

A New and Living Way

By
J. Leland Earls

Word of Life Fellowship

As of today, April 21, 1981, it has been almost twenty years since the Lord brought me into a “new and living way” through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It has been almost ten years since the experiences related in this booklet were first written. Two things impress most as I reflect back on my “pilgrim journey”: the Lord's providence and the Lord's faithfulness. The two are closely related. Jesus told His disciples (close followers) in Mt. 26:32 that He would go before them into Galilee. This is a pattern for us, if we are seeking to closely follow Him. Galilee means “a circle”, and symbolically pictures the circuitous area of the whole earth. When we are seeking to live pleasing to the Lord, in faith and obedience, then we can always know that He is going before us to shape all of the circumstances and events of our lives. In John 10:14, Jesus declares that He is the “Good Shepherd”, and in 10:4 we read that “when he puts forth his own sheep, he goes before them.” Hallelujah! As we look back on the events of our lives, we realize that some of the greatest miracles that have come to pass are miracles of Divine providence; experiences which could never have come to pass without the Lord going before and preparing the way. Not only that, but David declares in Psalm 23, that “surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.”

With the Lord going before us, and goodness and mercy following us, how can we lose? We can't! Paul says in Ro. 8:31, “If God be for us, who can be against us.” If we are a child of God, everything that happens to us in God's plan of love can work **for** us, even though that may involve great trial and sacrifice at times. Paul tells us that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works **for** us a far more exceeding weight of glory (2 Co. 4:17).” Read about some of Paul's “light afflictions” in 2 Co. 6:4-10, 11:23-33, and compare them with your own. The same Paul also said, “**in** everything give thanks: for this is the will of God” (1 Th. 5:18), and also “give thanks always **for** all things unto God. “Praise is the language of faith, so begin to thank and praise the Lord for His **love** plan for your life; “for I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us” (Ro. 8:18). Amen!

“It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Your faithfulness!” (La. 3:22-23).

Introduction

The Christian life as God intended it is not something static, but rather an ever progressive pilgrimage. God set the typical pattern through the lives of the patriarchal fathers: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. They lived a nomadic life, not settling permanently in any location, as we read in He. 11:8-9, 13, and 16. “By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles (tents) with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise”, for they “confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth”, and their desire was for “a better

country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.” And because He is not ashamed to be called their God, that is exactly what He declared Himself to be when revealing Himself to Moses: “I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” (Ex. 3:6, and quoted by Jesus in Mt. 22:32).

It was not until the sons of Jacob and their families went into Egypt that they changed their nomadic life and settled down in the land of Goshen (Ge. 47:27). And the result was eventual slavery to their offspring (Ex. 1:8-14). Many years later, God led the nation out of Egypt by the hand of Moses to the very land that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had sojourned in. During the intervening years the land of promise had become a prepared land, well developed by the peoples dwelling therein, so that God could give His chosen nation “goodly cities, which you did not build, and houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, and wells dug, which you dug not, vineyards and olive trees, which you did not plant...”(De. 6:10-11). But this land was not theirs automatically or instantly; it had to be possessed gradually over a period of time, city by city, battle by battle, for the possessing also required a dispossessing of the inhabitants entrenched therein.

According to God's plan, the Israelites were not to fully settle down in the promised land until they had broken down all the strongholds of the Canaanites and had completely destroyed them or driven them out (Nu. 34:50-56). Of those tribes which had their inheritance on the east side of Jordan, all of the men of war were required to accompany the other tribes across Jordan to fight and help them possess their inheritance. They were not to return until the land was completely subdued (Nu. 32:16-23). The record shows, however, that all of the tribes were content to settle down without pressing on to finish the job and completely rid the land of the enemy. Instead they allowed many of them to remain, putting them under tribute and even making leagues with them contrary to the will of the Lord. And because of this, they not only failed to possess all of the land and gain the complete victory the Lord had for them, but they became ensnared by the gods of the land went down to defeat again and again (Judges 1:21 & 27-36, 2:1-3 & 11-14).

When the Israelites stopped “going on” with the Lord, they inevitably went backwards. There is no place in our Christian experience where we can settle down and feel we have “arrived”. One of the biggest problems is the sleep inducing dogmas taught by so many of the Churches. One of the worst is that which is generally taught in evangelical circles that all “believers” in Christ are ready, simply by virtue of their faith, to inherit all of the glories of heaven, and regardless of their spiritual state or condition will be “wafted off to glory” when the Lord returns to this earth. Yes, I am aware that those who are truly “born anew” (not just head believers) have been “raised to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ep. 2:6), but let us look at the parallel to this in the type which God has given us through the nation of Israel. The Israelites were made to “sit down” in the promised land after they had crossed Jordan as they encamped at Gilgal. There the manna of the wilderness ceased and they began to eat of the fruit of the promised land. By faith they were in a position of victory, for God had given His word that the land was theirs and He would go before them and defeat their enemies (Ex. 23:23, 33:2). But that faith which gave them their position in the promised land had to be translated into the experience of actually going into every part of the land and making it their own.

The same is true in the “spiritual pilgrimage” of Christians. Our spiritual position in Christ must be translated into spiritual possession in Christ. In Ep. 1:17-19, Paul prays that the Ephesian Christians might be enlightened by the Spirit to understand the greatness of their inheritance, and in Ep. 3:14-19, he prays that they might be strengthened or empowered by the

Spirit to actually possess the inheritance. The Greek word translated “comprehend” in verse 18 actually means “to receive fully or thoroughly” or “to lay hold of”. It is the same word used by Paul in Phil. 3:12, where he expresses his determination to “apprehend” or “lay hold of” that which is made available to him in Christ. And he makes it clear that he does not consider himself to have arrived, but he keeps pressing on (Phil. 3:12-14). This is going beyond just a salvation experience.

The apostle John reminds us that we are to “walk in the light” (1 John 1:5-7). This not only means conforming our lives to righteousness, refusing to have any fellowship with the works of darkness; but also to walk in truth, as the increasing revelation of God's Word falls upon our pathway (Ep. 5:7-16). To receive further understanding of God's will and purpose for our lives, as well as for His church, and then to refuse to quicken our steps in response and obedience to that light, is to surrender the “pilgrim” character of our Christian life and its experience. The “work of God” is to believe **into** (not “on” as the King James renders it) the depths of Jesus Christ our Lord (see John 6:29). There is no “stopping place” **in Him!**

A NEW AND LIVING WAY

Almost ten years ago, on Aug. 9, 1961, I began to enter into a new dimension in my Christian life and experience, and I have never been the same since. For the first time since then the Lord has prompted me to put in writing just how He brought me into a new and living way. It did not begin all at once, but was the culmination of several years of preparation. How little we realize the magnitude of the Lord's providence over our lives, even when we seem to be going pretty much “our own way”. How loving and patient is the Lord, beyond our comprehension, as He deals with us through many experiences to bring us to the place where He can lead us into the realms of grace and glory He has prepared for us.

As I reflect back over my life, I am absolutely amazed at the “riches of His grace” and mercy toward me in so many ways and through so many experiences. Only an all-wise, mighty and incredibly loving God could possibly take the threads of our “ragamuffin” and tattered experiences over a period of time and weave them into something that is designed to be praise and glory unto Him. Only He who holds the world in His hands and knows “the end from the beginning” (Is. 46:10), could possibly work all things in our lives according to the “counsel of his own will” (Ep. 1:11), and according to the purpose for which He has called us (Ro. 8:28). Grace beyond comprehension unto us mortals who so often stumble blindly along, so unaware of His mighty hand of providence. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” (Ro. 11:33).

Because we have been so brainwashed by the traditions of men, it usually takes us so many years to get to the place where the Lord can begin to reveal His truths to us and bring us into the wondrous experiences of His grace and glory prepared for us before the foundation of the world (Ep. 1:4). Sometimes I look back over the years and say in my heart: “Lord WHY could I not have known you years ago as I know you now, and entered into the experiences that are so real to me at the present time?” And even as I ask, I am aware that I was not ready. Not until we become dissatisfied with the concept of religion as doctrines to be accepted in the mind as mere head-knowledge (with no life in them), and as forms to go through (with no power in them), do we come to the place where we begin to CRY OUT unto God for inner reality: that which will truly satisfy and have meaning and relevance to life.

I found myself in such a condition several years ago. I had been in the Ministry for a number of years, but became so dissatisfied and weary with the “merry-go-round” of carnal

programs and activities necessary to keep people interested and busy in the church, as well as the spiritual lack which was so evident in my own life and the lives of most other Christians. I do not mean I didn't know and love the Lord, but I knew I was in desperate need of something more than I was experiencing. This is the place we must ALL come to if we want to receive the greater blessings the Lord has for us. God cannot fill our inner being with that, which has greater vitality and meaning until there is a hunger, and thirst after Him (Mt. 5:6). We cannot take the attitude that since the Lord is our "friend", He will give us that which we need regardless of whether we reach out for it or not. Jesus made this very plain to His disciples in Luke chapter eleven in His teaching on prayer. The "friend" who was in need received the 3 loaves he desired, not because his friend (Jesus) was aware of his need, but because of his "importunity" (persistent asking and seeking - see 11:8). Jesus said further: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you" (Lk. 11:9).

In the late 1950's I was pastoring a Christian church in Portland, Oregon, when I began to diligently seek the Lord as never before (see He. 11:6). For several years my hunger for greater reality and truth had led me to delve into various teachings and movements which I thought might hold some keys to what I was seeking. My understanding was increased in certain areas, but my search led to so much that was just "dead-end" carnality and blind alleys. Then one day, I heard a knock on the parsonage door. After opening the door I was confronted with a man who said, "The Lord spoke to me to come and see you." Not only had I never seen the man before, but also the idea that God actually spoke to people in the day I was living came as quite a shock to me. This was only the first of a number of "shocks" which were to come as the aftermath of this confrontation. I invited the man to my office in the church building where we talked for some time. He had known only my name and the fact that I lived in Portland (had seen it in a magazine because of an article I had written). He came all the way from Vancouver, Canada to see me. After a time of talking he made the statement: "I think I know why I have come to see you; have you ever received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?" Well, of course I had not received the baptism of the Holy Spirit! How could I receive something which wasn't for me, but was confined to the apostles of the first century (as I had always been taught)?

However, the very asking of this question by my visitor provided the occasion for me to pause and reflect. I had been doing some reading in the previous months which mentioned the baptism of the Holy Spirit and its place in the experience of the Christian pilgrim on the path of the cross. I'm afraid a crack in my theological armor was already showing. Was the hunger of my heart showing also? I have since learned that the Lord will "move mountains" to meet the need and cry of a hungry heart. I can recount many instances over the past several years where I became the instrument in the hand of God to "cross the path" of ones who were crying out to Him. By a set of providential circumstances I was once led (along with a companion) to a home in Tucson, Ariz., to people I had never met. As it turned out, we had the very answers they were seeking for, and the amazing thing was, that they were on their knees praying to God for some answers at the very moment we knocked on the door. How great is our God! I could relate many other such experiences.

But back to the office in the church and my visitor, I know I must have seemed somewhat flustered and hesitant. There was no doubt in my mind that I had never received the Holy Spirit. Yet I was aware even at that moment of my deep need and inner hunger. Having received no definite response to his question my visitor then said: "Do you mind if I lay hands on you and pray for you?" Lay hands on me? I was not familiar with any practice of "laying on hands" except for the ordination of candidates to the Christian Ministry. Many years previous, the hands

of the elders had been laid upon me when I was ordained to the Ministry at the University Christian Church in Seattle, Wash. but for the baptism of the Holy Spirit? Although sounding rather strange to me, I consented. I don't even remember the words of his prayer. But at that moment the presence of God came upon me in a supernatural way such as I had never experienced before. I KNEW the Lord had touched me by His Spirit's power. There was a change in my ministry from that day on.

Why do I say that the Lord “touched me” in that experience? Although I did not have sufficient understanding at that time to fully evaluate what had happened, it became very evident to me some time later that I had not actually received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I will explain more fully when I relate the story of how I actually did receive. However, at this stage of my account, I want to emphasize that those who are seeking God can experience what might be called “touches” and “movings” of the Spirit of God, without actually receiving the baptism. That can come only when one is truly ready. I am aware that there are those who teach that all one needs is faith to receive and the willingness to open one's mouth to try to speak in tongues. There is a measure of truth in this, and no doubt many have been helped through encouraging and positive suggestions, along with the laying on of hands and mutual prayers. But too many times, seeking ones have been rather unceremoniously cajoled into trying to get an experience, as if it could be brought about by some kind of pressure tactics or fleshly antics. I believe there is a need for more thorough understanding of just what the Scriptures teach concerning the Holy Spirit baptism and one's readiness to receive, and if you will bear with me, I will seek to make it clear a little later in this booklet.

Certainly faith is needed, for without faith we cannot please God or receive from Him (He. 11:5); but to a great extent faith, and our capacity to receive through faith, is rooted in the “soil condition” of our heart. This is shown by Jesus' parable of the sower, where the seed (Word of God) is pictured as being sown in the heart. And as we read the parable, it becomes quite evident that the different results produced (the 30, 60 and 100 fold), were a reflection of the different soil (heart) conditions, and not in the seed sown, for the seed was the same (see Mt. 13:18-23). The Lord always meets us in accordance with what we are ready for at a given time in our Christian experience. To a great extent this depends upon the work He has been able to do within us as a preparation and conditioning. The prophet declared to Israel: “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up the fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, will he come and rain righteousness upon you” (Ho. 10:12). There are certainly varying degrees and depths of faith, surrender, commitment, desire, determination, hunger, awareness of need, etc., and also varying degrees of unbelief, whether rooted in misunderstanding, fear, uncertainty; or in disobedience and self-will. And all these have a bearing on what the Lord can do for us and our capacity to receive. When sharing my experience in the baptism of the Holy Spirit with a fellow Minister at one time, he said: “I'm not sure I want the Lord to have that much control of my life.” Ah, this can often be the “rub”. How desperate are we for more of God? How deep is our commitment? How intense is our hunger? How large is our “cup” or capacity to receive? More on this later.

When the Lord “touched” me with a supernatural awareness of His presence that day in the office of the church, I was much like Jacob at Bethel when God sought to deal with him and manifested Himself to him (Ge. 28:10-22). As I develop my story, I want to lay a Biblical foundation by relating to the experiences of Jacob, for his “spiritual pilgrimage” speaks to us by type in so many ways. Jacob symbolizes the “born-again” Christian, for his name means “replacer” or “supplanter”. He had come into possession of the birthright by replacing Esau.

Esau and Jacob were twins (Ge. 25:24), and thus they are symbolically ONE, but representing the two natures in each of us. Esau was born first, therefore he represents that which we first inherit through Adam, the fallen carnal nature (that which Paul calls “our old man” of sin - Ro. 6:6); but when we are born of the “incorruptible seed” of Christ (1 Pe. 1:23) and become “new creatures” in Christ (2 Co. 5:17), we become Jacob, for our new nature received from Christ replaces the old. God had decreed that the elder (Esau) should serve the younger (Jacob), to show that our carnal nature is to be sublimated and come into subjection of the Spirit-born nature (Ge. 25:23).

Thus, we can see that Jacob at Bethel where God met him, in an unusual way, represents the born-again Christian with whom God is dealing, but who is not yet ready for the fullness of God's purpose. God spoke to Jacob, declaring His covenant, which had been made previously with Abraham and Isaac, that the land of Canaan was given unto him and his seed. Yet Jacob was in the process of fleeing from that very land because of his fear of Esau. At that point Jacob was not ready to believe and appropriate the fullness of what God had promised.

So he went on his journey out of the promised land and came into the “land of the people of the east” (Ge. 29:1). In God's symbolic language that “east” stands for the false light of man's reasoning. Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden toward the east (Ge. 3:24). Cain had sinned, he was sent out from the presence of the Lord toward the east (Ge. 4:16). In the parable of the good Samaritan, the man who was wounded and left half dead was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, toward the east. From Jerusalem, the “city of the great king” (Psalm 48:2), to Jericho, the “moon city” of man's false light and reasoning. Other illustrations could be given. Going west speaks of the light of God's revelation and truth, and of submission and obedience to Him. When the children of Israel entered the promised land, it was from the east to the west. Entrance into the sacred tabernacle was through the eastern gate with progression towards the west where the Lord dwelt in the Holy of Holies. The record of history shows us that since the days of the early church, the crest of Christian civilization has been progressively westward in conformity to this pattern.

Not only does the direction that Jacob was traveling speak to us in symbolic drama, but the land where he was headed was called Padan-aram, which means “field of heights.” This was in contrast with the promised land of Canaan, which means “a lowland.” Thus “Canaan” speaks to us symbolically of a place of humbleness and submissiveness to God (a state or condition which is necessary for God to bring us into the fullness of His purpose), and “Padan-aram” speaks of pride, and the getting of one's sights set too much on the high and lofty things of this world, or a selfish ambitions of one kind or another.

Because of his experience at Bethel, Jacob said: “Surely the Lord is in this place” (Ge. 28:16). This was the way I felt when the Lord touched me by His Spirit. But, like Jacob of old, I was not ready to receive fully what the Lord had for me. A short time later I had the opportunity to move to a larger pastorate and church in Idaho. This appealed to me as I “envisioned” the possibilities that lay ahead in opportunities and advancement, so I accepted the call. Like Jacob, I literally traveled east, and also to a higher country, for the plateau land of Idaho is considerably higher than the lowland area of Portland, Oregon. I am pointing this out only because it became so apparent several years later that my own “spiritual pilgrimage” had paralleled that of Jacob's in so many ways. Although my ministry in Idaho could be considered a success from the perspective of outward appearance and accomplishment, I became increasingly dissatisfied with my own spiritual condition. Due to a number of experiences I went through, I began to cry out unto the Lord, seeking His face as never before. In this respect my experience was somewhat like

Jacob's when he was in the east country of Padan-aram. Although the Lord had given him success and prosperity from certain outward perspectives, he also went through much difficulty, travail and disappointment (Ge. 31:38-42). These experiences conditioned his heart to desire to return to the land covenanted to him by God (Ge. 30:25).

Some might suggest that it was God's will for Jacob to leave the promised land and go to Padan-aram, for the Lord spoke to Jacob at Bethel and said: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken of" (Ge. 28:15). But I believe we need to distinguish between what is the Lord's more perfect will, according to the "good pleasure which he has purposed in himself" (Ep. 1:9); and that which He allows or permits (or even arranges to happen) because He foreknows and foresees the experiences which are needed as the means for the working out of His purpose for us that we might be brought into His more perfect will. There are many things that the Lord allows, even designs and decrees, which are not according to His "good pleasure" (that which He delights in), because they involve suffering, grief, hardship, etc. But they are a part of the "counsel (design) of his own will" (Ep. 1:11) as the means which works toward His ultimate good, and acceptable, and perfect will (Ro. 12:2). It was not according to the "good pleasure" of God's will to allow His Son to be crucified on the cross (that is, He did not delight in such suffering), but it was according to His pre-determined counsel (design) and foreknowledge (Acts 2:23), as being necessary for the fulfilling of His purpose for man.

Even so in the life of Jacob, God foreknew what was necessary in experiences for him, and designed and prepared the circumstances ahead of time. Even so is it in OUR lives. God foreknows what we will need in teaching and learning experiences, disciplines, corrections, etc., and so in His counsel and design He foreordains the circumstances for our ultimate good, even though He does not delight in the attendant difficulties and sufferings. As humans, it is not according to our "good pleasure" to discipline and correct our children, but we find it necessary in the wisdom of our counsel. So with our heavenly Father. Then there is another factor to consider. The Lord's dealings with us in the experiences we go through depends not only on what He sees we need in order to "grow up", but also are dependent upon the particular purpose He has for us to fulfill in His kingdom plan. Human fathers do not expect or plan for all of their children to go into the same vocation or "calling" in life, and there can be a vast difference in their schooling training, depending upon what they are being prepared for. Some will receive far more specialized training than others. Look at the years or exacting preparation, disciplines, and specialized skills necessary for one to become an astronaut, but certainly not needed for many other occupations in life.

There is no doubt that God has special callings for those He foresees will be amenable to His dealings, both in His kingdom service in this life, and also in the ages to come. When James and John aspired to sit in ruling position on the right and left of Jesus in His Kingdom, Jesus said: "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" (Mt. 20:22). In other words, "Are you willing to be prepared for this high calling?" Jesus made it clear that those of the Father's choosing would be prepared for such places (Mt. 20:23). The apostle Paul was aware that he had been separated by God and called to a very special purpose (Gal. 1:15). This no doubt accounted for his special preparation, and much of the suffering and hardship he went through (1 Co. 4:9, 2 Co. 4:8-10, 11:23-33, 12:7-10). I am also convinced that this is the reason why some vessels in our day have had to go through special dealings by God, even unto much suffering, that they might "drink the cup" and be prepared for various special callings in the momentous days that

are ahead.

Praise the Lord! How wondrous it is that God foreknows the future, even the “substance” of our lives (read Psalm 139:14-16) and whether we will respond to His drawing and dealings or not. When I look over the past years of my life, one seemingly incredible, fantastic, yet wondrous thing is impressed upon my consciousness, and grips the entirety of my being: and that is the awareness of this fact: I am what I am today only because God laid His hand upon me and kept me, ordained the circumstances of my life, dealt with me through many experiences, and through His providential workings, refused to let me go my own way when I tried, and like Jacob of old brought me into a “land” of spiritual blessing and promise. WHAT about YOU? Dare you claim that it is by your own wisdom, ability, or virtue that you are what you are? Or will you honestly admit as Paul did that “by the grace of God I am what I am” (1 Co. 15:10). May each of us pray with all the intensity of our being that we “receive not the grace of God in vain” (2 Co. 6:1), and waste the precious opportunities God is giving us.

Peter speaks of the “elect according to the foreknowledge of God” (1 Pe. 1:2). And Paul declares that “whom he foreknew, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Ro. 8:29). How little we comprehend the various facets of God's election and predestination. How warped and distorted are some theologies which presume to teach that our God acts arbitrarily in electing some to eternal salvation and others to eternal damnation. How woefully tragic are such concepts which impugn the righteousness of our God, who Himself declares unto Israel that His ways are equal (just and right) as recorded in Ez. 18:25, 29. No, our God does not act in any arbitrary, unfair manner, even though man may think so (see Ez. 33:17, 20), but according to the intrinsic laws of His own being! And one of His intrinsic attributes is the faculty to foreknow the future, not only because of His master plan which He worked out before the world began, or even His overruling providence whereby He controls the destinies of nations and peoples, but because He foreknows each of us as individuals, and is able to calculate and compute that each one will do under certain circumstances. God said to Jeremiah: “Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations” (Je. 1:5); He also declared to Pharaoh: “for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth” (Ex. 9:16). On the basis of His foreknowledge He plans, prepares the conditions, places those He chooses for particular purposes (for good or evil) in the circumstances that will fulfill a portion of His will. And in doing so He forces no one to act in any way that would violate their free choice, but simply provides the opportunities for that which is within each one to manifest; then to be dealt with by the Lord, either to the hardening of their heart against Him, or the submission of their will to Him.

But, back to Jacob and God's dealings with him, Jacob's experiences in Padan-aram were a part of such dealings, for he was not where God wanted him when he was outside of the covenant land, even though God had promised to “keep” him there. Some might point out that Jacob had to go to Padan-aram to get a wife, as his parents instructed him (Ge. 28:7). But Isaac, his father, was provided a wife without leaving the promised land, and Abraham was very definite that Isaac was not under any circumstances to leave the land covenanted to him and his seed (Ge. 24:1-1). In Isaac's case the wife was provided according to the providence and good pleasure of God's directive will, rather than according to man's fallible reasoning (the “ease” country), as in the case of Jacob. It is quite clear that Rebekah, Jacob's mother, was acting out of fear rather than faith in directing Jacob to leave the land of promise (Ge. 27:41-16). Yes, in time things worked out for Jacob, “according to the purpose of him who works all things (in on way

or another) after the counsel of his own will” (Ep. 1:11), but it was what we might call a “round-about” way, and through much adversity and grief. And through all of Jacob's vicissitudes in Padan-aram, the outstanding and overruling factor was the promise that God had made to Jacob at Bethel, that He would keep him wherever he would go and bring him again to the promised land (Ge. 28:15). In other words, God had laid His hand on Jacob for His purpose, and Jacob could not get away from this regardless of where he went or how long it took.

Although the Lord certainly did “keep” Jacob in the “ease” country, and even prospered and blessed him in certain ways, (Ge. 30:43), there came a time when Jacob knew he was not where God wanted him. The same was true in my experience. The Lord had kept His hand on me in my own “east” country, and although there was the appearance of outward success, I reached the point of knowing I was not in the “place” God wanted me, spiritually speaking. Since the time the Lord touched me in my own “Bethel” experience in Portland, my spiritual life had actually declined. And this is something that every Christian needs to realize: Regardless of how much the Lord has touched you with His spiritual blessings, and how real He has been to you, you cannot “rest” on what you have known and experienced in the past. You must “go on” with the Lord and maintain a “fresh” touch of His Spirit and a daily fellowship with Him, or it is possible for you to go backwards. It is beyond the scope of this writing to go into, but there are many things that can hinder our fellowship with the Lord, our spiritual growth in Him, and can keep us from entering into all that He has for us. But I can assure you, based upon the scriptures, (He. 12:5-11), and confirmed in my own experience, that the Lord will not let you get careless and regressive in your spiritual life without dealing with you in one way or another. Like Jacob, I went through some difficult experiences in my “east” country that caused my heart to cry out to the Lord, and conditioned me as never before to seek the Lord, with a burning desire within for a greater spiritual reality than I had ever known.

Looking again at Jacob's spiritual pilgrimage, we see him leaving Padan-aram (Ge. 31:20-21) and setting his face toward the promised land, symbolic of a closer approach to the Lord and His purpose. But before he could fully enter the covenant land, he was destined to come face to face with what he had previously run away from: fear of his brother Esau. Esau is a type of the “flesh” or carnal self-life which must be dealt with and subdued if we are to enter into the greater blessings of our spiritual inheritance in Christ, and thus take the power of God. Regardless of what phase or manifestations of our carnal nature we have tried to excuse, ignore, run away from, etc., as in the case of Jacob, eventually the Lord will make us face it and overcome it. At first Jacob sought to appease and out-manuever Esau (Ge. 32:13-20), but then turned to the Lord in awareness of his deep need (32:24-30). And this is the key to receiving anything from the Lord. In He. 11:6 we read that God rewards those who diligently seek Him. But usually such diligent seeking is born out of awareness of need.

It is not a question of whether we need more of Christ and His Spirit within, for ALL of us do; but rather it is a question of how keenly and deeply we are aware of our need. This is vividly portrayed in Christ's letter to the Laodicean church. That church was in desperate need and yet knew it not. Pride and self-sufficiency blinded the people. They boasted that they were rich and increased in goods, and had need of nothing. Yet Christ's assessment of the situation was that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked (Rev. 3:17). Tragically, this is the exact condition of the vast majority of modern churches. How much Jesus' admonition of the Laodicean church is needed today: “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest

see” (Rev. 3:18). How much we need the eye-salve of the Spirit that we may see as God sees; that we might discern the true riches, “for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God” (Lk. 16:15). How we need to have our eyes opened to see the depths to which “Esau” is still ingrained in our inner being, with yet so much carnal density, grossness, unbelief, fear, vanity, pride, selfishness, etc., and how little we have come into possession of all that Christ has made available for us (our “promised land” of spiritual riches in Christ). It is no wonder that Paul prayed for the Ephesian Christians that they might receive “the spirit of wisdom and revelation” in the knowledge of Christ, and that the “eyes of their understanding” might be enlightened, that they might “know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe” (See Ep. 1:3, 11, 16-23; 2:7; 3:16). In marked contrast to the spiritual blindness and poverty of the church at Laodicea, not Jesus' assessment of the church at Smyrna: “I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, but thou art rich (Rev. 2:8-9). The church at Laodicea thought they were rich, but Christ said they were poor; but though the church at Smyrna was poor in material things, Christ said they were rich.

Looking again at Jacob, as he prepared to face Esau, and to cross over into the prepared land, it is quite evident that he was aware of his deep need, as he turned to the Lord in prayer (Ge. 32:9-11). At that time Jacob met the Lord in an experience that changed him and the course of his life. That which we read in Ge. 32:22-30 has great symbolic significance. By type it pictures to us the Baptism of the Holy Spirit which is so necessary for us to begin to fully “enter into” our spiritual heritage in Christ. It was at the ford “Jabbok” that Jacob had this “confrontation” with the messenger of the Lord (Ge. 32:22). The word “Jabbok” means outpouring, and in the book of Acts in the New Testament, the Holy Spirit Baptism is pictured as being “poured out upon”, “coming upon” or “falling upon” those who received (Acts 1:8, 2:17-18, 8:15-17, 10:44-45, 11:15, 19:6). Jacob's wrestling through the night (Ge. 32:24) is a picture of how so often Christian must “wrestle” with the carnal mind: their unbelief, fear, pride, uncertainties, reluctance to surrender all, etc., when confronted with the truth of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and their need of it. But when one's need and intense hunger finally wins out, then, like Jacob, there is the cry unto God: “I will not let you go, except thou bless me” (Ge. 32:26). Mt. 5:6 makes it clear that it is those who hunger and thirst for more of Christ (who IS our righteousness - 1 Co. 1:30) - that are filled with His Spirit. “For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness” (Psalm 107:9).

I have already alluded to my own hunger and seeking of the Lord in my “east” country. During that time the Lord began to work in a series of providential events which I will not now relate in detail, but only touch on briefly. In the summer of 1961, I was on vacation visiting my parents who were living in Spokane, Washington. While there I heard of a Christian Church minister pastoring in the Spokane valley who had given testimony of an unusual experience as reported in the Full Gospel Business Men's Voice magazine. Since I knew this minister and had worked with him several years previously in Oregon, I was interested in finding out what had happened to him. I went to see him and he told me of receiving what he called “the baptism of the Holy Spirit.” Wow! I immediately recalled my unexpected visitor while pastoring in Portland, and the fact that he had confronted me with my need of this same baptism of the Holy Spirit; and of the unusual experience I had received in that previous encounter. But this time I heard something about “speaking in tongues” from my minister friend. He had actually spoken in some kind of language when he received this experience. He also related how this “baptism”

experience changed his life and ministry. As we talked together the intensity of my heart's hunger increased. I had to find out more about this. My minister friend directed me to the one who had helped him, a blind businessman in Spokane who had been used of God to lead many into this experience. After contacting him by phone I was invited to his office to talk with him, little realizing what was to happen there.

I spend much time in the office of this man of God, going over the many passages of scripture which relate to the baptism or infilling of the Holy Spirit. Through this study my faith was quickened, for faith comes by hearing the Word of truth (Ro. 10:17), and I saw that the Lord was not only my savior, but also my baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11), and that I was to ask for this promised endowment (Lk. 11:13, 24:49). Finally I asked myself: "Am I ready for this experience? Could I receive?" I knew I desperately wanted to, so I focused my attention wholly on the Lord, yielding to Him my entire being as best I knew how. I also lifted my heart and voice in praise, thanking the Lord beforehand for what He had promised (Mk. 11:24). The Christian brother who was helping me laid his hands upon me and prayed. After some time it felt as if every bit of strength was suddenly drained from my body; then in glorious fulfillment of His promise there flowed into my body a strength and power such as I had never before experienced. It seemed as if every fiber of my being was saturated with the glory and presence of the Lord, like I was being charged with electricity. Joy such as I had never known flooded my heart. How I wanted to praise the Lord more and more; and after a time I began to utter syllables given by the Spirit, a language I did not understand; but I know I was speaking to the Lord, mysteries which only He understood (1 Co. 14:2). I became lost in the wonder of the glory of the Lord for a long period of time.

I have already shown how Jacob's encounter with the messenger of God at the ford Jabbok is a type of Holy Spirit baptism. After his experience, Jacob named the place Peniel, and said: "for I have seen God face to face" (Ge. 32:20). This is much the same way I felt when the Lord baptized me with His Spirit. Not literally, but "in Spirit" I "saw" the Lord in experience and reality as never before, as thought by a face to face encounter. We also note that the messenger changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means "a prince of God", and then added: "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with man, and has prevailed" (Ge. 32:38). How well this corresponds to Jesus' words in Acts 1:8: "But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall BE witnesses unto me." Power to BE what God wants us to be, that is what we receive through the Holy Spirit baptism. It is the witness of the life we live before others that counts, and this must come from the sincere overflow of that which is within through the LIFE of our Lord and POWER of His Spirit. Before continuing further with my testimony, I want to make it clear that each person's experience in the Baptism of the Spirit is different, and what I have shared of my experience is not meant to be a pattern. The experienced will be as diverse as our personalities, and will also vary in measure and intensity, depending on a number of factors. But true to the type in the life of Jacob, there will be an impartation and awareness of the reality and presence of the Lord as never before. You will know something has happened to you.

After meeting the Lord as my baptizer in the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:11), I could hardly wait to tell my wife, my parents, or anyone who would listen. (I have since learned to use some discretion, as I found that many were not as willing to listen as I was to share.) I could hardly wait to get back to my church and preach to the people. When I arose to speak I found a new power and authority in the pulpit that I had not known before. I preached two Sunday mornings before I announced that I was going to tell of the greatest experience of my life at the evening

service. Imagine my thrill when after the service some of the people said to me: “WE knew something had happened to you even before you told us.” Unfortunately not all in the congregation shared my enthusiasm for this newfound relation to the Lord. When people have been indoctrinated not to believe in something for many ears, it is very difficult for them to see things differently. Over a period of several months opposition began to arise and I knew I was going to have to make a change; I could no longer remain as pastor of that church. But in spite of it all I rejoiced within, for I knew that spiritually I was “facing west”, even as Jacob. I had left “Padan-aram” behind and I was determined to go on with the Lord. Esau, or “the flesh” always rises up against the things of “the Spirit”, but when one is determined to go on with the Lord, in one way or another the Lord subdues or eliminates all obstacles, and I knew HE would lead the way. Jacob's trials did not end when he returned from Padan-aram, but he had entered the promised land where God wanted him, and he was “moving on” with God. We must realize that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is the beginning of something new, not an end in itself. It is the open door into a NEW DIMENSION in Christ, so that we are enabled to “go on” with the Lord in our spiritual pilgrimage, with grace upon grace (John 1:16), from faith to faith (Ro. 1:17), and from glory to glory (2 Co. 3:18).

We read in Ge. 35:1 that God told Jacob to “Arise, go up to Bethel and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” It was “back to Bethel” for Jacob; back to the place where the Lord had met him previously in an unusual experience, before he went into Padan-aram (Ge. 28:10-19). Unusual thought it seems, in my own spiritual pilgrimage I also went back to my “Bethel”. When it became so evident to me that I was not to stay at the church I was pastoring in Idaho, I naturally began to seek the Lord as to just what He wanted me to do. At that particular time the church that I had previously pastored in Portland, Ore. was without a Minister. Imagine my surprise when I was contacted to see if I would like to return to become their Minister again, after being away for four years. They did this without the knowledge that I was seeking the Lord at that very time as to His directive for a change and a further step in His will. I knew I could not return without the congregation knowing of my experience and being willing to accept the “new me”. I arranged for a visit to speak at a Sunday morning service to explain to the people just what had happened to me, and what they could expect of me if I returned to the pastorate there. I made it clear that I was not going to try to force this experience on others, but neither would I withhold from those who would come asking and seeking. I also met with the elders of the church and they were desirous of my returning. Several weeks passed while we continued to seek the will of the Lord; then we made our decision to accept the call to return to Portland and pastor this church once again. We began our ministry there exactly four years to the very day from the time we had previously left to move to Idaho. I had returned to my “Bethel”: the place where the Lord had “touched” me in an unusual way.

We read in Ge. 35:1-3, 3, 6-7 that Jacob went back to Bethel and there built an altar, as the Lord had instructed him. An altar signifies sacrifice, the giving of ourselves totally unto the Lord, to do His will (Ro. 12:1). It is the giving up of our “right” to self-determination: placing our lives and destinies in the hands of the Lord. Only when we are willing to do this, can we “go on” with the Lord, being used of Him as He chooses, and increasingly entering into the realities and blessings of our promised inheritance in Him. And as we “move on” there must be continual “putting away” and “laying aside” of those things that He shows us that are hindering. THIS is the typical significance of Jacob's command to his household to “put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments” (Ge. 35:2). God does not want His

Ways for His people mixed with the ways of man (the “east” country). Years later, when God was ready to call a remnant of His people out of Babylon where they had been carried captive, His command was “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord” (Is. 42:11). (Compare this with 2 Co. 6:14-18 and Re. 18:4). Joshua the priest, as symbolic of the returned remnant, had to have his “filthy garments” brought from Babylon taken off, so that the Lord could clothe him with a change of raiment (Ze. 3:1-5).

In both the Old and New Testaments, the power of the Holy Spirit is compared to the equipment of clothing. See Judges 6:34, 1 Ch. 12:18, 2 Ch. 24:20 (marginal reading in each case). In Luke 24:49, we read Jesus' instruction to His disciples: “I send the promise of my Father upon you, but stay in the city, until you are clothed with power from on high” (Revised Standard Version). The Greek work here is “Enduo”, and is a combination of two words: “En” meaning in, and “duo” meaning down; hence its meaning is to sink into a garment, that is to be invested with it. It is the “endowment” (clothing) of the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to “put off” and “put on” what the Lord enjoins. The word “enduo” is used a number of times in the New Testament to indicate the “putting on” of the clothing that God has provided us through Christ: “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Ep. 4:24). (See also Ro. 13:12, 14, Ep. 6:11, 14, Co. 3:10, 12, 1 Th. 5:8). Another Greek word (apotithemi) means to “put off”, and is used a number of times to show the clothing of the “old man” which must be removed if we are to fully appropriate the beautiful garments of the “new man”. “Put off the old man with his deeds . . . put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth” (Co. 3:8-9). See also Ro. 13:12, Ep. 4:25, He. 12:1, James 1:21, 1 Pe. 2:1.

After Jacob had built the altar at Bethel, he set up a pillar of stone, upon which he poured a drink offering and oil (Ge. 35:14-15). This became symbolic of “God's house” which is the meaning of “Bethel”. Compare Ge. 28:18-19, 22. Now take a look at 1 Tim. 3:15 where Paul speaks of “the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” Throughout the scripture, stone is symbolic of that which God builds, in contrast to the man-made bricks of Babylon and Egypt (see Ge. 11:3, Ex. 1:14). Jesus said “Upon this rock (of the truth of His Sonship and Messiahship - see Mt. 7:24, 1 Co. 3:11) I will build my church” (Mt. 16:18). We are living stones in the living house or temple of the church which Christ is building. The “drink offering” which Jacob poured on the pillar is symbolic of sacrificial love poured out in service to our Lord (see Phil. 2:17, marginal reading), and this is made possible by the oil of His Spirit which was poured on the pillar (Ge. 35-14).

I will now relate the foregoing to my own experience. When I returned to my own “Bethel” in Portland, I was determined to lay my all on the altar. After being Baptized in the Spirit, I felt grieved that I had spent so many years in the ministry without knowing the Lord in this new dimension of reality and power. I wanted so much to “redeem the time” (Ep. 5:16) and I said: “Lord my life is expendable, you may do with it as you please.” Before long I could see my “altar” becoming a “pillar” as the Lord poured “oil” thereon and began to move by His Spirit through my ministry and in the church I was pastoring. A number of hungry ones received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Interest continued to grow, so we began to have Friday night meetings for those who wanted to know more about the move of the Spirit, the gifts and their function in the Body of Christ, as well as a deeper walk with the Lord. Attendance increased as many were coming from Portland and surrounding areas to these meetings. The Lord began to speak prophetically in both the regular church services and on Friday nights of that which He

purposed to do IF the People were willing.

Then, after over a year of ministry in this church, something unexpected happened to me. Because I believe what I went through follows the symbolic pattern wrought out in the life of Jacob, I will first relate his experience. Following the building of the altar and pillar at Bethel, we read that Jacob and his family journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath; and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labor (Ge. 35:16). In God's symbolic language, a man's wife portrays his soul, with its desires, aspirations and feelings. Sons and daughters portray positive virtues and soul qualities. Rachel's hard labor and travail caused her death, but before she died, a new son was brought forth. Because of the agony of the death-travail, she named him Ben-oni, which means "son of my sorrow", but Jacob re-named him Benjamin, which means "son of the right hand". Benjamin, was Jacob's twelfth son, and the only one born in the promised land. The "right hand" speaks of rulership authority and power (He. 1:3, 8:1, Re. 3:21). It must have been difficult for Jacob to understand why he had to go through such a trial at the very time he was so diligently seeking to "go on" with the Lord and be obedient to His will. Yet, out of the trial came the new, even "the son of the right hand".

How closely the pattern in my own spiritual pilgrimage followed that of Jacob's. Just beyond my own "Bethel", I went through an unexpected experience which brought great travail of soul. In June of 1963, I suddenly became very ill. Even though my wife and I, as well as devout Christian friends, stood in faith for divine healing, I became steadily worse. By October I was on my deathbed, with the doctor not expecting me to live. I cannot here go into detail, but during the night of October 18-19, the Lord performed a miracle and stayed the hand of death. From then on there was a long period of recovery, during which I was so bad I could not even read my Bible. I could not sense the Lord's presence as I had before. It seemed like I was devoid of everything spiritual except the God-given faith in my bosom that caused me to know I was in the Lord's will in spite of the circumstances and that I would triumph through that faith.

So many seem to think that if God's response to one's faith in meeting a need is not immediate, that either there is not a strong enough faith, or something is wrong that is hindering the answer. Certainly we know there are degrees of faith, and at times there can be hindrances to receiving an answer, but according to scripture, it is through "faith and patience" that we inherit the promises; and Abraham, who is the supreme example of faith in the scriptures, had to "patiently endure" in order to obtain the promise (see He. 6:12-15). It is the "trying of our faith" that works patience, and this would not be possible without times of delay and waiting. However, even in the time of waiting, IF the Lord delays the answer, there should be an ever-present spirit of expectancy coupled with much praise and thanksgiving, believing we have already received what we have prayed for (Mark 11:24). See James 1:1-4, Ro. 4:16-21.

Those experiences which "try our faith" are many and varied. All are not tried in the same way. Certainly not all have to go through a "Gethsemane" experience such as I did. There are different callings (as pointed out on page 9), and God had different purposes to be worked out in each one of His children. But the Lord uses all testings and provings to do a perfecting work in our lives, even as Jesus was perfected through the things which He suffered (He. 2:10, 5:8). Through such experiences, we can also learn how to help others; for what we have gone through enables us to "feel their infirmities", and "succor them" in their time of need, even as our Lord Jesus (see He. 2:18, 4:15). Without doubt, IF we submit to the Lord's dealings in every situation we face, then "the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, will be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Pe. 1:7).

During the months that I was ill and unable to minister, the Spirit continued to work in the church through those that had received the Spirit baptism. The special meetings continued, even in my absence. But opposition also began to arise and increase from those who were not ready to accept what was happening. In time it became apparent that the church might experience an unpleasant division in one way or another. Those who were Spirit-filled felt the time had come to withdraw from the church and thus eliminate any friction which was developing. As my wife and I prayed and sought the will of the Lord, we both felt strongly the leading of the Lord that I should also resign as pastor, even though I was still very ill and confined to bed. How we would support our family of five children we did not know, but we believed the Lord wanted to further test our faith by our willingness to obey and “launch out” without knowing where we would go or what we would do. This was a significant step in God's plan for us, and shortly afterward He vindicated our faith and obedience in a wonderful way.

But for a time the circumstances seemed to be working against us. We had a couple of months after my resignation to remain in the parsonage before we had to move. However, my condition did not improve. I refused to go to another doctor or hospital. But my wife heard of a Spirit-filled Christian doctor in Medford, Ore., who was seeking to establish a hospital where medical science and prayer and trust in the Lord could work together to mend the sick and needy. Unknown to me, she made arrangements to have me taken there. Two of the brethren of our church made a bed in the back of a station wagon and came for me. I didn't want to go, but I finally gave in and submitted to their desires. The trip of about 300 miles was hard on me even though I was lying down. My wife went with me and stayed in the home of some Spirit-filled Christian friends in Medford while I was in the hospital. Tests taken the few days I was there added no new light on my condition. In the meantime, much prayer was going up for me back in Portland as well as in Medford.

After a few days my wife returned to Portland. One day three of the brethren came to her and said they were sure that the Lord had shown them through the Spirit's gift of knowledge that the time had come for my deliverance. They were so sure that they asked my wife's permission to go to Medford to get me. They made no arrangements to bring me back lying down, for they made no bed in the station wagon, and took no bedding or pillow. When they arrived at the hospital they shared with me what they believed the Lord had shown them. I listened intently and weighed what they said. Many times previously in the past months I had determined to “act on my faith”, getting out of bed and refusing to believe I was ill, trying to carry on anyway, but being forced back into bed by virtually collapsing; it did not work. I point this out to show the difference between acting on a definite “word” from the Lord, and soulish presumption. Presumption is taking things into our own hands and trying to pressure God into acting on our behalf at the time and in the way we want Him to. Presumption latches on to the letter of the Word without understanding its true “spirit” and intent, trying to make it apply in a way that God did not intend. A perfect example is Satan's quoting of the Word of God to Jesus as recorded in Mt. 4:6. Satan tried to persuade Jesus to presumptively jump off the pinnacle of the temple and quoted God's promise of protection as the scriptural basis for such action. But Jesus retaliated with another scripture showing that no one has a right to take such presumptuous liberties with the Word of God, and thus “making trial” of the Lord God (Mt. 4:7).

In each of the temptations of Mt. 4:1-11, Satan tried to get Jesus to act precipitately apart from and ahead of God's way and time in order to try to prove something or make an impression on others. What folly! Jesus knew that God would vindicate Him in His own time and way. We need to realize the same thing. There are “times and seasons” set according to His authority

(Acts 1:7). We have a right to claim by faith any promise that we know is ours in God's Word. But just how and when He chooses to fulfill His Word is His prerogative. Abraham made a mistake when He tried to force God's hand and get the promise fulfilled the way he wanted it and when he wanted it (see Ge. 16:1-2). We are to trust, obey and then leave the results in God's hands. When Peter said to the lame man "rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6), he was not speaking out of his own soulish desire to see someone healed or to try to prove something. He was speaking out the "word" of the Lord by the immediate leading and "unction" of the Spirit within.

I knew that if what the brethren were saying to me at the hospital was His "word" for me at that time, and I was open and willing, He would confirm the same to my heart by His Spirit. As I prayed and waited on the Lord, I had a strong witness within that what they said was true. Just like a light suddenly turning on, I knew it was God's time. They asked me if I had clothes there. Directing them to the closet they brought my clothes and I put them on. I had not been out of bed except for very brief periods of time for many weeks. I began the long walk down the hospital corridor with a nurse frantically trying to get me to take a wheel chair. I refused help; I just knew it was God's time. I sat up in the front of the car the entire distance of about 300 miles to Portland. I even drove the last few miles. After arriving home I changed my clothes and my wife and I went out to a restaurant for dinner with the brethren and their wives. The next day was Sunday. Those who had withdrawn from the church had begun meeting together in a home. I went to the meeting on Sunday morning and never a service after that except when I was out of town ministering. I was indeed thankful for those brethren who heard from the Lord and came to my aid. We were learning to function in true "Body ministry" and the gifts of the Spirit.

From then on a new ministry began. Even as in the life of Jacob, the "travail of Rachel" made possible the coming forth of the "the son of the right hand" (Benjamin), so the time of great physical suffering and "soul travail" that I went through made possible the coming forth of new virtue, depth and insight, as well as opening up the way for a new and enlarged ministry in the kingdom of the Lord. I cannot begin to tell of the miracles of providence the Lord worked for us in the months and years after that. I still stand in "awe" of the marvelous grace of our Lord. Again, it is not my purpose to go into detail, for there is too much to tell, but although my health returned to virtually normal for almost two years, I was yet to be tested in that realm time and again. Yet, it was during such times of "setting aside" unto the Lord, and through much suffering, that the Lord gave me a depth of revelation and understanding of His Word that had blessed many throughout the land.

Even the above fits into the symbolic pattern through the life of Jacob. According to Ge. 35-19, Jacob was on the way to Ephrath or Bethlehem at the time of his trial. Ephrath, which was the ancient name of the town, means "fruitfulness", and Bethlehem means "house of bread". God ordained that Jesus be born in Bethlehem, for His is the "house of bread" for His people (John 6:33-35, 48). After my time of great trial and suffering I also arrived at the place of increased fruitfulness (Ephrath) in my ministry, and also began to receive by the Spirit new and fresh "living bread" (Bethlehem) for hungry souls. It is God's purpose that those "scribes" who are truly instructed unto the Kingdom of heaven, bring forth out of their household, "things new and old" (Mt. 13:52). Thus "food in due season" is provided for God's people (Lk. 12:42).

Let us now take a final look at Jacob's pilgrimage and note some pertinent factors in this pattern of "going on" with the Lord. Jacob's journey not only took him back to Bethel, but also beyond Bethel, showing that there was to be no stopping place. Previous to arriving at Bethel, we note that those with Jacob gave him "all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem"

(Ge. 35:4). They had to give up the “works of their own hands” (see Je. 25:6-7, 32:30), symbolic of God's people doing things their own way rather than His way; and they had to surrender their earrings, symbolic of having “itching ears” to hear “fable” contrary to the Word (2 Ti. 4:2-4). According to Paul in Co. 3:5 & Ep. 5:5, such self-willed and covetous desires and ways are idolatry. Jacob hid their idols under the oak at Shechem, which means “shoulder” or “strength”, and is symbolic of Jesus Christ Himself, who is our strength. Since He was crucified on a tree (Acts 5:20, 10:39, 1 Pe. 2:24), the oak symbolized “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Gal. 6:16). Yes, beloved in Christ, all the “idols” originating in the covetousness of our soulish and selfish ways must be submitted to the cross and forever “buried”. We note also that Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and was buried under the oak (Ge. 35:8). Deborah means “a bee”, symbolic of those who flit here and there for “sweets” of soulish and selfish satisfaction. Here we have a picture of the carnal “I” within each one of us which must be “crucified with Christ” (Ga. 2:20), and buried (Ro. 6:1-6).

Rachel (soul desires) could not go on with Jacob-Israel (the prince with God) because she took one of her father's idols from Padan-aram and would not give it up (Ge. 31-19, 34). As a prophet, Jacob had pronounced death upon her without realizing it (Ge. 31:32). But out of Rachel's death-travail came Benjamin, the “son of the right hand”. Benjamin represents “Christ in you, the hope of glory” (Co. 1:27); now being formed in the “womb” of our souls, even as Paul declares in Ga. 4:19: “My little children, for whom I am again suffering birth pangs until Christ is completely and permanently formed (molded) within you” (Amplified version). We must be willing to die to self, that Christ may come forth and be manifested through us in His beauty and glory, and also as in a ministry of greater reality and power. From a little different perspective, we can see that the death travail of Rachel (apostate Christendom) is now taking place, but out of the “womb” of present churchianity will come the remnant of “overcomers”, and like Benjamin who was born in the promised land, they shall “take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever” (Da. 7:18), “for the people who know their God shall be strong and do exploits” (Da. 11:32).

Let me now share with you a few final thoughts on the Holy Spirit baptism; its place in God's plan as patterned in the scripture. “The tabernacle shall be sanctified by my glory” (Ex. 29:43). These words were spoken by the Lord concerning the tabernacle pitched by Moses. Ex. 40:34-35 records the fulfillment when the “glory” entered the tabernacle and filled it. This is a type of the Holy Spirit baptism, when the Lord sanctifies our human “tabernacles” with His Spirit-glory. But note Ex. 40:36: “And when the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle the children of Israel went onward in all their journeys.” Here again is the evidence that God's purpose is to lead us on in our spiritual pilgrimage. Years later, during Jesus' pilgrimage on this earth, that same glory cloud appeared on the mountain of transfiguration as a “bright cloud” overshadowing Peter, James and John after Jesus had been transfigured (changed) before them, and Moses and Elijah had appeared to talk with Him. Then Peter said: “let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah” (Mt. 17:4). The account in Mark 9:6 indicates that he did not realize what he was saying; for he was speaking as by a prophetic spirit. The three tabernacles are symbolic of the three changes that God has purposed to take place in the human vessel or tabernacle of each believer. The first change is when we are “born anew” (regenerated) by water (John 3:3-5). The “water” in this passage represents the Word, for Peter says we are “born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God” (1 Pe. 1:23), and James admonishes his readers to “receive with meekness the engrafted work, which is able to save your soul” (James 1:21). When we are thus “born anew” we “pass from death to

life”, and we “shall not come into judgment” (John 5:24, see also He. 10:30, James 5:20). This change is symbolized on the mount of transfiguration by the “tabernacle for Moses”, for Moses means “drawn out (or saved) by water” (Ex. 2:10), and he led the people through the waters of the Red Sea.

The second change in our human vessels takes place when we receive the Holy Spirit baptism. This is when we are filled or infused by His glory presence, and there is a further regenerating by the Spirit (John 3:5) giving us the power to live unto the praise of His glory” (Ep. 1:12-14, Lk. 24:49, Acts 1:8). This change is symbolized on the mount of transfiguration by the “tabernacle for Elijah”, for Elijah was the “prophet of fire”, having seen God “answer by fire” when he prayed (1 Kings 1:10, 12), and being “caught up” into heaven when a “chariot of fire” appeared from the Lord (2 Kings 2:11).

Thus the baptism of the “Holy Spirit and fire” (Mt. 3:11) makes possible our preparation for the third change which will take place in our human tabernacles when we are “caught up” to be with the Lord (1 Th. 4:17) and our bodies are “fashioned like unto his glorious body” (Ph. 3:21), for “we shall be changed”, Paul says, “at the last trump” and “this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality” (1 Co. 15:51-53). This is symbolized on the mount of transfiguration by the “tabernacle for Jesus”, for our bodies shall be like His.

Does God choose any false symbols? What about the “fire” of the Holy Spirit baptism. Fire does four things: (1) It consumes, (2) it illuminates or gives light, (3) it energizes or provides power, (4) and it imparts heat and warmth. These represent the four purposes God accomplishes (and continues to accomplish as we move on in Him) through the Holy Spirit baptism. First, there is a “consuming” and purging of the carnal nature within us. This is symbolized by the supernatural fire which fell upon certain sacrifices in the Old Testament and consumed them (see Le. 9:24, Judges 6:21, 1 Kings 18:28, 1 Ch. 21:26, 2 Ch. 7:1). Once the fire had been kindled on the altar in the outer court of the tabernacle, it was never to go out (Le. 6:13).

Second, since fire illuminates, the Holy Spirit baptism helps to guide us into all truth (John 16:13), that we might “walk in the light” (1 John 1:7) of the continuing revelation of Christ and His Word to our hearts and understanding (see Ep. 5:14-18). This is the “extra oil in our vessels” (Mt. 25:4), for our lamps of truth (Psalm 119:105, 130), and is symbolized by the lampstand in the Holy Place which illuminated the priests as they ministered unto the Lord.

Third, we have already seen that the Holy Spirit baptism is to provide divine energy and power for victorious living (second sentence of last paragraph).

Fourth, the heat or warmth of fire symbolizes “the love of God shed abroad (imparted, infused) in our heart by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us” (Ro. 5:5). The impartation of power and love by the Holy Spirit is symbolized in the tabernacle by the fiery glory cloud which hovered over the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

The Holy Spirit is given to those who ask (Lk. 11:13), but the “measure” of infilling received usually depends upon the degree of hunger, faith and commitment. God accepts by the “fire” of His Spirit what has been placed on the altar, and this requires the totality of oneself thereon. If God does not answer the first time the seeking one asks, then there should be persistence without anxiety, patience and continued praise in anticipation of His time and place.

Regarding the “three Tabernacles,” I said that these represented three changes which are to take place in our human vessels or tabernacles in God's purposes for our lives. I will further illustrate this truth as portrayed by the three Feast Seasons that God ordained for Israel. In Exodus 33:14-17 we read: “Three times shalt thou keep a feast unto me in the year. Thou shalt

keep the feast of unleavened bread: (thou shalt eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded thee, in the time appointed of the month Abib; for in it thou camest out from Egypt: and none shall appear before me empty:) and the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy labors, which thou has sown in the field: and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou has gathered in thy labors out of the field. Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord God.”

The feast of unleavened bread was a part of the Passover, which took place in the month Abib, when the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt through the blood of the Passover Lamb (read Exodus 12:1-28 for the details). The Passover Lamb was slain on the 14th day of the month Abib (later called Nisan) and the feast of unleavened bread began on the 15th day, lasting for 7 days. After entering the promised land, this feast had to be celebrated in the place which the Lord appointed (Jerusalem), and all the males of Israel had to “appear” before the Lord whose presence was in the Temple at Jerusalem.

This Passover feast, which was in the spring of the year, and was the beginning of their religious year, speaks to us of SALVATION through the blood of our Passover Lamb (Jesus). On the 16th of Abib, the 3rd day following the killing of the Passover Lamb, the High Priest offered to the Lord or “sheaf” of the first ripe of the Barley harvest (Le. 23:10-11), as a “wave-offering”. This is a type of the resurrection of Christ, as He was “waved” (ascending to the Father and then descending on that resurrection day). The resurrection and glorification of the body of Jesus then made available the glorified “seed” of that body, to be lifted out of the Holy Spirit and grafted into the soul of every truly repentant believer who receives Christ as His own personal Savior (see John 20:22, 1 Pe. 1:23, James 1:21). The soul is then “flushed through” the ETERNAL LIFE, and shall never die. Thus in fulfillment of this first feast, we must “appear” before the Lord to RECEIVE His GIFT of life eternal. After that we are to “feed” on the true Unleavened Bread (Jesus Christ) throughout the entire “cycle” of our lives (symbolized by the 7 days).

The second time the Israelites were to appear before the Lord was 50 days following the Passover. It was called “Pentecost” because that word in Hebrew means “50”. It was also called “feast of weeks”, because they were to count seven complete Sabbaths from the 16th of Abib, when the barley wave-sheaf was offered (Le. 23:15), and observe the day following (the 50th) as the special feast day, on which they were to offer the firstfruits of their wheat harvest. It was in fulfillment of this feast that the Holy Spirit was poured out as recorded in Acts 2:1-4. Thus this feast speaks to us of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, which Paul says is a “firstfruits” (Ro. 3:23) or “earnest” (Ep. 1:14) of our inheritance, with a view to the full redemption of the purchased possession -- even glorification of our bodies at the time of our “placing as sons” in our full inheritance (Ro. 8:23). Thus if we want to “go on” to the full potential of sonship, we must “appear” before the Lord to receive this endowment from on high (Lk. 24:49), which “sanctifies our tabernacle” with the glory of His presence (Ex. 29:43), and gives us that added dimension which is needed to reach that full potential.

The third time all the males of Israel were to appear before the Lord was at the close of the harvest season, when all of the “fruits” of the earth had been gathered in. It was called the “Feast of ingathering” or “Feast of Tabernacles”, beginning on the 14th day of the 7th month (Tishri). This feast portrays that time when, if we qualify, we shall “appear” before the Lord to receive glorified tabernacles (bodies) like unto His (Phil. 3:21). However, this feast implies the “fruit” (harvest) of the earth has been gathered in. Jesus makes it very plain in John 14:1-16 that IF we are truly His disciples (being disciplined unto maturity) and His (heavenly) Kingdom, that

this will be evidenced by our bearing much fruit (15:8). He has chosen us to “bear fruit” and that this fruit should “remain” (15:16). He particularly mentions the fruit of love and joy in this passage (15:1-13). Elsewhere, other fruits such as righteousness, etc. are listed (Ep. 5:9, Ga. 5:22-23).

How beautifully these three feasts illustrate the same truth as is portrayed by the “three tabernacles” of Mt. 17:4. It was to a high mountain apart, that Jesus took Peter, James and John (Mt. 17:1). Peter also refers to it as “the holy mount” in 2 Pe. 1:18. Peter also indicates that this experience was a preview of the “power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” as they were “eye-witnesses of His majesty” (2 Pe. 1:16). Thus the “high” and “holy” mountain picture the heavenly kingdom which will be established in the upper atmosphere, centered in the New Jerusalem, and which will rule over the earthly kingdom (pictured by the 9 disciples who remained at the foot of the mountain). For further understanding of the difference, ask for my article: “The Pearl of Great Price.”

“And Israel journeyed and spread his tent beyond the tower of Edar” (Ge. 35:21). This is the cry of my heart: to continue on in my journey with the Lord. “Edar” means “a flock”. Are we not the flock or sheep of His pasture? (Ps. 100). “He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out . . . he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him” (John 10:3-4). “If we follow on to know the Lord, His going forth is prepared as the morning” (Ho. 6:3). It is the dawning of a new day; let us “follow on” to know HIM, in a continuous NEW AND LIVING WAY!

Copyright: Word of Life Fellowship

NOTE: More copies of this article or other literature dealing with “end time” truths may be secured by writing to:

Kevin Earls
Word of Life Fellowship
405 S. 7th
P.O. Box 190
Shelton, Washington 98584