



# **Draw Me Nearer**

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# Chapter 1

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## Draw Me Nearer

*And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. (Gen 13:3 -4)*

**T**he journey begins with the call of God. This call, like the experience of Abram in Mesopotamia, or that of Peter, Andrew, James, and John at the Sea of Galilee, is the means by which the journey toward the heart of God is initiated. This, if you will, is a journey toward the center of the universe, for Christ Jesus is the true center of the spiritual and physical universes. And this is the destination that the pilgrims are journeying toward. We all begin as infants, without any experience on the Lord's highway, and must continue as *the people of the way*, drawing nearer and nearer unto the Father's heart.

The men and women who were alive while our Lord walked the shore of Galilee had the opportunity to fellowship with Him in

the flesh. Many of them only saw Him afar; others came near to Him. A few even lived and traveled with Him. There were different levels of intimacy with the Man of Galilee.

First we see the multitude, pressing and thronging around him, seeking to see signs and wonders and to be healed. Many of them were genuine followers, and these came to hear His words with the intention of becoming His disciples, while others came to hear and be healed. While some followed Him because of the bread and fish that He often miraculously provided for them to eat, some actually followed for the bread that perishes not but endures to eternity. The group that followed because of natural bread never really became intimate with Him, but it remains true that all of them were touched one way or the other by the Master and were never the same again.

The multitudes saw Him as the healer, the miracle worker, and the compassionate provider. Yes, He was all that. These saw him from far off. They were the crowd that heard of his fame and came to see and to hear, but never really got closer. Others were standing along the pathway, located in the right place at the right time, and were touched by the radiant energy that emanated from His body as He walked by. These ones, too, were made every bit whole.

Some others were forever grateful to Him for coming around when their beloved sons were in the casket on the way to be buried

and returning them to life by His resurrection power. To others still, He was the son of David, the king of Israel, whom the prophets spoke about.

Yes, He's all that and much more. However, only a few drew close enough to Him to really know who He is.

The second level of intimacy with the Lord is seen with the seventy. In the tenth chapter of the gospel of Luke, we read of the Lord appointing seventy of His followers and sending them out two by two to preach.

*After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.*

*Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.*

*And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.*

*Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.*  
(Luke 10:1-2, Luke 10:17-20)

He appointed these ones, equipped them with power over devils, and sent them forth to preach. As they went on their mission, they saw miraculous manifestations of His power. They even saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. However, these people were not very close to the Lord Jesus, either. They experienced the miraculous manifestations and marveled at the wonders done in His Name, but were not intimate with His ways. Like the children in the wilderness, *"they saw His wonders, but Moses knew His ways."*

As we get closer to the Lord, we see the twelve disciples. These ones, whom the Lord selected out of the seventy and ordained to be His closest companions, went with Him everywhere. The Scriptures tells us that He chose them *that they might be with Him*, and that He might send them out to preach. These ones were nearer to Him than the seventy that He sent out earlier. While some others had excuses, these ones, when called by the Lord, left all and immediately followed Him.

Nearer to Him still, we find the three: Peter, James, and John. These three disciples seemed to form the inner circle of the Lord Jesus. They were the most dedicated and were always in the forefront of attending to the Lord, always close around Him and at His feet, learning His words. They were among the first set of disciples that the Lord called. Peter, James, and John were busy with their profession as fishermen on the Sea of Galilee when the Lord

found and called them, and they immediately left everything and followed Him.

Matthew tells us that He found Peter and Andrew his brother first: *And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.* (Mat 4:18 -19)

After this, the Lord called James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were in a ship with their father, mending their nets. They immediately left the ship and their father and followed Him. We can see that from the onset, these men were dedicated to the Lord and had forsaken all to follow Him. Yes, it was the Lord that chose them, but their hearts were already set to follow Him. The Lord sees the heart, knows who is ready to receive Him, knows the stage everyone is at, and will reveal Himself to each one at the level that person is ready to receive.

Just as we recognize that not everyone we meet is ready to receive the message of salvation, and not everyone who has been converted is sufficiently prepared to receive the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, so also, even among the twelve disciples, only a smaller core group could be given these most intimate teachings of the Lord. Therefore, we see that the Lord would often pull aside Peter, James, and John and reveal more intimate

things to them. We see Him take these three with Him to the Mount of Transfiguration (Mt 17,1; Mk 9,2; Lk 9,28), take them with Him to Jairus's house when He raised his daughter from the dead (Mk 5,37; Lk 8,51), and take them with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26,37; Mk 14,33). We hear of a couple of other outstanding disciples, namely Andrew and Philip, but these three—Peter, James, and John—were the ones to whom the Lord revealed more intimate things. Eventually, only John the Beloved was given the most intimate revelation of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the book of Revelation.

John was probably the closest disciple to the Lord while He was here, and, in my opinion, was probably the closest to Him even after He ascended to the right hand of the Father; for it was to him that the Son of Man gave the book of Revelation, the conclusion of the Holy Scripture, wherein is encapsulated the consummation of all things. He was also the last of the apostles, the survivor, who, though persecuted like the other apostles, “overcame” martyrdom. After the authority that was persecuting the Church attempted to kill him several times and failed, he was deported and banished to the island of Patmos. This was where the Lord met Him and said “*Come up hither,*” and gave to him the Revelation of Jesus Christ to deliver to the Church.

As we draw nearer to God, our vision of Him gets clearer and clearer. This also makes our understanding of ourselves clearer, and we

are better able to put all the things around us into perspective. Our vision gets better, our values and perspectives on life begin to align with His, and we become transformed into the likeness of Christ.

As we continue walking in God's way, we begin to see things as He sees them. We begin to reason in line with His words, we begin to talk and act like Christ, and we begin to carry out our everyday transactions as Christ would. As we endeavor to seek His way and to walk in it, we draw closer and closer to Him, and He is therefore able to reveal Himself to us. This, in essence, is what it means to draw nearer unto Him.

And as we draw nearer, He draws nearer unto us. It is true that He dwells in every born-again believer, for our bodies are temples of God, but the fact still remains that He can be that close to us and yet we can be as far from Him as possible. Not everyone who's born again is dedicated to His ways or eager about walking circumspectly in the Spirit. Many professed Christians, like His children who were brought out of Egypt into the wilderness, enjoy and desire His wonderful acts, but will have nothing to do with His ways.

# Chapter 2

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## The Call - I

*And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran,*

*And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee.*

*Then came he out of the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. (Acts 7:2)*

**T**he word of the Lord came unto Abraham while he was still in his pagan home country, in the land of the Babylonians. God called him to leave the country of his nativity and go to another land, which the Lord said He would later show him. Abraham, still called Abram at the time of this call, believed God and set out to go to a destination he knew not. The book of Genesis records the call in the

first verse of the twelfth chapter, as follows:

*Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. (Gen. 12:1)*

If you examine the tense of the verb used in this verse of Scripture, you will notice that it seems to look back to a previous communication between Jehovah God and Abram. And indeed, it does. God had earlier appeared and spoken to Abram before his family emigrated from Ur. From the account Stephen gave before his martyrdom, we understand that God called Abram while he was still in the Ur of the Chaldeans. God called him out from the midst of an idol-worshipping people to become a new nation that would be set apart unto Him. The words that God spoke to Abram were not fully written, but it suffices to know that Abram recognized the message as from the Most High God, and obeyed. Stephen clearly stated this in the Book of Acts, saying:

*And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran, And said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee. (Acts 7:2-3)*

While he was in Mesopotamia, before they moved to Haran, the *God of Glory* appeared unto Abram. The Holy Spirit, through Stephen, aptly chose this divine title to describe the appearing of the Lord to father Abraham. Oh

yes, He is the God of our salvation, the God of heaven and earth, the God of love, the God of provision, and the God of creation—but He appeared to Abram as the *God of Glory*. This might explain why Abram was able to hold on through all the trials of faith that he went through. He had not only seen the glory of God, but had also seen the *God of Glory*. As you meditate on these words, *may the God of Glory appear to you and cause you to prevail over every trial you meet in your spiritual walk*.

In meditating on the life of Abraham in the preceding sections, one cannot but see the striking similarities to the things we encounter in our Christian journey. It will benefit us tremendously if we carefully follow the life of this man of faith and see how in his journey he drew nearer and nearer to the heart of God, finally becoming a man God would call His friend. *I pray the Holy Spirit will help and inspire us to grasp the hidden treasures of truth in this message so that we can appropriate it in our lives and by it draw nigh unto God*.

First and foremost, it was God who made the first move. Abram received the call of God. This should not be strange to you and me. Our God is full of love and compassion. To put this more accurately, one should not say He is full of love, but that He is Love. *“God is Love, and he that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him.”* The ways of God are above us. His ways are higher than our ways. We see this in Genesis, for it was man that rebelled against Him. It was the earth that forsook heaven; it

was man who committed high treason in Eden and disobeyed his Creator. Yet it was the God of heaven, the Creator of heaven and earth, who made the first move for reconciliation.

We did not read that Abram started the relationship by seeking after Jehovah the God of heaven, but that God called Abram. God chose Abram. We do not know what sort of person he was prior to the call; we can only speculate. We do not read about Abram praying to Jehovah God, but the Scriptures state that he received the call of God. The God of Glory made Himself known unto Abram.

In the same manner, the call of God brought you and me into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. We were lost, all of us, but God, who is rich in mercy, came down in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, sought us out, and saved us. We did not look for Him: He looked for us, found us, called us, and saved us through the Blood of the Lamb with so great a salvation.

The walk of faith begins not with man, but with God. It is His call of grace that leads to consecration and separation. Babel, the tower of confusion, originated from men’s rebellious imaginations and made them begin saying to one another, *“Go to, and let us make us a name (Gen 11).”* The call and the walk of faith begin not with man, but with God Almighty, who Himself is the author and finisher.

This is in agreement with what the Lord told his disciples in the book of John, saying, *“Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,*

*and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you” (Joh 15:16).* It was not man who initiated the search after God, and it was not the earth that looked to heaven for reconciliation: it was the heavens that came down to shake hands with earth. It was Jehovah God who came down to save and reconcile fallen humanity with Himself. As it is written, *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation” (2 Cor 5:19).*

Let’s return to Abram and watch him as he follows Jehovah God out of his country. At the close of the eleventh chapter of the book of Genesis, the Scriptures present the family of Abram and even step ahead in telling us about Abram’s call and how he set out to obey God. This all happened around the time *“when men as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there” (Gen 11:2).*

While the earthbound men of Babylon were busy building the tower, saying to one another, *“Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth” (Gen 11:4),* God was searching for a man who would hear and obey His call to come out from among them. God found such a man in Abram the son of Terah of Mesopotamia. This is the way it has been in

every age. While carnal men are busy, laboring to build towers, striving to expand their territory and make names for themselves, God is busy looking for His men to call them out for His own purpose. Others can talk of their big achievements, their great progress, and their gain in the realm where they dwell, but the *called-out ones* continue to leave these earthly things behind and press on to higher places in God. And it is these earnest seekers after God who will bring to pass the move of the Spirit of God to bless humanity this end-time.

Abram was born about 4000 years ago in Ur of the Chaldees, a place north of the Persian Gulf, one of the richest parts of Asia at the time. His father, Terah, was a heathen who, like most people in ancient Babylonia, worshipped many strange gods. Out of the midst of this thick heathenism, God found and called the man Abram. In light of the evil and anti-God imaginations of the citizens of ancient Babylon, it is not surprising that God would call Abram and order him to leave his country, his kindred, and even his father’s house.

With a father who worshiped many strange gods and a city devoted to wickedness and idolatry, Abram was not raised in the best of environments. Yet, when God called, he believed and followed God’s instructions by faith. As it is written in the tenth chapter of the Book of Hebrews: *“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 whether he went”*



(Heb 10:3). By the word of God, he left the known to step into the unknown.

The very idea of leaving familiar territory and stepping into the unknown scares the living daylight out of some people. It is not easy to step out of the familiar into the unknown, but the call of the Christian life is a call of faith, a call to step into the realm of the spirit. It is a call to step from the visible realm into the invisible, from the mundane into the eternal, from the earth realm to the heavenly realm above.

In the eleventh chapter of the book of Genesis, we read about Abram's family and how he began to move out as God had commanded him.

*And Terah lived seventy years, and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran. Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the Chaldees.*

*And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and dwelt there (Gen 11:26-28, 31).*

The thirty-first verse of the eleventh chapter of Genesis tells us that Terah, the father of Abram, moved his family from Ur to Haran, a town about five hundred miles to the

northwest in the direction of Canaan. Without a doubt, Abram's call had something to do with this migration of the family from Ur to Haran, which could be considered a partial obedience and a step in the right direction. Of course, Abram obeyed God by leaving his home, his business, and the familiar city of Ur, yet it was not complete obedience, because we read that some of his family members went along with him. The *call* of Abram demonstrates to us the *starting-point* of the life of faith. The first requirement *is separation* from the world. Abram was called upon to leave his country, his *kindred*, and his father's house. God states the reason why Abram needed to separate himself from them in the book of Joshua:

*Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac. (Josh. 24:2)*

God had to move Abram out if He was going to raise a nation out of him and send a redeemer to save humanity out of that nation. Terah was an idol-worshipper, and since Abram had accepted the call by faith in the living God, it was expedient that he should be separated from his father's house, for *how can two walk together except they be agreed?* So, the instruction associated with the call was clear and specific: Abram was to get out of *his*

*country, away from his kindred, and away from his father's house. God's plan was to completely separate Abram from the idolatrous scenes of the Babylonian metropolis and draw him closer unto Himself.*

In like manner, the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and me today, saying, *"Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty"* (2Co 6:17-18). The message of the call has not changed.

Abram's life was changed. His trust in God set his life on a new course. It is that way for those today who receive eternal life by believing God and trusting in His Son. The believer is set on a new road, and the old road marked by a life of sin is abandoned. The new road is one of faith, obedience, serving God, and serving others. God's call to salvation is a call to a changed life. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."* (2 Co 5:17 -18)

God is still calling out a people for His name and setting them apart to draw them near unto Himself. They hear His voice, but the message is not an easy one, for it calls them to leave behind the opportunity for greater expansion

in Babylon, to leave the place of comfort and security, and to step into a place of loneliness and uncertainty. And where is this call leading them? Like Abram, they do not know; He will not tell them yet. All they are told to do is follow the cloud of glory wherever it leads. Such is the plight of the called-out ones.

# Chapter 3

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## The Call - II

*...for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful (Rev 17:14).*

**A**s noted in the preceding chapter, Abram heeded the call of God, set out from his hometown, and began his pilgrimage toward the land of Canaan, but he halted prematurely with his family in Haran. We did not hear that God spoke to him while he remained in Haran. God did not forsake Abram or rescind the call because of this incomplete obedience, but lovingly waited for him. Let us learn this important lesson. It's possible that we are not hearing from God because of our partial obedience. When He says, *"Come out from among them,"* if we decide to come out but bring them along with us, we may not hear from God as we once did. What should we do then? Let's learn from Abram.

So some others went with Abram out of the Ur of the Chaldees who themselves were not

called. These ones, including Terah and Lot, must have heard from Abram that the God of heaven had given him a sure word, and they also wanted to partake in the blessings. These jolly fellow travelers came along for the ride because of the prosperity promised by Jehovah. They loved the message and the supernatural anointing, and they were in it for the bounty, but would not share in the commitment or consecration necessary. Some would follow the Abrams out of Babylon with the ulterior motive of making a quick profit and winning names for themselves in the fertile plains of Canaan. These ones, like Terah, are not interested in the land of Canaan; they will settle in Haran and build a city there. They may have come out of Babylon, but Babylon is still in them. Others will join the pilgrimage with the Abrams and even cross Jordan into Canaan, but as soon as they reach the land promised to Abram, they will lustfully grab the fertile plains of Sodom for themselves. Sooner or later, the true called-out ones must be separated from these ones, and the pilgrims must press on unto the mountains of God.

And so Abram and members of his father's house traveled out of Ur, lived in Haran, and remained there until his father's death. Abram, seventy-five years old when Terah his father died, took the remnant of the family—his half-sister Sarai, who later became his wife, and his nephew Lot, the son of his elder brother Haran—and continued his journey to the land of Canaan.

*And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came (Gen 12:5).*

We must understand that the call itself was personal. It was directed to Abram, and to him alone. It was not for Terah, nor did it concern Lot. In the same manner, the call to the *ekklesia* is not addressed to the old man or the outward man, but to the hidden man of the heart; and for this call to be beneficial, it must be personally felt and realized by the inner man. The outward man may hear the call, but cannot comprehend it. The senses may even witness the occasion, but cannot appropriate it, just as those who went with Paul on the road to Damascus saw him struck to the ground, but heard not the voice that spoke with him.

The instruction given with the call was, "*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house.*" Abram indeed got out of his country, and even from his kindred, but not from his father's house.

Indeed, there is a tremendous internal struggle associated with leaving one's country and kindred and father's house to step into the unknown. Like Abram, after we've heard the call in our spirits and set out as commanded, we still desire to take the *old man* with us into the land of promise. The message of the call

is clear: *to put off the old man and its deeds, to put on the new man, and to follow the spirit of truth into the realm above.*

*That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Eph 4:22-24)*

But the called-out ones still seem to want the company of the old man, and so they cling to it for a while more, hoping by some hook or crook to take the old man and its corrupt mind into the land of promise. At first it seems that the old man is ready to go along, and sets off in excitement on the spiritual journey out of Babylon toward Canaan. But the old man will never make it there. Like Abram's father, "*they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and they came to Harran and dwelt there.*" Thus, the old man of the flesh cannot help us in the walk out of Babylon to Canaan. At first, in the period of excitement and infancy, the company of the old man seems to help us, for it is written not that Abram took Terah, but that *Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter-in-law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan.*" Often, at the onset, when the elect are called, there is some energy and enthusiasm from the old man, who is temporarily active in a good direction. But the old man will never go beyond Jordan; in

fact, he will not proceed beyond Haran. And if the called-out one decides to cling to and stay with the old man, he too will not advance to the land of his inheritance.

God wants us to learn this lesson: that the old man of the flesh cannot enter into the realm of the inheritance. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. No matter how hard we try, the old life must die and be cast off. It cannot be brought into the heavenly places. If we are to go on with God into the realm of fullness, the old man must die and be buried. But it seems we are in a strait, for a new vision draws us up toward the high calling, but the old man still has claims on us and weighs us down. And in spite of the heavenly calling, we still privately desire that the old man might be saved or improved and taken with us.

And so Abram lived in Haran with his father until the death of the old man. After the old man died and was buried, Abram was able to resume his response to the call of God in total obedience. He gathered all he had and headed for the destination to which God had called him, *“And into the land of Canaan they came.”* He obeyed the call of God and arrived in the land which God said He would show him.

The very next verse after the record of Abram’s obedience to the call of God tells us that God appeared to Abram. He had called and spoken to him at first when he was in his homeland, and was inadvertently quiet until now. Now, after Abram demonstrated his faith

by obedience to the word of God, the Almighty appeared to him and reaffirmed His promises. *“And the LORD appeared to Abram, and said, To thy seed will I give this land: and there he erected an altar to the LORD, who appeared to him”* (Gen 12:7).

And so Abram looked for the land of promise, and longed to acquire it according to God’s plan. He began his journey toward this earthly inheritance, but as he traveled along and drew nearer to God, he began to get a better understanding of God his Friend. He began to catch a glimpse of, not earthly real estate, but of the City which had enduring foundations, *“whose Builder and Maker is God.”*

In a great trial of faith, he looked for a son, a seed, and a nation that would inherit the land; but instead he caught a vision of the Day of Christ, and rejoiced and was glad at what he saw. He would no longer occupy himself with the brass and dross of earthly promises; now he would partake of the gold. Even God Himself had become his *“exceeding great reward.”* He had been changed from the younger Abram who was concerned about not having a heir to a man of faith whose desire was a heavenly one. He believed God, and He counted it to him for righteousness.

Abram entered the land that God had given him, walked through it, and acknowledged that it was good, yet something within him seemed to be left unsatisfied. Something inside him seemed to be saying, *“This is great, but there is something more; this is not it.”* The promise of

blessings and inheritance that God had sown in his heart brought forth a deeper spiritual desire for something much greater and more lasting than what his eyes beheld. He probably could not describe in human language what he was looking forward to, could not put into words what would satisfy the hunger and desire that had been birthed by the seed of promise that God had sown in his heart, but he knew beyond any shadow of a doubt that what he had seen was not it. He walked through the land, moving from the north down to the south and back to where he had first pitched his tent and built an altar unto God, and he perceived that this was not it.

He had grown more mature, his eyes had shifted heavenward, and he was no longer passionate or interested in possessing the land of Canaan, but sought a heavenly one. He was being changed from Abram to Abraham, from glory to glory, and earthly goods had faded away and become as dross before the pure shining gold of heavenly treasures. The words of the devotional hymn below are so pertinent to this message:

*From glory to glory He's changing me  
Changing me, changing me  
His glory and image to perfect in me  
The love of God shown to the world  
For He's changing, He's changing me  
From earthly things to the heavenly  
His glory and image to perfect in me  
The love of God shown to the world.*

The Holy Ghost, speaking through the Apostle Paul in the Book of Hebrews, writes, *"By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God."* (Heb 11:9-10)

So Abram decided to live as a stranger and a sojourner in the land that God had given him. The land was his to inherit, but he would not take it. His eyes were fixed on something more eternal, something much more glorious. All the long and wearisome journeying from his homeland in Mesopotamia had given God's word of promise time to mature and blossom in him, and now the intended purpose of Jehovah had been birthed in him. The seed of promise sown into the good soil had germinated and brought forth something vastly more glorious than just a piece of real estate in the land of Canaan. The promise of inheriting and building great cities and a kingdom in Canaan and of possessing the entire territory given to him by Jehovah was good, but Abram would have none of that. He had seen it now. In his spirit, he had seen something with everlasting glory and splendor. He was no longer after an earthly city or kingdom; he was looking up and beholding the glory of that *"City which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God."*

At the beginning of his journey out of Mesopotamia, he was probably excited about

the promise of inheriting the land of Canaan, but after he had become more mature and drawn nearer to God, his eyes saw better, and he shunned the earthly dross for the priceless eternal substance.

It is the purpose of God that as you and I draw nearer unto Him, we'll begin to see things more clearly, as He sees, and the dross of earth will have less and less grip on us. This brings to mind the words of a popular devotional composed by Helen Lemmel in 1992, which reads:

*Turn your eyes upon Jesus,  
Look full in His wonderful face,  
And the things of earth will grow strangely dim,  
In the light of His glory and grace.*

As we draw closer and closer to God, we'll become more and more dissatisfied with our state and hungrier for intimacy with Him. He does not want us to become satisfied with our spiritual state, for this will lead to complacency. He will therefore continue to reveal Himself to us in a step-by-step fashion, drawing us closer and closer to Himself. This will cause us to keep moving forward and upward, nearer and nearer. As we receive the revelation of Jesus Christ in degrees, each step will draw us closer to Him.

As many of us as hunger and thirst for Him must understand that the reason we don't seem satisfied is because He does not want us to. He does not want us to become self-contented and complacent. There is more.

There is much more He wants to bring us into.

The Apostle by the Spirit tells us that we all, "*with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord*" (2 Co 3:18). As we draw nearer and nearer to Him, the glass we are looking through becomes clearer and clearer, and we begin to look more and more like Him. This process continues and our path and nature become brighter and brighter, until we are so close to Him that we see Him face to face; then we know Him and know ourselves, even as we are known of Him.

*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. (1Co 13:12)*

# Chapter 4

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## From Bethel to Hebron

*And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. (Gen 13:3-4)*

*Arise, walk through the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee. Then Abram removed his tent, and came and dwelt in the plain of Mamre, which is in Hebron, and built there an altar unto the LORD (Gen 13:17-18).*

**T**he man of God arrived in the land that God promised to give him. He had left all behind in Mesopotamia: he had left his country, his kindred, and his landed property; he had even left his father's house. He had traveled on a long journey through strange territories, and had arrived in this foreign

land as a pilgrim. After enduring all this, he finally reached the destination that Jehovah had promised him. One would think that all his troubles would be over and he could now rest in his inheritance, but it was not quite this way. In fact, he was faced with two new formidable difficulties.

He arrived in the land that God had promised him, but the first thing he noticed was that it was occupied by the Canaanites: the land of his inheritance was currently owned by someone else. The second problem was no less formidable: there was famine in the land. What to do? This, in a way, was Abram's first trial in the land, and he did not know where to turn.

*And Abram journeyed, going on still towards the south. And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to dwell there; for the famine was grievous in the land. (Gen 12:9-10)*

Well, Abram did what a natural man would do. He probably looked around to see what the other inhabitants of Canaan were doing to survive. He had temporarily forgotten that he was not one of them. He lost his focus on the El-Shaddai who had brought him to the land, he forgot the promises that Jehovah had made to him, and, like the other ordinary people, he decided to move down to Egypt. Did he remember to ask counsel of the Lord his God? No! He was so preoccupied with the problem that he followed his survival instinct—just like we do sometimes: when the rubber meets



the road, we forget the Lord God as we seek deliverance from the arms of flesh. Abram, just as we probably would have done, went down to Egypt for refuge. Why do we often forget the song of the Psalmist?

*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah.*

*There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. (Psalm 46:2-5)*

Now, Egypt is a type of the world, and it also represents those who are living in the realm of the flesh and the senses, those governed by the things of this outside world. It represents the home of idolatry and perversion and the ground of sense.

Egypt is the land of many rivers, watered not by the rain of the heavens, but by her many rivers, which the children of Israel remembered when they thirsted in the wilderness and desired to return. Indeed, not only to the Egyptians is Egypt an enchanting land; its charms even attracts the called-out ones making them want to return. Egypt's treasures and provisions, its well-watered gardens, its wealth, proudly accumulated through the years by its powerful

empire, are always beckoning to the called-out ones and luring them to return.

There was famine in the land of Canaan, and Abram, just like the other Canaanites, migrated to Egypt for sustenance. Abram, being tried by difficult circumstances on the ground of the promises, went down to seek refuge in Egypt. In Egypt, he was faced with another situation where he denied Sarai his wife.

Let this be a lesson to you and me: that once we compromise in one thing, we make room for other failures. First, we see him succumb to the trial by going down to Egypt without asking the Lord's counsel; then he made an allowance for deceit with Sarai his wife; and of course, he went ahead and lied in Egypt. One error led to the next, as it is with us all: one wrong step leads to another. One lie, if it is not immediately corrected, requires another to cover it up, and so on.

Abram did not pass this test, but God is plenteous in mercy and gave him, as He gives us, several opportunities to retake it. This must bring you and me much comfort and encouragement; even if we stumble in this race, it is not the end for us. We can get up, pick up the race where we left off, and continue. God's desire is for us to win, and He will exercise his supernatural patience upon us and watch us win. We must understand that the purpose of the tests, trials, and obstacles God allows in our way is not to break us, but to train us and build us to a point where we can scale over the obstacle as overcomers. When

we fall under any obstacle, we begin to see our areas of weakness, and by His strength, to work on them. Like athletes preparing for a race, we confront the obstacle again and then overcome it, to the delight of our Lord, who is our coach and trainer. The tests and obstacles are training tools to make us grow and become more proficient. They make us better and prepare us to become champions and overcomers in the race set before us.

Abram went down to Egypt with all the members of his family. Not only that, but recognizing that the Egyptians might desire his beautiful wife, he made an agreement with Sarai to lie in order to protect himself from the possibility of getting killed for her. He again forgot the God of Heaven, who brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees and gave eternal promises. This was definitely a move in the wrong direction, yet the Almighty God his friend did not forsake him. God was with him, and even though he stumbled, He was there to pick him up.

*The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. Though he should fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand. (Psa 37:23 -24)*

We must not forget that Abram fell into all these in the first place because he decided to obey the call of God. If he had remained like his father Terah or his grandfather Nahor, he probably would never have been in this situation. Neither his father nor his

grandfather left ancient Babylonia, and there, they were provided for. Even in the time of famine, he would not have needed to leave home. He would not have needed to pass through any test or trial to prove himself, for these tests are for the elect only: they are for those walking the upward path of faith toward the mountain of God. As we travel on this road and run this race that is set before us, let us be watchful and make it a point of duty to always ask for counsel from the Lord when we meet with an obstacle, because He always has a way of escape for us. Let us make every effort to lay our cares upon Him and not rush into trying to solve the problems ourselves or following the multitude.

God in His mercy was all this time carefully following Abram and watching over him, even as he went down to Egypt contrary to the word that God had spoken to him since he came out of Mesopotamia. The Almighty God, who brought him out of Ur, never said anything about his going down to Egypt, yet God was down there to defend him and would not let Pharaoh as much as touch Sarai his wife. Due to God's intervention, Sarai was not defiled, and Abram, being reproved by the pagan king Pharaoh, departed from Egypt to where God had originally brought him.

This is something the church of our day must understand, for we desire communion with the Holy One of Israel and at the same time seek fellowship with the world. We seem to be ignorant of the fact that the altar of the

Lord cannot be erected in Egypt. While God is saying, "Come out of Egypt, my people, and be separate unto me and worship me on my holy mountains," it seems that the elders of the church in our day are compromising with Pharaoh, who told Moses that Israel could go and sacrifice to God in the Egyptian territory. He said, "*Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land.*" It takes the resolve of the man of God to stand and say no. "*It is not meet so to do; for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the LORD our God: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes.*" (Exo 8:26) The people of God must come out of Egypt if they truly wish to sacrifice unto the Lord God.

Moses said, "*How can we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes?*" Indeed, if the Israel of God desires to build a holy altar unto the Lord, and if she yearns to have communion with Him, she must come out of Egypt and not return there. The man of God cannot worship with the Egyptians, not erect the true altar of God there. There is no fellowship between the worldly and the holy. Here is what Moses is saying to Pharaoh: Israel sacrifices lambs and oxen to their God, while the Egyptians worship the ox. The ox is one of their gods. Shedding its blood and sacrificing an ox was an abomination to the Egyptians. So, if Israel wishes to sacrifice unto and worship her God, she must totally and completely come out of Egypt.

Dear fellow believer, the Holy Scripture is

telling us clearly in this message that we cannot hope to have communion with the Lord and draw nigh unto him while we remain in fellowship with the world. The Lord's altar cannot be erected in Egypt. We must separate and consecrate ourselves unto the Lord Most High.

Many in our day cannot see any difference between church organizations and the world, and indeed most of the time there is very little difference. Because of this, they cannot see why the church system and the world system cannot bind together to worship God. This is what Pharaoh was saying and Moses contradicted. Most religious and carnal Christians, including many modern-day preachers, cannot see why the church should not adopt the ways of the world in worshiping God and in growing the church congregation. They cannot see what is wrong with Pharaoh's suggestion for the children of Israel to build their altar in Egypt and worship their God there. In the same manner, many today cannot see the difference between the kingdom of Egypt and the Promised Land, between the holy and the profane, between the world and the called-out ones, and between the earthly and the heavenly. God has always commanded His prophets of this concerning His people: "*And they shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean*" (Eze 44:23). This is what He said when He called them a "peculiar people" and set them

apart as the “kingdom of Priests” unto Himself. They are holy, sanctified unto the Lord of Hosts. This is also true of us, the members of the true Church of Jesus Christ. We have been sanctified unto God and set apart to worship the Lord God on His holy mountain. There is no agreement between the temple of God and idols.

*Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?*

*And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?*

*And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (II Cor 6:14-16)*

In Egypt, Abram had no altar. There is no doubt that fellowship with the world mars our communion with God. Not only that, but Abram put himself in a compromising position where he had to walk in deceit with regards to Sarai his beautiful wife, and he had to be reproved by Pharaoh, who even seemed to behave more uprightly in this situation.

*And Pharaoh called Abram, and said, What is this that thou hast done unto me? Why didst thou not tell me that she was thy wife? Why saidst thou, She is my sister? So I might have taken her to me to wife: now therefore behold thy wife, take her, and go thy way.*

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What a reproof from an Egyptian! And so it is today. How unbecoming it is for those of us who profess to know God to do that which is unfair and deceptive, especially that which borders upon a lie. It will profit us if we learn from the mistake of this great Patriarch.

*And Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him: and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had.*

*And Abram went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south. And Abram was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold.*

*And he went on his journeys from the south even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, between Bethel and Hai; unto the place of the altar, which he had made there at the first: and there Abram called on the name of the LORD. (Gen 12:20-13:4)*

So we see Abram return to Bethel, where he had built an altar unto the Lord earlier. Once he returned to the place of his pilgrimage, his worship of God resumed. The altar was renewed, and the sacrifices and the offerings resumed.

# Chapter 5

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## From Altar to Altar

*And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. (Gen 22:9)*

**I**n every generation, while worldly-minded men are busy expanding their gains, building bigger barns, and making names for themselves; God has always kept for Himself a people after His own heart. He has always set a people apart whose hearts are set upon Him. Nimrod built Babylon, Terah built Haran, and Lot was judge and ruler at the gates of Sodom, but Abraham built altars unto God in Mamre, in Bethel, and in Hebron.

While the Lots are working hard at expanding their territories and possessions in the well-watered plains of Sodom, the Abrahams are pressing forward and upward toward the mark on the mountains of God. They are moving from place to place, drawing closer to Bethel, the house of God, and pushing forward toward Hebron, the place of communion.

Men of God are altar-builders. Whether in the Old Testament, when altars are made out of physical elements such as bricks, wood, and stone, or in the New when the altar is symbolic of prayer and worship through Jesus Christ, men and women of God are specialists. Men of God are not city-builders. They are not followers of Nimrod, who built the first cities and the first empire as the founder and ruler of Babylon.

*And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.*

*And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. (Gen 10:7-10)*

Nahor, Abram's grandfather, established himself in his father's country, built a city, and called it after his own name. Terah, Abram's father, clung to him for a while and traveled away from his kindred, but could only go so far. After about 120 miles of pilgrimage, he'd had enough, and he settled down and built a city that he named after his deceased brother Haran. But the man of faith, the called-out one, must continue on his journey of faith to the destination that God will show him. He must travel out of the realms of Babylonia and head toward the land of Canaan.

Thus Abram traveled from place to place on his way to the land of promise. He passed from Ur to Haran, then to Sichem in the plain

of Moreh, and then to a mountain east of Bethel. And as Abraham moved from place to place, he built altars of worship to Jehovah, his blood covenant Friend. He was on his way to the Bethel, the house of God and the gates of heaven. Removed from his comfort zone, he passed from the known to the unknown, from the certain to the capricious, and from people of familiar tongue to a country of strange people and language.

This is the same course that God has mapped out for his elect in Christ Jesus. These ones who have been chosen and called out of the world are strangers and pilgrims on the earth. Pilgrimage is their appointed lot: they cannot settle and build cities, but must move from camp to camp. They are always on the move, progressing, moving forward and climbing higher on the mountain of God.

As they fix their eyes on their destination on the mountain and press nearer and nearer, they meet with tests and trials that other worldly men never experience. They stumble many times, and may even seem to fall and roll down from their upward climb or take several steps back toward Egypt, but they are ever itching to go forward and upward. The failed tests cause them to learn and come to grips with their weaknesses, and they help them discover how to draw strength from the Omnipotent One.

Those who remain in the well-watered plains, who do not heed the High Calling, have none of these trials. Saul the son of Kish, the ready-Olarewaju

made king and the instant prophet, knew nothing about trial or the testing by fire, or the making of a prophet-king like David, the man after God's own heart. When had Saul ever needed to run from cave to cave to escape death from an angry master whom he was loyal to? When did he have to go down to Achish and pretend to be insane to escape being killed by the Philistines? He never needed to. But David, whom God was training and drawing nearer to His own heart, had to pass through these difficulties. The roads a man of God has to travel as he draws nearer to God are paved with such trials. If he remains in the comfortable plains, he will not encounter any of them.

As a man, Abram had stumbled a few times in taking his father's house with him, delaying at Haran, and going down to Egypt; but as he grew older in his walk, he began to draw nearer and nearer unto Bethel and Hebron, the place of communion where he would have an intimate relationship with God.

*So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

*And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came. (Gen 12:4-5)*

Abram's purpose in coming to Canaan was certainly not to better his lot. He came in obedience to God's command, out of a more advanced civilization in Mesopotamia. His obedience was not complete because he took members of his father's house with him and also stopped his journey prematurely at Haran. The time Abram spent in Haran can be considered a period of marking time and delaying the blessing of God.

Haran, where Abram temporarily settled with Terah his father, symbolizes a *place of delay*. God is, for all intents and purposes, issuing a clear warning to all of us who have been called to learn this lesson from the life of Abram: that while we tarry in Haran, the land of delay, we will not hear His voice and neither will He appear to us. We must set out and keep going and pushing forward, nearer and nearer to Hebron. So Abram, after his father's death, took his wife and his brother's son and proceeded on his journey of obedience toward the land of Canaan, "*and into the land of Canaan they came.*" It is important to notice also that Abram could not move forward until the other influence in his life competing with Jehovah had been removed. The old man, the old nature, has to die, or it will hold the man of faith back from obeying God.

My dear friend, if this narrative of Abram's life seems to match your life experience in your walk with God, be comforted by the fact that you're not alone. You've got company. However, what God is saying to all of us is that

we should put off the old man and his deeds, put on the new man, and resume our journey on the highway of obedience toward Bethel and Hebron, the place of the inheritance.

*And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the LORD who appeared unto him. (Gen. 12:7)*

Now we see Abram getting back in line with the path God set before him. When he journeyed back to the land that God showed him and built another altar, the Lord appeared to Him again. While he was in Haran, the place of delay, God had neither spoken nor appeared to him. We see this in the language used in the first verse of the twelfth chapter of Genesis:

*Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee. (Gen. 12:1)*

If you examine the tense used in this verse of Scripture, you will notice that it refers to the previous communication between God and Abram while he was in his home country. After Abram's obedience was complete and he was in the land where God told him to go, God reactivated the promises of blessing that He had made earlier. There was a break in their communication while he dwelt in Haran. Haran is the place of delay on our journey to the place of communion with God.

Now that Abram had moved out and resumed

obeying God again, God appeared to him and began to reaffirm the blessings that He gave him at first. In fact, when Abram asked for a surety for the blessing, to assure Abram of the immutability of His promise, God proceeded to make a covenant with him.

*And he removed from thence unto a mountain on the east of Beth-el, and pitched his tent, having Beth-el on the west, and Hai, on the east; and there he builded an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD. (Gen. 12:8)*

Abram was a real altar-builder. He always did two major things whenever he got to a new place: he pitched his tent and he built an altar. That was what Abram was known for. That was his testimony, and everywhere Abram went, he left this testimony behind—except when he went down to Egypt and when he waited on the *old man* in Haran. For what altar will you build unto the Lord in the land of Egypt? Will you sacrifice the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes? And how shall you sing the Lord's song in a strange land? My friend, we know about Abraham, but what kind of testimony do we have? What kind of reputation do we leave behind us as we travel from place to place in this journey?

To have a testimony, you don't need to wear a T-shirt or attach a big bumper sticker on your car that says "Jesus Saves," nor do you need to shout on the street so that people will know you're a true disciple. All you need to do is let

the light shine through you. Abram quietly worshiped God, and the Canaanites surely learned that he was a man of God and a prince among them.

A man of God told the story of a question asked by a thoughtful little girl. She had been to church with her parents and heard the preacher teach about God. One day, the little girl came to her mother. "Mom, God is bigger than us, right?" she asked. "Right!" her mother replied. "God dwells in us, right?" the little girl continued. "That's correct!" her mother replied again, looking at the little girl's face and not knowing where she was going with her line of questions.

You know, the little ones are often wiser than us grown-ups in the things of God because they listen with innocent hearts. Their eyes and ears have not been dulled by religion, by rationalization, and by the corrupting influence of the world and the world system.

Then the little girl slammed in her concluding question: "Mom," she said, "if God is bigger than us and He lives in us, won't He *show through?*"

*Oh, that He might show through in you and me today! That we might let our light so shine before men that they would see the good works and give glory unto our Father who is in heaven! That men may see that it is no longer I that liveth, but Christ that liveth in me!*

I also heard of a missionary who lived among some village people in inland China. The



villagers did not know anything about the Christian Bible, but they must have heard of a Jesus who was a miracle worker and went about doing good works. So, as they watched this missionary who lived among them, they admired him and were amazed by the life he lived among them, and they had no doubt in their minds about who he had to be.

It happened that another group of evangelists came to their village with the gospel and asked them, "Have you ever heard about Jesus?" These villagers, who had neither heard the gospel nor had the Bible read to them, answered with an enthusiastic and convincing "Yes." They told the evangelists that "Jesus" had lived among them for many years, and that they could even take these Bible preachers to the village where "Jesus" lived and worked.

The native people had examined the life of this unsung missionary hero and seen Jesus showing forth. They were sure beyond any doubt that he was Jesus because of his life and ministry. *Oh, that he might show through! That the Indwelling One might shine through and through in you and me today!* This is the desire of God for us: *To be glorified in His saints; to be admired in them that love Him.*

# Chapter 6

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## Teach Me Thy Ways

*After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. (Psalm 46:1-5)*

**I**n the spiritual training that our Father God has mapped out for us, it is His purpose that each of us will continue to grow in our faith until we learn to depend on Him alone. It is His plan to continuously draw us closer to Himself until we are so close that we stop doubting and struggling, carrying our burden and relying on our strength, and start living a life of total reliance upon His promises.

Though we know we have been justified and are learning to walk by faith, we find ourselves trying to fulfill God's plan ourselves by our own effort and strength. We find Abram in the same situation. Abram had an immutable promise from God: Jehovah said to him, *"I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so*

*that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered."* God first promised Abram that he would make him a great nation when he was around 75 years old. He believed God and kept expecting, but nothing happened. His wife Sarai remained barren.

Years came and went, and Sarai, Abram's wife, was still barren. The man of faith, in desperation for the fulfillment of the promise of God, looked another way and to another for a seed: Abram took Hagar, hoping by her to obtain the promised seed. Hagar is the natural; Sarai is the spiritual. Hagar is the human self-will, while Sarai is the submissive spiritual will. Hagar symbolizes the law; Sarai is grace.

Hagar is very fruitful, but Sarai remains barren. God may allow the elect Abram to bring forth a seed through the labor and scheming of the flesh, but this seed cannot replace the promised one. We see this in ourselves, in connection with our faith walk. We, like Abram, start off well, walking in fellowship and communion with Sarai, longing and seeking for a seed through the free woman. Then, having looked so long in vain for a seed from Sarai, we turn to Hagar, hoping to accomplish the plan and purpose of God by the scheming of the flesh. But the Scriptures clearly sum it up: flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, corruption cannot inherit incorruption, and the seed of the flesh cannot inherit the promises of God.

Hagar, the law, brings forth children unto bondage. Sarai, the freewoman, brings forth seed into the liberty of the children of God. The Apostle by the Spirit gave this allegory in the Epistle to the Galatians:

*Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar.*

*For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.*

*But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. (Gal 4:24-26)*

We are the children of the freewoman and of the seed of Abraham through faith. But though we know that we are righteous through faith, we still trust our sense-knowledge, which compels us to walk by the law to attain it. Though we have embraced the sacrifice of the cross, though we talk about it and profess to believe in its power to deliver, we have not learned to distrust our sense knowledge and to put away the arm of flesh.

The truth is on our lips. We constantly profess it: that we will prevail not by power or human might; that when we are weak, then we are strong; and that by dying, we live. As far as head-knowledge is concerned, we have learned these things, but when it comes to actually living them, only a few even scratch the surface.

It is difficult for our natural minds to grasp that the death of the old man, the death of our

strength, and the death of our will, even when they seem to be in the direction of serving God, can indeed be the right way. This seems impossible to the sense-knowledge mind, and so we seek to live rather than to die; we strive to develop our own human strength and strong will rather than submit to and rely upon the Spirit of God. We then earnestly desire that somehow our effort and the product of our self-will and fleshly arms could somehow be sanctified to bring forth the spiritual fruit and replace the promise of faith. Like Abram, we hope that we can cajole God into substituting Ishmael for the child of promise. And so, like Abram we pray sincerely, "*O, that Ishmael might live before thee,*" hoping to substitute the effort of the flesh for the fruit of the Spirit. Listen to God's reply to Abram:

*And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee! And God said, Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac; and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him. (Gen 17:18-19)*

We still desire that our efforts be sanctified to bring forth the promised fruit of the spirit, forgetting that God has already spoken: "*In Isaac, not in Ismael, shall the seed be called.*" We become exasperated in waiting for the seed from the long-barren freewoman, and so turn to the bondwoman, forgetting that we cannot obtain the spiritual from the flesh or the fruit of faith from the work of the law.

And behold! Hagar brings forth a seed! She brings forth Ishmael, for she is not barren, but the son of the bondwoman cannot be heir of the promise and must be cast out. Unaware of this and hoping that we can present the product of human effort and of the flesh to God to fulfill His plan, we passionately pray for God to keep Ishmael. But God agrees with Sarai, who said, "*Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac.*" (Gen 21:10) The work of the flesh must be cast out, for by it, we cannot attain the promises of God.

Is what the Holy Ghost is saying to us through this metaphor clear? God indeed has spoken and has made an unchangeable promise to you and me. He has declared, by His word spoken clearly and unmistakably to our spirits, concerning His plan and purpose and what He's going to do in our lives and through us. He has even shown us the great fruit that will proceed from the mission. We heard His word, believed it, and thanked Him for it. We then proceeded with our business and in faith began to wait for the promise. We started up truthfully and sincerely in faith, in expectation of the manifestation. At the beginning, we were on fire, looking forward to the manifestation and knowing that it would not be by our power nor by might that the promise would manifest.

However, we wait and wait and the promise doesn't show. We have been thanking God all this time; we've been believing, confessing,

and walking in faith all the while; we've been praying and seeking His face all this time for the promise; but after all this, faith still seems to be barren, and the promised seed is not forthcoming.

Years after years in futility, it seems, we have waited for the promise to materialize, and our patience is now wearing thin. Our faith, which once was fervid, is now dwindling and wearing off. After waiting for the promise, like Abram, for several years, we are tempted to seek the fulfillment of the promise elsewhere. Faith is becoming worn out and the "freewoman" herself is now *well-stricken in age*, worn out, and her womb is as good as dead; all hope of her bringing forth the promise seed is lost. So we turn to the bondwoman, the arm of flesh, and the will of the flesh to produce the seed.

Before we continue in this meditation, let's closely examine who Hagar really is, so we have a good understanding of the message the Spirit of God is teaching us in this metaphor. Hagar, an Egyptian, was Sarai's bondmaid. She belongs to Egypt, and hence belongs to the world and the things of the world. In her, we see that which is worldly at its very core. She is a bondwoman, and as the Apostle declares, *gendereth to bondage*. Sarai is the freewoman, the true owner of the house, and the mother of the heir, though at the present time she's still barren. Sarai is the spirit of liberty and of walking in faith. But after we have walked in faith and in the liberty of the children of God

for a while without seeing the promised fruit, we look elsewhere, even to the flesh, seeking a solution; we use worldly means to accomplish the purpose of God, seeking and longing to bear the image of the heavenly through the law and the energy of the flesh.

And as we turn to the flesh, lo and behold! The flesh, like Hagar, is not barren, and she quickly brings forth Ishmael. Now, we can help God and substitute this seed of the flesh for the heavenly seed of promise—if only we can convince the Almighty to accept this in place of the promised seed of faith. And so, like Abram, we sincerely pray, *“O, that Ishmael might live before thee.”*

Oh yes: you have placed your request before God, you have trusted His word, you have been walking in faith and confessing what God has said, but nothing seems to be coming forth and your needs aren’t getting met. Like Abram, you feel that you’ve been faithfully joined to Sarai, but Sarai is still barren. Yet you know that God has said a seed will come forth. You cannot reconcile the present reality with the word of God and the seemingly futile expectation. So, to reconcile this, you seek an alternative way to fulfill the promise and help God bring it to pass: you resolve to bring forth fruit through another fleshy means. And indeed, you’re successful. You have taken Hagar, and she has brought forth Ishmael. Incidentally, the seed Ishmael is indeed a male, but he’s the son of the bondwoman. And since he is a male,

just like the promise seed, and also a seed of Abraham, you attempt to present this to God, urging Him to accept this as substitute for the divine promise. You urge Him to take the fruit of the flesh for the heavenly seed, the work of the law for the fruit of the spirit, the worldly building made by defiled hand for the living Sanctuary of the Most High God.

As we draw nearer and nearer to God, we’ll continue to see that His ways are higher than our ways and His thoughts are higher than ours. We will also continue to know that we cannot do things our way and bribe Him into adjusting His way to fit ours. We must all learn that we need to change our ways to match His, for He is the never-changing One. He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever, but we must continue to change until we become like Him. We need to pray that He’ll help us to become malleable in His hand, that we’ll be teachable and easily entreated and molded to conform to His ways.

Teach us your ways, Lord, that we may know You and that we may submit to You and follow You all the rest of our days. Reveal Your way to us as you revealed it unto Moses and help us to walk in it.

*Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me: for thou art the God of my salvation; on thee do I wait all the day. (Psa 25:4 -5)*

# Chapter 7

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## Come Up Hither

*After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.*  
(Rev 4:1)

**T**he book of Revelation presents the blessings, the prizes, and the privileges reserved for those described by the Lord as overcomers. God's purpose in sending us this awesome book with the rewards and prizes "*to him that overcometh*" is not to flash the glorious prizes before our eyes and then tell us we cannot win them, but to encourage us to press on toward the mark and obtain them. The purpose of the book is to reveal these to the members of the church, in order that as many as earnestly desire it may enter into the hall of fame of the overcomers, for "*it remaineth that some must enter therein.*"

But we must never forget this salient fact: that a *prize* is different from a *gift*. Salvation is a gift from God, but the package containing the glorious awards and blessings promised "*to*

*him that overcometh*" is a prize.

In His letters to the seven churches sent through His servant John, the Lord enumerated seven sets of promises to "*him that overcometh*" in each of the seven churches. These prizes began with the privilege of partaking in the Tree of Life and reached a crescendo with the promise of a place to sit with Christ at the Throne of God.

To the first Church, the one at Ephesus, the Lord wrote: "*He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.*" And to the last Church, the one at Laodicea, He wrote: "*To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.*"

The purpose of the Revelation of Jesus Christ is to draw us unto God, from the Tree of Life to the Throne of God. It is to take us from salvation and redemption to reigning with Him on His throne. And to reveal this to us, God Almighty gave the Lord Jesus Christ the Book of Revelation to show to His servants the things which must shortly come to pass.

*The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show to his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel to his servant John:*

*Who bore testimony of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.*

*Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand. (Rev 1:1 -3)*

The desire of God from the dawn of creation has been to bring man into a place of intimacy with Himself. He has therefore been approaching humanity in love and speaking, through signs and wonders, through visitations and appearances, through types and allegories, and through prophetic messages, for the purpose of revealing Himself to man. His ultimate goal is that man, who, from Adam, has been dead in trespasses and sin, will be regenerated or born again, filled with the Holy Spirit, grow up spiritually to full maturity, and be *caught up* or translated into the realm where He, the Almighty dwells, that *where He is there man may be also*.

The Holy One of heaven has been trying to reveal Himself to man since the beginning of time. He began this through the prophets and perfected it at the first appearance of Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel.

*God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;*

*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself made purification of our sins, sat down*

*on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Heb 1:1 -3)*

The reason for the coming of the Lord the first time was to reconcile humanity back to the Father and to reveal Him. He, *the express image of the Father*, came to show us the Father, to make Him known. He did not come to tell us facts about the Father; no, not at all! He came to make Him known. He is the express image of the Father's personality.

The Lord was never interested in telling us about Himself or in teaching us the science about God. He came rather to reveal the Father and to make Him known. He was the *Father revealed among us, God with us, and God revealed among us*. He, by sheer existence in human form, showed forth the Father walking the shores of Galilee. He was the Father made known unto us. When men looked at Him, they saw the Father, for He was the manifestation of the Father God. His name is **Emmanuel**: God with us, God revealed to us, and God among us.

However, the ultimate plan of God is not to shine forth out of His only Begotten Son alone, but to be revealed and shown forth from a multitude of sons after their own order, similar to that of the firstborn who is their Lord. His goal is to be revealed and shown forth in all His saints. Paul the Apostle alluded to this fact in the book of Galatians, when he was talking about his ministry:

*But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by*

*his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood. (Gal 1:15-16)*

God's plan and purpose is to reveal His Son in everyone of us. This will be an unveiling of the Christ who dwells within us. And as the Almighty God was revealed in His Son and was glorified by the Son, so shall Christ be revealed in the saints, who are His body.

*Oh, that he might show through! That the indwelling One might shine through from within me! That He might be glorified in His saints and be admired in them that love Him!*

God is at work in us, and soon there will be an unveiling of the Christ within, fully formed in us. God is putting the finishing touches on His work inside you and me, and the time of unveiling is at hand. It is not the outer man that we're talking about; it is not the natural man that God is working on; it is the hidden man of the heart. Yes, it is Christ in you, *the hope of glory*. The Apostle spoke in a similar metaphor in his letter to the Galatians: *"My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you"* (Gal 4:19). May the work He's doing in us reach perfection in due time, Amen.

As emphasized above, the Father is revealed by the Son, and we can only know God when the Son reveals or makes Him known unto us.

He said so Himself in the book of Matthew: *"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him (Mat 11:27).*

These words from the Master are highly illuminating. We understand from this that no man can know the Father God except through the revelation of Jesus Christ. A man can hear the preaching of the gospel a thousand times, and it will mean nothing to him until the Holy Ghost brings that word into his spirit and reveals the truth to him. It is the Holy Spirit that opens the inner eyes of men and women so they can see the things of God.

Our eyes need to be opened in order to see the things of God and to see Jesus the risen Lord as He is. Consider the incidence with the two brethren after His resurrection:

*And, behold, two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened.*

*And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them.*

*But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.*

*And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of*



*them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? (Luk 24:14-19)*

Indeed, He was only a stranger to them, for He walked and talked with them, but they knew Him not. They heard Him, looked at Him, and even spoke to Him, yet He remained a stranger to them, even though they had been His followers for about three years.

As He walked with them in the way, He expounded the Scripture to them concerning Himself. And as they came near the village where they were going, he acted as though he was going on further, but they persuaded Him to stay with them. While He was at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed it, broke it in pieces, and gave it to them. And it was at this instance that *“their eyes were opened, and they knew who he was.”* He had walked and talked with them all the way to Emmaus—about eight miles’ journey on foot—yet they did not recognize him until there was an unveiling of the Son of God.

*Open my eyes, Dear Lord, I want to see Jesus.*

In the same manner, the Lord Jesus said, *“No man knows the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son will reveal Him.”* The only people who can know God are those to whom the Son reveals Him. One can only know God by revelation. The disciple did not know Him while He lived with them here on earth for the space of three years. It was not until later

that they were able to see Him in the spirit. They knew Him after the flesh, but did not really know Him. On one occasion Peter saw a glimpse of who He really is, and it was on this singular occasion that Peter, quickened by the spirit of revelation, spoke out saying, *“Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”* No man can know the Father or the Son except by the revelation of the spirit.

The book of Revelation is the *Unveiling or Revelation of Jesus Christ* and reveals Him in all of His glory. The Lord God, wanting to unveil the Person of Jesus Christ to the church, gave this book to His servant John to deliver it unto us. John, the beloved brother, was on the Island of Patmos for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ when he saw these great visions. In the vision, he saw the Son of Man in His glorified Body. The One he saw was completely different from the Man of Galilee he used to know, for when John saw Him, he fell at His feet as dead. It was an awesome sight!

In this awesome appearing of Jesus Christ to John the Beloved, John heard the voice of the Son of Man as the sound of many waters and received messages from Him which he delivered to the seven churches. It was after this that John saw heaven opened and was *caught up* into the throne of God.

*After this I looked, and, behold, a door was opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with*

*me; which said, **Come up hither**, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.*

*And immediately I was in the spirit; and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone; and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald.*

*And round about the throne were four and twenty seats; and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.*

*And out of the throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices; and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God. And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.*

*And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle. And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within; and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. (Rev 4:1-9)*

God's ultimate desire is to draw us nearer and nearer unto Himself until eventually we are caught up to His throne to be eternally close

to Him. There we'll join the heavenly host and become partakers of the realm of light, full of the glory of His presence; we'll worship Him in spirit and in truth. We'll no longer be onlookers and watchers from afar; we'll become participators who have been translated and brought into the presence of the Father before the throne. The ultimate purpose of God is not for us to just be witnesses of the work and of the Word of God, but for us to become by nature and essence sons of God.

He wants to draw us from the earthly realm to the heavenly, from the temporal to the eternal, and from the Tree of Life to the Throne of God and of the Lamb. He wants to call you and me down here and say, "*Come Up Hither*, and see things which must be hereafter."

In these last days, God is seeking out a people who will come to know Him, and in knowing Him, will surely manifest or reveal Him to the world, as He was once revealed in His only Begotten Son.

*Draw me nearer to yourself, Lord; reveal yourself to me.*

*Draw me nearer to the Light, to the true Light that lights everyone that comes into the world; Light my candle and keep me burning and shining for You, O Light of God.*

*Draw me nearer, let me fix my eyes upon you, Jesus, and let the things of earth grow dim as wood before pure gold, in the light of Your*

*shekinah glory.*

*Draw me nearer to the ascended Lord in His glory in the heavens. Call me from up there, Lord, and let me hear Your voice commanding me to **Come Up Hither**, and show me wondrous things in your heavens, O Lord, my Savior and my Redeemer.*

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