

JULY

PRODUCING THE PROOF OF DIVINE DESTINY

During the past few months, you have been on a quest to eliminate hindrances that will prevent you from fulfilling your divine destiny. You have learned strategies for dealing with disobedience, the tongue, the mind, the world, the flesh, and the devil--all problems that resulted in Israel forfeiting their Promised Land. Because of these unresolved issues, Israel rebelled against God and was relegated back to the wilderness. After forty years of wandering and the death of the generation that refused to enter in, a new generation returned to the border of their inheritance. This time they did not question. They did not fear. They did not rebel. This time, they achieved their divine destiny.

The new generation of Israelites miraculously crossed a flooded river to reach their Promised Land. They marched around the massive walls of the city of Jericho and the walls collapsed. Israel came into their destiny producing the proof that God's power was greater than that of the enemy: *"That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God forever"* (Joshua 4:24). It was the supernatural miracles that convinced their enemy and entire nations of the reality and power of Almighty God. Even a sinful prostitute declared: *"For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites, that were on the other side Jordan...And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath"* (Joshua 2:10-11).

When Jesus commissioned His disciples with the mandate of reaching the world with the Gospel, He told them to wait in Jerusalem until they received power for the task. He declared: *"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth"* (Acts 1:8). Jesus did not say, "You shall receive a blessing after the Holy Spirit comes upon you." He declared: "You shall receive power". For too long, many believers have stopped at the point of blessing--at the border of their promised land. They were satisfied with their salvation, or with the tongues received through the infilling of the Holy Spirit, or with the excitement of their new-found faith. They have not gone on to experience the proof-producing power of God in their lives and ministries.

In the devotional readings this month you will learn how Israel went beyond the borders of blessing to claim their destiny. You will learn how you, too, can go beyond the point of blessing into a new dimension of power. You will learn to produce the proof that God is still in the soul-saving, miracle-working business. Get ready--you are about to become a proof-producer!

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JULY 1 THE PURPOSE OF CRISIS

During the next few days we will study the proof-producing power demonstrated by God through the nation of Israel as they left the wilderness behind and entered Canaan to claim their inheritance.

The book of Deuteronomy ends with the death of Moses. The book of Joshua begins with the conclusion of a period of mourning for Moses and the commission to Joshua to lead the nation of Israel into their Promised Land. The book of Joshua commences where the book of Deuteronomy ends.

The first nine verses of the book of Joshua are a record of God speaking to the new leader of Israel:

*Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord it came to pass, that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give to them, even to the children of Israel.
(Joshua 1:1-2)*

God told Joshua, "Moses my servant is dead." Moses was a great man, but his era was past. You cannot continue to live in the past if you want to embrace your future.

Very often, a crisis moves you on to the next assignment God has for you. For Joshua, the crisis was Moses' death. Joshua had faithfully served Moses for years (Exodus 17:8-16; 24:12-18; 33:11; Numbers 13:16). Moses had anointed Joshua as his successor at the command of the Lord (Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 34:9). The death of Moses was a great loss to Joshua.

The people of Israel mourned Moses for thirty days after his death and then God told Joshua it was time to quit mourning. The past was over. It was time for Joshua to step into his new anointing. God said, "Now therefore arise." Joshua's era--a new season--was about to begin.

From what do you need to arise in order to embrace the future God has for you? A great loss? Rejection? Abandonment? The loss of your spiritual mentor? Whatever it is, it is time to put the past where it should be--behind you. No more mourning. No more looking back. A new spiritual era is beginning in your life.

If you are experiencing a crisis right now, it very well may be the hand of God that is orchestrating circumstances to move you on to your next assignment.

JULY 2 AN IMPOSSIBLE BEGINNING

The first assignment God gave to Joshua was impossible in the natural. God said, "Go over this Jordan" It was flood time, and the waters of the raging river were impossible to cross. But God said "go over" and He promised:

Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses. From the wilderness and this Lebanon even unto the great river, the river Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and unto the great sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast. There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. (Joshua 1:3-5)

The land was theirs, but they had to claim it:

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan; Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places: And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it. And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit. (Numbers 33:51-53.)

God gave Israel 300,000 miles of territory as part of their covenant promises, but they only claimed 30,000 miles at any given time. The land was theirs unconditionally, but the possession of it was conditional upon their obedience.

How much spiritual territory and how many promises of God have you not yet claimed? God is saying to you, as He did to Joshua, "Arise and go...I have given you the land." And the very first task He gives you may seem impossible.

You may not have to cross a flooded river, but you may be facing a flood of opposition. You may be engulfed in a flood of financial problems. You may face a torrent of persecution. In the natural, you may lack the education, talents, and abilities for what God is calling you to do. But you are not living in the natural. You are living in the supernatural.

Begin with the impossible and watch God make your impossibilities possible. Look into the invisible and dare to do the impossible.

JULY 3
THE KEY TO SUCCESS

God told Joshua, "You will be in enemy territory, but I am with you just as I was with Moses" (Joshua 1:5). The same word is applicable for you to today: You are in enemy territory, but as God was with Moses and Joshua, so He will be with you.

Then God gave Joshua a powerful key to success:

Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them. Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. (Joshua 1:6-8)

If you want to prosper and be successful in all you do, base your life upon the Word of God:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. (Psalm 1:1-3)

The world's concept of success is not the same as that of God. Success in the world usually means position, fame, wealth, and material possessions. Success in God's Kingdom is not measured by these standards. Success is measured by faithfulness to God.

To the world, the death of Jesus on the cross was considered a failure--a king who lost His kingdom. But to God, the cross was the greatest success in the history of mankind. It defeated sin and death and assured the coming Kingdom.

The Word of God is the supernatural key to successful fulfillment of your destiny. Do not study the Word just to accumulate facts. Study it in-depth so that your conduct can be governed by it. As God told Joshua, you must observe the Word, speak it, meditate on it, live by it, and not deviate from it.

JULY 4 CRUCIAL COMMANDS

God declared to Joshua:

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:9)

Choose to honor God's commands. He has commanded you...

- Be strong and of a good courage.
- Do not be afraid.
- Do not be dismayed.

...For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. These commands and promises are yours also as you prepare to enter into your divine destiny.

As soon as Joshua received these guarantees, he relayed God's plan to the officers of the people (Joshua 1:1-9). He told them to...

Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it. (Joshua 1:11)

If you are to be a proof-producer, you must learn to act upon the Word of the Lord. Obeying God's commands are not only important to victorious Christian living, they are vital to becoming a proof-producing believer.

The people responded positively to Joshua's directives from the Lord, declaring: "*All that thou commandest us we will do, and whithersoever thou sendest us, we will go*" (Joshua 1:16).

This was quite a different response from that of the previous generations of Israelites who arrived at the border of their promised land forty years previously. This is a new generation. This is a group of people who are not going to be defeated by their own words. They know how to deal with the battles of the tongue, the mind, the heart, the world, the flesh, and the devil. They will not be defeated by the enemy. They will not walk in disobedience. They will not be denied. They will reach their destiny!

To which generation do you belong spiritually?

JULY 5 GOD'S PART, YOUR PART

God works with and through man:

- He used Noah to build an Ark.
- He used Joseph to save the world from famine.
- He used Moses to deliver His people from bondage.
- He used Ezra to lead His people back to Jerusalem after captivity.
- He used Nehemiah to build a wall around Jerusalem.
- He used prophets to deliver His message.
- He used twelve men and the early church to take the gospel to the world.

All throughout the pages of scripture, God works with and through man.

Take time to review Joshua chapter 1 regarding the plan for the conquest of the Promised Land, observing God's part and the people's part:

Joshua and the people were told to:

- Arise: 1:2.
- Go over: 1:2.
- Be strong: 1:6-7, 9.
- Be of good courage: 1:6-7, 9.
- Not fear: 1:9.
- Not be dismayed: 1:9.
- Claim their inheritance: 1:6.
- Commit to God's Word: 1:7-8.
 - Observe it.
 - Do not be diverted from it.
 - Speak it.
 - Meditate on it.
 - Obey it.
- Prepare themselves to possess the land: 1:11.

God's part:

- He would give them the land: 1:2-4.
- He would see that no man would be able to withstand them: 1:5.
- He would be with them as He was with Moses: 1:5.
- He would not fail them: 1:5.
- He would not forsake them: 1:5.
- He would give them prosperity and success: 1:7-8.
- He would be with them wherever they went: 1:9.

God has made similar promises to you and you have similar responsibilities. Apply these truths to your own life as you advance into your Promised Land of destiny.

JULY 6 HOW FAR DO YOU WANT TO GO?

For years, believers have sought a deeper experience with God that would result in His proof-producing power being demonstrated in our midst. The church has held revival meetings, rallies, retreats, and promotions. People have been blessed—enjoying the presence of the Lord, singing, dancing in the Spirit, and experiencing times of great joy.

The trouble is that repeatedly, many believers have stopped at the point of blessing and have not entered into the depth of relationship that God intends them to have. We have not gone far enough. The big question is how far do you want to go? Do you want to have more than just blessings? Do you want the miracle-working power of God manifested through your life and ministry?

We have amazing edifices, artistic crosses, and elaborate stained glass windows. We have great choirs singing beautiful anthems. We have fellowships and buffet dinners. We have men in the pulpit who have been to a theological seminary and can preach a homiletically sound message, delivering a beautiful sermon point-by-point. They baptize in water, counsel those with problems, and conduct weddings and funerals. But something is missing. It is not enough!

No one likes to deal with negatives. However, in order to become a proof-producer we must deal with things as they are and not as we would like them to be. We must face the truth, even if that truth is difficult to accept. Many of our church fellowships are devoid of the proof-producing power of God.

Here is a truth that, if you learn it and act upon it, will be a valuable asset in life. It is this: All success is based on dealing with people and situations exactly as they are and not as you would like them to be. For example, if you are dealing with a dishonest person, you must treat him as such. Do not trust him, for he is not trustworthy.

All truth is parallel. We must deal with spiritual conditions as they are and not as we would like them to be. The Bible says: "*And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free*" (John 8:32). The truth is, how will we ever reach this world for God if we continue to do business as usual inside the walls of our churches?

Just how far do you want to go with God? Determine right now that you don't want to do "business as usual" in the spiritual realm. Like the new generation of Israelites, determine that "wherever You command us to go, whatever You tell us to do, we will do it!"

JULY 7
SHE SAW THE PROOF

Joshua chapters 2 and 6 record the story of a woman named Rahab. From these passages we learn that Joshua dispatched two spies to survey the fortified city of Jericho prior to the conquest of Canaan. Unlike the venture of the twelve spies recorded in Numbers 13, the purpose of this mission was not to determine whether they should enter Canaan, but when and how it should be done.

Jericho, the ancient "city of palms" to which the spies were sent, was a prosperous and populous city surrounded by two great walls. These walls represented the city's greatest strength and it would be necessary to breach or destroy them in order to take the city. According to archaeological findings, there was a space of twelve to fifteen feet between these walls. Timbers were laid from one wall to the other and houses of sun-dried bricks were constructed to bridge the space between them.

Built over this gap between the two walls of Jericho was the house of a woman named Rahab who was a harlot. There was a constant stream of visitors in and out of her house and this may have influenced the spies to seek refuge there. They presumed that two strangers would not be noticed. These are reasons one might surmise that the men stayed there, but the real reason is that they were guided by the Lord. This heathen woman was about to become a true believer, a woman of faith, and an ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The presence of the spies did not go undetected. The king of Jericho received word that the men had lodged at the house of Rahab and sent word for her to bring them out to him (Joshua 2:2-3). Instead, Rahab hid the spies and told the king's messengers that they had departed. Then she told the spies:

I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are fainthearted because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things, our hearts melted; neither did there remain any more courage in anyone because of you, for the Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath. (Joshua 2:9-11)

What caused this idolatrous, heathen woman to acknowledge the Lord as the true God? The proof was demonstrated by the miraculous. Does your life and ministry produce the proof that God is the one true God and is still in the miracle-working business?

JULY 8
A WOMAN OF FAITH

Rahab hid the spies who had come to check out the city of Jericho, protecting them from the soldiers sent by the king. She acknowledged God as the true Lord, citing the miracles that had caused her to believe in Him. Then she said to the two men:

"Now therefore, I beg you, swear to me by the Lord, since I have shown you kindness, that you also will show kindness to my father's house, and give me a true token, and spare my father, my mother, my brothers, my sisters, and all that they have, and deliver our lives from death." (Joshua 2:12-13)

The two spies agreed to this request and Rahab helped them escape over the city wall from a window in her home. The spies told Rahab to hang a scarlet cord from the window through which they escaped so they could easily identify her house and spare her and her family from destruction when Israel invaded Jericho.

Having eluded the enemy, the spies returned from Jericho and declared to Joshua: *"Truly the Lord has delivered all the land into our hands, for indeed all the inhabitants of the country are fainthearted because of us"* (Joshua 2:24).

A few days later, the Jordan River parted and the Israelites walked across on dry ground. The people of Jericho peered across their walls to see a crowd of Israelites walking around the city in a silent procession. For six days, the strange ritual was repeated. On the seventh day, the people were there again but this time they walked silently around the city seven times. At the conclusion of their hike, the priests blew their trumpets, the people shouted, the earth trembled, foundations cracked, and walls which had safeguarded the city for years collapsed.

You will remember that Rahab's house was built on the walls. What tremendous faith she demonstrated to remain in her house while the walls of the city were shaking and crumbling in the dust. But there she stayed, Rahab and her entire family, and from the window of their home fluttered a scarlet cord.

James commends Rahab for the faith which was demonstrated by her works (James 2:25) and Paul enrolls her in the hall of fame of the faithful, declaring: *"By faith the harlot Rahab did not perish with those who did not believe, when she had received the spies with peace"* (Hebrews 11:31).

Are you able to remain in place when everything around you is falling? What do you do when the very foundations of your life are being shaken? That is the kind of faith Rahab demonstrated, and it is the kind of faith that is required to accomplish your divine destiny. It is a faith inspired by the proof-producing power of God.

JULY 9
HOUSEHOLD SALVATION

When Rahab rescued the Israeli spies, they told her to identify her house by hanging a scarlet cord out of the window so that she would be protected during the forthcoming battle. When Israel invaded Jericho, Joshua told the two men who had spied out the country: *"Go into the harlot's house, and from there bring out the woman and all that she has, as you swore to her. And the young men who had been spies went in and brought out Rahab, her father, her mother, her brothers, and all that she had. So they brought out all her relatives and left them outside the camp of Israel"* (Joshua 6:22-23).

This example is a great spiritual parallel of household salvation. Rahab interceded for her entire family, and they were saved. Biblical records reveal that this woman later became the wife of Salmon, a prince of Judah. She gave birth to Boaz who married Ruth, who bore a son named Obed. Obed was the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David, through whose line came Jesus Christ. Rahab is listed among the ancestors of the Lord in Matthew 1:5.

The scarlet cord from Rahab's window was a symbol of redemption through the blood. It confirmed the promise of God declaring, *"When I see the blood I will pass over you"* (Exodus 12:13). Rahab claimed this promise for herself and her entire household. Rahab was not saved because of her faith in the cord, but by what it represented: Her faith in the redeeming blood of the Lamb of God.

Years later, when Paul and Silas ministered to a Philippian jailer, they told him:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.
(Acts 16:31-34)

Do you feel like the foundations of your home are crumbling? Have you prayed for years for your loved ones, without visible results? Are you interceding for a lost son or daughter, parent, or spouse? Do not stop praying for your family! When you pray for them, you are placing the scarlet cord of the blood of Jesus Christ over your household.

You hold in your hands the scarlet cord that links your loved ones to life instead of death. Get a firm grasp on it and never let go. Let your proof-producing faith be manifested in believing for the salvation for your own household.

JULY 10
AT THE EDGE OF DIFFICULTIES

After receiving guidance from God, Joshua rose early in the morning and directed the people of Israel to depart from Shittim where they had been camped. They traveled to the banks of the raging Jordan River and lodged there.

The people went to the edge of their difficulty and waited for God to act. They prepared for their miracle by demonstrating a proof-producing faith. If they had remained in Shittim, they might have waited there another forty years. Instead, they acted upon the Word of the Lord. They obeyed and went as far as they could in the natural. Then they waited for God to make their impossibilities possible.

Joshua told the people, "*When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God and the priests and the Levites bearing it, then you shall remove from your place, and go after it.*"

Years previously, when Israel crossed the Red Sea, the Rod of God held by Moses was used to open the way. Here, the Ark of God opens the waters. God moves in different ways at different times. You cannot be focused on how He did things in the past or you may miss the move of God in the present.

Throughout the wilderness journey, Israel was led by a cloud in the daytime and fire at night. Now they are told to follow the Ark which symbolized the presence of God (Exodus 25:10-22). The visible cloud and fire that had guided them through the wilderness no longer directed them. It was a new era. They were to follow the presence of God symbolized by the Ark of the Tabernacle.

We no longer have the cloud, the fire, or the Ark, but we have the Holy Spirit to provide guidance. Do not make a move without the direction of the Holy Spirit confirming the will of the Father to you. God will not always move as He did in times past. You must be willing to embrace new moves of God because you, like Israel, are traveling into new territory and that requires change.

Next, Joshua told the people, "Sanctify yourselves. For tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you." If you are to enter into the miraculous proof-producing ministry of God, then you must be prepared spiritually. Get ready! God is going to do wonders for you, in you, and through you.

JULY 11
THE JORDANS OF LIFE

Joshua told the priests to carry the Ark of the covenant and lead the procession into the Promised Land. The people were to follow the Ark, which symbolized God's presence. But wait a minute...what about the raging river that was just ahead? Where, exactly, were the priests to go?

The Lord told Joshua that when the soles of the feet of the priests bearing the Ark entered into the Jordan, the waters would be cut off so the people could pass over. And it happened, just like God said!

The priests had to take the first step of faith, however. What if they had refused to take up the Ark, pointing out that in the natural, they had no place to go? What if they had argued about the dangers and the practicality of such action? (Sounds like some church board meetings, doesn't it? God speaks to the pastor, and the leaders point out all the reasons why something can't be done.)

As an act of obedience, the priests lifted the Ark and took the first step of faith. They stepped into the raging river, and the waters rolled back. What is the first step you must take? What impossibility must you confront by faith?

Our Lord is a God of purpose, so the miracle at Jordan was not just a dramatic show of power. God had specific reasons for this proof-producing miracle. He declared:

This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee...And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, Come hither, and hear the words of the Lord your God. And Joshua said, Hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you, and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. (Joshua 3:7-10)

As revealed in this passage, God had specific purposes for this miraculous event:

- Joshua would be confirmed as a man of God
- Israel and their enemies would know that this God was the true and living God.
- The enemy would recognize that they were a defeated foe.
- The people would achieve their divine destiny--without fail.

The Jordan Rivers of life--the barriers you face on the way to your destiny--can either be viewed as impenetrable obstacles or amazing opportunities for a demonstration of God's power. How do you view the "Jordans" of your life?

JULY 12 LEAVING THE PAST BEHIND

Israel passed over Jordan as the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant went before them. This is a great spiritual analogy of how we are to follow the presence of God and spiritual leaders who are advancing in obedience to Him.

Just as God had promised, as soon as those bearing the Ark of God came to Jordan and their feet were dipped into the edge of the river, the flood ceased. The Bible says that the waters rolled back to the distant city of Adam and all the way down to the salt sea, now known as the Dead Sea.

The crossing of the Jordan River was symbolic of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ that enables you to die to the old life and live a new life. The waters rolling back to the city of Adam and to the Dead Sea are symbolic of God's power to reach back to the time of Adam to forgive sins, extend His grace to spiritually dead places, and bring new life. The same is true in your life. God's power can cover your desolate past and bring new life to your barren present.

In order to reach their destiny, the people of Israel had to leave their past behind. They had to abandon the "tents" of their security in order to claim their inheritance. This was a new generation and with the exception of Joshua and Caleb, none of them had seen the Promised Land. All they knew was the wilderness and, although it wasn't a great place to live, it was familiar to them. But once the people crossed over and the river closed behind them, there was no returning to the old life.

The same is true for you spiritually. If you want to experience the presence of God and reach your Promised Land, there is no turning back to the old life. You may be tempted to do so because it is all you have known. But you cannot turn back if you want to fulfill your destiny.

In New Testament times, there was a certain man who wanted to follow Jesus but said he must first return home to bury his mother and father, meaning he wanted to wait until he received his inheritance. Jesus responded: *"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62).*

Don't ever look back to the old life. Your destiny is in your future, not in your past.

JULY 13
PROOF-PRODUCING MEMORIALS

God commanded Joshua to erect a memorial in the middle of Jordan. Twelve stones were to be placed where Israel passed over on dry ground. In addition to this, Joshua directed that twelve men--one from every tribe--should each pick up a stone from the middle of the river and carry it to the other side.

The twelve-stone memorial erected in the middle of Jordan was symbolic of death to the old life. No more wandering in the wilderness of sin. The past was over. When the waters of Jordan closed over this memorial, only God could see it--just like your sins that are covered by His blood. The psalmist declared:

Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah. (Psalm 32:1-5)

God said: *"I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25)*. Just as the waters covered the stone memorial in the midst of Jordan, so the blood of Jesus covers your sin. If God does not remember your past sins, then why do you keep fretting over them? Once you repented of your sins, He forgave them and no longer remembers them. So if He doesn't remember them, then why should you keep rehearsing past failures.

The twelve-stone memorial erected in the Promised Land was symbolic of new life. Joshua explained its purpose to the people:

When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever. (Joshua 4:21-24)

Are there special things God has done for you that you need to memorialize for future generations--perhaps through a journal, a book, a painting, a recording, or a song of praise? When the next generation looks back on your life and ministry, will it be symbolic of the miraculous, as the stone memorial that was erected in Canaan? What will be your spiritual legacy?

JULY 14
ENTERING INTO THE MIRACULOUS

Some people try to explain the receding of the waters of Jordan as a natural phenomena. Let's consider the facts. The exact timing of the event was predicted; it occurred exactly when the priests did as they had been instructed; the ground was dry when the waters rolled back; and the waters returned when all of Israel had passed over. There is no natural explanation for the precise fulfillment of all of these events.

Joshua makes it quite clear who did this miracle and why it was done:

For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever. (Joshua 4:23-24)

God moved miraculously, but the people had to enter in to experience it. God still performs miracles, but you must believe and act upon His Word if you are to experience the manifestation of His proof-producing power.

Have you ever noticed that in a church where they do not believe in healing, no one gets healed? In a church where they do not believe in the prophetic word, there are no prophecies going forth?

The Apostle Paul indicated that both belief and confession are necessary for salvation:

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Romans 10:8-10)

You must confess and believe in order to be saved, and other spiritual experiences come the same way--through confessing and believing. As you confess God's Word, belief is fostered in your heart for salvation, healing, deliverance, and other manifestations of God's proof-producing power.

Israel believed God's Word and, by their actions, confessed their faith in what He had said. In order to enter into the miraculous, they had to believe and act upon God's Word. They had to start advancing into the Jordan River by faith. The same is true for you if you are to enter into the miraculous and experience a proof-producing ministry. You enter in by faith and the miraculous results.

JULY 15 THE RIVER OF GOD

God moves in cycles. A cycle is a period of time with a specific beginning and ending. Israel experienced a cycle of slavery. They endured two cycles in the wilderness. But now, upon crossing the Jordan River, a new cycle began. A new generation. New battles to fight and win. A new land. New provision.

God still moves in cycles. Right now, we are in God's end-time, harvest-time cycle. The ultimate conclusion of this cycle will be the culmination of the spiritual harvest of the world and the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

As a part of the end-time cycle in which we now live, the river of God's Spirit is rising throughout the whole world and it will crest at unprecedented levels. This divine, supernatural river is a new manifestation of God's power that cannot be measured. Israel experienced the manifested presence of God as they passed through a river to claim their land. You, too, will pass through a river—the river of God's manifested presence and you will also become a channel through which it flows.

The Prophet Ezekiel saw a vision of this river of God and described it as one that could not be passed over. It issued into the desert and the sea, and everywhere the waters touched new life sprang forth (Ezekiel 47:5-9). In these end-times, the river of God is intensifying as never before. It will not be a trickle. It will not be a puddle. It will not be a stagnant pool of the stale waters of tradition. It will be a new, intensified downpour! Fresh water. Get ready for a deluge. A cascade. A torrent.

All truth is parallel--meaning that what is happening in the natural world reflects what is being manifested in the spiritual world. Some years ago, through a world-wide weather phenomenon called El Nino, we witnessed floods where there had never before been floods. Small streams were turned into raging waters. Tidal waves of tremendous dimensions completely deluged places. Right now, in the spirit world, God is creating a parallel of this natural phenomena. There is a river of God—an intensified tidal wave of His manifested power—that is about to hit this world that will be totally unprecedented:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. (Joel 2:28)

God's Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh--your sons, your daughters, the young and the old. Everywhere this river of God flows, new life will spring forth. Everyone who is touched by its waters will experience supernatural regeneration of body, mind, heart, soul, and spirit. Plunge into the river of God. Let its supernatural current of power carry you from the banks to the depths of your destiny.

JULY 16
LET THE RIVER FLOW

When this great river of God begins to flow over you, the focus will not be on the channel it flows through--the organization, denomination, or human vessel--but on the water itself. That is because the flow of this divine river will be so powerful, so unlimited, and so God-directed that no one will be able to take credit for it. It will not be the work of man, but the work of the Holy Spirit.

In Ezekiel's vision, he saw five depths of water flowing from the temple of God (Ezekiel 47:2-5). First there was just a trickle, then ankle-deep water, knee-deep water, loin-deep, and finally it became a river to swim in, so deep it could not be passed over. These various levels have been interpreted many ways by Bible scholars. Some believe it represents different stages of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Others believe it to be stages of spiritual maturity.

One thing is for sure, if we follow the analogy of a natural river, a river eventually flows into the sea. In scriptures, the seas are symbolic of the nations--so this means that the river that emanates from God is to flow through you--the temple of God--to the nations of the world. It will flow deep and wide. No one will be beyond the reach of these spiritual waters.

The direction of the flow of this river is also significant: "*...These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed*" (Ezekiel 47:8). Isaiah 14:17 states that Satan caused the world to become a wilderness. Here we see the river of God flowing into the wilderness to bring new life. The sea mentioned in this passage refers to the Dead Sea, which symbolizes the dead sea of fallen humanity.

The living water from God is being released into the temple of God--the Body of Christ corporately--and into you individually as a member of this Body. This living water is to flow through you into the dead sea of sinful humanity and into the wilderness of this world to bring new life. And...

...whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and every thing shall live whither the river cometh. (Ezekiel 47:9)

Everywhere the river flows--everything and everyone it touches--will live! On the banks of the river are fishermen who are pulling in tremendous catches of fish, representing the souls of men and women (Ezekiel 47:10). Where there was no harvest of "fish" before, there will be a great spiritual harvest of souls. God wants this river of His manifested presence to flow through you into the wilderness of this world! Let us cry out from the depths of our being, "Oh God, let the river flow!"

JULY 17
PREPARING TO RECEIVE

This river of God's manifested power will not flow into a spiritual void. It will not flow to those who are too busy with their own concerns to receive it or those who limit God by their own unbelief. This river of God will flow to those who—like the widow woman in Elisha's time—are prepared to receive it.

Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant my husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, what hast thou in the house? And she said, Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil. Then he said, Go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels... (2 Kings 4:1-4)

This widow woman experienced an unprecedented, supernatural flow of oil because she heard and acted upon the word of the prophet. She caught the vision—she could see the oil multiplying, the flow intensifying, the vessels being filled, her debt being canceled—so she prepared herself to receive the River of God. All that stood between her generation and the next generation being enslaved was the oil. All that stands between you and your generations being enslaved by the enemy is the oil of the anointing of God which you must pass on to them.

To prepare to receive this river of God's anointing, you must renew your spiritual focus. Like the widow woman, you must catch the vision of what God wants to do in and through you:

- If you feel empty spiritually...
- If you long to be used of God, but do not understand your part in His plan...
- If you feel there is something more to Christianity than the routine into which your life has fallen...

...Then ask God to open your eyes to the plans and purposes He has for you. We are not talking about natural eyesight or what is visibly seen in a trance-like vision. We are referring to the process whereby God is raising up spiritually dead men and women with new purpose, meaning, and vitality to fulfill their God-given destinies.

As you wade into this river, the waters in which you are immersed will flow in you and through you to produce God's manifested power in your life and the lives of those to whom you minister.

JULY 18

PREPARING FOR CONQUEST

After crossing the Jordan River, the people of Israel camped at a place called Gilgal on the east bank near the city of Jericho. Gilgal was their base camp during the invasion of the Promised Land. The women, children, and flocks remained there while the men went forth to battle.

Gilgal became a place of spiritual significance because it is where Israel prepared for the conquest of their Promised Land (Joshua 4). Samuel included it in his ministry circuit (1 Samuel 7:16) and there was a school of the prophets located at Gilgal during the time of Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:1-2).

The people of Israel were prepared physically to take their land--they had walked through the wilderness for forty years, so they were in good physical shape. They were prepared materially, as they still carried with them the wealth of Egypt which their ancestors had taken when they left that land years previously.

The people were also prepared mentally--the new generation was saying "we are able" instead of doubting, disobeying, and retreating in despair.

Although this new generation of Israelites had learned many lessons during their forty-year wilderness trek, they needed spiritual preparation that would enable them to fulfill their destiny.

Often, when God gives us a spiritual vision, we rush right in to try to fulfill it and find ourselves ill-prepared. There is always a time of spiritual preparation prior to the fulfillment of destiny:

- Noah prepared an ark before rain had ever fallen upon earth.
- Joseph prepared during seven good years for the lean times to come.
- Moses prepared for his destiny for forty years in the desert.
- The disciples tarried in Jerusalem until baptized in the Holy Spirit.
- The Apostle Paul retreated into solitude in Arabia to prepare for his ministry.

Just because God gives you a vision does not mean it will be fulfilled today, tomorrow, next week, or next year. Achieving divine destiny requires preparation. Sometimes extensive preparation, and often lengthy.

Four spiritual events occurred at Gilgal to prepare Israel to fulfill their destiny. These events are natural examples of spiritual truths which will prepare you to claim your own spiritual inheritance. We will meditate on these during the next few days.

JULY 19 THE PURIFICATION

Israel was being prepared spiritually for their destiny. The first step was **purification**. All the males of Israel were to be circumcised as a token of the covenant between them and God (Genesis 17:1-14). The covenant of circumcision was instituted at the time of Abraham but had not been practiced during the wilderness wandering. The new generation of Israelites had not been circumcised and did not bear the sign of the covenant upon them. Israel was preparing to war against the nations of Canaan, yet at this strategic time, God commanded them to be circumcised. By circumcising their flesh, they actually disabled themselves physically in the presence of the enemy, which did not make sense in the natural. But God's ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9).

If you are to claim your spiritual inheritance, you must bear the marks of change upon your life. As believers, we are to be circumcised in heart: *"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).*

Our circumcision is spiritual and is of the heart instead of the flesh. If you have been circumcised in heart, however, there will be external signs just as when Israel was circumcised in their flesh. You will act, talk, and live differently. Your life will bear the marks of change which are the signs of your covenant with God: *"For he is not a Jew which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward of the flesh: But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28-29).*

Do not be afraid of the "knife" of God's Word as it marks your life. The reproach (shame) of Egypt (representing sin) must be eliminated. You must put off the filth of the flesh. You do not have to bear the shame of your past because Jesus bore it for you (Hebrews 12:2). Gilgal means "the rolling away", indicating that the shame of slavery in Egypt had been removed. As you camp in the very shadow of your enemy, you must realize that you cannot war in the flesh. You must disable your flesh and trust in the power of Almighty God. Your destiny will be possessed in the power of the Spirit, not through the efforts of your flesh. You fight from a position of strength in Him. He shows Himself strong in your weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).

This circumcision of heart is two-fold. God initiates it: *"And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart..." (Deuteronomy 30:6).* God changes you, but you also have a responsibility in this process: *"Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart..." (Jeremiah 4:4).* You must continually cleanse yourself of the filthiness of the flesh through prayer and the Word. You cannot do your part until He does His part. That would just be another attempt at self-improvement.

JULY 20 **THE PASSOVER**

The first step in Israel's preparation for conquering their Promised Land was **purification**. The second step of preparation for conquest was to observe the **Passover** (Joshua 5:10). The Passover speaks of the applied blood and it dates back to Israel's deliverance from slavery.

After decades of slavery to the Egyptians during which the Israelites were subjected to hard labor and unbearable horrors, God sent Moses to Pharaoh with a message: "Send forth My people, so that they may serve Me." Despite numerous warnings and nine terrible plagues, Pharaoh refused to heed God's command.

The tenth and final plague was when the angel of death passed through the land and all of the first-born sons died. In order to be protected from this judgment, Israel was instructed by God to kill a lamb and mark the doorposts of their homes with its blood. Homes marked by the blood of the lamb would not experience God's judgment.

At midnight, the death angel struck homes in Egypt but "passed over" the homes marked by the blood--hence the name of the observance "Passover". As a result of the deaths of all the oldest male children in Egypt, Pharaoh finally agreed to release Israel from slavery.

To commemorate this miraculous, proof-producing event, the nation of Israel was instructed to observe an annual Passover (Leviticus 23:5). During the wilderness wandering, they had not kept this mandate so here, prior to entering the Promised Land, the new generation is instructed to do so once again.

The "Passover" was symbolic of the blood of the lamb being applied to their lives. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world (John 1:29). To be able to take possession of your spiritual inheritance, you must first have His blood applied to your life.

Spiritually speaking, to experience the Passover you must be born-again through confessing your belief in Jesus and His atoning work through His death on the cross of Calvary. His blood must be applied to your life to redeem you from sin and its consequences (1 Peter 1:2,18-19). His blood then provides you with access to God's presence (Hebrews 9:12); sanctifies you (Hebrews 13:12-13); enables you to do God's will (Hebrews 13:20-21); and empowers you to overcome all the power of the enemy (Revelation 12:11). All of these benefits are essential to fulfilling your divine destiny.

Have you experienced these supernatural benefits of the blood? If not, take time right now and ask God to apply the benefits of Christ's blood over the doorposts of your life.

JULY 21 THE PROVISION

The first step in Israel's preparation for conquering their Promised Land was the **purification**. The second step was to observe the **Passover**. The third step related to **provision**.

When Israel arrived in Canaan, the manna which they had eaten in the wilderness ceased to fall and the people ate of the fruit of their Promised Land. For believers who are living in obedience to God, one source of provision will not fail until the next is ready. If the "manna" has ceased, it is because the "new corn" is ready. New and better things are coming your way!

The manna from God was important in its time. It supplied basic necessities and was suited for the wilderness journey. But now it was time to move on to the fruit of the land. This "fruit of the land" speaks of spiritual maturity: *"Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection..." (Hebrews 6:1).*

To effectively fulfill your destiny, you must progress from the basics of Christianity into spiritual maturity. You must move from the "milk" to the "meat" of God's Word. The "milk" of the Word is important for spiritual development: *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).* But newborn babies are not usually sent out to do battle. Infants must be nurtured through proper nutrition which will enable growth and maturity. They must move from the milk to solid foods.

There are three reasons believers do not move from the "milk" to the "meat" of God's Word.

First, they are unskillful in the Word of God: *"For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe" (Hebrews 5:13).*

Second, they do not apply what they have been taught: *"But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12).* God is not going to give you new insights into His Word until you apply what you have already learned.

Third, they are carnal. Paul told the Corinthian Church: *"And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk and not with meat; for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).*

So how can you move from the milk to the meat of the Word? You will learn how in tomorrow's meditation.

JULY 22
THE PROVISION
(continued)

Yesterday you learned how the manna ceased and Israel begin to eat of the fruit of the land when they entered into their Promised Land. This is symbolic of believers moving from the "milk" to the "meat" of the Word of God. You learned that you should progress on to experience the meat of the Word so that you can grow and mature spiritually.

Here are some guidelines for moving from the milk to the meat of the Word of God.

First is desire. You must desire the milk of the Word in order to grow (1 Peter 2:2).

Second is discipline. As you discipline yourself to be obedient to the milk of the Word, you will be able to receive the meat of the Word.

Third is dedication. You must dedicate yourself to searching for the meat of God's Word:

My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.
(Proverbs 2:1-5)

If you knew there was a chest filled with silver buried in the yard of the house where you live, you would launch a search for it. You would excavate every inch of your property until you found the treasure. The search might be difficult, but you would persevere. You would make time for it and be faithful and systematic in your quest. If you will seek for the meat of the Word with the same dedication described in this passage, you will find it.

Fourth, is delight. You must delight in the Word. Discipline will eventually result in delight in the meat of the Word as the Scriptures will become "pleasant to your soul" (Proverbs 2:10). The psalmist David constantly spoke of the delight of God's Word, declaring that his delight was in the law of the Lord (Psalm 1:2) and in His statutes (Psalm 119:16). He declared that he would "run in the way" of God's commandments, so anxious was he to do God's will (Psalm 119:32).

To move from the milk to the meat of the Word you must have desire, discipline, dedication, and delight. Where are you in this process?

JULY 23 THE PRESENCE

Four spiritual events occurred to prepare Israel to conquer Canaan. These events are natural examples of spiritual truths which will prepare you to claim your own spiritual inheritance. We have discussed three of these: **Purification, Passover, and provision.** Today we will discuss the fourth: The manifested **presence** of God.

The closer the hour of combat, the more Joshua felt personal responsibility for the forthcoming battle. When Joshua saw a man holding a drawn sword he asked, "Are you for us or our adversaries?" Joshua only saw two sides, his side and that of the enemy. But God wanted Joshua to realize that it is not "us against them" but "Him against them." You do not battle alone or in your own strength.

The man identified himself as the Captain of God's host. This was a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ. Joshua was learning that the battle was not "us against them", but rather "Him against them." The same is true for your spiritual battles. The drawn sword symbolized the fact that the battle was the Lord's and it would be fought on the basis of the Word since the sword is a symbol of God's Word. Any battle fought for the fulfillment of God's promises is His battle and must be fought His way.

Joshua was told to take off his shoe because he was on holy ground. Note that it was just one shoe. God was employing a custom of the time which was used when Boaz secured Ruth and her property (Ruth 4:7-8). It was a visible symbol of the confirmation of an agreement. God was confirming to Joshua that His promises would be fulfilled.

Have you encountered the "Captain of God's host"? Have you received the assurance of His manifested presence as you advance to claim your spiritual inheritance? If not, you must come before Him as Joshua did asking, "What saith my lord unto his servant?" Then whatever He says, do it!

When given the promises of leading God's people to their Promised Land, Moses would not proceed one step without assurance of the presence of God. He said, "*If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence*" (Exodus 33:15). God assured Moses, "*My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest*" (Exodus 33:15) Moses needed God's manifested presence. Joshua needed it. And you need it!

Joshua 5 records the preparation of a people to do a work for God which we have summarized by four key words: **Purification, Passover, Provision, Presence.** Applying these spiritually, we learn that believers who want to claim God's promises must be cleansed by the blood, bear the marks of change in their lives, progress from the milk to the meat of God's Word, and experience the manifested presence of God.

JULY 24
THE JERICHO OF LIFE

We are meditating this month on being a proof-producer. When Joshua and the children of Israel crossed the flooded Jordan River on dry ground, the proof was produced that their Lord was the true God. Look how the enemies in Canaan responded:

And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel. (Joshua 5:1)

This is what a proof-producing ministry does: It destroys the power of the enemy! Even the great city of Jericho came to a screeching halt when they heard what God had done. They closed the gates of their walled city and prepared to defend their territory. Note that it was the power of the Lord that caused these responses as the enemy heard about the miracles the Lord had done. These proof-producing miracles melted their hearts before the Israeli army ever arrived on the battlefield.

God continually made statements like "I have given" and "I will" throughout the conquest of Canaan, making it very clear who was fighting Israel's battles. You do not win battles and take spiritual territory in your own strength. You are victorious because God gives you effective spiritual strategies, supernatural weapons, and battles with you, through you, and for you in the Jerichos of life.

As the men of war went up against Jericho, they were told to march around it once a day for six days, following the priests bearing the trumpets who marched before the Ark. They were not to speak a word--perhaps because negative words had caused their ancestors to experience trouble in times past? There was no discussion, no words of fear or doubt. On the seventh day, they were to march around the city seven times. When they heard the priests blow their trumpets, then they were to shout and the walls of the city would collapse. Sometimes, a strategy God gives seems absurd, but in this account walls fell at the sound of trumpets and shouts. Scriptures reveal that giants were brought down by a single stone, multitudes were slain with the jawbone of an ass, and a single tent peg and a millstone took down mighty enemies of God. People may criticize unusual methods, but if those methods are mandates from God, they will succeed.

Archeological evidence has confirmed that the walls of Jericho fell down flat. Hebrews 11:30 is clear how the walls fell: By faith. You do not conquer the "Jerichos" of life through self-effort. The proof-producing power of God is manifested by faith through the lives of those walking in obedience to God's Word. That is how the walls of your "Jericho" will fall. When the walls collapsed, Israel had to step over the rubble to enter in and claim the city. When your walls of opposition fall, there will be a mess of rubble. Be willing to step over the mess of your past, your hurt, your anger, etc., to advance to claim your destiny.

JULY 25
THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

If we are to successfully claim our spiritual inheritance, we must do so in the power of the Holy Spirit. There are multitudes of people around the world who have not yet heard the Name of Jesus. We will never change this fact unless we face it as it is.

It is time to stop traveling down the same ruts of spiritual harvest we have been in for the past hundreds of years of Christianity. We must face the situation as it is and receive a new revelation if we are to get the job done.

One of the problems is that many believers have missed one of the greatest truths Jesus ever taught. They know the Scriptures and can quote many passages by heart. But they have overlooked or rejected a vital truth that has to do with the promise of the Holy Spirit. It is clear from the Scriptures that God intended the *power* of the Holy Spirit to be your greatest spiritual resource in reaching the world.

The Baptism of the Holy Spirit is much more than a charismatic outpouring. It is more than what is being experienced in traditional Pentecostal churches. There is more to Pentecost than just speaking in tongues. There is an experience of supernatural power!

You may know doctrine, and that is good to keep your theology straight. But head knowledge of doctrine will not give you the power to cast out demons, deliver addicts, and heal the sick. You must have an experience of power. When you have experienced the burning bush like Moses did, it is no problem to face Pharaoh and declare, "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, let My people go!"

Before receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, Peter denied the Lord. He and all of the disciples abandoned Christ in the face of adversity. But after the Pentecostal experience recorded in Acts 2, they preached powerful messages, healed the sick, delivered the demonized, and turned the then-known world upside down.

The real power of the Holy Spirit is more than just blessings. It is more than singing, shouting, and dancing. It is more than speaking in tongues. It is the demonstration of power! Determine right now that you will move beyond the blessings into the realm of power.

When you have had an experience with God, you can face any challenge. You can face sickness. You can face demons. You can confront evil. You can face any negative circumstance and emerge victorious because you have had an experience. Not theory. Not just theology. An experience! And a man with an experience is never at the mercy of one who has only an argument.

JULY 26
THE LORD WORKING WITH YOU

The task given to the early church--and to us, as followers of Jesus today--is to produce the proof of the power of God to a lost and dying world. This is why we must give careful consideration to the highly successful methods the early Church used to accomplish this task.

The ministries of the apostles and members of the early church were miraculous and proof-producing. When we talk about miracles, we must understand that we are not just talking about observable physical miracles of healing and deliverance. We are talking about the greatest miracle of all--that of salvation.

The reason for the success of the first church is very simple: It was the Lord "working with them." When the Lord is your co-worker, there is no room for failure. He will confirm His Word with supernatural miracles. The apostles would not have been successful had they not produced confirming evidence of the power of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.

Jesus commissioned His followers--and us--saying:

And he said unto them, Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned, And these signs shall follow them that believe, In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents: and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them: they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen. (Mark 16:15-18,20)

The disciples had signs and wonders following them because the Lord was working with them. Some view ministry as "them working with the Lord." That is the way many believers try to minister. They make their plans and ask God to bless them. They have a set order of service, with no room for the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit to move. But the method that proved successful for the first church was "the Lord working with them."

There is a breakthrough you can experience in the spirit world that will completely revolutionize your ministry, just as crossing Jordan and conquering Canaan did for Israel. It is in recognizing and accepting this simple, yet profound truth: The Lord wants to work with you to demonstrate His proof-producing power to the world.

JULY 27
AUTHORITY FROM GOD

God sent Jesus to earth for a purpose. He gave Him a responsibility and the authority to fulfill that responsibility. Not only did Jesus come to die on the cross for the sin of all mankind, He also came to destroy the works of Satan: "*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*" (1 John 3:8).

Jesus came as the representative of the Father with God's authority. He spoke the Word. He worked the works of God. After His death and resurrection, Jesus took the authority vested in Him by God Almighty and delegated it to His followers. He did not take that authority back to heaven and leave us here to accomplish the tremendous task of reaching the world without the manifested power of God.

Jesus passed that authority on to us as co-workers of God. He gave His authority to the disciples who followed Him while He was here on earth, and He gives that same power and authority to us. He said:

- All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18).
- As my Father has sent me, even so send I you (John 20:21).
- Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: And nothing shall by any means hurt you (Luke 10:19).

The disciples followed the example of Jesus and used the authority He delegated to them as they went out to reach the nations. They literally turned the world upside down for God: "*...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also*" (Acts 17:6). These are the same men who once denied Him, fled in His time of trouble, and doubted His resurrection. But now...

...they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen. (Mark 16:20)

When you become a person of authority, you have the spiritual credentials for doing the works of God.

How do you become a person of authority? By whose authority do you do the works of God? Not by education or ordination. The authority you need begins and ends in Jehovah God!

You have the same authority operating in you that commanded Joshua to, "Cross that river and surround that city." Your authority is from God. You have the spiritual credentials for doing the proof-producing works of God.

JULY 28
IT SHALL BE DONE

God sent Jesus into the world for a divine purpose: To destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8). What would you think of a God who knew the strength of the enemy and did not give His Son the necessary weapons to defeat the enemy's power?

Jesus said: "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*" (Matthew 28:18). He recognized that the Father had given Him the necessary authority to fulfill His destiny. Jesus gave testimony to this in the synagogue when He opened the Book of the prophet Isaiah and read:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. (Luke 4:18)

Do you think that Jesus would send you to face spiritual enemies without the same power and authority? No--He would not!

When Jesus sent out His disciples, He told them that as His Father had sent Him--with all authority--in like manner He was sending them:

And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.(Matthew 10:1)

Jesus not only commissioned the disciples to preach that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, but also to "...*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give*" (Matthew 10:8). Jesus placed powerful weapons into the hands of believers with these words:

...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 18:18-19)

You have supernatural spiritual weapons in your hands that will empower you to fulfill your destiny. All you must do is begin to use them.

JULY 29
WORKING THE WORKS OF GOD

Jesus delegated great authority to His followers. He said: "...*Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done. And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.*" (Matthew 21:21-22). We have the authority to speak to mountains and they will be removed--mountains of oppression, sickness, depression, and spiritual bondage.

Often, when confronted with the sick, demonized, and those bound by addictions, some believers have used excuses like "I don't have the gift of healing. I don't have the gift of deliverance." But in the healing recorded in Acts 3, Peter declared to a lame man, "Such as I have!"

No matter how you interpret it, it comes out the same: "Such as I have!" Peter knew he had the authority and he used it, just as Jesus had done. He spoke the word with authority, knowing he was backed up by all the powers of Heaven. Peter said, "*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk*" (Acts 3:6).

Jesus spoke the Word and it was accomplished. Peter and the other disciples spoke the Word and it was done. We can speak the Word with that same authority, with the same invincible power of Almighty God standing behind it.

The word "authority" in the Greek is *exousia* which literally means "to be out." *Ex* means "out of" and *ousia* means "being." One writer has defined it as "the ability to go beyond oneself." The term is used to describe authority which a person has that has been delegated to him from someone else. The word also denotes mastery, supernatural power, and complete jurisdiction.

The person who has this authority acts through the person to whom he has delegated the authority. Do you see how totally powerful this concept is? Jesus delegated His authority to you. He lives in you and works with you and through you.

When you minister to others in proof-producing power you go beyond yourself, beyond what is natural into the supernatural. It is not your miracles, but it is the Lord working with you and through you with signs following. This is why the ministries of the disciples were so dynamically effective. The Lord worked with them and through them.

Take a moment and look at your hands. The Lord wants to work through your hands, just as He did through the hands of the disciples. They understood the keys to producing the proof. They spoke the Word. They acted in the power and authority of God Himself. These supernatural methods will never fail. They will accomplish the works of God.

JULY 30
FAITH GROUNDED IN FACT

Before you can demonstrate the power of God in your life, you must have your faith tied to a known factor. Those who pray, "If it be thy will..." do not have their faith tied to proven facts. The Bible declares:

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)

You must know how to pray in faith believing:

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22)

Do not just say "if it be Thy will", boldly declare, "Thy will be done!"

The book of Hebrews tells us that it is not enough just to believe God exists. We must also believe that He rewards those who diligently seek Him:

But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)

We can pray with authority only when we know that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He still saves, heals, and delivers. His command has not changed, and the proof-producing power delegated to us to fulfill that command has not changed:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it. (John 14:12-14)

The God we serve is one who knows no limits! One of the main reasons why we limit an unlimited God is because we do not see Him as He really is. A centurion, whose story is recounted in Matthew 8, saw Jesus as He was. The centurion said to Jesus, "You don't even have to come to my house to heal my servant. Just speak the word and he will be healed." Jesus was so moved by the centurion's declaration of faith that He said that there never had been any greater faith than that which this man demonstrated.

The new generation of Israelites believed God's Word as it was--a fact--and they crossed a swollen river and conquered evil nations. If you want the same proof-producing power operative in your life, then you must ground your faith in the truths of God's Word. Faith must be grounded in fact.

JULY 31
SIGNS, WONDERS, AND MIRACLES

Believers in the first church were proof-producers. When they went into a city, it was not just for preaching and teaching. Almost anyone can learn how to instruct someone else in the faith. These believers ministered the manifested power of God and produced the proof that Jesus Christ was still alive and their Lord was the true God.

That was the task of the early church. They had to convince a world that--although they had seen Jesus hungry, tired, weary, thirsty--He was truly the Son of the living God. They had to prove that although the people saw Him die, He was still alive. How did they do this?

- They produced the proof.
- The Lord worked miracles through them that turned entire cities upside down.
- They went beyond blessing the people to demonstrate God's power.

Signs and wonders accompanied their ministries, just as Jesus had promised. The first such recorded incident after Pentecost was the healing of the lame man at the Gate of the Temple. This man had been lame from the time of his birth, yet:

...Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee; In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. (Act 3:6-9)

And you wonder why the people took notice? You question how the church grew daily in New Testament times? When the lame walk, the deaf hear, the blind see, and the sick are healed, do you think your community will take notice of what is happening at your church?

When people heard Jesus was in a house in Capernaum, a huge crowd gathered together. There was no publicity sent out, no media blitz. People heard about the miracles, and they came to experience the works of God (Mark 2).

Jesus is in your house! You have within you the same power Moses had when he stretched the rod of God across the Red Sea. You have the same power as Joshua, when he instructed the people to advance into the flooded Jordan River. You have the same power resident within you as did the Apostle Peter.

The miracles recorded in the Bible weren't Moses' miracles, Joshua's miracles, or Peter's miracles. They were God's miracles! God will work through you in the same way to produce the proof of His power to a lost and dying world. No matter what your destiny--whether a preacher, businessman, or politician--you are called to be a proof-producer.