

2. From Nightmare To Dreamland

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

1. Jesus is coming again. "And, behold I come quickly...." Revelation 22:12.
2. He is coming for the righteous and the holy. Revelation 22:11, "...he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And behold I come quickly and my reward is with me to give every man according as his work shall be."
3. He is coming for those individuals because they won't sin any more. Revelation 22:11 . A man that righteous is not sinning for "all unrighteousness is sin." 1 John 5:17.
4. These people will stop sinning for they have learned the philosophy of 1 John 3:9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." They have learned that if they will take God's seed and place it in their hearts and keep it, and hide it, and hold it in their hearts, they will not sin. They have learned it by looking to Jesus. They are doing what Jesus did when He was tempted. In Matthew 4:4 the Bible record states that Jesus, when the devil came to Him, hurled a promise at him, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

These people have learned that Jesus came to take our place and that while here on earth, He had no means at His disposal that we do not have. They have adopted the formula for victory that Jesus used - the power of the Word of God! This is the philosophy of hiding in the heart the Word of God. It is a new experience, even as Peter mentions: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." 1 Peter 1:23. The seed, which is the Word of God has been hidden in the heart, as Jesus hid it in His heart. They will have, by experimentation, found that the method Jesus used is the only method that is successful in dealing with temptation. They will have read such texts as John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." They will have read such promises as 2 Peter 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

These people have learned the philosophy of 1 John 3:9. God's life is in His word, and when they let the Holy Spirit plant that word, and hold and retain that word, and feel it, they will have stopped sinning, because God's immutable, eternal word declares they will be holy still . I want to belong to that group! More than that - I determine to belong to that group! I believe I CAN belong to that group. I believe we all can belong to this group.

5. The secret of Jacob's victory in his time of trouble recorded for us in Genesis. 32:8,9, 12,28 is clearly seen to be the fact that Jacob took God's immutable, eternal promise and in humility and utter selflessness, presented to God the promise that He had made. Jacob said, "Lord, you promised me You would stick by me when I left home. When I slept on that pillow of stone and You showed me that ladder extending from heaven to earth, again You assured me that you would go with me and see me through. Lord, You told me You would not forsake me, but promised me that my seed would be as the stars of the heavens, and You promised me I would be able to return home.

This is how Jacob succeeded. He did not merely pray a prayer of penitence in declaring his unworthiness, but he prayed a prayer of reception by which he asked God to do something he believed God would do, and then he returned thanks to God that He had done it! This is the prayer of reception: returning thanks to God for receiving the thing that God has promised. How important that we stretch

A B C's of Bible Prayer

our faith to include this miracle of prayer. Jacob didn't stand before God at the end of that night of wrestling when the angel said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh..." and say, "... if it is Your will to bless me, then bless me..." That would have been a prayer of commitment. Christians today have completely missed the mark as far as the prayer of reception is concerned. They have confused it with the prayer of commitment. Jacob needed more than the prayer of commitment that night - he needed to receive power and victory. He needed a new life! He must have it or else perish! Tenaciously he clung to the Mighty Deliverer and cried from the depths of his soul in agony, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me." In other words he said, "I will not let Thee go except Thou give to me the thing You have promised me and for which You have come."

God said, "Let me go..." Jacob held on. Again he cried, "I cannot let Thee go.... You must give that for which You have come I want it, Lord." "Alright", God said, "no longer are you Jacob. From here on you are Israel. You're a prince - you're a victor. You have found deliverance. You have received what you have asked for."

6. All who do what Jacob did will go through the last time of trouble safely. Jeremiah 30:7, "...it is the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be delivered out of it." This is the promise! Deliverance is promised those who have learned the philosophy of accepting the life of Jesus Christ in His word, and receiving Him in His word. They will pass through the time of trouble victoriously - triumphantly!

7. God Himself will declare that they are without fault. Jude 24, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,"

Think of it - God will present us faultless! God Himself looks upon His children in the last great day when He comes for them and Jesus presents them to the Father and says, "Father, here they are. There's not one fault in them.

I feel like singing the song the colored people so often sing, "Lord, I want to be in that number when the saints go marching in". Don't you? When we can say, "Lord, I plan to be in that number when the saints go marching in.... or "Lord, You promised to help me, and because You promised I know I am going to be in that number..." then I won't fail.

In the previous message I told you about the experience our son-in-law went through. I told you how that because of a lack of communication, a failure to see clearly perhaps some of his own thinking so he could intelligently ask the questions, he was unable to find the answers to some very important questions. You will remember that the Lord led him across the continent to me because I had gone through a time of trouble myself and the Lord had led me to some answers that He wanted me to share with Bob.

The Lord gives us these little times of trouble so that we will be prepared to go through the larger time of trouble when it comes. That's a reasonable program, isn't it? We also saw how he finally prayed the prayer of faith and reception. Let's continue to explore it further.

It was in my time of trouble that I became acquainted with this seed. It was a marvelous revelation to me. Jesus said in Luke 8:11, "The seed is the word of God." It was in my time of trouble that I learned how to hide the seed in my heart. Like the apostle Paul I must confess that I have not attained. But I want to move forward and march onward. This, I believe, is what counts.

God led me through a time of trouble so that I could learn some of these things. So that I could help Bob, first of all - and then a host of others, when he came to me. Now the event that prepared me for this encounter was an amazingly small thing. It was so small that I have come to the conclusion that it is the small tests of life that prepare us for the big tests. It is the little times of trouble that prepare us for the great time of trouble. It is as we meet temptation that we realize that which God would perform

A B C's of Bible Prayer

within us. As we meet the everyday temptations - the common, ordinary temptations successfully, that we are prepared for the greater temptations. It may well be, that when we arrive at our Father's house and look back over our experience that what we thought was a little incident in our lives, was, in reality, a tremendous event - a turning point in our lives!

So it was with us. It was over twenty years ago. We were living in Rochester, New York We had just completed a very heavy series of evangelistic meetings. Our energies were drained. I had been counseled on several occasions to get some diversion - some exercise. Good health depends upon good circulation, and good circulation depends upon physical exercise. We were living in a home that was on a lot so small that there wasn't room for a garden.

I had been reading two books. The one was called Country Living. I realized more than ever before that if I was going to keep my health, I had better get a garden. I knew I had to get exercise somehow! The other good book that I had been reading was entitled, What God Hath Promised. From my childhood I could look back and realize that God had answered many of my prayers. There were so many answered prayers that I could account for, that you would have thought that I could never lose my way. But, you know, it's not the number of answered prayers we have experienced, but rather how we have held on to the arm of the Lord that's important.

Often I would see the title and think of the remainder of the verse that reads, "What God (Hath) had promised, he was able to perform." Romans 4:21 I kept this in my subconscious mind day after day. I was reminded of it often because we were giving this book away at the evangelistic meetings as an attendance incentive. The Lord blessed us in our meeting. There were 131 baptized as a result of that one campaign. Night after night we gave them this book, What God Hath Promised. I thought of the many times I had taken God at His word, and the wonderful deliverances God had used me to bring, as a channel, to individuals with habits of one kind and another. I thought of many instances of answered prayer in my personal life ever since I was a boy.

At the age of twenty-one I had become a teacher in our church school system. I had told my pupils that the day would come when I would prescribe the promises of the Bible just like a doctor prescribes medicine for his patients - a promise for each kind of problem. But I had never done anything about it. Now here I was, looking at that book, What God Hath Promised.

The time had come for me to put the plan to a test in my own problem. It was a small request I made, but it has meant so much to me ever since. For weeks, as I travelled, I was looking for a home with enough land for a garden. But look as I may, I could not find a home that would satisfy my need. I decided I would buy an acre of land, if nothing else, and build. But no one would sell me an acre off of those big farms. I was beginning to get desperate.

I had been spending an hour or more every morning in prayer. I had a list of 165 names that I would pass through morning by morning, presenting them to the Lord, asking for His divine blessing to be upon them and to move upon them in such a way that they would surrender their hearts. It was such a sweet fellowship. But I needed more. I wanted a closer fellowship. I wanted to be able to reach out and take God at His word and expect the impossible to take place - and in this case hope it would take place somewhere where I could have a garden! It didn't revolve around a situation where someone said, "I'll kill you if you serve the Lord." It revolved around a garden! That's why I say the Lord is testing us in some of the smallest things of life.

After I had kept my eyes open for weeks, one morning as I was finishing my prayer, the thought came to my mind, 'I'm not going to fool around keeping my eyes open any longer. I'm going to ask the Lord to give me a place today, and if He doesn't give me that place today, I'll know that maybe I'm going to be transferred.' So I wrote a letter to the Lord! I believe it was the first letter I ever wrote to the Lord. In the

A B C's of Bible Prayer

letter I said, "Dear Lord, I want a place where I can have a garden. I know You know where such a place can be found, for You know the end from the beginning. Help me find it today. If I don't find it today, I'm not going to look around any longer, because You know I just don't have the time. We have a heavy program here and today must be our last day to look."

I took this little letter downstairs to where my wife was doing the washing and I said, "Honey, the Bible says in Matthew 18:19, '.... if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.' Do you agree that this is reasonable? If the Lord doesn't give us a place out in the country today, we'll just forget it."

"That's fine with me", she said, "I agree"

So we had fulfilled the condition, and whether she signed the letter or not I don't remember, but we prayed together and presented this letter to the Lord.

I told my wife to forget the washing, and away we went. We hunted all day, and found nothing that was appropriate. My wife decided it was time to fix supper, so I took her home and she prepared supper. While she was busy in the kitchen I told her I was going out for a few more minutes, and I drove out to route 104. I parked the car and reverently bowed my head and said, "Lord, if You're going to give me a place in the country, You're going to have to move fast. I'm going to keep looking for just a few more minutes, and when I've made this little trek, I'm through looking. I'm going to go home and forget about it."

Just then I had the strangest feeling. I was impressed that the place was right there on my right. All I could see was an old dilapidated farm house. Whether this was an impression or the voice of the Holy Spirit is not too important to me. I'm convinced that many times these impressions are the Holy Spirit talking to us, endeavoring to guide us and lead us. Here it was! I wasn't sure I was hearing right - or seeing right. But I got out of the car and went up to the house - but there was no 'For Sale' sign to be seen anywhere!

I thought to myself, as I was walking up the walkway, 'How am I going to accost these people when there's no For Sale sign anywhere? How do I know it's even for sale?' Then I decided that I would go to the door and say, 'Is this the place that was for sale?' At least then I'd be safe.

So I rang the doorbell. When the lady arrived at the door I said, "Is this the place that was for sale?" Her mouth fell open and she looked shocked!

"How did you know? To tell you the truth, it has been for sale, but we had given an option and the option expired just today. My husband is at the store on the corner. You'll find him there. He'll sell it to you."

I went back to the store to which she had directed me. I asked for him and found him and told him what I was there for. "Yes", he said, "I'll sell it to you". Right then I gave him a deposit - ten dollars - I believe it was! I had fifty dollars that I was going to pay him the next week, and that was all the money I had. The next week I brought him the money and that was it! I never even looked the place over. I knew that was the place and I was just thrilled that I had found it. I was sure of it!

When I brought them the fifty dollars, I told them that I had found the place in answer to prayer. I told them I was going to tell people about this experience everywhere I went - and I've done just that.

I had big plans for that farm. I had decided that I would sell all the land except one acre that would be mine for the garden I needed. The devil listened to these plans and he started to get busy. When I mention the devil and his antics, I don't want you to think I'm a devil worshipper. Some people keep talking about the devil and all he does. Let me tell you I believe God is bigger than the devil and I want

A B C's of Bible Prayer

people to know that I believe God has more power than the devil. I want people to know what God is like - to know of His power and might. But the devil intruded at this point in a very forceful way. God had promised to step on the serpents head in the very beginning of the sin problem - but just like a serpent - you can step on his head and he still squirms. The devil was doing a lot of squirming just about that time.

Just after I bought this farm, I had a visit from one of my brothers. I'm the youngest in a family of eight boys. I have had to take advice all my life! Well, I told him about my new place and was anxious to show it to him. And so we drove out to it. I was so proud and thankful for it, and it must have shown as I said, "This is the place the Lord gave us in answer to our prayers and a letter we wrote to the Lord."

This brother of mine had been a preacher for many years, and I admired him greatly. I was anxious for his reaction. At this point he looked me full in the face and said, "You wrote a letter to the Lord?", half in unbelief.

"Why yes", I said

"Do you want me to tell you something? I'm convinced the Lord didn't get his mail that day."

Well, you know, that didn't make me feel too good. But that wasn't all. Another brother came and took a look at it and he wasn't quite so gracious as the first brother had been. He said, "Do you mean to say this is the result of answered prayer?"

"Yes", I said, still confident of my position.

"Well, if you ask me, this prayer was answered, but I think the devil answered it!"

My mother was next on the scene. She came and wanted to see the place. This time I was sure she would speak a word of encouragement. But when she saw it she said, "Son, if you'll back out of this deal, I'll give you all the money you need to do it."

Three lovely relatives! There was just one ray of sunshine in it all. When my wife came to see it for the first time, she said, "I'm going to stick by you. I think it's fine." Thank the Lord for a wife who will stick by the side of her husband, and for a husband who will stick by the side of his wife."

I had had an infidel lawyer draw up the contract. This contract called for me to pay \$3,500.00 on a certain day in a certain number of weeks. "You have that amount in hand, of course", he said.

"No, I don't. But I will when the time comes."

"Well, how are you going to get it?" he wanted to know. "Oh, I'm going to sell my place in the city" I said.

"But you have a deadline date when you must have the money here in the office, and suppose your house doesn't sell?"

"You see, sir," I said, "I'm a minister and the Lord is a part of this deal, and He always hears and answers prayer."

He looked a little astonished and blinked twice. "Just suppose you don't have it sold by the time the money is due; what then?"

"Oh, it will be sold - there's no question the Lord always answers prayer. Don't you worry, I'll have the money here on time."

He tried to rephrase the question several different ways, clearly indicating that what I was telling him just didn't make any sense to him at all. With almost a look of pity he said, ". . . but just suppose it isn't sold . . . suppose the Lord . . ."

A B C's of Bible Prayer

"Sir, don't you worry", I said, "It will be sold. I'm sure of it."

When the day arrived that we needed the \$3,500.00 our home was sold. In glee I took the money to his office and presented it to him. "See, here it is - just as I told you!" He was delighted to see the money in on time, but assured me he didn't believe the Lord had anything to do with it. To him it was just luck - happenstance!

The next step wasn't quite as easy. Within three months I had to have another \$6,000.00 and I didn't have another home to sell. With my brothers having said what they did and my mother having said what she did, I knew there was something I had to do. One of my brothers told me I was being presumptuous instead of exercising faith. This led me to a study of everything I could find on the subject of faith in comparison to presumption.

I found the difference between the two. Presumption, I found, is when we take the promises of God and expect Him to fulfill them without us first fulfilling the conditions. Presumption also involves using the promises of God and the answers to these promises for selfish reasons. If we will fulfill the conditions and use the answer for God instead of for ourselves, we are not presumptuous, no matter how far we reach out in faith.

In my study I came across the stories of men like George Mueller, and how God had answered his prayers of faith in times of trouble and unselfish need. I found a number of stories involving men who reached out in faith and how the Lord came to their rescue when the need was great and the answer would glorify His name. I went out into the middle of my land and with my hands in the soil I poured out my heart to God. I prayed most earnestly. I said, "Lord, if I've acted presumptuously, forgive me. I'll back out of this deal even yet. But if I've been consistent with principle, if I have done right, I can't back up because I've put You right in the middle of it, and I'll not turn my back on You."

My mother came to me, and as all concerned mothers do, she said, in a way which I knew came from a heart filled with love, "Glenn, I'm afraid for you."

"Why, mother?" I asked. "What are you afraid of?"

"I'm afraid you're going to be an infidel."

"An infidel! Me, mother? Why would you think that?"

"Well, you're expecting so much of God, and when He doesn't come through, I'm afraid you'll turn completely from Him."

I assured my mother that I had no question but what God would help me. I was practising what I had been encouraging others to do. I had been telling people to talk faith - talk as though ours is an invincible faith - and it is, if it's founded in the Mighty God of the Bible. I had been telling people not to say, 'my faith is weak', but rather to say, 'my God is strong'. I had realized the truth in the statement, 'By beholding we become changed', and this prompted me to encourage people to focus on the positive attributes of God - His strength and might. You see, to talk about our failings - we become weaker; talk about God's power, and faith will increase. It's a law that has proven itself over and over. This prompted me to tell my mother, "Mother, God is going to answer my prayer and I'm not going to be an infidel."

In my study I found one book that I would recommend above all others. It is the book Education, by Ellen White. Pages 253-258 hold some of the most precious lines I have ever read. It says that the seed is the Word of God. For any promise that God has made we are to ask. Then we're to believe that we receive, (Mark 11:24) and to return thanks to God that we have received, for the gift is in the promise.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

This is it! We can come to God and place our hands on the promise and tell God, "Lord, I claim this promise and I thank You that I have received the answer." This is the prayer of reception. There are certain promises that allow me to approach God on that basis. I have a right to do that. There are other promises that call for a prayer of commitment. There are prayers of praise, adoration and confession. But this is the prayer of reception. This is the prayer that guides us through the time of Jacob's trouble.

Time went on. In just a few days - five to be exact, I must raise \$6,000.00 and I didn't have a penny in sight. The chapter in the book Education was a million-dollar chapter as far as I was concerned right then. I determined that if I could find a promise that would assure me of \$6,000.00 I would ask for it. More than that I would believe it would be provided and thank Him for having received it. But you know, I couldn't find a promise for \$6,000.

I prayed earnestly and said, "Lord help me find a promise that is the equivalent to \$6,000." And do you know - God guided me to it! Here it is, Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches..."

That was it! That covered \$6,000. and more! How happy I was to find it. How relieved I was, for I had been pretty concerned, as you can imagine. You see, I still had to deal with the questions and doubts that had been planted in my mind by my brothers and my mother. I had been told that the devil had answered my prayer; that God didn't get His mail. I had to know just where I stood. I had to be sure - did God answer my prayer or didn't He; did God get His mail or didn't He? I had to know - was this place the result of answered prayer, or wasn't it? These questions had to be settled beyond a reasonable shadow of doubt!

I asked God for \$6,000. I said, "Lord, please let me have this money. I want it so I can keep my word - because You keep Your word. It was You that gave me this land, and it was You that gave me the determination to keep my word. Thank You Lord for having supplied the money I need."

Well, I looked for it - but couldn't find it. But then I remembered that I still had five days before I needed it. Although God had promised to supply the need, the need was yet five days away. Each day I prayed this prayer and again on the day it was due, except on that day I thanked God for having supplied the money. Again I said, "I have received it." But there still was no money to be seen - not a penny! This took faith. I believed and I wasn't going to back down. But I said, "Lord, where do I go from here?" I was satisfied that I was following divine guidance. Jesus said, "Ask". I had done that. He also said, "Believe", and I had done that. That's the prayer of reception. But now where to turn? I didn't know!

I was reminded at that time of the hens on our farm. After the hay was mown, they would go into that hay and lay their eggs. They were there - but we had to go and find them. "So," I said, "the money is here - I've just got to go and find it." So I took another promise, Psalm 32:8, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

After reading the promise I said to the Lord, "Lord, I'm going out to find the \$6,000. Please guide me to it." I got into the car and started out. I turned left. Then I turned right. Down the street and another left, until I found myself in the heart of town. I parked the car and here I was right in front of the office of my atheist lawyers office. I said to myself, "What a place to come for the money." I felt impressed to go up to his office and talk with him. And so I did just that. We chatted for a few minutes and I said, "Phil, where can I borrow \$6,000.00 for three months?"

"Down there," he said without a moment's hesitation, and he pointed to a bank. This wasn't his bank, however. Nor was it the bank I was dealing with.

A B C's of Bible Prayer

"But they don't know me at that bank", I said. With that he picked up the telephone and gave them a call. He asked for Bill and said, "Look Bill, loan Dr. Coon \$6,000.00 for three months. Thanks a lot." And that was it!

He told me to go to the bank and ask for Bill and he would arrange it. I moved fast after that! When I got there all I had to do was to sign on the dotted line and within minutes I had the \$6,000. Later I asked him if it was common for a preacher to be able to borrow \$6,000.00 without co-signers or collateral. "No", he said, "we require the signatures of five property owners and then very often they don't get it."

God helped me pay the entire amount off on the days the notes were due. That did something for this poor heart of mine. I know there is a God and that He answers prayer. I'll tell you more of this thrilling story in succeeding chapters.

Right now, won't you open your Bible to 1 John 2:25 and lay your hand on the promise that promises us eternal life. Where it says 'us', put in your name and read it aloud that way. Now won't you pray a prayer of reception and thank Him for this gift, tell Him you believe you have eternal life and then thank Him for it. May God bless you.