to all.**

The spirit of Ananias and Sapphira has to be cleansed out of our modern church, and a lot of attitudes and practices over money dealings, lies and cover-ups, etc. repented of. Malachi 3:8-11 tells us many Christians rob God in tithes and offerings (now free-will offerings out of a fully committed heart), and bring curses upon themselves.

Question: Can God trust you with money ~ His money?

I once saw this quotation: "*It is not how much of my money I give to God, but how much of God's money will I keep for myself?*"

These times of judgment are coming again in the Church (I believe before Jesus returns). Such powerful dealings of God will be the only way some people will respond and "get the message" that we are serving a Holy God.

Another verse of Scripture which (I believe) is present truth says this:

"For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will the end be of those who do not obey the Gospel of God?" (1 Peter 4:17).

Judgment upon the Christian is to remove disobedience and rebellion out of our lives. In each of my encounters with God there has always been an experience of God's judgment against my unbelief, disobedience and rebellion. I have not enjoyed that part, but it has always been necessary ~ and I have learned to thank the Lord that He does show me my own sinful heart. The judgment on my own self by the Lord has always resulted in **a new respect for God's authority ~ and has released a new authority of God in my own life.**

It has been my experience to have to thus far in my ministry deliver strong words (at different times) to two men through a word of knowledge; words that if they did not take heed to what God was saying, He would take their lives. Neither of them took heed. The first died within three months, the second within one month. I was quite shocked when the news of these deaths was received and a very healthy respect and fear of God has filled my life since.

- **The Church has to know She cannot play around with God!**
- **Christianity is on His terms, not ours!**

And the Church must first have Her house in order before She can expect to put the world in order. Do not be surprised to hear of more things like this happening. God must speak clearly and strongly to His Church if She is to be the mighty force He wants it to be. It is through death that God speaks to us more strongly than in any other way, especially when that death appears to happen before its time.

In the two cases I have mentioned, the first man was 22 years old, and the second 64 (a leader of a Pentecostal Movement). Both were known personally to me, and so it was not an idle act without

responsibility on my part. How I have learned to realize that God does mean what He says ~ and says what He means.

Authority has got to be more than something talked about. The more we see authority rising up, the more repentance we will see. And the more we repent, the greater the authority we shall know as Christians.

Question: **Are you satisfied with the level of authority in your life, and if not, what can you do about it?**

Chapter 10: Simple Obedience

WITHOUT EXCEPTION OBEDIENCE is something that has to be learned. Even Jesus:

“Though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; and having been perfected (“complete”), He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who OBEY HIM” (Hebrews 5: 8-9, emphasis mine).

Obedience is “a hearing attentively, or listening; hence obedience as the result of attentive hearing.”

- **Jesus learned obedience.**

That word “learned” means “to learn from others, from study and observation.” We have to give ourselves to studying God’s Word, hearing His voice, and observing the Master Himself.

In Matthew Chapters Five, Six and Seven we have recorded what is known as the “Sermon on the Mount” (I like to call it “Kingdom Living Principles”). At the very beginning we read:

“And when He (Jesus) was seated, His disciples came unto Him: then He opened His mouth, and taught them . . .”
(Matthew 5:1-2).

At the conclusion of His teachings He summed everything up by giving the illustration of the man who built his house on the rock and the man who built his house on the sand. This is what Jesus said (and still says):

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on the rock:

"And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

"And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall"
(Matthew 7:24-27).

Both those houses could very well have looked exactly the same. And while the weather conditions (circumstances of life) were favourable, all went wonderfully well for the foolish man. But the real tests of life are not determined by looks. When the storms came it was the foundations that were important. Sand has no resistance to swirling floodwaters; just as an undisciplined, disobedient life-style has no strength or testimony when tested. That type of person must fail.

- As far as Jesus is concerned, the only difference between success and failure is in the way we respond to His word, His voice.**

Both the wise and the foolish heard the word from the Master's lips ~ the same words ~ but the wise man put them into practice; he obeyed. The foolish man heard what Jesus was saying, but thought he knew a better way. He did not obey. He failed while the wise man succeeded. The crunch of Christianity is whether we are obedient to God, or disobedient. Every time we disobey God we are showing by our actions (or lack of actions) that we think we know better than He.

- **If we really do believe the Word of God, we will obey it!**
- **If we really do love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind, we will do what He tells us.**

Jesus said:

"If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word . . . He who does not love Me does not keep My words" (John 14:23-24).

That word "keep" means "to watch over, take care of, keep an eye upon, observe attentively."

Christians are disciples ~ disciples of Jesus ~ or they are not really Christians at all. A disciple is one who is "a learner, pupil. In the New Testament more than this, a follower, one who follows both the teacher and the teaching" (Bullinger's). So, **a Christian disciple follows Jesus and His teaching.**

- **What He says goes!**
- **What He tells us to do, we should do it!**

Otherwise we are not worthy of Him. God only asks one thing of the Christian and that is his obedience. Obedience ~ is this too hard?

- **Obedience demonstrates our love to the Master.**

THE FEAR OF MAN

One day as I was meditating upon the importance of obedience, the Holy Spirit spoke to me: **"Right now My people cannot obey Me fully, even if they wanted to."**

I said, "Why is that, Lord?"

"Because at this present time the fear of man is greater in their lives than the fear of God. While the fear of man is greater than My fear they will always disobey Me. This has got to

change.” Hence the need for manifest authority, as well as the apostle and prophet ministry in the Church.

When the Holy Spirit spoke those words it became so clear. We are a nation of people bound up in the fear of man. So many times we disobey God because we are afraid of what certain people will think or say.

“The fear of man brings a snare (“entanglement into bondage, a trap”)” (Proverbs 29:25).

Nearly every time there is a praise and worship time in Christian meetings there are people who disobey the Holy Spirit in manifesting the gifts of the Holy Spirit because of fear.

- **Fear is a robber!**
- **Fear is a tormentor!**
- **Fear is a spirit!**
- **Fear binds and restricts us!**

And the Bible clearly says:

“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:7).

- **God’s power in us will always lead us into obedience.**
- **God’s love in us will always lead us into obedience.**
- **God’s sound mind in us will always lead us into obedience.**

It is only the fear of man that makes us disobey. Let us see it for what it is and turn from it. We are not called to be inferior, fearful servants to man’s whims and wishes, but we are called to rise up in obedience to our Heavenly Father’s commands.

Question: **Are you building on the rock of obedience, or on the sand of the fear of man?**

Do not be like the one-talent man of Matthew 25:18, 24-30 any longer. When he stood before the Lord to give account of himself, he said:

"I was afraid, and went and hid Your talent in the ground. Look, there You have what is Yours. But his Lord answered and said to him, You wicked and lazy servant . . ."

A NEW THING

Many times I have heard prophecy relating to the next move of God stating that it will be "a new thing . . . a way we have not walked before," etc. I try to visualize what a new thing will involve. If we are going to be called upon by our Master to do things we have never done before, then we are going to have to have a good relationship with Jesus, knowing His voice clearly enough to trust and obey whatever He says . . . **Obedience comes out of hearing attentively what is being said to us by the Holy Spirit.**

Something that I feel has got to happen is to see a whole new releasing of the miraculous power of God. **If we cannot demonstrate the power of God with visible evidence of signs, wonders and miracles, the world will not be convinced. Jesus taught that signs would follow the believers ~ not believers the signs** (Mark 16:17-18).

The hold-up to a new miraculous demonstration of the power of God is tied up with disobedience and the fear of man. **God has chosen to work through men and women ~ His Church ~ people who are committed to His purpose and filled with the Holy Spirit.** The Word of God is clear enough about believers laying hands on the sick, cursing diseases, casting out devils, curing the cripples, raising the dead, etc. We know it is God's will for these things to happen. Praise God they are happening ~ but nowhere like they are going to when God gets our attention and obedience!

- **Obedience to the Holy Spirit is the key to releasing the miraculous!**
- **Obedience will also help us to conquer the fear of man.**

I believe it was the Holy Spirit Who gave me a mind picture to demonstrate how powerful the fear of man is: I saw myself sitting in a funeral service with about 150 people in attendance. The Holy Spirit spoke and said, ***"If I asked you to walk forward and raise the dead, would you do it?"*** In my heart I knew I could not ~ or would not! I mean, think of the repercussions whatever happened! The point of this challenge was to show me how important it is to know God's voice. For if God does tell us to do something like that, then God would confirm His word ~ and He would be greatly glorified. It is not hard for Him to raise the dead!! If it is only presumption on our part, then guess who finishes up with "egg on their face"?

In this next move we have got to clearly know the voice of God. He is always right and always knows best. That comes first ~ clearly knowing the voice of God.

Secondly, I realized a little of how powerful the fear of man is. We must break through this fear, for the raising of the dead will happen more and more when the Church arises. Whether it happens in a funeral service, in the church, or wherever is really immaterial ~ **it is what God says, and when He says to do it, that counts.**

- **Would you do it?**

Or, do you think I am being silly?

I have had experiences over the years of doing "new things" in God that I have never done before. But every time I have obeyed, something wonderful has happened. Like the time it was announced by the leader of a meeting for people ***"to come forward for prayer and words (of prophecy) over your life, and Pastor Francis will pray for you,"*** when Pastor Francis ~ taken totally by surprise and knowing I had no anointing just then to do that ~ felt like I had

been thrown in the deep end and couldn't swim! Then, when quite a lot of people went forward (over 50 of them) for me to pray, I started crying out in my spirit for help . . . quickly!

"Lord, they expect me to minister to them in the power of the Holy Ghost, and I don't have a thing to give them!"

I knew I could not just "switch on" mechanically and I certainly was not going to prophesy "my words" over them.

As I reached out to the Lord, He asked me to do something I had never done before. He said, **"See that minister over there"** (across the other side of the room!), **"I want you to walk up to him, look him straight in the eye ~ eye-ball to eye-ball ~ with your eyes open, and begin to speak positive words into him."**

To me that seemed a crazy thing to do, and I certainly thought that the minister concerned would think I was a "nut case." But I have been in Holy Spirit ministry long enough to know that I needed to obey. So, in spite of what others might have thought, I walked across to the minister and did as I was told. **As I did that and spoke into that man's life, the Holy Spirit anointing was released in ME and I was able to move amongst those who had come forward and prophesy the Word of the Lord over them.** Many wept openly as they recognized the presence and anointing of God in the midst. One woman said to me: *"I have been married to that man for over 20 years and I have never seen him cry before now. Just look at him."* There he was kneeling on a hard board floor, weeping loudly under the dealings of God.

- **It pays to obey!**

Another recent experience of a "new thing" happened at a leadership training camp. Over 100 men and women had gathered for indepth teaching on matters of leadership responsibilities. I was one of the speakers. For weeks before this camp I had been praying for God to bless the camp, to use me, etc., even do a new thing if necessary

(I was by then aware of God wanting to do new things). At the first meeting I had no official involvement so decided to sit at the back and "just observe." As the meeting progressed it became increasingly "heavy" in the spirit. People were tired from travelling long distances, etc. I sat there feeling pleased I was not preaching, but then "complained" to God about all the prayer I had done to see this camp a great blessing, and nothing was happening! Immediately the Holy Spirit spoke and said, "**Why don't you do something about it?**"

"Who me, Lord? It's not my meeting! What do You want me to do?"

"I want you to walk up and down the aisle speaking loudly in tongues!"

"That will be the day, Lord! I have never done that before in my life! The people will think I am trying to take over the meeting, or trying to show off."

"Do you remember the prayers you have been praying before you came? You even told Me you would do a new thing if I wanted you to. Now, I want you to break something in the spirit realm."

"How, Lord?"

"By doing just what I have asked you."

Suddenly the anointing of the Holy Spirit came on me so strong that I began to shake. But I did not want to do what I was told. The more I delayed being obedient the "tighter" the meeting grew. Finally, seeing I was right at the rear of the meeting, I thought I would just quietly walk back and forth across the back of the hall where no one would see me and very quietly speak in tongues. I began to do this, when the Holy Spirit spoke again:

"What are you doing?"

"I am trying to obey You, Lord."

"I never asked you to do that. I asked you to walk up and down the aisle speaking out in tongues loudly. Now obey Me!"

As I stood there having a big argument with God, the meeting became very silent, as though nobody knew what to do next. The preacher stopped preaching and stared at me! I knew what to do, but did not want to do it! I finally relented and, in direct obedience to the Holy Spirit, I walked up that aisle speaking loudly in tongues. It brought quite a shocked re-action from many in that meeting as they were suddenly awakened from their slumber by the noise. I kept my eyes shut as much as possible, for each time I opened them to quickly glance at where I was walking, all I saw were heads wrenching side-ways to see where the noise was coming from! After walking up and down the aisle once, speaking in tongues, the Lord gave me a powerful prophecy and I walked back up and down the aisle as I delivered it. Something broke in the spirit realm and there followed a flow of prophecy from among the gathered assembly. Approximately 10 prophecies came forth. One of them was given by an elder from our church in Palmerston North who had been seeking to be released in the gift of prophecy for quite some time (approximately six years). What a breakthrough for him it was ~ and what a joy to hear it. Since that time Warren has been a tremendous blessing as he has continued to move in prophecy, as well as the word of knowledge, discerning of spirits, word of wisdom and gift of faith. What seemed to me to be a foolish thing turned out to be a great blessing as I have observed the results from that particular meeting.

- **The Lord knows best!**

We had a marvellous camp!

SOME SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES OF OBEDIENCE

As I have pondered over this challenge of simple obedience I have come to see some Bible illustrations in a new light and which show us something of the obedience required to release God's power into a situation. I would like for you to put yourself into these illustrations and do a little test on where you are at with regards to obedience.

THE FIRST MIRACLE OF JESUS (John 2:1-11):

There was a wedding service in Cana of Galilee. Jesus, His mother and disciples were there. Everything was going along fine, until the wine ran out . . .

Imagine yourself being at that wedding and YOU are one of the servants. Mary comes to you, informing you they have run out of wine, and, pointing toward Jesus, tells you to approach Him. This doesn't seem too difficult, does it? But then comes the amazing, prophetic words from Mary's lips, "**Whatever He tells you to do, do it.**" You walk over to Jesus and He tells you to fill the waterpots with water (logically, what has no wine got to do with filling waterpots?).

- **Would you do it?**
- **Would you fill the wine jug with water from the waterpots?**

The servant (you) did as he was commanded and looked to Jesus for the next lot of instructions. Jesus then pointed out the head man of the wedding and says to you, "**I want you to go and pour that water out into that man's glass.**"

Let's say there were over 100 people at the wedding and they are watching you and Jesus talk.

- **Would you walk to the front with your jug of water, knowing they were expecting wine?**
- **Would you pour that water out into the governor's glass?**

The servants in the Bible story did as Jesus told them and, **in their obedience, they released the miracle that was required to meet the need.** The water was turned into wine! And good wine at that! Their disobedience could have prevented the miracle taking place, whereas **simple obedience** (refusing to bow down to the reasoning of the natural mind) **to the word of Jesus brought a miracle into the midst.**

- ***"The glory of Jesus was manifested!"***

How? Through servants who were prepared to take Jesus at His word! Today it is no different. Jesus is still looking for servants who will take Him at His word! **"Whatever He says to you to do, do it"** (John 2:5). Their obedience released Jesus into His public ministry!

THE MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES (Luke 5:1-11):

Peter and his crew had been fishing all night without any success at all. Tired and weary, they were washing their nets, most likely very disappointed at their fruitless night's work. Jesus comes on the scene, followed by a huge crowd of people, all eager to hear what He has to say. Put yourself into the picture. You are Peter the fisherman. You listen intently also as the Master teaches His word. When Jesus has finished speaking, He turns to you and says (in front of all), **"Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a catch** (of fish)." All your fishing knowledge, expertise and fishing friends know from experience that there are no fish out there. You have just been out there all night and caught absolutely nothing!

- **But Jesus has spoken . . . what will you do?**
- **Will you obey Him, or give in to logical reasoning?**

Peter speaks out, "**Master, we have toiled** ("laboured, wearied ourselves") **all night and caught nothing: NEVERTHELESS AT YOUR WORD** (emphasis mine) **I will let down the net.**" He chose to believe Jesus more than the prevailing circumstances!

In obedience they went out, cast the net and released the miracle of God. The Bible says:

"And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking" . . . so much so that two boats were nearly sunk with the weight of fish they now had on board.

- **Obedience was "the key" then.**
- **Obedience is still "the key" now!**

It is an interesting thought that if Peter had tried to take Jesus into partnership with him after that miracle, he could have become a millionaire (with the Lord directing operations you could not go wrong!). But exactly the opposite happened:

- **"They forsook all, and followed Jesus!"**

ANANIAS THE DEVOUT DISCIPLE (Acts 9:1-22):

This time you are Ananias, having a time of prayer and praise alone with the Lord. Next thing you discover you are having a vision and the Lord speaks:

"Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying,

"And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight."

There was only one thing wrong with that vision ~ God wanted him to go and pray for Saul of Tarsus! Every Christian for miles around feared this Saul more than any other man. Ananias knew Saul was coming to Damascus to beat up the Christians; that same Saul who had a reputation "a mile long" as being a cruel, heartless enemy of the disciples of Jesus.

- **What would you do with that vision?**
- **Would you try and explain it away so that you would not have to go?**
- **Would you try and tell yourself that that is only your thoughts and not God speaking to you at all?**

Ananias reasoned with the Master:

"Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm ("bad things") he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name."

"Lord, he'll kill me!" was what Ananias was thinking. (What would you be thinking?)

God is so good. He knows our hearts and will never ask us to do anything we are not capable of doing. **Whatever He tells us to do we can do it!**

The Lord in His graciousness speaks to Ananias again:

"Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake."

Saul! Chosen of God?!

The thought of it had never crossed the disciples minds. He was an enemy ~ "of the devil!" ~ and that was that! But God had other

ideas, and Ananias is the link to release the purposes of the Almighty into the life of that religious bigot.

With the Holy Spirit now stirring in Ananias, he goes for a walk. He comes to a street ~ it is called "Straight Street" (a good street to live in), just as the vision had declared. Along that street Ananias goes (remember you are Ananias) and there he finds the house belonging to one Judas. With pounding heart you stand at the gate . . . Will you go in, or carry on walking?

The Bible says Ananias "**entered the house.**" And, just as the vision had proclaimed, there was this man Saul ~ a little man ~ who was praying. By this time Ananias has had so many confirmations of the vision being right ~ and of God! ~ that he boldly declared as he put his hands on him:

"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, Who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit."

When Ananias was obedient to the vision "**immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized.**"

- **What would you have done?**
- **These are the kind of things that the Holy Spirit wants us to do today.**
- **Has He got your ear?**
- **Are we listening to what the Holy Spirit is saying to the churches?**
- **And will we obey when He does speak?**

Be an Ananias for Jesus!

CORNELIUS AND PETER (Acts 10):

Two men, Cornelius and Peter, through obedience to God, were the instruments to bring the Pentecostal Gospel to the Gentiles. As a result of a vision, Cornelius sent men to find one whose surname was Peter at a place called Joppa. The angel had given instruction that this Simon was staying with another "**whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.**" Cornelius' men did as they were commanded and went to Joppa to find this person called Simon Peter. While they were coming, Peter (who was a very strict Jew and knew nothing of their coming), went to pray. He fell into a trance and saw heaven opened with a great sheet being let down before him. In it were all manner of animals, creeping things and birds. A voice rang out, "**Rise, Peter; kill and eat.**"

In this illustration you are Peter. You have always watched the things you eat, seeking to live according to the teaching of the law. You have tried to be a good Christian by doing all the "right" things. Then you have this vision that cuts right across your concepts.

Peter refuses to eat ~ he disobeys God, because he answered, "**Not so, Lord!**" He clearly recognized God's voice, so he knew it was not his own idea, or a Satanic source.

- **What would you do?**

The voice speaks again, "**What God has cleansed you must not call common.**" Three times this happened before the vessel returned back up to heaven.

- **How many times does God have to speak before we will obey Him?**

The Word of the Lord had to come to Jonah the second time (Jonah 3: 1).

Peter could not understand what the vision was all about ~ it left him doubting. Then the men from Cornelius' house arrived at the gate (remember Peter was up on the housetop). The Holy Spirit spoke to Peter, saying:

"Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them."

In obedience he goes down and introduces himself to the men, who tell him why they have come:

"Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God, and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you."

Still unaware of why God was sending Peter, he set off to Cornelius' house.

- **Would you go?**

Peter went in direct obedience to the Holy Spirit. He did not go with a prepared sermon. **He was a prepared messenger to deliver the right message to the right people in the right place at the right time! That is when miracles happen!**

He stood before the people and preached Jesus unto them. Then we read in Acts 10 verses 44-48:

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.

And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.

For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, "Can anyone forbid water, that these

should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?"

And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

If Peter had known the full meaning of the sheet let down from heaven, he most likely would not have gone to Cornelius' house (especially if he knew the apostles and brothers were going to rebuke him when he got back to Jerusalem: Acts 11).

The Lord knows what is right and how much we can take at any given point in time. It was the Lord's express desire to pour out His Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles, and He gave Peter sufficient enough information to get him to obey.

God will pour out His Spirit today through all who will obey. When Peter obeyed and went, the Gentiles experienced the supernatural blessings of the Holy Spirit upon their lives.

Jesus has promised:

"I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh . . ." (Acts 2:16-24).

It is God's will to do it ~ **and He does it when we obey what He says.**

OTHER EXAMPLES:

Several other Scriptural examples could be used to show the importance of obedience to the voice of the Lord:

Think of Noah in building the ark in preparation for the coming flood of judgment, when as yet the world had not known rain (Genesis 6). By faith he built, even though the whole of public opinion and understanding would have been against such a venture.

- **Would you have built that ark under those circumstances?**

Moses, when commanded to hold his rod out over the Red Sea and divide the waters to enable the Israelites to pass through on dry ground, **obeyed, and saw a tremendous miracle of God take place before his eyes** (Exodus 14).

- **What would you have done?**

Joshua, when leading the Israelites around the walled city of Jericho 13 times in direct obedience to God, saw the walls fall down flat on that 13th time as they blew the trumpets and praised the Lord (Joshua 6).

If you were Joshua, would you have marched the people around the city that many times, believing God would honour your obedience?

These are just a few examples of the many in the Word of God where **simple obedience** released God to do mighty miracles in the midst of His people.

- **Yes, simple obedience!**
- **It is the key to unlocking the power of God in our midst!**

Chapter 11: **Obedience and the New Visitation**

PERHAPS THIS could have been included in with Chapter 10, but I feel that it is important to separate the following to bring further emphasis on how important obedience is to release the new visitation of God.

- **That God wants to visit us there is no doubt.**
- **That He is right now preparing a people for this coming move there is no doubt.**
- **That there will be a mighty outpouring of the power of God there is no doubt.**
- **It is the who's and the how's that we need to be aware of.**

Who will be in this next move, and who will be used in this next move, **will be determined by our response to what God is saying.**

- **Are we willing now to deal with every thing in our life that causes us to be disobedient?**

We cannot continue to drift along in life thinking that it is all of the sovereignty of God and none of us. Nor is it all of us and none of God. **But it is God and us working together ~ with Him in command. Each of us must be willing to do as He asks us.** There is no other way.

How God will pour out His Spirit and fulfil all His Word we do not fully know. But we can rest assured that He is more than able to

bring to pass all His promises. I think we all will be greatly surprised when God arises in the midst of His people. What an awesome day!

It will happen, because "***the glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former***" (Haggai 2:9).

One way that God is going to release life, healing and miracles more and more in the days ahead is through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Gift of Prophecy will take on a more authoritative function to release healings and miracles among the people. Let us look at

...

THE VALLEY OF DRY BONES (Ezekiel 37:1-14)

To me this passage of Scripture is one of the most amazing descriptions of how God will revive His Church and raise Her up to be a mighty conquering army. Here we see God and Ezekiel His prophet working together to bring life out of death.

Right now there is a restoration of the apostle and prophet ministry to the Church. These ministries break us out of our sins and apathy, and release us into the divine "jet-stream" of the will of God. I believe this next move of God will be ushered in through mature saints who know something of ***the disciplines of the Holy Spirit***. They will be a people who have learned by experience to know the voice of God and will be obedient to that voice.

Ezekiel was such a man. I want you to let your imagination picture the setting of the story as we take a walk together into the valley of dry bones. If you are a man or woman of the Spirit you are in this valley. In fact visualize yourself as Ezekiel ~ why not? The hand of the Lord has carried you out "***in the Spirit of the Lord***" and set you down in the middle of this valley full of very dry bones. You notice two things: (1) There are many bones, and (2) They are very dry. It is a scene of hopelessness, death and despair. Then God speaks to you, "***Son of man, can these bones live?***"

- **What a question!**
- **How would you answer it?**
- **Ezekiel was quite a wise man; he just put it back on the Lord: "O Lord God, You know."**

God's voice of authority comes forth directly to you:

"Prophesy to these bones, and say to them, 'O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! Thus says the Lord God to these bones: 'Surely I will cause breath to enter into you, and you shall live.

"I will put sinews on you and bring flesh upon you, cover you with skin and put breath in you; and you shall live. Then you shall know that I am the Lord."'"

What would you do?

There you are, standing out in that valley ~ whose floor is covered with multiplied thousands of very dry bones ~ and God tells you to prophesy life into them! **Those bones are very dead!** How can dead, dry bones hear . . . receive breath . . . sinews, nerves, skin . . . the knowledge of God?

That's impossible!

Wait a minute. . . have we forgotten that **"NOTHING** (emphasis mine) **is impossible with God"** (Matthew 19:26 and Luke 1:37)?

"You mean, Lord, You want ME to speak, to prophesy upon these very dead bones?"

"That is what I said."

Because the fear of man is the biggest fear we battle against, let us just imagine that there are a group of people sitting on a hill-side on the edge of the valley having a picnic. They see you standing there staring at all the dry bones, and are wondering what you are

doing. Up to now you have not been aware of the company but, in looking up, you notice them and the challenge of God becomes so much greater. Thoughts go racing through your mind, “*What will they say or think if I start prophesying out aloud upon these bones? I will be ‘the laughing stock’ of the community, etc.!*” You look at the people, back to the bones, and all the time the Holy Spirit is saying, “***Prophesy!***”

“*What am I to prophesy?*”

“Hear the word of the Lord!” (Can dead bones hear??)

We cannot get away from it. **We must hear, listen, take it in. If we do not hear we cannot obey. When we do hear, we can obey.**

God promised Ezekiel what He would do, but first Ezekiel had to prophesy what, to the natural mind, is “lunacy” ~ and a total impossibility.

What happened?

“So I prophesied as I was commanded; and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and suddenly a rattling; and the bones came together, bone to bone” (verse 7).

- **Ezekiel obeyed God!**
- **He opened his mouth and spoke out boldly in prophecy the word of the Lord!**

Can you see the picnic party on the hillside laughing? They think Ezekiel is mad . . . “*Fancy talking to bones!*” Joking and mocking takes place among them. But then something amazing happened

...

“*I . . . I thought I s-saw . . . a . . . b- bone m-move!*” someone very soberly said.

"You're crazy!" came the reply.

Then others exclaimed, "That bone did move! Look! There's several bones . . . moving! Lots of bones are . . . moving! All the bones are . . . moving!"

The laughing stops! The jokes are no longer heard! Silence reigns on the hillside . . .

There is a noise now in the valley as the mighty hand of God, released by Ezekiel's obedience, supernaturally gathers the bones together. Skeletons are forming; sinews and skin appear over them. A creative miracle of God is taking place right before Ezekiel's eyes.

The miracle developed only to a certain stage: there was no breath in those bodies that had been formed out of the very dry bones. Bodies are useless without breath and life in them.

What must be done?

God knows what must be done ~ that is why we must continually look to Him and listen to what He has to say.

He speaks again to Ezekiel (you):

"Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, son of man, and say to the breath (breath of life), 'Thus says the Lord God: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe on these slain, that they may live'"' (verse 9).

God never tells us everything at once (we could not contain it!). He tells us so much, and then our obedience determines whether He tells us more. Disobedience on our part can abort what He wants to do.

- **Our obedience is vital!**

Ezekiel may not in 100 years have known to “**prophesy unto the breath** (wind)” ~ but God knew, and once again calls on Ezekiel to do something that is foolish to natural reasoning.

Have **you** ever prophesied unto the wind?
 Would **you** obey?
 What did Ezekiel do?
 He prophesied again!

“So I prophesied as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood upon their feet, an exceedingly great army” (verse 10).

Ezekiel obeyed God!

- **Obedience brought life where there was death!**
- **Obedience turned a corpse into a soldier!**
- **Thousands of dead bodies became an army that could march!**

Ezekiel’s obedience to the word of the Lord gave resurrection life to a nation! Did you take that statement in? **Ezekiel’s obedience to the word of the Lord gave resurrection life to a nation!** Yes, simple obedience . . . simply doing as God asked of him.

What do these bones represent? Let the Scriptures answer:

“Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel”
 (verse 11).

In relevant terminology, that is speaking of the Church of Jesus Christ and every individual within that Church. Not a very nice thing when God shows us up as dry bones in a valley. But can we deny it? So many Christians today are Christian in name only. There’s no life, enthusiasm, separation from the world, or vision for the impossible in our lives. Faith is small and we walk rather by sight and circumstances. This has got to change.

- **We need an encounter with God!**

How did Israel become dry bones? Through a negative confession; putting themselves down; giving up; discouragement and unbelief. All these things are the result of disobedience. Did they have to stay that way? No! a thousand times no! That was not the will of God for them. It is not the will of God for us either. We have not been redeemed to be second-class citizens, but to be conquerors in Jesus' name! Overcomers!

God said again to Ezekiel:

"Therefore prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.

"Then you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O My people, and brought you up from your graves.

"I will put My Spirit in you, and you shall live, and I will place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I, the Lord, have spoken it and performed ("done") it," says the Lord" (verses 12-14).

God's glory shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea (Numbers 14:21 and Habakkuk 2:14). Both these Scriptures were given at a time when the circumstances seemed as hopeless as Ezekiel's valley of dry bones.

- **Think of the joy when the results of your obedience are seen in the miraculous confirmation of God!**

BRINGING LIFE OUT OF DEATH IS THE TEST OF OUR CHRISTIANITY

The Church has got to know again that the same Holy Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead is quickening ("making alive") our mortal bodies today (Romans 8:11). That same Holy Spirit brings life out of death ~ He is the resurrection Spirit!

Life is the hallmark of Christianity! Because He (Jesus) lives, we live also! Resurrection life must be the fruit of all Holy Spirit ministry.

- **We are life-givers!**
- **We are called to drive out death and bring in life!**

The one thing more than anything else that caused the woman to know Elijah was a true man of God was that he could bring life out of death (1 Kings 17:17-24). He raised her dead son back to life, and caused her to exclaim:

"Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth."

Those words will be spoken many times again in this next visitation of God. God will arise in His Church in an unprecedented way, showing Himself mighty and strong through those who obey Him.

"THERE WAS A NOISE"

What else does Ezekiel 37 reveal about the move of God? Verse 7 says: "***There was a noise, and suddenly a rattling . . .***"

I do not believe the next move will be a quiet thing, "***something done in a corner***" (Acts 26:26). It will be out in the open ~ the Word of the Lord will be boldly declared. There will be a shout in the camp! The voice of authority of "***Thus says the Lord,***" and the

confirmation of that word will be clearly seen. God's fear will rule in the hearts of His saints.

Noisy? Yes, noisy as the Holy Spirit releases us to release others . . . to set them free from all manner of things. Think of the noise as the cripples, the maimed, lame, halt and blind are totally changed as we obey the Lord. Do not exclude creative miracles where legs and arms, etc., are grown again. **The happening in the valley of dry bones was full of creative miracles!**

Think of the noise of our meetings when the saints realize their God-given rights and take hold on their possessions!

The Scripture is right:

"The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a King is among them" (Numbers 23:21).

Consider this one:

"Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! For the Lord Most High is awesome ("to be feared, reverenced"); He is a great King over all the earth. He will subdue the peoples under us, and the nations under our feet. He will choose our inheritance for us, the excellence of Jacob whom He loves. Selah ("pause a moment, and meditate upon what has been said"). God has gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet" (Psalm 47:1-5). Or:

"Our God shall come and shall not keep silent; a fire shall devour before Him, and it shall be very tempestuous ("frightful") all around Him" (Psalm 50:3).

A SHAKING, A RATTLING

The word "rattling, shake, shaken, or shaking" means "to tremble, to shake violently, to cause to move, to shake out or off or away;

to agitate, disturb, to cause to fear." Those things which have happened to me in my encounter with God have caused a shaking in my life. Some things have fallen off and that which has remained has been strengthened. It is my conviction that God has got to shake the Church a lot more yet. She is encumbered with too many wrong things. She has got to get back to the simple life style of the early Church, **to simply be available to God for anything and everything.** She cannot go on being deaf to what the Holy Spirit is saying.

"Shake us, Lord!"

"See that you do not refuse Him who speaks. For if they did not escape who refused Him who spoke on earth, much more shall we not escape if we turn away from Him Who speaks from heaven, whose voice then shook the earth; but now He has promised, saying, "Yet once more I shake not only the earth, but also heaven."

"Now this, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of those things that are being shaken, as of things that are made, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:25-29).

I see great changes coming in church life. This will cause shaking in many lives, especially those who resist change and who like to keep doing things the way they are at present.

- Just because "we've been doing it this way for 20 years" does not mean it is right.

Is the resurrection life of Christ in it? If not, it will be shaken, so that only that which is acceptable in the Kingdom of God will remain.

Holy Spirit ministry will shake those with a carnal mind and fear of the supernatural. The disobedient will be shaken as God wrestles with us to get our attention. He wants to use each one of us, but we must be obedient. And obedience has to be learned! It doesn't happen overnight. That's why we must be committed to prayer and fasting so all hindrances of the flesh can be shaken out of us, and we can clearly hear the voice of God.

Chapter 12: Knowing the Time of Visitation

NOW AS HE (Jesus) *drew near, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, "If you had known, even you, especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes.*

"For the days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment around you, surround you and close you in on every side, and level you, and your children within you, to the ground; and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

Then He went in to the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in it, and saying to them, "It is written, My house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'"

And He was teaching daily in the temple. But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him, and were unable to do anything; for all the people were very attentive to hear Him" (Luke 19:41-48).

Jesus was telling them of the destruction that was shortly to come upon that place ~ **but they did not know the time of their visitation.** God is visiting THIS nation and we need to be aware of it. I want to ask you in all sincerity:

- ***"Do you know the time of visitation?"***

We need to know, so we can prepare accordingly.

In the Scripture, everywhere that “***the day of visitation,***” “***the time of visitation***” and “***the year of visitation***” is mentioned, it is always a clear-cut direction. God’s people went one way or the other. They either “ran with the Spirit” or they turned and were consumed in the flesh.

- **Every time!**
- **There was no half-way house!**
- **There was no lukewarmness!**
- **There was no sitting on the fence!**

“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (“wealth, riches”)” (Matthew 6:24).

- **We are right now in a day of decision.**
- **Which way will we decide?**

Let me share with you Luke 19:41-44 from the Amplified Bible:

“And when as He (Jesus) approached He saw the city, He wept (audibly) over it, Exclaiming, Would that you had known personally, even at least in this your day, the things that make for peace (for freedom from all the distresses that are experienced as the result of sin and upon which your peace, that is, your security, safety, prosperity and happiness depends)! But now they are hidden from your eyes.

“For a time is coming upon you when your enemies will throw up a bank (with pointed stakes) about you, and surround you, and shut you in on every side.

“And they will dash you down to the ground, You [Jerusalem] and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another; [all] because you did not come progressively to recognize and know and understand [from observation and experience] the time of your visitation [that

is, when God was visiting you, the time in which God showed Himself gracious toward you and offered you salvation through Christ].

This is not speaking specifically of our initial salvation experience; but rather salvation against the judgment of God that is coming.

VISITATION

Visitation separates:

- Saints from sinners;
- Spirit from flesh;
- Knowledge from ignorance;
- Spiritual sight from spiritual blindness.

Visitation brings:

- Life to those who prepare for it;
- Death to those who don't (there's no middle road).

Visitation preserves:

- ***You have granted me life and favour, and Your care*** ("visitation" – KJV) ***has preserved*** ("keeps safe from danger or harm; protects from decay") ***my spirit*** (Job 10:12).

Visitation is a time of cleansing:

- Jesus cleansed the temple (Luke 19:45-46).

Visitation makes PRAYER the top priority for God's people:

- ***"My house is a house of prayer"*** (Luke 19:46).

- Those “***who join themselves to the Lord, to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants . . . and holds fast My covenant ~ Even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer . . . for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations***” (Isaiah 56:6-7).

Visitation means Jesus teaches us new things daily:

- “***And He was teaching daily in the temple***” (Luke 19:47). Our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20).

Visitation stirs up persecution from the religious community:

- “***But the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people sought to destroy Him***” (Luke 19:47).

Visitation brings a new hunger into the hearts of people to hear the word of Jesus:

- “***. . . for all the people were very attentive to hear Him***” (Luke 19:48).

Are you “***progressively coming to recognize and know and understand from your observation and experience, the time of your visitation?***” (Luke 19:44, Amp. Bible). Those who did not know the time of visitation were overthrown in the judgment that accompanied it.

In the next visitation revival and judgment in the Church go hand in hand. God must have a clean Church through which to pour out His Spirit in a mighty and miraculous way. Judgment will fall on all that which is not acceptable to Him. The Book of Jeremiah has something to say on the judgment that accompanies the time of visitation:

Jeremiah 8:12; 10:14-15; 11:23; 23:12; 46:21; 48:44; 50-27,32 and 51:18. Hosea 9 is another portion of Scripture to look at.

The day of visitation is not only a time of judgment, but also redemption. When Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist obeyed God by naming his son John, the Holy Spirit came upon him and he prophesied:

"Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people . . ."

". . . And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; for you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways, To give knowledge of salvation to His people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God, With which the Dayspring ("an uprising; a poetic word for dawn: the Messiah") from on high has visited us; To give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:68, 76-79).

So, just as God used John the Baptist to bring visitation to Israel before the first coming of Jesus, likewise is He using the Church to bring visitation to the nations before the second coming of Jesus Christ. I believe visitation must come before the return of Jesus.

WHEN DOES VISITATION BEGIN?

We need to understand something of visitation. We need to understand something of the question, "When does visitation begin within our lives?"

- **Is it yet a futuristic thing?**
- **Is it now?**
- **Or has it already begun?**

I have thought about this and, when I looked into the experience of Moses, I discovered that the moment the people of God began to cry unto God with all of their hearts for change ~ for deliverance ~ to be set free from the land of bondage ~ **God heard their cry!** You can read about it in Exodus 2:23-25 and Exodus 3. (See also my book, "The Prophetic In The Exodus").

- **From the moment God hears your cry, visitation is about to come unto you:**

"Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned ("to sigh deeply") because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.

"So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

"And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them" (Exodus 2:23-25).

The first thing God did in response to their cry was that He came down from heaven and identified Himself with man. **God visited Moses** in the backside of the desert, in his extreme "dryness," in his extreme wilderness experience. God visited Moses and gave him an encounter at the burning bush, so that from that experience he was never to be the same again.

- **That is visitation!**

God wants to do that with each and every one of us. We need to experience such an encounter with Him that we will become extremely aware of His personal dealings within our lives. Through knowing God's priorities and will for our life we will never be the same again.

- Has He got your attention yet?
- When God got Moses' attention, Moses had an encounter with the Living God!
- God talked to him!

God said to Moses:

"I have surely seen the oppression ("pain, suffering, distress") of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.

"So I have come down to deliver ("to snatch or take away") them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey . . .

"Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression ("a feeling of being weighed down, as with worries or problems; physic mental distress") with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send YOU to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt" (Exodus 3:7-10, emphasis mine).

All who experience personal visitation of God are “keys” in this next great spiritual awakening that is already growing throughout the nation. Right now you and I need to be running with it. The longer we leave it, the harder it will become to catch-up the pace and run with what God is saying and doing. It will be an unprecedented visitation. We will not have seen anything of the likes before.

- Run with the vision!
- Lay hold of knowing the time of visitation!
- God wants to visit us!

- **God wants to come to us in such a way that we can never doubt His word, His voice, His experience ever again. Praise the Lord!**

God said to Moses:

“Come now, therefore, and I will send you . . .” “Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, ‘The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, ‘I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt’” (Exodus 3:10,16).

- ***“The Lord has surely visited you!”***

As far as God was concerned (and Moses too), the visitation had already begun. But the people were still in bondage. The people were still in Egypt, but God had said, ***“The Lord has surely visited you!”*** Do not put off until tomorrow what God is saying and doing today!

Through an encounter with God, and with mighty signs, wonders and miracles, Moses convinced the ungodly. God's people were released and they went out by mighty signs and wonders through the Red Sea on dry ground! The enemies ~ those who were not identified with the visitation of God ~ were destroyed (Exodus 14). I believe we are seeing a parallel arising again right now as God summons His "Moses" up and down the land to a divine appointment and encounter.

As I have thought about this I believe one time of visitation came to me on October 19th, 1984. Ever since that time I have walked in a new dimension with God. The things the Holy Spirit spoke to me back there, the majority of it has already come to pass. God's Number One priority for our lives is daily prayer commitment. Prayer must be the priority ~ the first fruits ~ it is the best we can

give to God. Let us use the best hour(s) of our day to spend time in the presence of our Wonderful Lord. All the great men and women of the Bible were people of prayer. In visitation the Number One emphasis is prayer. We must get the victory there.

The Holy Spirit said He would call His people in this nation to prayer commitment. That would be followed by a commitment to fasting, which would release a new authority in the Church. Those three things ~ prayer, fasting and a new authority ~ are already taking place. At the time of writing this I am more aware of many Christians who are now committed to prayer and fasting. There's a new wave sweeping through the country. It's below the surface, behind the scenes, at this stage. But it is building up. It will break forth. Good things are happening; God is cleansing the temple. The greatest cleansing and disciplining "agent" in our life is a daily committed prayer time where we get alone with God long enough to allow Him to put His finger on things within our lives. I often pray: "*Lord, You take out of my life those things that should not be there, and put into my life those things that should be there.*" I pray that way concerning the church and ministry too.

I believe a new visitation has begun in our nation. The visible evidence will become more clearer as we move forwards with God. Let us not be ignorant as to what is happening right now.

Jesus said the city of Jerusalem would be destroyed because of the ignorance as to the time of her visitation.

- **They did not know the time of their visitation!**

When the armies came against them they crumpled underneath the onslaught, because they did not know the time of their visitation.

Visitation does not depend entirely upon God. Visitation also depends on our walk and relationship with Him. It is not a

matter of us sitting back passively and waiting for a Sovereign God to do everything.

- **Visitation is released through the obedience of the saints!**
- **There is no substitute for obedience!**

Why was Abraham the blessed man he was? Because he obeyed God (Genesis 22).

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

***"And what will you do in the day of punishment* ("visitation" – KJV), *and in the desolation* ("laying waste; ruin; misery") *which shall come from afar? To whom will you flee for help? And where will you leave your glory?"* (Isaiah 10:3).**

Tremendous questions.

What is your answer to them?

If we do not understand and know the time of visitation, all the good intentions in the world will not save us from desolation and destruction.

***"What then shall I do when God rises up? When He punishes* ("visits" – KJV), *how shall I answer Him?"* (Job 31:14).**

- **It is so important that we are found now doing the things God has called us to do!**

What use is it if we are trying to please Him with things and actions that are not what He has asked of us? We must not side-step the daily priority of prayer commitment! **We must get to know the voice of the Holy Spirit more clearly! These are urgent days; visitation is upon us! We must be living right with God and our fellow men.**

"Beloved, I beg ("ask earnestly; entreat; implore") **you as sojourners and pilgrims** ("temporary visitors; sojourners"), **abstain** ("voluntarily do without; refrain") **from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, having your conduct** ("behaviour") **honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by your good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation**" (1 Peter 2:11-12).

Our daily example is so important. The way we live will determine how many people around us will be brought into this visitation. Let us not miss it at any cost, and let us not be guilty of preventing others from experiencing it by undisciplined lifestyles.

There are great days ahead for those who right now are preparing themselves for a new visitation of God in the land. Let us not fail in that responsibility which the Holy Spirit places upon us, but rather fulfil it through simple obedience to His will.

Chapter 13: **A Brief Recap**

TO CONCLUDE this book I would like to give you a brief recap of what God the Holy Spirit is saying to the Church today. I believe these are very important things that every Holy Spirit-filled Christian needs to be committed to.

Seek an encounter with God through:

- Daily committed prayer in the secret place.
- Fasting.
- Breaking the prince spirit of unbelief.
- Gaining a new authority in God for daily living.
- Hearing God's voice (He is speaking today).
- Breaking out of the fear of man.
- Seeking a greater releasing of the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit in our life.
- Being obedient, knowing God's way is always right.
- Being prepared for a mighty new visitation such as never has been encountered before.
- Living in such a way that you will be a part of that visitation of God by being available, teachable and supernaturally useful to Jesus our Risen Lord as He marches through the land, bringing life out of death.
Hallelujah!
- Knowing the time of your visitation.

"... and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to His temple . . . Behold, He is coming," says the Lord of hosts
(Malachi 3: 1).

- Be totally committed to the cause of Christ!

When God asked Abraham to give up his most treasured possession, Isaac ~ who was a gift from God in the first place ~ he was obedient. Abraham so knew God's voice that he obeyed even that request. He was so willing to obey God that he believed God would raise Isaac again from the dead if no substitute sacrifice was provided. It was not until Abraham had the knife raised above his head ready to bring it down to kill Isaac that God intervened. A ram was provided and Isaac lived. As a result of Abraham's faith and actions, God gave him this tremendous promise:

"By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son ~

"Blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the sea shore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.

"In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice" (Genesis 22:16-18).

What a testimony! Firsthand from God Himself!

Can you hear those words ringing in your ears, dear child of Abraham? Let me repeat them again:

". . . all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because YOU HAVE OBEDIED MY VOICE!" (emphasis mine).

DO WE NEED AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD?

Yes! Yes! Yes! Every individual and church needs such an encounter with God! So much so that obedience to His voice is the top priority and outworking of everything we do.

- Out of prayer commitment must come obedience to the voice of God.
- Listen to all He has to say, and then obey!

I would like Jesus to have the last say in this book: "**You are My friends if you do whatever I command you.**"

"No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you.
(Are we hearing what He is saying?)

"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed ("ordained") you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you" (John 15:14-16).

God bless YOU!

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- Bible Basics (Foundational teaching for newer Christians)
- Kingdom Living (Teaching on Matthew Chapters 5 to 7)
- Curses (What the Bible has to say) (*by Rodney Francis, Len Buttner and Kerry Wright*)
- Baal Worship

*To be placed on our E-Mailing List to receive our monthly
"Prayer Support Letter,"
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