

## Forward

We are really thrilled to tell you, dear reader, that this little book, which presents the A, B, C's of prayer, is itself an answer to prayer.

Because of the urgent requests from people all across America for these sermons in printed form, I decided one morning to fall on my knees with the Bible open to Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need, according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I told God I needed someone to transcribe these sermons from tape, edit them and prepare them for printing, as I could not possibly do it by myself. I prayed most earnestly. I asked (Matthew 7:7), I believed (Mark 11:24), and I claimed the answer by returning thanks that I had received -- just like Jesus did at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:41) and as we are recommended to do by our favorite author in the book, *Education*, pages 257, 258.

That very night as I spoke at Pastor Gery P. Friesen's church in Norwalk, California, he approached me with the words: "Have you ever thought of securing someone to transcribe these sermons from the tape, edit them and make arrangements for the printing?" I could scarcely believe my ears. Pastor Friesen has done just that! With his heavy church program, he has sacrificed time to carry through on this project, and our thanks to God and to him, for being God's servant and letting God answer our prayer through him.

God will answer your prayer, too, as you learn the simple A, B, C's of prayer.

G. A. C.

## 1: At The End Of My Rope

I'd like to have you notice seven Bible facts with me:

1. Jesus is coming again. "And, behold I come quickly..." Revelation 22:12.
2. He's coming for those whom He calls, 'Chosen'. Revelation 17:14, "...and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."
3. They will have become chosen in a furnace of affliction. Isaiah 48:10, "...I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."
4. This furnace of affliction is called, 'the time of trouble', or 'the time of Jacob's trouble'. Daniel 12:1, "... and there shall be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time; ..." Jeremiah 30:7 says, "... it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it."
5. Jacob was delivered out of his time of trouble because he learned the prayer of reception. Genesis 32:8, 9, 12, 28. This was the prayer of reception, not the prayer of commitment, not the prayer of thanksgiving or adoration or penitence, merely. Nor was it merely the prayer of confession. He was delivered because he had learned the prayer of reception.
6. His time of trouble and deliverance is a type of the time of trouble and deliverance of the people of God in the last days. Jeremiah 30:7, ". . . it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it." Jacob here is represented as a type of a group of people living just prior to the coming of the Lord who have gone through the tremendous refining process in a furnace of affliction. Notice that they will be saved out of it because they have learned the prayer of reception which Jacob learned and which guided him through his time of trouble.

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7. The result: They will be like Jesus Christ Himself. 1 John 3:1-3, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

Jacob represents a group of people who through this great time of trouble - this refining process - will come forth as gold. The promise is that this group of people will be saved out of this time of trouble because they have learned what Jacob learned. They have learned to pray as Jacob learned to pray; not merely the prayer of repentance, not merely a prayer of confession, nor of thanksgiving or adoration. They have learned to pray the prayer of reception. God, coming down through the flaming vault of the skies looks upon these people and says: "They are like me." I want to belong to that group of people when Jesus comes again, don't you? And I want to be a part of that people so earnestly that I am determined to pray this prayer of reception.

A number of years ago there was a young man at La Sierra College who for years had been trying to find solutions to his problems. He had questions that needed answers. Although he had received many answers to prayer, on vital issues the answers eluded him. The answers to the great questions of life he could not find. The real solutions to problems he could not discover. Even after going from one teacher to another, and from one Christian to another, the questions remained unanswered. In vain he sought.

He often went to a lonely spot to pray, pleading with God for the answers to his questions. Although he felt refreshed after a season of prayer, the solution to the questions he faced remained unclear. Finally one day, he decided on a course of action and left a note for his room-mate.

For the sake of identifying these two boys, we will call them Bob and Jim. Bob wrote a simple note which said, "Dear Jim: I've gone to San Diego to join the navy. Will you kindly pack up my belongings in my trunk and when I'm settled I'll tell you where to send them." When Jim returned to the room and read the note, he read between the lines. Jim felt that the navy did not hold the solution to Bob's problems. He knew that for a man to run away from the problems was merely an attempt to run away from himself, and as long as a man carries himself with him, he will carry his problems as well.

Jim realized the need for help in this situation and so he called in some of his close Christian friends and asked them to pray that God would prevent Bob from being able to join the navy. Earnestly they united their hearts in pressing to God their prayer.

This was the time of the Korean War when Uncle Sam needed every stalwart, red-blooded American boy available. Against these odds, these young men set their faces.

In the meantime, Bob arrived in San Diego and quickly found a navy recruiting officer. He stepped up to him and announced his intention to join the navy. To enhance the situation, he did a little self-advertising. He explained the advantage the navy would realize by his enlistment. This was just for good measure so he wouldn't be turned down. When he finished, the officer looked him in the eye and said, "Young man, we're not interested in you right now. We're not accepting men for a month. Come back later if you want to." His answer was cold and hard.

This shook Bob visibly. He hadn't expected this at all. He went back to his hotel room and, undaunted, looked through the ad's in the newspaper hoping to find a job for a month after which he would go and enlist. He found an ad calling for a salesman. Bob felt himself to be a pretty good salesman and so quickly made his way to the office at the address given. Shortly he was seated in the manager's office and they fell into conversation.

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In a few minutes this man sized up the situation. Standing to his feet and shaking a menacing finger in Bob's face, the man said: "Young man, go back home and decide what you want to do - and do it!"

Now Bob was shaken. Here was a man who was looking for a salesman; he had spent good cold cash advertising for a salesman and a salesman shows up and he sends him home! He had offered his services to his country in a time of dire need, and his country had turned him down.

Now what will he do? He can't go back to college and save face. He didn't know what to do. He had only \$8.50 in his pocket. There in his hotel room he remembered that he had had many answers to his prayers. Falling on his knees he prayed, and in effect he said, "Dear Lord, I've come to the end of my rope. I don't know what to do. I don't know where to go. But, dear God, if you'll come to my rescue and tell me what to do, I will do it. I'll go where you want me to go and do what you want me to do. I will be what you want me to be."

Just then, Bob told me, he heard an audible voice speaking to him. A distinct, clear voice, such as he had never heard before or since. That voice said, "Go to Madison College in Tennessee." Bob had never heard of Madison College, nor did he know where in Tennessee it was.

With \$8.50 in his pocket he started across the continent for Madison College. Six days later he arrived in the town of Madison, two miles from the college. Bob walked the last two miles to the college. It was a dreary, cold, rainy morning. As he was walking along he kept asking himself, 'why did I come across the continent to come to this school? What can I find here that I couldn't find in California? What is this really all about?'

He arrived on campus, introduced himself and was welcomed. He had a little time to think and to crystallize his thinking. When asked by fellow students what his purpose in coming to Madison was, he answered, "I have come here for one express purpose, I am trying to find a philosophy that will guide me through the coming time of trouble." This was Bob's consistent answer to the questions of his fellow students.

If there is anything the church ought to be anxious about, it is a clear concept of this philosophy. I'm not so interested in people repeating the fact of the coming of the seven last plagues and the time of trouble. The mere repetition of these things merely fills us with fear, and the Bible says, "Fear hath torment", and "...he that feareth is not made perfect in love." 1 John 4:18 The important thing, however, and that which I am interested in is, helping people learn of the philosophy that will guide a people through the coming time of trouble and make it possible for a people to look up and say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for him and he will save us."

These messages have been prepared with this one thing in mind. I want you to know more than simply that there are some dark, dreary days ahead. The devil knows that; and the angels know that. God knows that - most everyone knows that! But we need to know more than that! We need to know - we need to become acquainted with the philosophy that will guide us triumphantly through the time of trouble. We can be walking like angels as Zechariah 12:8 says we can in the closing days of human history.

In spite of the fact that Bob had determined that he would never again seek counsel from a living soul, after two weeks on the campus, he decided he would try once more. He made his way over to the pastor's study and knocked on the door. It was my privilege to have been the pastor at the Madison College church at that time.

What Bob didn't know as he stood there knocking at the door was that I had been going through an experience similar to that which he had been passing through. He didn't know that this pastor had gone down some weary, lonely lanes and had been pleading with God to give him some answers. Although I

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had been a minister for years, there were many questions that remained unanswered in my mind. Another thing that Bob did not know was that after pouring out my heart to God and searching importunately, I had found some answers.

I have come to this conclusion: When God, in His mercy has given light to a searching soul, and someone else is looking for the same light and understanding, He will bring these two people together if it means crossing the continent. God will give the answer when the thinking has been crystallized sufficiently to know the need. Bob had crystallized his thinking; he knew his need and was ready for some answers.

Bob entered the office and began to relate his experience. He told of his problems and shared with me some of the questions to which he had not been able to find answers. God sent His Holy Spirit to my side at that moment. I knew there were answers to these questions, and I recognized them as questions to which I had discovered the answers by the help and power of God. You see, it is not enough to have knowledge; one must be able to detect the other person's need. I felt the Lord was directing me to understand the immediate need.

I turned to Bob and said, "Bob, I'm not so interested in your individual problems. I'd like to share with you a philosophy of answered prayer." And so I opened my Bible and we began. One hour later Bob walked out of that office as though he were walking on air! He had made some thrilling discoveries. He was elated! I had given him a study on the science of the prayer of faith which I had learned in my Gethsemane. I had found in my agony of searching something for which I have been continually grateful. I had found the A, B, C's of prayer - like a little child.

In Matthew 7:7 I had learned the 'A' of prayer. "Ask (that's the 'A') and it shall be given you." In Mark 11:24 I had learned the 'B' of prayer. "Believe...." Believe that you have received the answer! Isn't that simple? Yes, the rudiments are simple, but to do it is something else. To kneel down before God and open His Book to any of the 3,573 promises or clusters of promises and place my hand on it and ask God, like a little child, to fulfill this promise in my behalf - and then believe He will do it, simply because He has promised, is a complicated thing. To do this does not require the faith of an Elijah, but the faith of a little child.

So often we come to Him knowing too much. We're too wise - far too mature. Was it not Jesus who said, "Except ye become as little children...." How does a little child accept a statement of her mother?

There were two little children disputing a point. The one said, "It's so."

"No, it 'taint so" the other girl said.

"Yes it is so, because mother said it's so."

The basis of her belief was not so many words, but it was mother. The basis of our belief is not so many words, but it is that God said it! Our faith is to be based on God.

Does God lie or does God tell the truth? This is important as we consider this question. The little girl was still not satisfied.

"It still 'taint so", she insisted

"It is too so, because mommy said it's so, and what mommy says is so, even if it 'taint so."

That's child-like faith. That is taking what mother says as so, because of mother!

I found I had to fall on my knees and say, "I believe the promises you have made because YOU say it's so, even if the devil says it's not so." Even if circumstances say it can't be so - if God says it's so - It IS So! This is the 'B' of prayer. This, however, is not the prayer of reception.

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The 'C' is the prayer of reception. And this I had to learn after having preached for many years. The 'C' is to claim the promise for which I have asked, and for which I have told Him I believe in. To claim it, and to return thanks that I **have** received it, is the secret that had eluded me for many years. This is what Jacob did in his time of trouble. He confessed his unworthiness and said, "Lord you told me that you would stay by me, and you told me that you would bring me back home safely. I'm frightened because my brother is coming with four hundred soldiers. I'm afraid he will destroy my family, my little ones and all that I have. This is my problem, Lord, but I'm relying on the promise you made to me regarding my safety. You promised me, Lord."

Humbly he confessed his sins and cried to God for mercy repeating the promises and reminding God of all He had said. Now he was asking God to fulfill it. Then he claimed the promise. Reverently he said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me." This is the prayer of reception.

Oh that we, like Jacob, might say in prayer, "I will not let Thee go except Thou give me the assurance that Thou hast heard me and given me the assurance of the fulfillment of your promise.

There are millions of people today who are praying prayers of adoration, prayers of penitence, prayers of thanksgiving, prayers of confession and prayers of request. Very few even admit that they believe! But I do not believe there is one Christian out of a hundred who is fulfilling the conditions and saying, "Lord, I believe that what You have promised you are now fulfilling." This is the prayer of reception.

We are going to explore this together as we continue, so that we can know how to take hold of this Mighty God, this Creator of the universe, this Saviour who is eager and willing to deliver anyone who came to Him. We, too, can come to Him and say, "Lord I believe this promise. I believe you are now fulfilling this promise and I thank you that you have fulfilled it."

Where did I get this from? I got it from the Bible. But a favorite author of mine was the medium of God to point out these thrilling facts. It is found in the book Education pages 253 - 258. Here is just a line or two that will thrill you: ". . . for any gift He has promised, we may ask; then we are to believe that we receive, and return thanks to God that we have received."

Isn't that thrilling? That was from page 258 of the book Education by E. G. White. I want to share with you in the succeeding studies how each of us can do just what has been recommended. And you are going to learn how to do it! This experience can and will be yours. Your problems can be solved in the framework of this arrangement. God has promised it would be so.

In the book, Christ Object Lessons on page 147 it tells us to take our Bible in our hand and open it. Then we are to come to God and say, "Lord, I have done as You have commanded. I present Thy promise, and I claim the answer."

George Muller, that great man of faith used to pray with his Bible open before him. When asked why he did this, he would answer: "This open Bible is the channel of communication between God and man. The Holy Spirit gave this book; the Holy Spirit indicts our prayer, so this open Bible forms a great channel of communication between God and man."

This is God's Holy Spirit's Word. So as I take His book, I realize according to Romans 10:17, "...faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." So then, faith comes by hearing the Word of God! We can come to God and say, "This is Your immutable, eternal, everlasting, undying Word. It cannot fail."

"...hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good.? Numbers 23:19

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It is impossible for God to lie! In this we can place our complete trust and confidence. There need never be a question in our minds about God's veracity.

Bob left the office that morning having found what he wanted. He was thrilled! He returned to my office a few days later. He said, as I ushered him in, in response to his knocking on my door that he had come back for a little more information. Before we went into another discussion I was curious as to whether Bob had followed the counsel I had already given him. I asked him, "Bob, have you already put into practice what I have already shared with you?"

"No, I haven't", Bob said

With that I kindly ushered him back to the door and with a smile on my face I told him to come back just as soon as he had done that. A little shaken Bob left the office and, as he told me later, he determined to put the information he had received into practice. Bob is now my son-in-law, and he confided to me later that it was not until that moment that he realized the importance of following through on a conviction. God had led him across the continent to find what he was looking for. He had found it and now it was time to do something about what he had found.

It's time for us to do something about what the Lord has revealed to us, don't you agree? Knowledge is of no value unless it is put into active use - unless we do something with it.

Here now is what we have learned:

1. Jesus is coming again.
2. He is coming for those that are 'called' and 'chosen'.
3. They will have been chosen in a furnace.
4. That furnace is a time of trouble.
5. That time of trouble is the time of Jacob's Trouble.
6. Jacob was saved out of his time of trouble because he learned the prayer of reception.
7. All, who like Jacob learn the prayer of reception and fulfill the conditions as Jacob did, will be led through the time of trouble and will look up into the face of God and say, "We're ready for You, O Lord, we have waited for You..."

"Thank you, Father, for the wonderful love Thou hast shown us; for Thy eternal Word; for Thy precious promises. Thank you for having spoken and for performing what Thou hast promised. Thank you for One who will teach us to pray, in Jesus name, Amen. "

Open your Bible now to 1 John 1:9 and place your hand on that promise. Then reverently pray this prayer of reception: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

"Dear Lord in heaven, I have read this promise. I confess that I'm a sinner. Please forgive me for my sins. Now I believe that Thou hast forgiven me, and I return thanks to Thee for this forgiveness, in Jesus name, Amen."