



The Book of Genesis

Lesson Number 27



A MINISTRY INITIATED IN MAY 1993, AND DEDICATED TO STRENGTHENING THOSE WHO ARE IN CHRIST, BY BUILDING THEIR FAITH, ENHANCING THEIR JOY, AND STABILIZING THEIR HOPE, ENABLING THEM TO WORK OUT THEIR SALVATION WITH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

TRANSLATION LEGEND: ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot m(1992); ALT=Analytical-Literal Translation (2005), AMPLIFIED=Amplified Bible (1965), ABP=Apostolic Bible Polygot with Greek Interlinear (2003); ASV=American Standard Version (1901), BBE=Bible in Basic English (1949), BRENT=Brenton's English Septuagint; CEV=Contemporary English Version (1995); DRA=Douay-Rheims (1899), ERV=English Revised Version (1885), ESV=English Stand Version (2001), GENEVA=Geneva Bible (1599), GNB=Good News (1966), GWN=God's Word (1995), IE= International English (1973), ISV=International Standard Version (1967), JPS=Jewish Publication Society (1917), KJV=King James Version (1611), LITV= Literal Translation of the Bible (1976), LIVING=Living Bible (1971), MESSAGE=The Message (1993), MKJV= Modern KJV (1962), MONTGOMERY=Montgomery's New Testament (2001), MRD=Peshitta-James Murdock Translation (1852), NAB=New American Bible (2002), NASB=New American Standard Bible (1977), NAU=New American Standard Bible (1995), NIB=New International Bible, NIV=New International Version (1984), NJB=New Jerusalem Bible (1985), NKJV=New King James Version (1979), NLT=New Living Translation (1996), NRSV=New Revised Standard Version (1989), PHILLIPS=J B Phillips New Testament (1962), PNT=Bishop's New Testament (1595), RSV=Revised Standard Version (1952), TNK=JPS Tanakj (1985), WEB=Webster Bible (1833), WEYMOUTH=Weymouth's New Testament (1903), WILLIAMS=William's New Testament (1937), TYNDALE=Tyndale's Bible (1526), WYCLIFFE=Wycliffe New Testament (1382), YLT =Young's Literal Translation (1862)

----- GREEK LEXICON LEGEND -----

LEXICON LEGEND: FRIEBERG = Friberg Lexicon, UBS = Barclay-Newman, LOUW-NIDA = Louw-Nida Lexicon, LIDDELL SCOTT = Liddell Scott Lexicon, THAYER = Thayer's Greek Lexicon, LEH = LEH Lexicon, GINGRICH = Gingrich Lexicon

THE INSPIRED RECORD OF THE BEGINNING OF ALL THINGS: THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH, MANKIND, SIN, THE FIRST CHOSEN AND BLESSED NATION, THE FIRST CURSE, THE FIRST PROMISE, AND THE FIRST FAITH.

DISCLAIMER: The quoting of other translations is not to be taken as a condoning of them. My purpose is rather to show the remarkable diversity, and sometimes outright contradictions that exist among these various versions of Scripture. Our understanding of the Word of God ultimately depends upon our comprehension of the Lord Himself and His eternal purpose. Where this understanding is not present, we are shut up to scholasticism and conjecture, both of which are of the world, not of God.

GOD'S FOURTH APPEARANCE TO ABRAHAM

Gen 18:1 "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day;² And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,³ And said, My Lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant:⁴ Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree:⁵ And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said.⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth.⁷ And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it.⁸ And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat.⁹ And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent.¹⁰ And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women.¹² Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also? ¹³ And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? ¹⁴ Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son. ¹⁵ Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh." (Genesis 18:1-15)

INTRODUCTION

A SUMMARY OF THE TEXT

For the fourth time in twenty-four years, God appears to Abraham. The appearance is by means of heavenly messengers, who, when seen by Abraham were immediately treated hospitably. He saw to it that their feet were washed, they were refreshed, provided rest, and served a most

excellent meal. Both Abraham and Sarah joined in the preparation as they lived out what it mean to be hospitable. Their action is described by words such as "hastened," "quickly," "ran," and "hasted." Abraham was asked concerning Sarah's whereabouts, and he responded that she was in the tent. The messenger then said he would

return, and Sarah would have a son. Hearing the word, Sarah laughed within herself. The Lord then asked Abraham why Sarah laughed, adding, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" The promise was then given again. Out of fear Sarah denied that she had laughed, but was sharply rebuked with the words, "Nay, but thou didst laugh."

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Thus, we are again exposed to Divine manners – the way God responds to a questioning of His word.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE RECORD OF ABRAHAM

It is necessary to underscore the importance of the record God has provided certain saints.

- ➔ For example, the record of Melchisedec, though short, is necessary for a proper understanding of Jesus' High Priesthood (Gen 14:18-20; Heb 5:6,10; 6:20; 7:1,10-17,21).
- ➔ The same is true of Aaron and the office of high priest under the Law. It provides a contrast with Christ's High Priesthood, which produces a greater understanding (Heb 5:1-5; 7:11,26-28; 8:3; 9:10).
- ➔ The record of Moses is essential to a proper understanding of the intercession and mediation of Christ, as well as the nature of the New Covenant (John 1:17; 3:14' Acts 3:22; 13:39; Rom 10:5-10' Heb 3:2-5; 8:5-7).

So the record of Abraham provide a definitive view of faith and how it impacts upon human conduct. These days there is entirely too much

supposition about faith, and not enough solid reasoning. An ignorance of Abraham, and the stress placed upon him, contributed to this condition.

There are 259 reference to Abraham in Scripture: 193 in Genesis through Malachi, and 66 in Matthew through Revelation. All of them relate to his life **after** God had called him out of Ur of the Chaldees. He was approximately seventy-five at that time, and lived to be one hundred and seventy five.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT ABRAHAM?

All of the things we know about Abraham are associated with his calling by God.

- ➔ He was called by God, an responded to that call.
- ➔ He left Ur of the Chaldees, not knowing where he was going.
- ➔ He stayed in Haran, accumulating possessions and servants, until God moved him toward the promised land.
- ➔ He built altars to the Lord, honoring Him.
- ➔ He called upon the name of the Lord.
- ➔ He knew what to do during a famine.

- ➔ He walked through the land of promise, remaining there as a sojourner.
- ➔ With three hundred and eighteen trained servants, he pursued and overcame four armies, delivering Lot and regaining all of the possessions that were taken.
- ➔ He believed the promise of God, even though it contradicted human reasoning.
- ➔ He instantly obeyed the commands of God, coming out of Ur, going to Canaan, walking through the land, ceasing to think of Eliezer as his heir, ceasing to think of Ishmael as his heir, having a child through Sarah (though biologically impossible), casting the bondwoman and her son out of his house, and consenting to offer up Isaac as a burnt sacrifice to God.

THE NATURE OF FAITH REVEALED

God is revealing the identity and nature of the faith that is *"obtained"* from him (2 Pet 1:1). **From the very beginning, it accepts what God says without objection or qualification.** At no point does faith stagger or balk when receiving the word of the Lord. That simply is not the nature of the faith, which alone can appropriate the grace of God (Eph 2:8).

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- ➔ He survived a stay in Egypt.
- ➔ When the place could not support the flocks of himself and Lot, he separated from him, giving Lot the first choice.

God is pointing us to Abraham for this tutelage on faith. He is a key figure in Divine history, set up to show us something that is necessary to know. God has done this frequently.

- ➔ **NOAH.** In Noah we see how faith is consistent, lasting over a length period of time without weakening.
- ➔ **JOB.** In Job we see how much a person can suffer without casting faith aside, or falling backward.
- ➔ **ABRAHAM.** In Abraham we see how faith reacts when hearing God.
- ➔ **MOSES.** In Moses we have the example of faithful leadership.
- ➔ **SOLOMON.** In Solomon we have an example of the thoroughness of world wisdom that can be given to man – yet it is a wisdom that cannot save or keep the soul. This was made clear in Solomon's life.
- ➔ **PAUL.** In Paul we see that an abundance of revelation does not contribute to pride, haughtiness, or self-exaltation.
- ➔ **THE APOSTLE JOHN.** In John we see that age and suffering do not dull spiritual capacities or expression.
It is man's tendency to speculate or philosophize about the matters mentioned above. **Men will find they**

cannot agree when such an approach is taken to these vital subjects. To confirm that men are not philosophize about critical matters, God has embodied them in people that we may see them more clearly. This is precisely what He has done with Abraham, setting him up as a living example of faith.

This being true, how do you suppose the Almighty God will view the person who takes it upon himself to criticize Abraham – calling him a liar, not willing to wait on the Lord, etc.? God has not spoken of Abraham in such a manner, nor moved anyone else to write him up as one prone to such things. In the day of judgment, it will not go well for those who have misrepresented Abraham, *"the friend of God"* (James 2:23; 2 Chron 20:7; Isa 41:8).

The True Nature of Faith

The true nature of faith was lived out in Abraham. **He always accepted what God said, and never balked at it.** He always obeyed, acting immediately upon what he heard. When circumstances did not appear to justify believing the promises of God, he believed them anyway.

This is how faith functions. Abraham encapsulates in living the effects of believing God. That is why those who believe on Jesus are said to be related to Abraham– like a son to his father (Rom 4:1,12,16; James 2:21). Let no man be deceived in this matter. **A professed faith that differs from that of Abraham is not faith at all.** That, of course, is precisely the point James makes to his readers. Their lives declared they were fundamentally unfaithful, and therefore James refers to them as *"adulterers and adulteresses"* (James 4:4). He does not condone their state, referring to them as believers. Rather, he powerfully affirms they were in a state from which recovery was mandatory. If they remained in that condition, they would classified as enemies of God (James 4:4).

Our generation needs strong affirmations like this, and less psychological diagnosis and suggestion. There really can be no effective problem solving until the real problem has been identified – **and even then, a Divine remedy must be pursued.** Throughout Scripture, unbelief is the fundamental problem.

AND THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM

Gen 18:1 ***"And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day."***

There is no specific time reference here – although later we learn that is was the year before Isaac would be born. This appearance was during the same year the Lord appeared, changing the names of both Abram and Sarai to Abraham and Sarah.

Ordinarily, the appearances of the Lord to the patriarch were separated by a significant period of time.

The infrequency of the Lord's direct contact with Abraham are arresting to consider. **They suggest that faith can**

function very well on what the Lord has said. It does not rely upon direct contact with the Lord, but upon the word of the Lord, or what the Lord has made known. Even when that word is sporadic, it still carries great weight when recalled and trusted.

A similar set of circumstances is found in Paul the Apostle. **He was visited directly by the Lord Jesus, but not on a frequent basis.**

Lord's Appearances to Paul

- ➔ On the roads to Damascus (Acts 9:)
- ➔ In Corinth (Acts 18:9-10)

- ➔ An angel stood by him during storm (Acts 27:23-24).
- ➔ Jesus revealed Lord's Supper to him (1 Cor 11:23-29).
- ➔ The Lord told him he would bear

GOD'S APPEARANCES TO ABRAHAM	
OCCASION	AGE
CALL.....	Unknown - ?
APPEARANCE 1.....	75
APPEARANCE 2.....	85
APPEARANCE 3.....	86
APPEARANCE 4.....	99
TEST WITH ISSAC.....	Est - 133

In this fourth appearance to Abraham, three messengers come to him, confirming that Sarah will bear a son the next year – Given O. Blakely

witness in Rome (Acts 23:11).

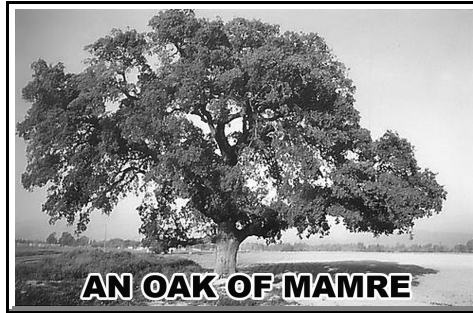
A Lesson to be Learned

There are relatively few men that have been privileged to be visited by the Lord, or an angel of the Lord, or had immediate fellowship with God. Some of them included Adam, Cain, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Solomon, the Prophets, Peter, John, Paul, and Cornelius.

In those appearances, those who received a commitment from the Lord and believed it, lived in the strength of that revelation. This is because *“the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”* (Heb 4:12). **Once spoken, the power of God remains associated with His word.**

The Word of God is careful to remind us that man *“lives by every word of God”* (Lk 4:4) – not by every appearance of God, or contact with God, or exhilarating experience. **It is the nature of God to work through what He says.** While there are lofty experiences that certain favored men have had with God, it is the Word of God that sustained them, not their experience.

This all washes out, so to speak, in the



The fact that anyone in this generation could be spiritually impoverished can in no way be justified. **A perpetual fundamental ignorance of the Scriptures is a transgression of unspeakable magnitude.** We are living in a time when such a plentitude Divine utterances exists that it has challenged the most prodigious thinkers in the world. There is no subject pertaining to life and godliness on which God has not spoken abundantly – and it is all available to the soul who hungers and thirsts for righteousness.

THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM

“And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre . . .” Other versions read *“by the of Mamre,”* ^{NKJV} *“the oaks of Mamre,”* ^{NASB} *“near the great trees of Mamre,”* ^{NIV} *“the holy tree of Mamre,”* ^{BBE} *“the vale of Mambre,”* ^{DOUAY} *“the terebinths of Mamre,”* ^{JPS} *“the Oak of Mamre,”* ^{NJB} *“the oak grove*

tent and built an altar after God told him to walk through the land (Gen 13:17-18).

- ➔ It is where Abram received word of the capture of Lot (Gen 14:13).
- ➔ The appearance of God that is recorded in this text (Gen 18:1).
- ➔ This is the area in which Abraham buried Sarah (Gen 23:17-19; 49:30).
- ➔ Abraham was buried in this area (Gen 25:9).
- ➔ This is where Jacob came to Isaac, shortly before Isaac died (Gen 35:27-29).
- ➔ Jacob was buried in this area (Gen 50:13).

Mamre was to Abraham what Sinai was to Moses (Deut 33:2), the house of God was to David (Psa 84:10; 122:1), and Gethsemane was to the Lord Jesus (Mk 14:32; John 18:1-2). It was a place associated with Divine communication, promise, and closeness to God.

For believers, the assembly of the saints is to be such a place, with holy associations and insights. There is where, in a most unique way, God can be said to be *“in,”* or *“among”* ^{NASB} them (1 Cor 14:25).

IN THE HEAT OF THE DAY

“ . . . and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day.”

The heat of the day is generally considered to be about noon, when the sun is at its peek (Gen 43:161 Sam 11:11).

Here the time of the natural day paralleled the illumination Abraham would receive from the Lord. In an environment of light, you might say, he would be given more light. As it is written, *“For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light”* (Psa 36:9). Another parallel took place when the glorified Christ appeared to Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus (Acts

When infantile expressions are pouring from the lips of the people, and minds are unproductive with emotions ascended to the throne, nothing of significance will burst upon the people. The reason is that this does not produce an environment of light.

fact that **we are living in a time of unprecedented favor.** We have the advantage of having a great number of God’s words, promises, warnings, etc, available to us. They all are impregnated (for want of a better term) with Divine power. That is simply another way of saying that **God is never dissociated from what He has declared.**

belonging to Mamre,” ^{NLT} *“the plains of Mamre,”* ^{RWB} *“while he was living in the oak grove at Mamre,”* ^{LIVING} *“by the oaks or terebinths of Mamre.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

As a location, *“Mamre”* is mentioned ten times in Scripture.

- ➔ This is where Abram pitched his

9:3). In reporting the event, Paul said it took place *“about noon”* (Acts 22:6) – at the height of natural brightness.

This is a facet of Divine dealings with men that must be known by the saints. **Understanding is ministered in an environment of light, or illumination – not in darkness and ignorance.** Right here the emphasis on shallow and

undiscerning [what is called] “praise” is seen. When infantile expressions are pouring from the lips of the people, and minds are unproductive with emotions ascended to the throne, nothing of significance will burst upon the people. **The reason is that this does not produce an environment of light.** The spiritual status of those caught up in

such activity is testimony enough for its lack of spiritual substance. In our time this kind of activity is being advanced among the young people. Whatever good it is purported to have, it has not yielded a body of spiritually informed young people. Godly understanding is rarely found these days among such, and that is a reproachful circumstance.

THREE MEN STOOD BY HIM

“^{2a} And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him . . .” Other versions read, *“three men*

confirmed, that although She had confronted an angel, what was said came from the Lord Himself

given to Moses (Ex 20:1). Yet in the apostolic explanation of the event, it is said to have been a word *“spoken by angels”* (Heb 2:2). Stephen said that the Law was *“given by the disposition of angels”* (Acts 7:53). Paul said it was *“ordained by angels”* (Gal 3:19).

Angels are messengers from God, and they only deliver the word of the Lord. For all practical purposes, their word is to be received as coming directly from the Lord Himself.

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were standing by him,” ^{NKJV} *“three men standing nearby,”* ^{NIV} *“three men standing near him,”* ^{NRSV} *“stood in front of him,”* ^{RSV} *“coming toward him,”* ^{LIVING} *“had set upon him,”* ^{ABP} and *“stood at a little distance from him.”* ^{AMPLIFIED}

(Gen 6:7-13).

➡ **AN ANGEL APPEARED TO MANOAH** (Judges 13:9-24). Yet, Manoah concluded *“we have seen God.”*

➡ **AN ENGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED TO “ALL THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL,”** and spoke in the first person, affirming what God Himself had done. (Judges 2:1-4).

➡ **GOD SPEAKING TO MOSES OUT OF A BUSH.** When God called Moses, He spoke out of a bush saying, *“I am the God of thy father”* (Ex 3:6). Stephen declared that the call of Moses was through *“the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai”* (Acts 7:35).

The heavenly protocol in the matter of Divine communication is confirmed in giving of the Revelation to John.

“The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and He sent and signified it by his angel unto His servant John” (Rev 1:1).

➡ The message came from God Himself.
➡ It was given to Jesus Christ.

➡ Jesus gave it to an angel.
➡ An angel gave it to John.
➡ John gave it to the churches.

Yet, in that message, which came to us through John, who received it from an angel, we read words like this:

➡ *“I am He that liveth, and was dead,*

This is an elaboration on the words, *“and the Lord appeared unto him.”* Keep in mind that *“God is a Spirit”* (John 4:24), and therefore cannot be seen corporally, or bodily. **In the revelation, God will accommodate himself to human frailty by coming in a form.** We also understand such appearances were generally accomplished through angels, or heavenly messengers. There are other Scriptural incidents in which an angel is said to do what elsewhere God is declared to do.

➡ **AN ANGEL SPOKE TO HAGAR.** Hagar accounted, and the text

➡ **THE GIVING OF THE LAW.** It is affirmed that God spoke the Law

- and is alive for evermore” (1:18).*
- ➔ *“I know thy works and thy labor” (2:2).*
 - ➔ *“I will give power to My two witnesses” (11:3).*
 - ➔ *“Behold I come as a thief” (16:15).*
 - ➔ *“Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Rev 18:4).*
 - ➔ *“Behold, I make all things new” (21:5).*
 - ➔ *“I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely” (Rev 21:6).*
 - ➔ *“He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be My son” (Rev 21:7).*
 - ➔ *“Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book” (Rev 22:7).*
 - ➔ *“I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Rev 22:13).*
 - ➔ *“He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus” (Rev 22:20).*

Now, who said those words, and how are they to be received?

Clarification of the Matter

In his letter to the Thessalonians Paul taught that a word delivered by a messenger of God is to be considered as coming from the Lord Himself. *“For this cause also thank we God without*

There is no record of a heavenly messenger appearing on earth that was not in the form of a man. Further, there is no Scriptural record of any angel speaking in other than human language.

ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 Thess 2:13).

A Most Disconcerting Situation

It is a most disconcerting thing to consider how many people despise the word of the Lord. They do not receive it as coming from God Himself, and therefore feel free to ignore it, minimize it, or allow other thoughts and words to have the priority.

While professing Christian leaders have learned to live with this situation, it remains an intolerable one. When Stephen confronted people who refused to receive the Word, he said: *“Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye” (Acts 7:51).* When Paul and Barnabas delivered the word of God to a group of Jews who rejected it, Paul responded: *“It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:46).*

Of course, in our time a philosophy of preaching has been adopted that has led people to believe that a word that offends the people is to be withheld, and more comfortable words uttered. It is thought that this will gradually melt the hearts of the obstinate. The fruit of this approach is evidence enough of its

falsity.

One Further Thing

Angels are *“spirits”* – *“ministering spirits”* (Heb 1:14). They do not have a body, or corporeal nature. When appearing to men, **they always are in the appearance of men** (Judges 13:6,8,10; Dan 9:21; 10:5,18; 12:6,7; Zech 1:0; Mk 16:5; Acts 10:30).

There is no record of a heavenly messenger appearing on earth that was not in the form of a man. Further, there is no Scriptural record of any angel speaking in other than human language. Those who say they speak with the *“tongues of angels”* have no way of substantiating their claim. Additionally, when Paul was caught up to the third heaven, he heard *“unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”* (2 Cor 12:2). I gather that this does not mean there was a moral law against speaking the words, but that the human constitution is not capable of uttering them.

When God speaks, an understanding of it is imperative, whether the message is delivered is through an angel or a man. Where this perspective is not owned, it must be admitted that there really is no need for any Divine utterance. However, such a thought does not have its origin in the heavens, where Jesus is enthroned.

Our day, men could use a lot more sensitivity and obedience to the Word of the Lord. There is altogether too much dulness and insensitivity to God.

WHEN HE SAW THEM

“^{2b} . . . and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door,

and bowed himself toward the ground, ³ And said, My Lord, if now I have

found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: ⁴ Let a

In this fourth appearance to Abraham, three messengers come to him, confirming that Sarah will bear a son the next year – Given O. Blakely

little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: ^{5a} *And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant."*

We have here a sterling example of the hospitality possessed by those with faith. **Essentially, faith constrains the individual to live with his own interests in the background.** That has been true in every age.

This is an example of something written to the Hebrew brethren that



concerned being hospitable. *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares"* (Heb 13:2). The word *"entertained"* means to lodge and care for. To both Abraham and Lot (who also entertained angels unawares—Gen 18:1-8; 19:1-3), according to appearance they were being hospitable to men. Yet, these were not men, although they appeared to be men. The text in Hebrews suggests that this is actually an ongoing circumstance, and that failing to be hospitable may very well amount to refusing angels entrance into the home.

There is also the instance of Cleopas and his companion who entertained the Lord Jesus Himself, in a

state unawareness (Lk 24:29).

In all three of these instances, those involved were aggressive to be hospitable.

➔ Abraham ran to meet his visitors ... bowed himself toward the ground ... asked them not to turn away, refreshed them with water, got some bread, had a tender calf prepared, dressed and served with butter and milk (Gen 18:1-5).

➔ Lot rose up to meet his visitors, bowed himself with his face toward the ground, asked them to turn in, pressed upon them greatly to do so, made them a feast, and baked some bread (Gen 19:1-3).

➔ There was the Shunnamite woman, who was prominent. She observed Elisha and *'constrained him to eat bread.'* As a result, *"as oft as he passed by he turned in to eat bread."* That, however, was not sufficient. She said to her husband, *"And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither"* (2 Kgs 4:9-10)

➔ Cleopas and his companion constrained Jesus to abide with them, reasoning with Him that the day was far spent, and set Him down to a meal (Lk 24:28-30).

WHEN HE SAW THEM

"...and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground..."

Keep in mind, these were strangers to Abraham. He had never seen them before. Yet he was forward to be hospitable, being willing to share what he had with those who passed by.

PASS NOT AWAY

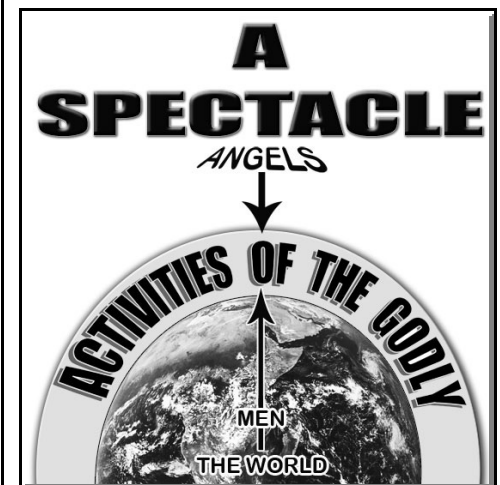
" . . . And said, My Lord, if now I

have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: ⁴ *Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant."*

The thoroughness with which Abraham approached his unexpected guests illustrates the nature of true hospitality. First, he provided refreshment from their journey: water to wash their feet, and to rest themselves under the shade of the tree. While they were resting he would provide some bread, or food. That was presented as a distinct and joyful possibility, and submitted for their approval.

Abraham did not know these were angels. **I can envision, however, that in the heavens the Lord was drawing the attention of other angels to this event.** Perhaps He asked them to consider how Abraham reacted to these visitors, and how he did not consider his own comfort. In fact, this would mean a lot of work for him – and yet, that is not what he was thinking about. As we peruse the life of Abraham, we are obliged to think of this as something more than Eastern culture – although that is involved. I choose to see this as the impact of faith upon the human spirit.

A Spectacle to Angels



Now, with this in mind, consider a statement made by the apostle Paul, particularly as it regards the attention of angels – heavenly monitors, as it were: *“For I think that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made **a spectacle unto the world, and to angels, and to men**”* (1 Cor 4:9).

Consider the angelic hosts watching with a keen interest the activities of Noah, Abraham, David, Daniel, John the Baptist, the apostles, Philip, Stephen, Timothy and others. Ponder what they have learned in observing these men – things about God Himself, His mercy, patience, and transforming work. See what they have learned about the effectiveness of faith, the strength of hope, and the unwavering consistency of obedience produced by faith.

Think of what the very messengers Abraham confronted – what they perceive in a member of a fallen race, and the impact of believing has upon such a person.

The Scriptures teach that we “are come” to a host of personalities we cannot see, hear, or touch. They include “an innumerable company of angels,” and “the spirits of just men made perfect” (Heb 12:22-23). Do they have no interest in what they behold? If a rich man who went to hell knew about his brothers that remained on the earth (Lk 16:28), do the angels and spirits to whom we have come have no awareness of our presence and activities?

The awareness of angelic observation, and even presence, can impact immediately upon ones conduct. An example of this given in Paul’s letter to the Corinthians. There had been disorder in their assemblies. Some of it was apparently caused by interruptions, particularly of prophetic utterances. Some of this was caused by women who had not duly honored their husbands. They asked questions in the assembly which caused a disruption of some sort. In writing about this general condition, Paul makes a statement that bears upon the subject here addressed.

*“For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head **because of the angels**”* (1 Cor 11:7-10).

Angels operate under strict authority from above. They are under God and Christ, and some are even under other angels – like Michael’s angels (Rev 12:7). The fact that they are subordinate does not mean these angels never speak, or are never given responsible tasks to fulfill. They do not require an escort everywhere they go. Knowing what they do about subjugation, and doing the will of God as one who is under someone else’s authority, **how would they react to the kind of insubordination that was taking place in Corinth.** Pondering such a question should certainly contribute to sobriety. Little wonder Paul provides due incentive: *“because of the angels.”*

SO DO, AS THOU HAST SAID

“^{5b} And they said, So do, as thou hast said.” Other versions read, *“do as you say,”* ^{NIV} *“Let it be so,”* ^{BBE} *“We accept your offer.”* ^{CEV} *“Thank you; we accept,”* ^{GNB} and *“Certainly. Go ahead.”* ^{MESSAGE}

The messengers, depicted as the Lord appearing to Abraham, tell him to proceed in the doing of what he has

We must not overlook the fact that this is a kind of revelation of the Lord’s way of responding to human commitments made to Him. They are treated seriously. When Moses delivered the covenant to the people of Israel, they solemnly said, *“All that the LORD hath spoken **we will do**”* (Ex

Lord lamented that they did not have a heart to do what they said, but they had spoken well, and what they said was expected of them: *“I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: **they have well said all that they have spoken.** O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! Go say to them, Get you into your tents again”* (Deut 5:28-30).

When Israel failed to do what they had said, they were described as having broke the covenant made with them: (Jer 31:32; Heb 8:9).

Those who fail to carry out their commitments and vows are termed

19:8). Upon hearing those words, the

We must not overlook the fact that this is a kind of revelation of the Lord’s way of responding to human commitments made to Him. They are treated seriously.

“covenant breakers” in Scripture (Rom 1:31). They are also referred to as “trucebreakers” (2 Tim 3:3), a term applied to those who have “a form of godliness,” but deny “the power thereof” (2 Tim 3:5).

Jesus spoke of those who were not to be followed, or emulated, describing them as those who do not do what they say. “but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not” (Matt 23:3). Unfortunately, there are those who offer a lot of talk, yet do not carry out the doing of what they promise. In speaking to the chief priests and elders of the people, Jesus said, “But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you” (Matt 21:28-31).

This Is a Critical Matter

The criticality of doing what one says, particularly as it relates to the Lord, is often overlooked by the thoughtless – those who are absorbed with things pertaining to this world. **As is indicated in the above saying, the Lord does not honor a commitment that is not carried out.** This, of course,

exposes the absolute falsity of the doctrine of, what is called, “eternal security.” That particular doctrine states that once a person is in Christ, they can never be dissociated from him. Once

nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head” (Matt 8:20). Obviously, the man had not thought thoroughly enough before he had made his commitment. Another man then

There remain great numbers of people who declare they have seen the light, and will follow the Lord, whatever it costs them. However, they have not thought deeply enough about the matter.

they are a “son,” they will always be a son, regardless of what they do (Ishmael and Esau were sons, but their were not heirs). Once they are inside, they are, so to speak, locked in, so that nothing can negate their beginning.

Were this true, these three visitors would have remained with Abraham, even if he had not carried out what he said. Remember, this was an appearance of the Lord to Abraham, even though he was not acutely aware of it at the time. Once he made a hospitable commitment, he was admonished to carry it out.

On one occasion a certain scribe said to Jesus, “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever Thou goest” (Mat 8:19). Jesus responded, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have

spoke up – one of Christ’s disciples, or followers: “Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father” (Matt 8:21). This man wanted to fulfill some of, what he conceived to be, his obligations. Jesus responded, “Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead” (Matt 8:22).

There remain great numbers of people who declare they have seen the light, and will follow the Lord, whatever it costs them. However, they have not thought deeply enough about the matter. They are enslaved to convenience, and thus speak, thinking only of the ideal circumstances for themselves. Such people are **not** the children of Abraham, and they are not, in that posture, motivated by faith. Such are not living by faith, for their lives contradict the life of Abraham, the father of all who believe.

AND ABRAHAM HASTED . . .

“⁶ And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes upon the hearth. ⁷ And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it. ⁸ And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the

tree, and they did eat.”

Notice how Abraham went about fulfilling his commitment. “Abraham hastened . . . said to Sarah, make ready quickly . . . Abraham ran and fetched a calf . . . gave it to a young man and he hasted . . . set it before them.” No sluggishness or reluctance was present in anyone. At the word of Abraham, both Sarah and a young man

hastened to fulfill their roles.

None of these activities were for self, but all of them were required in the hospitality ministered to others.

The Principle of Making Haste

Hastening is an immediate and thorough response. It does not conform to the earthly saying, “Haste makes waste.” It is not an impulsive response

(as in Prov 28:20), or one in which dismay is present (as in Isaiah 38:16). **As used here, it is a response of understanding** – one in which the person realizes the gravity of the situation.

Hastening to do something related to the Lord is also found throughout Scripture: –i.e. moving without hesitation to do quickly what is intended.

- ➔ Following the revelation that Mary would give birth to the Son of God, she went to the house of Zecharias and Elizabeth **“with haste”** (Lk 1:39).

thy testimony concerning me” (Acts 22:18).

- ➔ Peter admonished the believers to maintain a certain spiritual posture, **“Looking for and *hasting* unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat”** (2 Pet 3:12).

This attitude is also reflected in the word **“instant.”** When Anna saw the infant Messiah she **“that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem”** (Luke 2:38).

Many souls never make the proper advancement simply because they are too slow to respond to Divine direction and provision. Jesus once charged two of His disciples with being **“slow of heart to believe”** (Lk 24:25). It took them too long to believe!

There are people like this, who do not think properly when certain facts confront them. The world may look at this as a comely trait – being careful not to act too suddenly, and giving time to think things over thoroughly. There may be times when this is the right course to pursue – but it is not when one is confronted with truth and Divinely orchestrated opportunities. There are times when an immediate response is required – like when Peter was sinking beneath the wave (Matt 14:30). When Jesus told Zaccheus to **“come down,”** He meant immediately (Lk 19:5). When a voice from heaven told John, **“Come up hither”** (Rev 4:1; 11:12), it was to be done immediately. What if the man with withered hand heard Jesus say, **“Stretch forth thine hand”** (Matt 12:13), decided to do it the next morning? Or, what if that impotent man at the pool of Bethesda heard Jesus say, **“Rise, take up thy bed and walk,”** and decided to do it two or three days later?

Even so, there are spiritual impulses and intuitions that must be obeyed immediately – else they will lose their power. Perhaps one senses that this is the time to move in closer to the Lord, to spend more time in the Word, or to devote himself more heartily to the work of the Lord. But, alas, amidst a diversity of influences that are brought on by a close proximity to the world, the summons is ignored, and eventually it goes away.

Even so, there are spiritual impulses and intuitions that must be obeyed immediately – else they will lose their power.

- ➔ When the shepherds were apprised of the birth of Jesus, **“they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe”** (Lk 2:16).
- ➔ When Jesus called Zaccheus out of a tree, he told him, **“make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house”** (Lk 19:5).
- ➔ Paul once **“hasted, if it were possible for him, to be in Jerusalem by Pentecost”** (Acts 20:16).
- ➔ When warning Paul, the Lord said to him in a vision, **“Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem: for they will not receive**

Speaking of the Israelites who believed God, Paul said they were **“instantly serving God day and night”** (Acts 26:7). Those in Christ are admonished to be **“instant in prayer”** (Rom 12:12). Paul exhorted Timothy, **“Preach the word; *be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine*”** (2 Tim 4:2).

This is the kind of response that perceives an opportunity, discerns a cause for thanksgiving, and is required in being constant and faithful in the service of the Lord. Delay causes fullness of hearing, blindness of the heart, and spiritual insensitivity.

A Observation

WHERE IS SARAH THY WIFE?

“⁹ And they said unto him, Where is Sarah thy wife? And he said, Behold, in the tent. ¹⁰ And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife

shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.”

WHERE IS SARAH THY WIFE?

“And they said unto him, Where is

Sarah thy wife? . . .”

I do not doubt that Abraham picked up immediately on the dialog that is now initiated. These were, so far as

In this fourth appearance to Abraham, three messengers come to him, confirming that Sarah will bear a son the next year – Given O. Blakely

appearance is concerned, strangers. Yet they know the name of his wife. A thoughtful person would note that.

As a matter of record, the name “Sarah” is mentioned thirty-eight times in Scripture – and only one woman in Scripture bears that name. Eleven of the times she is mentioned, a point is made that she is Abraham’s “wife.” Seventeen of the times she is mentioned, it is in direct association with Abraham. In fact, all of the references to her are within the context of Abraham’s calling and life.

SARAH THY WIFE SHALL HAVE A SON

“ . . . And he said, Behold, in the tent. And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.” For “the time of life,” other versions read, “at this time next year,” ^{NASB} “in due season,” ^{NRSV} “in the spring,” ^{RSV} “when the season cometh cometh round,” ^{ASV} “in about a year’s time,” ^{CSB} “at this time of the year,”

DARBY “according to this period seasonably,” ^{SEPTUAGINT} “when the season comes round again,” ^{NET} and “Nine months from now I will come back.” ^{GNB}

The expression “the time of life” does not refer to Sarah’s life, but to the resurfacing of life, as in Springtime. After the barrenness of winter, life surfaces again in the Spring of each year. This reflected the nature of God’s blessing upon Sarah. **After the winter of barrenness, she would have a springtime for her body, when new life would issue forth from her as God had promised.**

Because the birth was not only miraculous, but in strict accordance with the begetting of a child by a man, and the conception of the child by a woman, this indicates that Abraham and Sarah acted upon this promise right away.

Earlier, for the first time in

Abraham’s life, the Lord told him, “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 17:19). Now the promise is again affirmed – established, as it were, by two witnesses. **It is God’s manner to confirm His word.** This is done for the advancement of faith.

SARAH HEARD IT

“And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him.”

Abraham has gone forward to meet the men, and was standing outside the tent, although he was near to it. Sarah had remained in the tent, where she had prepared the bread. However, she was not disinterested in what was being said. She heard this promise uttered, doing so with more than a passing interest. She was attentive, which is a comely trait.

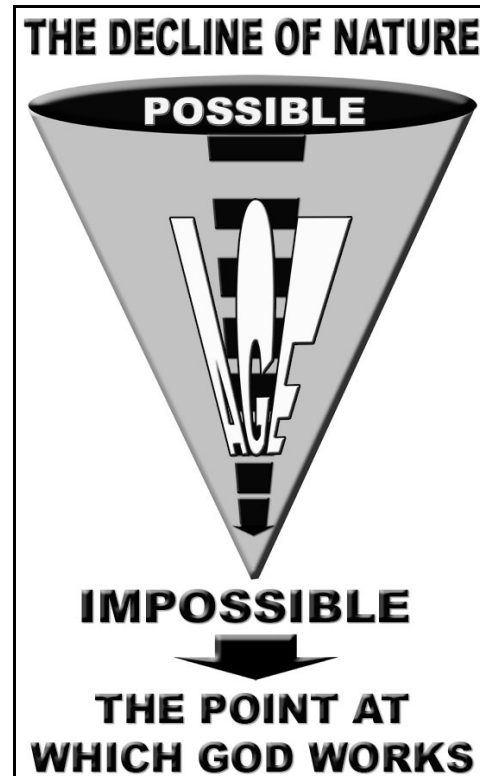
OLD AND WELL STRICKEN IN AGE

“¹¹ Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. ¹² Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?”

ABRAHAM AND SARAH WERE OLD

“Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age . . .” Other versions read, “well advanced in age,” ^{NKJV} “very old,” ^{BBE} and “getting on in years.” ^{CSB}

Scripture always sets the facts before us. There is no attempt to veil the conditions under which God works. When the creation commenced, we are candidly told “the earth was without form and void” (Gen 1:2). It was then that the creation commenced. Before God created a wife for Adam it was observed, “there was **not** found an help meet for him” (Gen 2:20). When He



gave the people bread, it was only when “there was no bread” (Num 21:5). God prepared to give Israel water, when “there was no water for the people to drink” (Ex 17:1). Throughout history, God has delivered people when there was “none to deliver” (Job 10:7; Lam 5:8) – “no deliverer” (Judges 18:28).

In the matter of salvation and man’s spiritual condition we are told, “there is none righteous” (Rom 3:10), “we were without strength” (Rom 5:5), “we were dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:5), and “There was none to help” (Isa 63:5).

Now, the promise of an heir is attended by impossible natural circumstances. The man who will beget the child, and the woman who will conceive it, are both totally incapable of what is required for a child to be born.

IT CEASED TO BE

" . . . and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women . . . " Other versions read, "passed the age of childbearing," ^{NKJV} "had stopped having her womanly periods," ^{NAB} and "it had ceased to be with Sarah as with [young] women. [She was past the age of childbearing]." ^{AMPLIFIED}

A kind of double jeopardy existed with Sarah. First, she had been "barren" from the very beginning (Gen 11:30). However, for several years God could not have opened her womb to bear children – as He did with Rebecca (Gen 25:21), Leah (Gen 29:31), Rachel (Gen 30:11), Hannah (1 Sam 1:17-20), and others. They all bore children while they were still of age to bear children, doing so through God's miraculous power.

However, so far as age is concerned, Sarah is not in the category of child-bearing women. She is past that age.

Something To Consider

Some people petition God for a great work **too soon** – before they have come to the point to see the impossibility of the thing for which they ask. Before the woman with an issue of blood was healed, she did what she could, pressing through a crowd until she could touch the hem of Jesus garment (Mk 5:27-29). Before the four men who brought an impotent man to Jesus could see him healed, they had to break up the roof of the house in which He was teaching, and let the man down at His feet (Mk 2:4-5).

While I am fully aware that this kind of reasoning can be taken too far, it does seem necessary to point out the necessity of godly effort. It is prominent throughout the record of Scripture. There is a strain of theology that teaches people to expect something from God without due preparation and effort. That is not proper teaching.

THEREFORE SARAH LAUGHED

"Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old

also?"

This is the text to which Peter alludes when he states that Sarah called Abraham "Lord" (1 Pet 3:6).

If there had not been a Divine response to this reasoning, out of charity we would assume Sarah's response was the same as that of Abraham – a response of wonderment. Also, we have the illuminated reasoning of Paul who states that Abraham was not weak in his faith, did not consider the impotence of his own body, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb. He did not stagger at the promise of God, was strong in faith, and was fully persuaded that what God "had promised, He was able also to perform" (Rom 4:19-21). **Any temptations Abraham may have had to linger on the facts of both his age and impotency must have been thrown down in the energy of faith.**

11:11).

This was her final conclusion, after her faith had been duly tried. Therefore, although she was gently rebuked, we consider her to have ultimately triumphed through her faith.

Like Abraham, she did not laugh out loud, but "laughed within herself." Notwithstanding, this was known to the heavenly messengers, and they will draw attention to it.

Precisely what is laughing – the kind of laughing Sarah did – "within" oneself? **This was the laugh of unbelief, for she was chided for it.** It was a reaction that failed to take the power of God into consideration. In fact, for this moment, she allowed human reason to upstage the promise of God. She sifted the promise through the maze of human understanding, and thus could not at that moment process it.

Every believer is obliged to, by walking by faith, live close enough to God to be sensitiveto Divine drawings.

This apparently was not the case with Sarah – at least not at the point she is said to have laughed. It appears that over the process of time, she had, at this point, become more convinced of her natural condition that she was of the promise of God. After all, it had been at least thirteen years since she and Abraham addressed the fact of her barrenness. Nothing had changed, and she was growing older. If she was dealing with anyone but the Lord, this incident would never have been mentioned – She did laugh "within herself."

However, Scripture will affirm that even under this condition, she did ultimately triumph. It is written, "Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised" (Heb

This kind of laughter is revealed in a number of fleshly expressions that are often given when God calls a person to higher stance. Here are some of them.

- "But the doctor said . . ."
- "I am too old for that."
- "I have never done that before."
- "I have never been trained in that area."
- "I am just too busy."

These are not always things that are said audibly. It is the festering of doubt within the mind. I do not doubt that it is seen in heaven as laughing within oneself.

I am careful to say that we are speaking of Divine requirements and drawings into areas that appear too difficult for the flesh. These are not

matters where one person can judge another.

Every believer is obliged to, by walking by faith, live close enough to God to be sensitive to Divine drawings. Faith tunes the human spirit to the heavenly frequency so that we have better spiritual hearing, clearer spiritual vision, and greater sensitivity to the Lord. This incident provides us with a

proper view of questioning God. It is not an acceptable posture. It is never right to assess Divine requirements by looking at natural aptitude.

This does not give license to people to make it their aim to do this or that for God, and then to imagine that their personal objective necessarily came from heaven. Some ambitions are really

temptations, for directions from heaven.

When determining to do something, it is important that we not assume the compelling impulse came from God. Our intentions must be carefully examined in the light of God's word to determine their legitimacy, and whether or not they are God-glorifying in both their existence and outcome.

WHY DID SARAH LAUGH?

"¹³ And the LORD said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?"

Abraham did not know Sarah had laughed, for she did so "within herself," not audibly.

The angel appears to take Sarah's response as a challenge – which is a revelation of the manner in which holy angels view the conduct of men. There is no indication that they are longsuffering in the same manner as the Lord. Were it not for the strict

him, and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your transgressions: for My name is in him . . . And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him" (Ex 23:20,21; 24:2).

This record, as well as others, contributes to the increase of sobriety, militating against the marked tendency of men to think lightly of questioning the Almighty God, and calling His promises into question.

IT IS ALWAYS A SERIOUS MATTER

➡ "Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?" (Mark 8:17).

➡ "And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?" (Matt 15:16).

I am deeply concerned about the rapid increase of erroneous thinking concerning the matter of doubt. One local Bible College professor taught that doubt was a form of faith. Sloppy teaching like this has produced a sea of doubters that are viewed as being intellectually honest. They are not! They are doubters, and "he that doubteth is damned if he eat" (Rom 14:23). Doubt is never viewed favorably in Scripture, and therefore must never be viewed propitiously by men.

The gravity of the condition is seen in the words of James: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord" (James 1:6-7). It is not possible to live acceptably in a condition that contradicts this statement. There is a person who cannot receive anything from the Lord.

Even when there is the slightest element of doubt found in men, it is duly noted by the Lord.

obedience to the Lord in the carrying out of their mission, I do not doubt that many people would have had their lives abruptly terminated.

On one occasion, after God had made known to Moses that He would not personally go with Israel, but would send His angel before and with them, He solemnly told Moses: "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared. Beware of

Even when there is the slightest element of doubt found in men, it is duly noted by the Lord. This is seen in our Lord's frequent response to His disciples.

➡ "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (Matt 14:31).

➡ "Where is your faith?" (Lk 8:25). "Are ye also without understanding? Do ye not understand?" (Matt 15:17).

IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?

“¹⁴ Is any thing too hard for the LORD? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son.”

Here we confront the fact of a different kind of promise – one that cannot be altered or negated. When Israel balked at the promise of inheriting the land, they were excluded from it, not being able to enter because of their unbelief (Num 14:23; 26:64-65; Heb 3:19).

However, this was a different kind of promise – one relating to the sending of a Savior into the world. **That promise was not contingent upon human response.** Therefore, God will enable Sarah to believe in order that she might receive strength to conceive the heir of the promise, Isaac.

Any promise related to the Savior coming in to the world, and the consequence of His death, in no way was dependent upon men. That is because it was related to the fulfillment of an *“eternal purpose.”* The purpose itself is absolutely unconditional so far as men are concerned. Men’s involvement in the effects of Christ’s death are conditional. **It is imperative that we be able to distinguish between the conditional and the unconditional promises of God.** For example, God receiving us as sons and daughters is conditional upon us coming out from among the defiled and being separate (2 Cor 6:17-18).

IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD?

“Is any thing too hard for the LORD? . . .” Other versions read, *“Is anything too difficult for the Lord,”* ^{NASB} *“Is anything too wonderful for the Lord,”* ^{NRSV} *“Is there any wonder which the Lord is not able to do?”* ^{BBE} *“Shall anything be impossible with the Lord?”* ^{SEPTUAGINT} *“Is anything too marvelous for the LORD to do?”* ^{NAB} and *“I am the LORD! There is nothing too difficult for me.”* ^{CEV}

Considering how very little was known of God at this time, this was a telling question! Abraham knew about

the creation, the fall, the flood, and the scattering of the people at the tower of Babel. God had revealed He was *“Almighty,”* and Self-existent. Abraham had some personal acquaintance with Divine direction, protection, flourishing, and the enablement to overcome four influential kings and their armies. **Actually, however, there had not been a lot of revelation about Divine ability.** Much of this will be demonstrated in Abraham, but little of it was known at this time.

This Is A Different Time!

We are living in a time that has remarkable advantages. We have in Scripture a defining and revealing sampling of the working of God.

➔ The creation of the worlds by His

immorality (Sodom and Gomorrah).

- ➔ God creating a nation (Israel).
- ➔ God delivering people (Abraham, Israel, Daniel, etc.).
- ➔ The response of God to a disobedient nation (Israel).
- ➔ The giving of a righteous Law (Ten Commandments).
- ➔ God giving triumph to men (Abraham, Israel, Joshua, Samson, David, etc).
- ➔ How God uses prophets (Israel).
- ➔ God manifested in the flesh (Jesus Christ).

Any promise related to the Savior coming in to the world, and the consequence of His death, in no way was dependent upon men. That is because it was related to the fulfillment of an “eternal purpose.”

word (Heb 11:3).

- ➔ The creation of humanity.
- ➔ The reaction of God to the disobedience of men (Adam and Eve, Cain, the world).
- ➔ The reaction of God to global immortality and sin (the flood).
- ➔ What happens when a man finds grace in the eyes of the Lord (Noah).
- ➔ The reaction of God to united human plans and efforts that did not take Him into account (Babel).
- ➔ God calling a man (Abraham).
- ➔ God making promises to men (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Israel).
- ➔ The reaction of God to deep

- ➔ God empowering men (Abraham, Samson, David, John the Baptist, apostles, disciples, etc.).
- ➔ God’s response to corrupt government (Egypt, Israel, Babylon, Herod).
- ➔ God’s willingness to reveal a lot to a single individual (Moses, David, Daniel, Paul, John).
- ➔ God’s longsuffering (Israel, Paul).

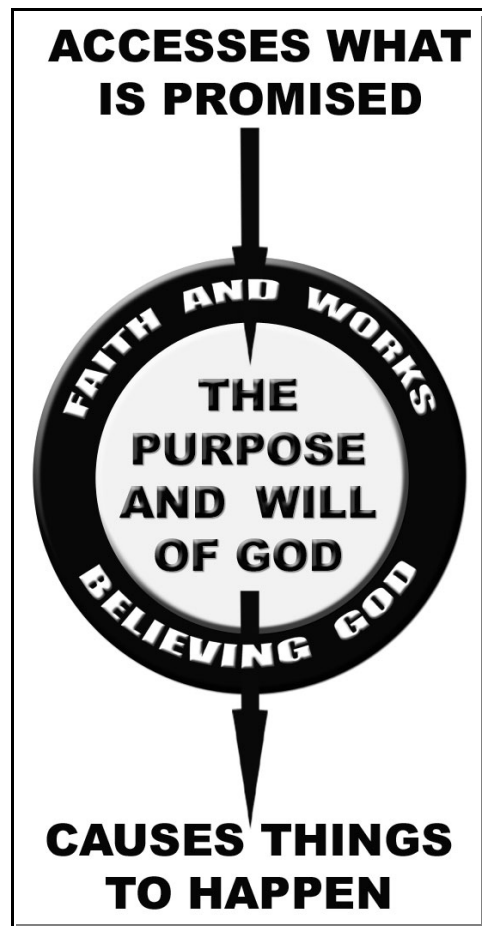
There has been such an abundance of revelation given concerning God that to attempt to list it all is well nigh impossible.

In a time when all of this has been made available to men, the question *“Is anything too hard for the Lord?”* is quite different than it was when posed to Abraham.

SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON

" . . . At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son."

The messenger again accents that the promised birth will be at *"the time appointed."* Earlier the Lord referred to



the time of Isaac's birth as *"this set time next year"* (Gen 17:21). Speaking of the Father, Jesus told His disciples that *"times"* had been *"put in His own power"* (Acts 1:7) – and this is a classic confirmation of that fact.

Consider the various factors that had to be managed by God in order for the birth of the promised Isaac to take place at the appointed time.

- ➔ The lives of both Abraham and Sarah had to be protected and sustained by the Lord.
- ➔ The faith of Abraham and Sarah

had to be sustained.

- ➔ Satan, who aggressively opposes God and makes war against those with whom the Lord works, had to be under Divine control.
- ➔ Principalities and powers that dominated the world had to be held in check.
- ➔ Hostile enemies had to be subdued.
- ➔ Surrounding nations had to be controlled so they would not invade the territory in which Abraham resided.

Unique promises

There are not many promises that have no conditions – but this is one of them. No "if's" were attached to the commitment. The reason for this circumstance is the nature of the promise, or Divine commitment. This did not have to do with merely receiving a blessing, although that was involved. **It rather was related to the execution of God's "eternal purpose" – the provision of a Savior.** That provision was in no way hinged to the qualifying decisions or accomplishments of men. If they in any way depended upon men, then prophecy is really nothing more than the result of God seeing what was going to happen in the future.

There is a fundamental flaw in this form of reasoning. It does not take into consideration the accomplishment of things that are not possible in the realm of nature:–i.e. an impotent man and a barren woman having a son (Rom 4:19), a virgin having a son (Isa 7:14), a root springing out of dry ground (Isa 53:2), and a child being raised in wicked Nazareth for thirty years being found *"without sin"* (John 1:46; Acts 10:38; Heb 4:15).

Everything upon which the entrance of the Savior into the world, and the accomplishment of His assigned work, depended was orchestrated and made to happen by God Himself. There were no variables – none at all! The

involvements of the following people were wholly of the Lord, and there is simply no other way to view it. Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Jacob, Judah . . . Zecharias, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Simeon, Anna, the shepherds, the wise men from the east. **It is not possible that an alternative to these participants would be required. The entirety of the involvement was of the Lord, from beginning to end.**

There are promises made to the believer that are something like this – promises that are guaranteed of fulfillment. Here are some of them.

- ➔ *"All that the Father giveth Me **shall come** to Me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out"* (John 6:37).
- ➔ *"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, **if we ask any thing according to His will, He heareth us:** And if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him"* (1 John 5:14-15).
- ➔ *"He that overcometh **shall inherit all things;** and I will be his God, and he shall be My son"* (Rev 21:7).

The above are promises that are sure because they are within the circumference of God's will. The overcomer will not fail to inherit all things. When that is where the person is, living by faith and walking in the Spirit, the promise will be fulfilled. Jesus will never cast away those who come to Him. If we ask anything according to God's will, the petition will not be denied. That is a promise (1 John 5:14-14). John even adds this challenging word: *"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight"* (1 John 3:21-22).

The focus of the believer is upon the promises, by which he becomes

“partaker of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). This does not exclude obedience, or keeping and obeying the

commandments. **Rather, it is what makes those responses possible.** Faith puts is where God wants us. A person

has to decide what he is going to with such guarantees. I recommend it is best to believe them.

SARAH DENIED

“¹⁵ Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid. And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.”

Sarah is in the tent, but has been listening to the words of the messenger. Those words were more than the communication of a Divinely ordained and orchestrated fact. **They were also a test of faith.** During the text, Sarah had laughed, thinking within herself that this was not in the realm of possibility. Later, as Paul affirmed, she **did** receive strength to conceive seed, doing so by faith (Heb 11:11). That was after this occasion, and prior to her conclusion of the test.

SHE WAS AFRAID

“Then Sarah denied, saying, I laughed not; for she was afraid.” Other versions read, “Sarah was afraid, so she lied,” ^{NIV} and “Because she was afraid, Sarah dissembled.” ^{NAB}

As used here, the word *“denied”* means “BE UNTRUE, BE INSUFFICIENT.” ^{STRONG’S}

At this point, Sarah no doubt equated laughing with an audible response – that is still the way people think. Someone who is reported to have laughed is reported as having done so out loud. But Sarah did not laugh out loud. She *“laughed within herself”* (Gen 18:12). No mere mortal would have charged her with laughing. No professed expert in human behavior would call Sarah’s response *“laughing.”* **But the Lord did.** In view of this, it appears that the word *“lied”* is a bit too strong, although etymology does support that use. If, in the ordinary sense of the word, Sarah *“lied,”* then she would have known that she did, in fact, *“laugh within herself.”* I am questioning that this was the case. I do not believe her spirit had been cultured enough to recognize her response as

laughing – even though, from the heavenly point of view, that is what she did.

The weight of the question provoked fear in Sarah, which confirms her inner laughter was not a response of wonder and jubilation like that of Abraham. As Scripture often confirms, fear does provoke some rather uncomely responses.

Observations Concerning Fear

Sarah is only the second person in Scripture of whom it was said they were *“afraid.”* Adam was first to confess he was *“afraid”* (Gen 3:10). Some time later it is written that Lot feared to dwell in Zoar (Gen 19:30). Jacob *“was afraid”* after he had dreamed of a ladder set up on earth that reached into heaven (Gen 28:17). Joseph acknowledged to his brothers,

50:19,21). Two of the times the word is found, God was saying *“fear not”* (Gen 15:1; 21:17).

The first statement that someone *“feared God”* is found in the book of Exodus, where it is written, *“the midwives feared God”* (Ex 1:17,21). Centuries later it is written that Nehemiah’s brother Hanani *“feared God”* (Neh 7:1). It is also written that Job *“feared God”* (Job 1:1). In all of Genesis, Joseph is the only man who said, *“I fear God”* (Gen 42:18). Hebrews 11:7 states that Noah *“moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house.”*

Even the word *“afraid”* is only mentioned nine times in Genesis (Gen 3:10; 18:15; 20:8; 28:17; 31:31; 32:7; 42:28,35; 43:18). Four of those times, the fear was not toward God,

The point of this brief diversion is to accent the rarity of the fear of the Lord during those ancient times. This is largely because there was not a lot of conscious, or perceived, activity between God and man.

“I fear God” (Gen 42:18).

On occasions, in His appearances to the patriarchs, God would say *“fear not”* (Gen 15:1; 21:17; 26:24; 46:3). However, the truth of the matter is that **there is not a lot about fearing before the Lord in the book of Genesis.** The word *“fear”* is only mentioned fourteen times in Genesis. Seven of those times it is not speaking of fearing before God (Gen 9:2; 32:11; 35:17; 43:23; 46:3;

but because of certain circumstances (Gen 31:31; 32:7; 42:35; 43:17).

Even in our text, it does not say that Sarah feared the Lord, but that she was *“afraid”* when His messenger posed a question concerning her laughter.

THE POINT OF ALL OF THIS

The point of this brief diversion is to accent the rarity of the fear of the Lord during those ancient times. **This is**

The aim is to fear the Lord without having to be jarred awake by His presence, or some pointed word that makes Him known.

largely because there was not a lot of conscious, or perceived, activity between God and man.

THE FEAR OF THE LORD IS LEARNED

The fear of the Lord is something that is **learned**. God told Moses to gather Israel together and He would make them hear His words *“that they may **LEARN to fear Me**”* (Deut 4:10). In outlining some of the fears that were to be observed, and the procedures involved in them, the reason for them was, *“that thou mayest **LEARN to fear the Lord thy God always**”* (Deut 14:23). Moses further told the people that when a king of God’s choosing was set over them, he was to read the book *“all the days of his life, that he may **LEARN to fear the Lord His God**”* (Deut 17:19). Moses was instructed to tell the people that when they gathered together in the Feast of the Tabernacles, they were to hear the words of the Law *“that they may **LEARN, and fear the LORD your God, and observe to do all the words of this law**”* (Deu 31:12). Additionally, the reading was to be before *“their children,*

*which have not known any thing, may hear, and **LEARN to fear the LORD your God**”* (Deut 31:13).

God is not satisfied with men merely quaking at His presence, or when it becomes glaringly obvious that He is being confronted. **The aim is to fear the Lord without having to be jarred awake by His presence, or some pointed word that makes Him known.**

This is a fear that is *“learned”* primarily from His Word – the record of His works, His purpose, and His will. This kind of fear cannot be possessed independently of God’s word. **If men will subject themselves to the Word of God, and make an association between the Word of God and the Person of God, they will come to learn the fear of the Lord.**

We are living in a generation of whom it can be said, *“there is no fear of God before their eyes”* (Psa 36:1). This is quoted in Romans 3:18 as a description of fallen humanity. So far as this generation is concerned, and with

the exception of *“the elect,”* the absence of the fear of God is largely owing to the famine of hearing the Word of the Lord (Amos 8:11). That is the appointed means whereby men come to *“**learn to fear the Lord.**”*

THOU DIDST LAUGH

“And he said, Nay; but thou didst laugh.” Other versions read, *“Yes, you did laugh,”* ^{NIV} *“Oh yes, you did laugh,”* ^{NRSV} *“No, but you did laugh,”* ^{RSV} *“No, but you were laughing,”* ^{BBE} *“but thou didst laugh,”* ^{JPS} *“Yes, you did!”* ^{CEV} *“No, I know that is not true. You did laugh!,”* ^{ERV} and *“Yes you did; you laughed.”* ^{MESSAGE}

In my judgment, the messenger saw more than Sarah saw – that is one reason for this whole matter being suddenly broken off. This was not like an argument, with Sarah affirming one thing, and the messenger affirming another. **The messenger knew more than Sarah knew, and I do not doubt that it brought conviction to the heart of Sarah.** We do know that she shortly *“received strength”* through faith *“to conceive seed.”* Therefore, the condition that moved her to laugh within herself was **not** a continued circumstance. Perhaps her faith was renewed on this very occasion, and she then received strength to conceive seed. Nevertheless, the Spirit does not gloss her initial response. This is because the Word is not advancing a respect for people, but the fear of God.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the stage has been set for the development of a nation through whom the promised *“Seed”* would come. There has also been the divulging of the reservation of a land in which this nation would be cultured, and in which the Messiah would be born, raised, minister, lay down His life, be raised from the dead, and from which He would ascend into the glory.

All of this was promised five hundred years before Israel’s

deliverance from Egypt, and two thousand years before the birth of the promised Seed, Jesus Christ.

Fourteen times (in eleven verses) in Genesis, chapters twelve through eighteen, the word *“covenant”* is mentioned.

➡ *“The Lord made a covenant with Abram”* (Gen 15:18).

➡ God made His covenant between

Himself and Abram to multiply his seed *“exceedingly”* (Gen 17:2).

➡ God’s *“covenant”* involved Abram being *“the father of many nations”* (Gen 17:4).

➡ God established His covenant with Abram’s seed after him (Gen 17:7).

➡ God told Abraham he would keep His covenant, as well as his seed after him (Gen 17:9).

➔ God established circumcision as a token of the covenant made with Abraham (Gen 17:10,11,13,14).

➔ God promised to establish His covenant with Isaac – before Isaac was born (Gen 17:19,21).

As observed before, beginning with Genesis twelve, and continuing through the conclusion of the Revelation, the Divine focus is upon Abraham and his Seed. This narrows down to Abraham himself, the nation springing from him, the ultimate Seed [the Messiah], and those who are chosen in that Messiah.

DIVINE PREPARATIONS REQUIRED
Sin had so impacted humanity that

provoked God to destroy every living thing, saving those within the ark, continued after the flood as well. Prior to the flood, *"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually"* (Gen 6:5). Following the flood, God again observed, *"I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done"* (Gen 8:21). What was required to preserve humanity can scarcely be comprehended by men!

However, that was just the beginning. When man was separated

coming, together with a consciousness of the need for righteousness.

A godly lineage had to be developed through which the Savior would come. There must also be a sanctified nation in which the coming Messiah could be raised and prepared for His work. This would also require a special land, separated from other lands, in order to the development of a proper spiritual culture. It was even necessary to develop the concept of a covenantal *"token"* that would minister the confidence of involvement in the will of the Lord. This is not to mention the necessity the Law, a *"schoolmaster to bring us to Christ"* (Gal 3:24-25).

WE ARE SEEING THE BEGINNING OF THESE THINGS

With Abraham, we are beholding a concentration on the preparations required for the coming of the Messiah. The record of God's dealing with both individuals and peoples is not merely history. It is a chronicle of the working out of an eternal purpose.

This working includes the purging of unsuitable peoples, as well as the development of a sanctified people. It was essential that men become aware of God's wrath as well as His mercy. The idea of *"the will of the Lord"* had to be established, as well as its absolute priority over all other wills.

THESE ARE NEEDED PREPARATIONS

It is doubtful that a person can be saved without having some measure of awareness in these areas. The means employed in the development of this awareness includes the Law and the Gospel of Christ. To ensure that productive results are realized, the Holy Spirit enters into the work, convicting men of the guilt of sin, the need for righteousness, and the defeat of the devil (John 16:8-11). He will also carry out the new birth through the Word of God in order to the obtaining of an inheritance (John 3:8; 1 Pet 1:3). The spirit also sanctifies the individual *"unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Christ"* (1 Pet 1:2). Only the Lord Himself could accomplish these things.

AN ETERNAL PURPOSE SET IN MOTION

ESSENTIALS

- > **PRESERVE THE HUMAN RACE**
- > **MAKE THE CHARACTER OF GOD KNOWN**
- > **MAKE THE NATURE OF SIN KNOWN**
- > **AQUAINT MEN WITH THEIR ADVERSARY**
- > **CONFIRM THE TEMPORALITY OF EARTH**
- > **DEVELOP THE CONCEPT OF DIVINE WRATH**
- > **DEVELOP THE CONCEPT OF A SOVERIEGN GOD**
- > **DEFINE SIN BY A LAW**
- > **DEFINE FAITH IN A PERSON**
- > **DEVELOP SENSE OF THE NEED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS**
- > **CHOOSE A MESSIANIC PROGENITOR**
- > **DEVELOP A DIVINELY CULTURED NATION**
- > **SELECT A SANCTIFIED ENVIRONMENT -- A LAND**
- > **MAKE MEN AWARE OF THE NEED OF A SAVIOR**
- > **DEVELOP THE ANTICIPATION OF A SAVIOR**
- > **DEVELOP THE CONCEPT OF A COVENANTAL "TOKEN"**

extensive preparations were required before the Savior came into the world. An environment and context must be developed that will enable men to understand both the Savior and His great salvation.

Those who imagine that salvation is simplistic overlook the necessity of due preparation. First, the human race must be preserved, in spite of the fact that it was provoking God with its incessant sin. The very condition that

from God, there was a corresponding loss of many things essential for him to be saved. Some of them included being familiar with the character of God, the nature of sin, the nature of the adversary, the temporality of the earth, Divine wrath, and a Sovereign God. There were also some definitions that needed to be established. These included, but were not limited to, defining sin, faith, and righteousness. There was also a requirement for the development of a perceived need for a Savior, and the anticipation of one

Purported conversions that are wrought without these appointed means are not genuine. Real conversion results in the individual obtaining a *“new heart”* and *“a new spirit”* (Ezek 36:26). The truly converted persons

listen to and obey the Lord Jesus Christ (Deut 18:15). They hear Christ, and follow Him wherever He goes (John 10:27). God puts His Spirit in such people. According to the prophecy of Ezekiel, this results in the people

walking in His statutes, keeping His judgments, and doing them (Ezek 36:27). All of these realities required extensive preparation – preparation that was too extensive for natural men.

Our next Hungry Saints Meeting will be held on Friday, 2/24/12. We will continue our series of lessons in the book of Genesis. The twenty-seventh lesson will cover verses 16 through 33 of chapter Eighteen: “GOD REVEALS THE IMMINENT DESTRUCTION OF SODOM.” In this account the remarkable scope of Abraham’s spiritual knowledge is report. Even with a relatively small amount of revelation, Abraham has grasped some things about God that remain rare, even in this day of abundant light. Our meeting will begin at 7:00 P.M. You are invited to bring your family and friends for fellowship around the Word of God. Refreshments are served afterward, with a time of extended fellowship for everyone.

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THE WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP

WORD OF TRUTH FELLOWSHIP Website: <http://wotruth.com/wotf/wotindex.htm>

A place where believers can meet, fellowship, be edified, and express themselves.

Additional Website for Word of Truth Fellowship: <http://www.forministry.com/USMOINDPTWOTFW>

WORD OF TRUTH Website: <http://wotruth.com>

BROTHER BLAKEY'S ON-LINE COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY on Nehemiah: <http://wotruth.com/nehindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Daniel: <http://wotruth.com/Daniel.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hosea: <http://wotruth.com/hoseaindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Romans: <http://wotruth.com/Romans.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Corinthians: <http://wotruth.com/2Corinthians.htm>

COMMENTARY on Philippians: <http://wotruth.com/philippiansdindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Colossians: <http://wotruth.com/Colossians.htm>

COMMENTARY on First Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/1stthessindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Second Thessalonians: <http://wotruth.com/2ndthessindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Hebrews: <http://wotruth.com/hebindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First Peter: <http://wotruth.com/1stpetindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on First John: <http://wotruth.com/1stjohnindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Revelation: <http://wotruth.com/revelationindex.htm>

COMMENTARY on Mark: <http://wotruth.com/Mark.htm>

COMMENTARY on Titus: <http://wotruth.com/Titus.htm>

COMMENTARY on Acts: <http://wotruth.com/Acts.htm>

COMMENTARY on Malachi: <http://wotruth.com/Malachi.htm>

COMMENTARY on Galatians: <http://wotruth.com/Galatiansindex-new.htm>

COMMENTARY on Genesis: <http://wotruth.com/Genesis.htm>

COMMENTARY on Ephesians: <http://wotruth.com/Ephesians.htm>

PARTICIPATING BROTHERS AND SISTERS

A DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS MINISTRIES DURING OUR GATHERINGS

“Openings and Introductions” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth to promote spiritual focus; “Lead Singing” – AM Songs selected by Leader, PM Songs Lead in favorites by the brethren; “Calling” = 7-10 minute exposition of truth designed to provoke disciplined thought; “Sermon” = 45 minute exposition of the things of God as revealed in Scripture; “Exhortation” = 5-8 minute challenge to act upon the truth we have heard; “Table Meditation” = 8-12 minute exposition of matters relating to Christ’s role in salvation; “Lead Scripture shower” = Leading of the quoting/reading of Scripture without comment; “Lead prayer session” = Presentation of three matters for prayer that are taken from the Word of God; “Lead Intercessory Prayer” = A time of focused prayers for personal needs; “Closing Scripture/Benediction” – Closing of the AM Gathering

SPEAKING/LEADING/MINISTERING IN THE ASSEMBLY

The Word of Truth Fellowship, Joplin, MO DURING JANUARY, 2012

1. *Blakely, Given O.* (PM Sermon, PM Sermon).
2. *Blakely, Jonathan* (AM Table Meditation).
3. *Blakely, June* (Lead PM Prayer Session, Teach AM Class).
4. *Blakely, Mattie* (Lead Scripture Shower, Lead PM Singing).
5. *Blakely, Michael* (Teach AM Class, AM Sermon, PM Table Meditation, PM Exhortation, PM Exhortation).
6. *Blakely, Michele* (Play Piano, AM Opening, Lead PM Singing).
7. *Blakely, Paul* (AM Calling, PM Introduction, PM Table Meditation).
8. *Cobb, Matthew* (AM Exhortation, AMN Calling, PM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).
9. *Cobb, Nicole* (Lead AM Singing).
10. *Cobb, Robert* (AM Sermon, AM Table Meditation, Teach AM Class, AM Exhortation, PM Table Meditation).
11. *Dill, Sarah* (Closing Scripture/Meditation, Read PM Sermon Text)
12. *Hutchcraft, Aaron* (AM Opening, AM Exhortation, AM Exhortation, AM Sermon, PM Exhortation).
13. *Hutchcraft, Barbara* (Lead AM Singing, Lead PM Singing, Lead PM Prayer Session, PM Introduction, PM Introduction, Lead PM Singing).
14. *Hutchcraft, Debbie* (AM Calling, Lead PM Singing).
15. *Hutchcraft, Gene* (Lead PM Intercessory Prayer, Teach AM Class, AM Table Meditation, PM Sermon, PM Exhortation).
16. *Hutchcraft, Judah* (Special PM Piano Solos, Read AM Sermon

- Text, Introduction to PM Sermon).
17. *Hutchcraft, Silas* (Read AM Sermon Text).
 18. *Lizcano, Antonio* (Closing Scripture/Benediction).
 19. *Meyer, Mary* (Lead Scripture Shower, Lead Scripture Shower).
 20. *Parker, Melissa* (AM Opening, Lead AM Singing).
 21. *Parker, Tony* (AM Table Meditation, AM Calling, PM Sermon).
 22. *Sims, Annie* (Lead AM Singing, Read PM Sermon Text, Read PM Sermon Text).
 23. *Sims, Baylie* (Read AM Sermon Text, AM Opening).
 24. *Sims Girls – Annie, Hannah, Rachel* (Quote AM Sermon Text, Quote PM Sermon Text).
 25. *Sims, Hannah* (Closing Scripture/Benediction)
 26. *Sims, Ricky* (AM Sermon, AM Exhortation, Teach AM Class, AM Table Meditation, PM Sermon).
 27. *Sims, Tasha* (Lead AM Singing, PM Introduction).
 28. *Williams, Jeremy* (AM Sermon, PM Exhortation, PM Introduction, PM Exhortation).
 29. *Williams, Logan* (Play AM/PM Lord’s Table Interlude, Introduction to AM Sermon, AM Calling, Read PM Sermon Text).
 30. *Williams, Nichole* (AM Opening, Lead Scripture Shower, Scripture Shower).
 31. *Williams, Sydney* (Closing Scripture/Benediction, Closing Scripture/Benediction, Read AM Sermon Text).
 32. *Preparing Lord’s Supper* (Various sisters).

“THE WHOLE BODY FITLY JOINED TOGETHER AND COMPACTED BY THAT WHICH EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH” –

THE BODY OF CHRIST

It is a fact: “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him” (1 Cor 12:18). He did not set them in the home, but “in the body.” He did not place them in society, but “in the body.” They are functioning members of the body who fill necessary functions – edifying roles in the solemn assembly (1 Cor 12:19-27). The functioning value and ministry of “the body” is realized when it is “together,” not when the people are separated. The ministry of each member is determined by their faith – “a measure of faith” that has been given to them in order to the “profit” of the entire body (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:7). This is how the Lord has put together “the church, which is His body” (Eph 1:22-23). We make no apologies for the ministry of the entire body – publicly, in the assembly, and in order to the edification of the saints. This is all done in an orderly manner, with due thoughtfulness and regard for those who are in Christ Jesus, and who, in faithfulness to God who gave these various abilities. Our assemblies are designed to allow for the various expressions and insightful responses of all who are of honest and good heart, have faith, and are in, and living for, the Lord Jesus.

2012 Refreshing Waters Renewal, #24

July 31, August 2, 2012
Diamond Grove Christian Church
Diamond Grove, Missouri

Theme: THE EXALTATION OF CHRIST

An exposition of the reality of, and purpose for, the Exaltation of Christ. The implications of this exaltation will also be affirmed with Gospel power.

1. **GOD HAS EXALTED ONE CHOSEN OUT OF THE PEOPLE – PSALM 89:19**
2. **JESUS IS EXALTED AND EXTOLLED – ISAIAH 52:13**
3. **JESUS IS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD, EXALTED – ACTS 2:33**
4. **EXALTED TO BE A PRINCE AND A SAVIOR – ACTS 5:31**
5. **GOD HAS HIGHLY EXALTED JESUS – PHIL 2:9**
6. **HE HAS BEEN GIVEN A KINGDOM – DAN 7:14**
7. **JESUS IS KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS –**
8. **JESUS IS FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER – EPH 1:20**
9. **HE HAS OBTAINED BY INHERITANCE A MORE EXCELLENT NAME – HEB 1:3**
10. **JESUS IS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS – HEB 4:14**
11. **JESUS HAS BEEN MADE HIGHER THAN THE HEAVENS – HEB :26**
12. **ANGELS AND AUTHORITIES AND POWERS HAVE BEEN MADE SUBJECT TO CHRIST – 1 PET 3:2**
13. **JESUS IS RULING IN THE MIDST OF HIS ENEMIES – PSA 110:2**
14. **THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PLACED ON JESUS' SHOULDERS – ISA 9:6**
15. **GOD WILL JUDGE THE WORLD BY THE MAN CHRIST JESUS – ACTS 17:31; JOHN 5:22**
16. **JESUS IS FAR ABOVE ALL PRINCIPALITY AND POWER, AND MIGHT, AND DOMINION – EPH 1:19-21**
17. **ALL THINGS ARE UNDER JESUS' FEET, AND HE HAS BEEN GIVEN AS HEAD OVER ALL TO THE CHURCH – EPH 1:22**
18. **JESUS ASCENDED UP FAR ABOVE ALL HEAVENS THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS – EPH 4:10**
19. **JESUS IS EXPECTING UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL – HEB 10:13**
20. **JESUS HAS ENTERED INTO HEAVEN TO APPEAR IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD FOR US – HEB 9:24**
21. **JESUS IS A GREAT HIGH PRIEST WHO HAS PASSED INTO THE HEAVENS – HEB 4:14**