A black and white illustration of a mountainous landscape. In the foreground, a person in a long, light-colored dress is kneeling on a rocky path, with their arms raised in prayer. To the right, a goat is standing on the path, facing away from the viewer. The background features jagged, rocky mountains under a cloudy sky. The scene is framed by a decorative border on the left side.

Your Presence,
Oh God,
or I Die!



Your Presence,
Oh God,
or I Die!



As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
P.O. Box 68309, Indianapolis, IN 46268 USA.

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Sick of Statistics

I want to share some things with you to try to express the intensity of the battle that's raging inside of me. I'm about two-thirds of the way into a forty-day fast right now and the thing that's driving me more than anything else is that I'm so sick of the statistical, probable, "of the earth" kinds of things that happen in the church world.

As I look around, I see people starting to get some right ideas about relationships and worship and restoring truths rather than just accepting form and ritual. But even with that, there is something inside of me as I go from place to place, that craves to see something undeniably, indisputably God. I want to see something that's just God and nothing else. It's not "for" God. It's not burning incense to appease a God that's somewhere out there. Rather, it's something that is absolutely, undeniably God.

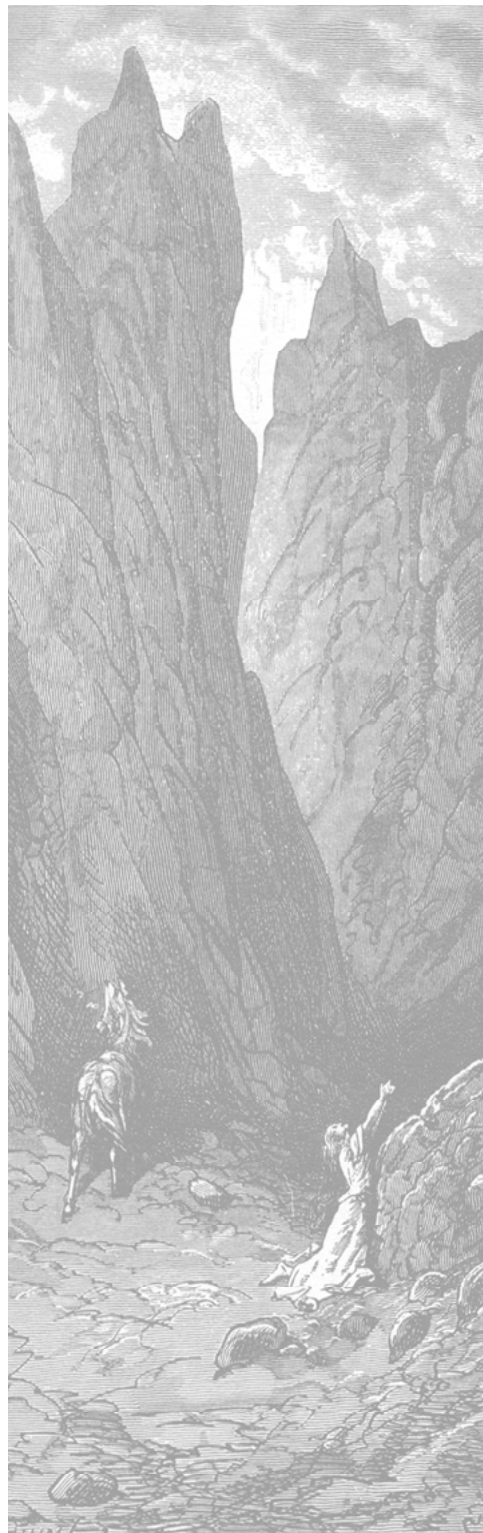
For example, Pentecost wasn't something God "did." Pentecost *was* God. God showed up, and there was no denying that. About the first-century church, even in a weak church like Corinth, Paul could say, "When you're gathered in the name of the Lord and the power of the Lord Jesus is present..." (1 Cor. 5:4) And then later on he spoke of the unbeliever falling on his face and crying out, "God is really among you" (1 Cor. 14:25). God was really doing something! His presence was manifested in a way that couldn't be disputed.

As I go from place to place, I meet oodles of wonderful saints who love God and want to serve Him and be His people. That's wonderful and certainly the right position to be in. But even so, there is an element that only God

can add as we position ourselves and lay our lives before Him. And that is simply *Him*. It's *His presence* and not something that can be manufactured. You can't conjure it up with a "hip-hip-hooray" hyper worship leader. You can't make it happen by having a "dynamic, energetic preacher." You might feel the fever pitch of the "worship service," but the end result, generally speaking, is that after you leave, it begins to fade. When you get back to your own house, what are you going to do next? You look around at your neighborhood and you see all these houses and the shopping centers teeming with masses of people. Then what do you do? What's going to happen next? You are by yourself again, right?

So many people are learning about true worship and about a people that are joined and knit together by every ligament and sinew. We are learning about crucifying the idols, the foolishness, the bitterness, the unforgiveness, and the selfishness that divides us from one another. It's true that learning and doing those things are paramount to being positioned. But there is something yet remaining that goes beyond statistical probability. Three thousand people baptized in one day wasn't something that was the predicted, statistical outcome of a fisherman's unpolished "sermon." Unlearned and ignorant men don't just pull off that kind of thing. It was something that God did. It was some way that God met humanity. God somehow joined Himself to the hearts and the prayers of the people that were of one accord in that upper room. That is a pattern in the Old and the New Testament – God somehow meeting man. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today and forever" (Hebrews 13:8).

I just can't tolerate in my soul any longer seeing things that are statistically probable. There are good people, honest people, sincere people, and people that genuinely love and serve God in places all over the world. And yet so much of it is just "for" God. It's not "with" God and "in" God. It's not "In Him and from Him and through Him," which is the



unsearchable riches that Paul speaks of (Rom. 11, Eph. 3). It's not something that's obviously Deity.

If we're going to be honest about it, most things today could be done by a group of atheists that know their Bibles and know the songs. There's something that really bothers me about that. If it's just a matter of singing a few songs and studying a few Bible verses, and being honest with each other, then some atheists could do that, right? Can you see that? Similar things happen with the Buddhists and the Muslims. But they are missing something – they are missing the only Wise and True and Living God. So I'm crying out for a testimony of God's presence, His purpose and His heart—something that is undeniably, indisputably God and can't be missed.

Making a Name for Himself

Let's read some verses and talk about each of them and draw some conclusions. I'm reading from the New King James version and the first is from 2 Samuel.

"And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people, to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods?" (2 Samuel 7:23).

Who is like you, oh Israel? You are that people, the one nation on the earth that the God of heaven and earth went to redeem. He did this to make for Himself a Name and to do for you great and awesome deeds.

If you were to search out that idea, that pattern, "*to make for Himself a name,*" you would find that it is God's heart above all things to have an inheritance in His people. In Ephesians 1, again and again it says, "to the praise of His

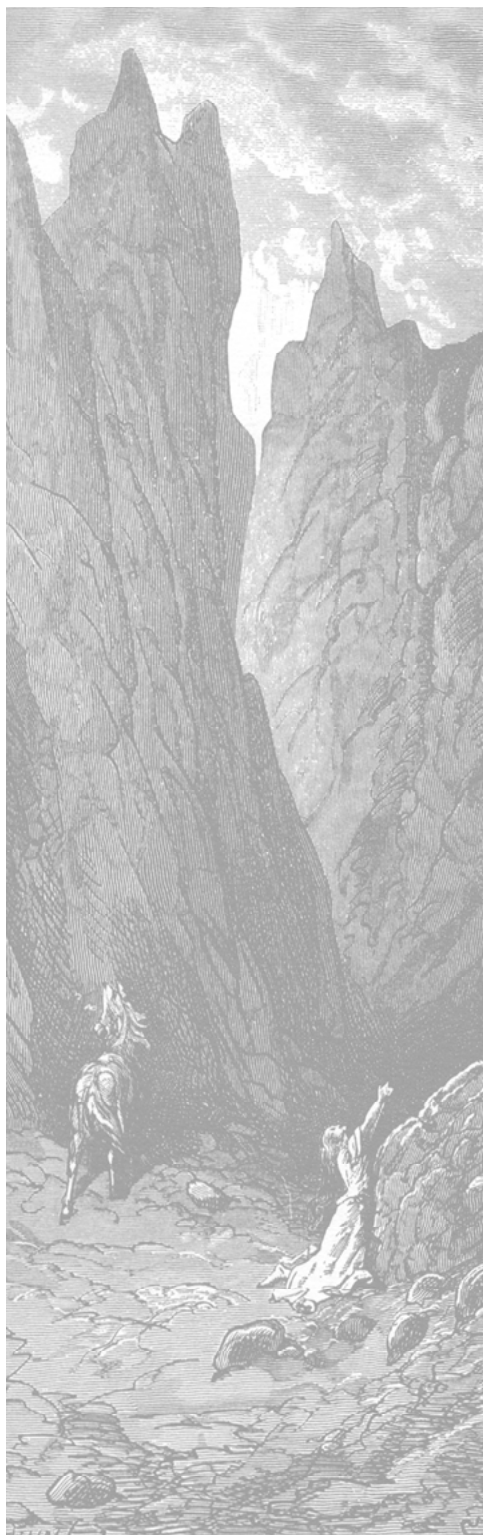
glory,” “to the praise of His glory”...that He might have an inheritance. In the book of Ezekiel by itself, that idea comes up over and over again in chapters 20 and 36, “...to make for Himself a Name..” “...for My holy Name...”

David said, “*You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you. O Lord, you are God!*” (1 Chron. 17:25-26).

It’s God’s heart and God’s will that He would build a church that the gates of hell won’t prevail against. It’s His will that He would be manifested to destroy the works of the evil one and that He would make a great name for Himself, on earth as it is in heaven. Because that’s His desire, it’s got to be our passion too—that God would make a name for Himself.

“Who is like you, oh Israel?” You among all the nations—you, Church, have been chosen. All the nations are ruled by Jesus “for the church” (Ephesians 1:22-23). God gave Him a name and a place above every name, above every authority and above every kingdom in the seen and the unseen world. It’s for the purpose of redeeming His Church and bringing His Church to a place where the gates of hell won’t prevail against it. It is God’s will to make a name for Himself, and in the process He will do great and awesome deeds for your land.

“Then with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD; and he made a trench around the altar large enough to hold two seahs of seed. And he put the wood in order, cut the bull in pieces, and laid it on the wood, and said, ‘Fill four waterpots with water, and pour it on the burnt sacrifice and on the wood.’ Then he said, ‘Do it a second time,’ and they did it a second time; and he said, ‘Do it a third time,’ and they did it a third time. So the water ran all around the altar; and he also filled the trench with water” (1 Kings 18: 32-35).



Just before this Elijah was marching around and making a mockery out of the prophets of baal saying, “Oh, your god must be on vacation! Maybe he’s asleep. Yell a little bit louder. Wake him up.”

Where did Elijah get the courage to do that? Here he is against the 450 prophets of baal and Jezebel. To everyone else, it seems like he’s there all alone. Yet he won’t just leave well enough alone and stand there quivering and biting his fingernails, waiting to see what God might do. Instead he made a big production out of it and had a great time really hamming it up. Then he poured water all over it just to add to the whole drama of it.

“And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near and said, ‘LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that You are God in Israel and I am Your servant, and that I have done all these things at Your word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that You are the LORD God, and that You have turned their hearts back to You again.’ Then the fire of the LORD fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood and the stones and the dust, and it licked up the water that was in the trench. Now when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, ‘The LORD, He is God! The LORD, He is God!’ And Elijah said to them, ‘Seize the prophets of baal! Do not let one of them escape!’ So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the Brook Kishon and executed them there” (1 Kings 18:36-40).

You can see the war and the battle that is going on. That same warfare exists in this room over your own hearts, your families and your lives. It exists in our work places and in the neighborhoods we live in.

“Who is the Lord God?” And Elijah said, “Show them. Bring down fire from heaven. Hear my prayer so that everyone

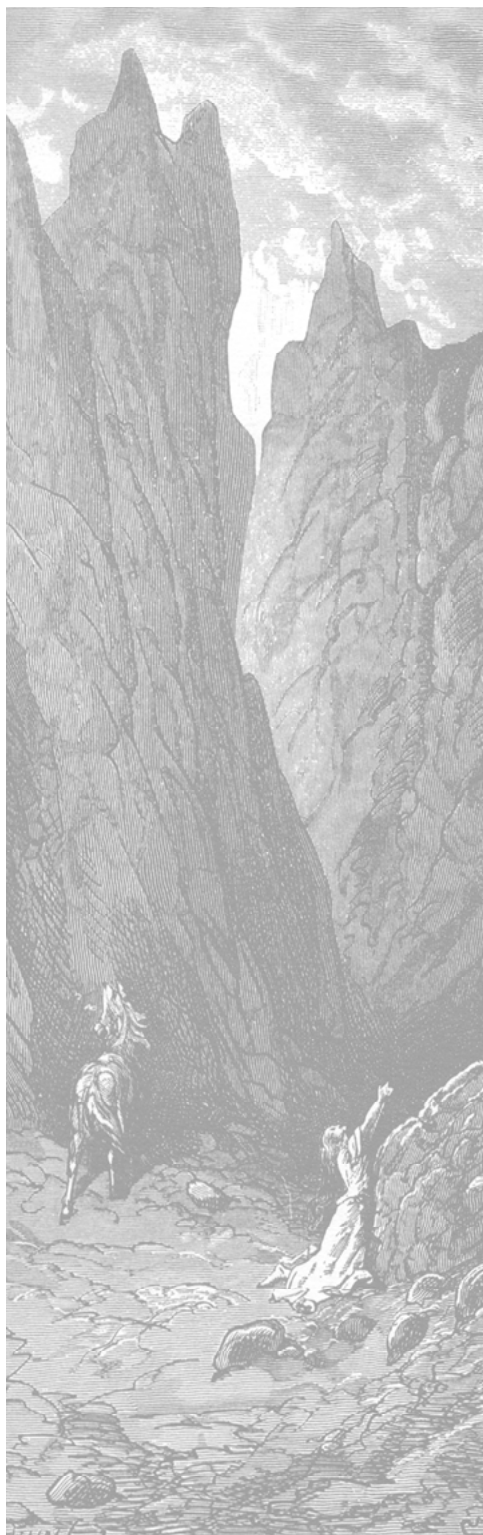
will know that this is of God. This isn't philosophy. This isn't just a way to believe in order that we might have a better life. Show them, oh God, that this is You."

That same battle still exists today. Our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers. It's not just a philosophy of living and behavior modification so we can all be happy. We will be happy if we live God's way, because He designed us so that His Word is what rightly orders our lives. But it's certainly not limited to that and that's not the real issue.

The real issue is in Ephesians 3:10 where it says that God, through the Church, will make known His glorious manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers. That's where the real issue is. This universe exists so that all of the demons and the authorities and principalities and powers—everything that's not subject to Jesus—would be humiliated and put under His feet. That work was begun and actually finished on the Cross when Jesus made a public spectacle of the principalities and powers, triumphing over them (Col. 2:15). Now we're enforcing and proclaiming and declaring that. That's where the issue is.

So, in Elijah's life it wasn't just a matter of his getting his own way. Rather, it was "Show them that You are the Lord God! Show them that all of the heavens and the earth bow before Your Name. Manifest Your presence here to humiliate the enemies of Christ, the enemies of Almighty God. Do this to show them that it was at Your Word that I've done all these things."

Again, that has got to be our heart as we go out into the world. We've got to be crying out as Elijah was, that God would do something to show Himself to be a great and an awesome God. There has to be something beyond just our words. The Kingdom of God does not consist of mere words, but of power. We'll look at that some more a little bit later.



A Heart Desperate for God

Again, I hope I can impart to you what has been so much on my mind lately. I'm willing to pay my life to see it because when you consider the idea of fasting for 40 days, you are taking your life into your hands. You don't do that on a whim. Something has got to be that important to you. It's not a joke. We're talking about life and death, and you begin to feel that after a while. It's not even a matter of self-control. I mention it again for your benefit because I'm begging you to have that kind of heart. You've got to see God and not just have words about God. It's got to be God manifest in His purposes. His heart and His will "on earth as it is in heaven." "Come, Thy Kingdom. Be done, Thy will." That has got to be the heart with which we pursue the things of the Kingdom of God.

We're not talking about doing little optional good deeds for one another and having little optional meetings more often than we used to. It's not about adding little optional relationships that are a little deeper than Sunday-morning-go-to-meeting. We're talking about the very nature of the Godhead and the manifest wisdom of the glorious, eternal God being made known to the principalities and powers through the Church. We're talking about the gates of hell not prevailing against the Church that Jesus is building. We've got to care very much for God's Honor and His Words and His Name. It's a heart of, "Show them, Father. I beg You for Your Name's sake, that these things be done, not that I'd be glorified or that any attention would be brought to me."

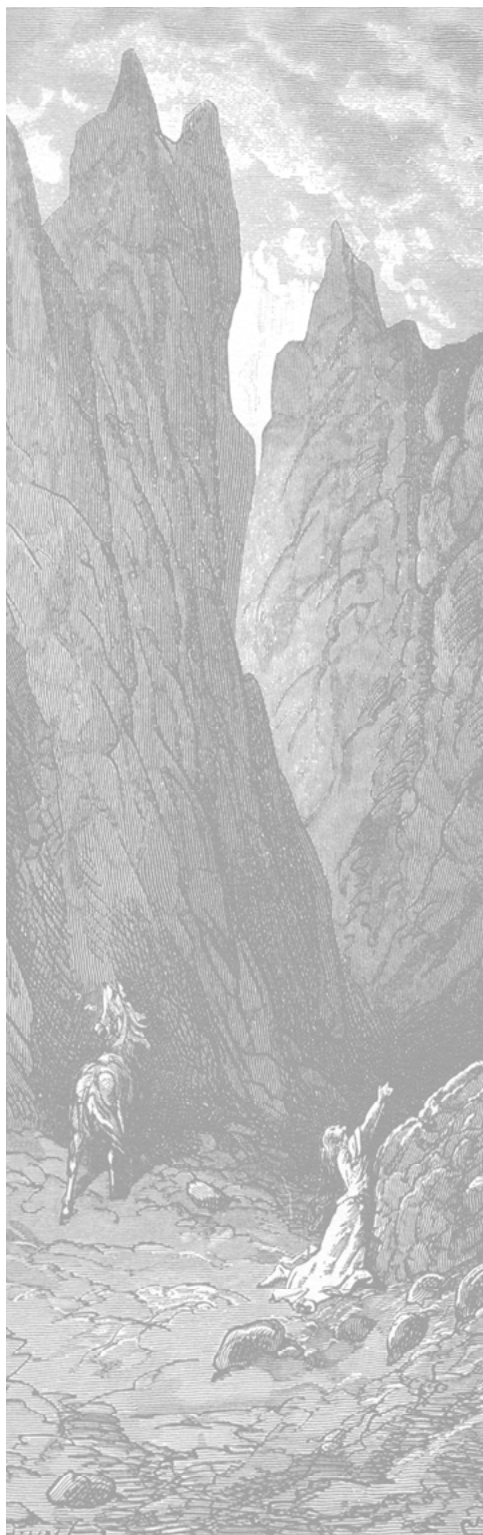
All that drama and production that Elijah did wasn't for his own sake or benefit. It was so God's Name would be glorified. As Jesus cried out in John 12, "Father, glorify Your name." That's got to be our heart too. Even years from now on our deathbed it would still be, "Father, glorify

Your name.” And a voice from heaven comes back, “I have glorified it. And I will glorify it again.” That has to touch your heart. It can’t be just a maze or hypnosis of going through religious activities. We’ve got to care. We’ve got to command the rains to be shut up for three and a half years. We’ve got to have that kind of heart that’s desperate for God’s Name to be made great among the nations. That’s His heart too, so like David, we can pray in confidence because God has promised that the gates of hell wouldn’t prevail against His Church and that He would make His manifold wisdom known.

*“As in the days when you came out of the land of Egypt,
I will show them marvelous things.
The nations shall see and be ashamed of all their might;
They shall put their hand over their mouth;
Their ears shall be deaf.
They shall lick the dust like a serpent;
They shall crawl from their holes like snakes of the earth.
They shall be afraid of the LORD our God,
And shall fear because of You” (Micah 7:15-17).*

“God, show Yourself strong in Your people. Let the nations quake and fear and tremble at the Name *Jesus*. Every knee shall bow at the Name of Jesus.”

What does that mean? Is that poetry? No! Let it be such that when someone hears the word “Jesus,” they don’t say, “Oh, you’re just a fanatic,” but they tremble and drop to their knees. All of His enemies will be made His footstool and we’ll wait patiently yet persistently for that. He’ll utilize the Church to do greater works than He did. That isn’t just a bunch of hocus-pocus doctrine. That has to do with the principalities and powers being humiliated. It’s not a magic formula of a right way to do something. It’s not a gimmick. It has one purpose only: that the sons of God be manifest and we grow into the full measure of the stature of Jesus Christ (Romans 8).



We’re not here to be entertained or made to feel better or to just be encouraged and motivated. We are here to grow into the full measure of the stature of Jesus Christ. Then the demons will know our names like they knew Paul or Jesus, but didn’t know the seven sons of Sceva (Acts 19). The demons will know our names. That’s God’s will for us, and that’s got to be our heart. I’m going to keep going back to these things because I hope it’s true that I’ll die for what God wants to do on the earth. I’ll live or I’ll die before I’ll put up with mediocrity and the statistically probable and predictable meetings and conversions and relationships. I’m tired of the mundane.

James 3 says that the wisdom of this world is unspiritual and of the devil. This world’s wisdom has to do with the predictable philosophies, activities and results of men. They are unspiritual and of the devil. What’s of the earth is clearly of the devil, according to the Scriptures. What’s of God is clearly of God.

So there is no place in my heart and I hope not in yours for what’s statistically probable. If we allow that mentality, we will go to our graves having never seen God and the Things that statistics couldn’t predict. It ought to break your hearts to go into meetings week after week and nothing ever happen that can’t be explained by what humans are able to do with a little motivation, imagination, raw ability, and a little knowledge. It can all be completely explained in the natural realm by natural means. You could set up 150 atheists and give them their lines, and they could do exactly the same thing that you did. That ought to make you sick. That ought to kill us inside.

Let it be God who shows up. Let it be God! Let it be a piece of the Deity, of the Creator of the universe rather than just events and words. The Kingdom of God does not consist of rhetoric. It doesn’t consist even of teaching but of *dunamis*, of power (1Cor. 4:20). Dynamite is unmistakable. Can you put it in your coat pocket and light it and try to pretend

that it doesn't exist? No way! It's going to have an effect. There's something real about God. Amen?

Signs Follow His Word

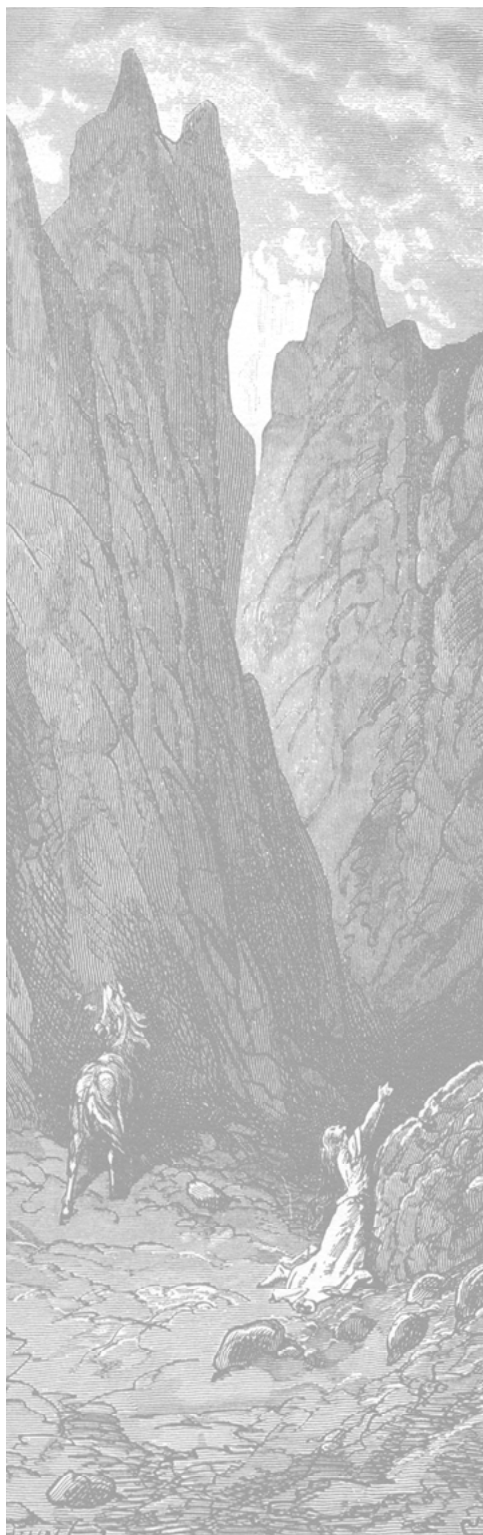
“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, ‘Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.’ And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men” (Matthew 9:6-8).

The issue in the unseen world was the forgiveness of sins and that was larger to God than this man being able to rise up and walk. For their sakes Jesus said, “In order that you might know the power of God, let me demonstrate it for you. I'll show you something that your physical eyes can see. Here's something that your five senses can feel and touch and see and hear in order that you might know the infinite and manifold wisdom of God. Then you'll know that this isn't a joke or a game. Let it be seen on earth as it is in heaven.” And the multitudes marveled and glorified God.

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things which you hear and see...’” (Matthew 11:4).

Often times testimonies are given to the natural man in the seen world because God has to coddle us. As immature babies we're not able to see what He sees. We should be able to see Truth for what it is, but because we can't, God will work through things we can physically see and hear in order to convict us of Truth.

Again, it's not a game. Jesus taught that if someone wouldn't believe Moses and the prophets, then even if a man were raised from the dead, it would profit them nothing (Luke 16:31). If everything is a gimmick and flesh-on-parade and something we're pursuing externally,



then there won't be any power in it. But those things that confirm the Word of God and challenge us to grow into the image and stature of the fullness of Christ are the things God works through.

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—He said to the paralytic, ‘I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house’” (Mark 2:10).

“And they went out and proclaimed everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.” (Mark 16:20)

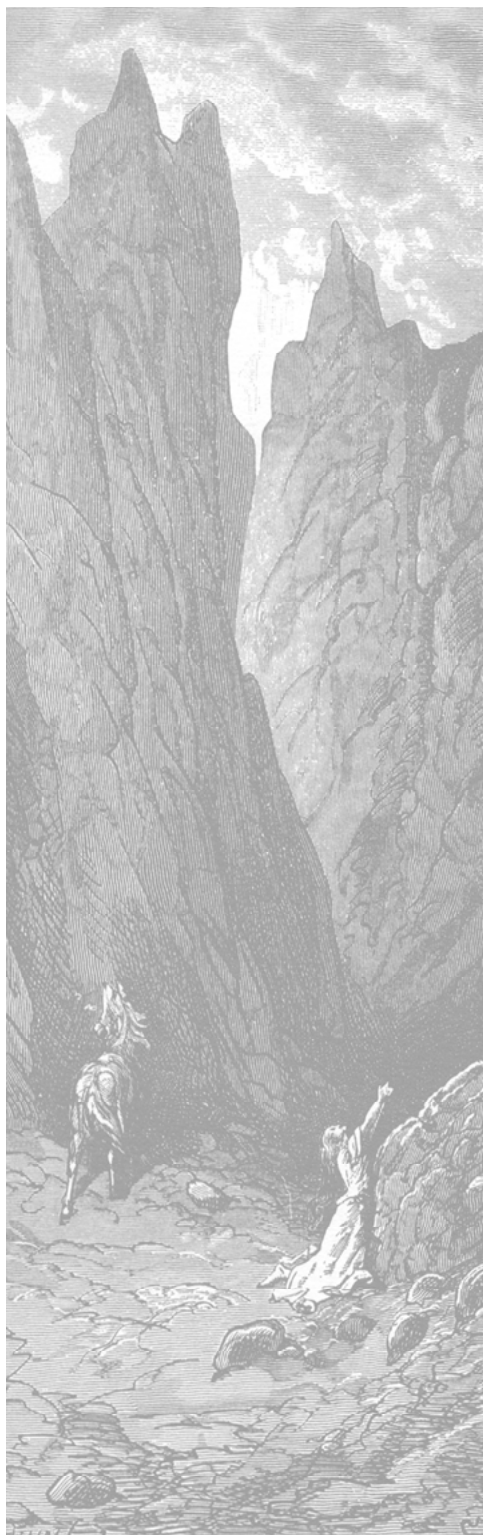
Another version says, “...confirmed the word by the signs that followed.” Yet there's a whole world full of people out there who are following signs instead of “signs following.” You have to be aware of that. For those people, it's not a life and a message and a proclamation. They're just following signs. It's not about truth that causes men to repent and drop to their knees, and being cut to the heart for having crucified the Son of God. There is a serious question about the validity of what is happening because it's a game to them and isn't about God. Auditoriums fill up with people who are following signs, rather than people who see signs following the proclamation of the Word of God that cuts them to the heart. It causes them to repent and to follow Jesus Christ with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. If signs happen at all, it is God's heart that they follow or accompany the proclamation of the living and active Word that lays bear the motives and intentions of the heart.

Again, there's a counterfeit out there that causes people to gratify their flesh. Jesus was angry at that. One minute He's multiplying the loaves and fishes, and the next minute He's rebuking them for following Him just for the bread. If we're after the external rather than after the internal (with the confirmation following the internal truth), then it's the wrong religion.

Because people are after the external, that's why there's so much confusion in the world today about God actually doing things. There's the camp that says God doesn't do anything. And there's the camp that says God is our servant and our genie-in-a-bottle—if we do the right incantations then He'll do something for us. It's very self-centered. It's wrong and sinful and it's counterfeit. Satan hears those prayers just as much as God does.

Sometimes God might listen because of our ignorance, but by and large, it is God's will to have things in the seen world follow Truth. It's Truth that lays bare the intentions of the heart and causes us to come to Him on His terms. It causes us to repent and to have our life purged and cleansed by the washing of the Word. Then He accompanies that with external confirmations. "So that you will know that the Son of Man has power to change your life, I will do this external thing for you. I'll give you a testimony that you can't forget. I'll do something for you to prove My faithfulness. You'll always remember it just like the Israelites always remembered the parting of the Red Sea." All the way through the Old Testament you see it: "Remember the Red Sea. Remember the Red Sea." So God says also to us, "I will follow My Word. I'll do things that will make your ears tingle if you'll obey Me and walk with Me and turn to Me with all your heart. I'll give you something to remember Me by so you'll always know My faithfulness."

When satan tries to steal your joy from you, you'll remember that God is alive. You'll remember the great and awesome deeds that He's done for you, and nobody in the world or universe will be able to take that away from you. No one can steal the joy and the celebration that you have. That's the purpose of signs that follow. It's not about following signs, but rather the signs following. You need to keep that in mind.



"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him" (John 2:11).

Do you see that? His glory was manifested and then His disciples believed in Him. They were already following Him at the proclaiming of His Word, and then they saw His glory manifested.

In Luke 5, Jesus was teaching to the multitudes by the lake and from the boat by the shore. He was teaching and teaching, and Peter was there hearing all this great teaching. It's just great, it's fantastic. Yet there was no real effect on Peter, was there? Remember how Jesus next tells Peter to push out in the boat and cast out into the deep. "Let down your nets." And Peter says, "We've not caught anything all night, but at your word, we'll do it." Then the catch of fish nearly sinks the boat they're in. What was Peter's response to that? Poof! He's cut to the heart and falls to his knees, "Depart from me. I'm a sinful man!"

You can see how the teaching of the Word of God is paramount as a foundation. It's so important to hear the seed of the Word of God that endures forever. Nothing grows without a seed, and like with Peter, after that seed was planted, then the Glory was manifested. It was then that Peter dropped his head, fully believed, and trusted and followed Him.

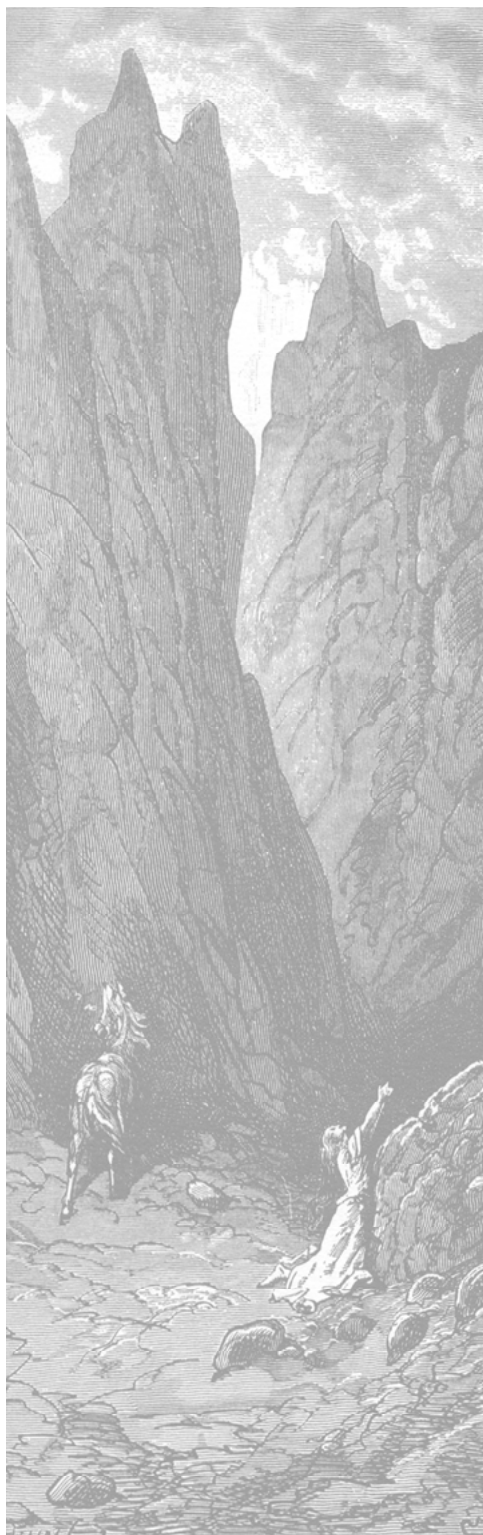
So the two things have got to come together. That's the Gospel and that's who Jesus is, yesterday, today and forever. It is Jesus who proclaims the Word and teaches, but teaching all by itself can leave us pretty dull. Maybe we're a little convicted, but at best we've only been taught. We don't actually walk in one-tenth of what we know, do we? Do any of us need to know more? It can be good to know more, but the more we know, the lower the percentage is of what we're actually walking in.

So Peter was soaking in the teaching of Jesus, really enjoying it all and thinking, “This is good!” Then God showed up and manifested His glory and that’s when Peter was cut to the heart. Now the teaching all of a sudden made some sense to him. The disciples had been with Him for some time, following Him and listening to His teaching. But He confirmed His Word by manifesting His glory, and His disciples believed in Him. So, the two come together.

“This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him’” (John 3:2).

Though he was immersed in the law, even a Pharisee could see that these things were out of the realm of what man is able to do. I’m asking you to cry out to God for something that’s out of the realm of what man is able to do. If you’re showing people the way of Truth and the Word of God, and they’re a little stubborn and reluctant, ask God to do something to confirm His Word. Ask God to wake them up. Ask Him to give you understanding or discernment about their lives that will rip them open. Ask Him for something that you couldn’t have known about that will rip open their heart and lay them bare.

Where we live we’ve prayed many times that God would bring crises and events to confirm His Word. We might ask God to cause a person to have a car wreck if that’s what it takes, but to keep their bodies and spirits safe. We ask for something to alert them to the frailty of life. We could tell them, “Life is a vapor,” but so what? They say, “Yeah, yeah, I know that.” So we ask God to make it real to them. Let it be something that would rip them open so that they say, “Hey, depart from me. I’m a sinful man.” Let God show up. Let it be an act of God where He manifests Himself by showing His Glory.



“And many of the people believed in Him, and said, ‘When the Christ comes, will He do more signs than these which this Man has done?’” (John 7:31).

For the Jews, they had an understanding of the phrase, “the Kingdom of God.” These people had an understanding of what that meant. They also understood the phrase, “the Christ of God” and “the Anointed One of God.” They knew what that meant and that He would come with action and not just with words. So they said, “Wow! Could the Christ actually do more than this man has done?”

“Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon’s porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, ‘How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly.’”

“Jesus answered them, ‘I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father’s name, they bear witness of Me’” (John 10:22-25).

Jesus was saying, “Here’s the proof. Here’s the testimony of who I am. It is in the works that I do.” Later you see Paul speaking in 1 Corinthians 15 of the signs that accompany the work of someone of apostolic stature. He said, “This is a proof. This is a testimony that these things are true.”

In John 17, Jesus says “...as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as you have given him” (John 17:2). He is speaking of Himself to the Father. There’s an authority in the seen world that testifies to what’s happening in the unseen world. You’ve got to be crying out for that. I’m begging you to not be satisfied with anything less than the testimony in the seen world of what God is doing in the unseen world—on earth as it is in heaven.

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book...” (John 20:30).

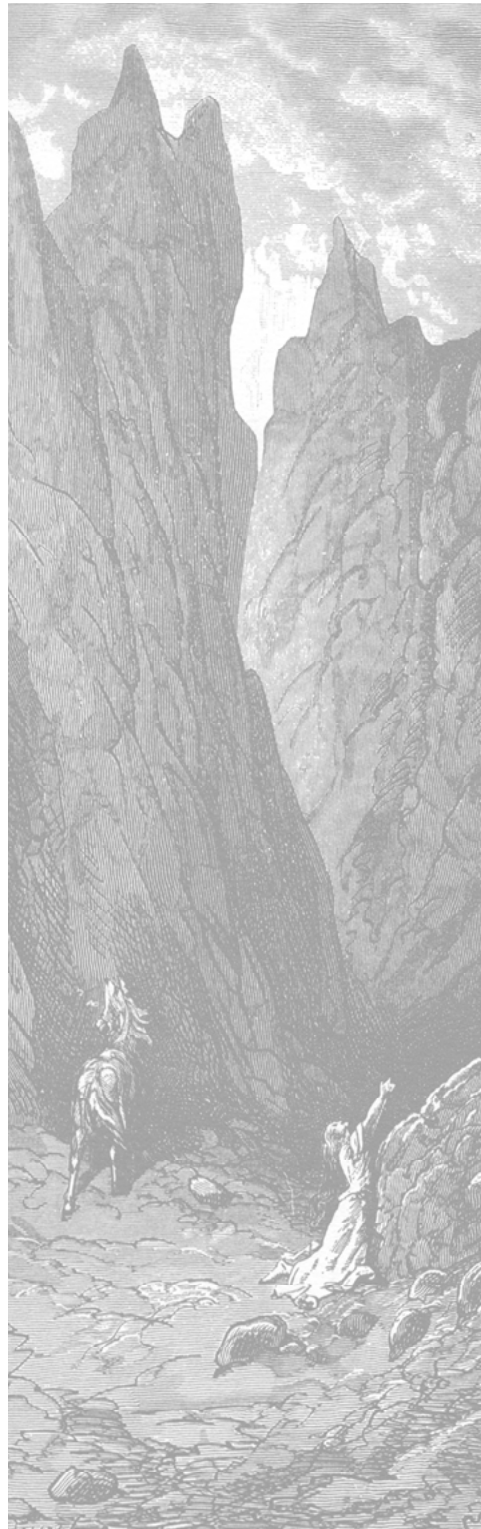
Testimony in His People

Let's talk now about the expression of Jesus in His people. Jesus being here was an awesome thing, but He said, "It is better for you if I leave..." It was better that He leave than that He stay (John 16:7). Why was that? He said, "I'm sending you the Spirit that he would no longer just be with you but he will be in you, and that you might do greater works than I've done" (John 14:12, 16-17). "This is to my Father's glory that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8).

In His people there will again be on earth a testimony of the Life of Jesus Christ. "The Christ" is what 1 Corinthians 12 calls the people of God. How will the manifold wisdom of God be made known to the principalities and powers? Is it by Jesus? No, it's by *Jesus in His people—by the Church*. The gates of hell won't prevail against what? Against Jesus? No, against *Jesus in His people*, the corporate Christ life, the called-out ones of God. Hell won't prevail against the Church, the Bride of Jesus Christ that's of His same nature and that lives by His same Spirit. The same Spirit that raised Him from the dead now dwells mightily in us to allow us to do more than we could ask or imagine. "According to the power that works in us" is how that verse reads (Eph. 3:20). So now let's read about Jesus in His people.

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know..."

"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear" (Acts 2:22, 32-33).



Peter is saying that God attested to them the nature of Jesus' life. He proved that Jesus was who He said He was by the signs that followed—by a testimony in the seen world of what Jesus was saying and speaking of in the unseen world. Peter went on to say, "Jesus is raised up, and we are all witnesses. The same God that raised Jesus from the dead and testified of who Jesus was by the things that He did, is also pouring out what you now see and hear."

The first time I really read that a couple of years back, I wrote in my margin, "Oh, God, for something that men could see and hear." Pour something out that man can see and hear that would testify that this is not just man's idea. This isn't just a neat thing. Yes, I could prove what I'm saying to you with sound argument, but what good does that do?

Someone says, "It's in the Bible so it has to be true." The other person says, "How do you know the Bible is the Word of God?" The first person says, "Because it says it is." That's called a circular argument in the philosophical world and doesn't hold up as valid. "The Bible says it's the Word of God. The Bible says it's the Bible."

"You say you're Julius Caesar? How do I know you are Julius Caesar?"

"Because I say I am."

"Oh, okay."

I might say I'm a Christian, but on what basis do I say I'm a Christian? "I say it on the basis that the Bible says I'm a Christian." Is that the Word of God or is it the word of men?

So you can see why heathens and atheists really don't listen to our arguments. Have you noticed that? "It's true because it says so right here."

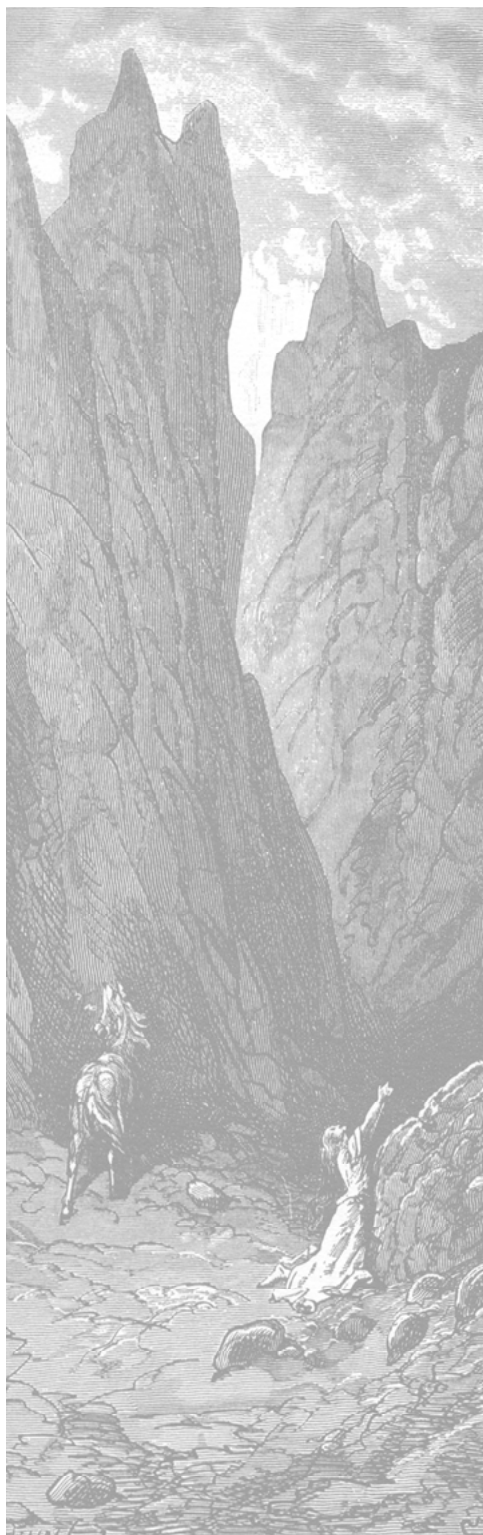
"So what?" they say. "I could show you three thousand

other books and say those are true too. If you expect me to do something about your book, what will you do about my book?”

Do you see what I mean? You get caught because it’s just circular arguments. That’s why we’ve got to be crying out, “Oh, God! Pour out something they can see and hear! Pour out something to testify to who You are and what You’re doing. Pour out something that’s beyond my ability. I cannot make anything happen, but God, You can. Please hear my prayer.”

If you think about it, we’re not talking about anything more than prayer. Do you see what I mean? The very basis and foundation of Christianity is that we can talk to God and ask Him to intervene. We’re asking God to somehow intervene in ways that wouldn’t happen—statistically and probably—if He didn’t intervene. It’s just prayer, and there’s no disputing that it’s essential to Christianity. It’s simply asking God to get involved in doing something that we can’t conjure up on our own. The Spirit *and* the Bride say, “Come.” Both of those things have got to be in conjunction with each other.

Let it be your constant prayer that men will be left with no excuse. Let it be that men see that there is no mistaking that our lives are of God. If they turn away from Him, it won’t be because our arguments were too pathetic. Our incomplete knowledge and lack of persuasive skills better not be the cause of other people’s demise. “God, You’re going to have to intervene here. I will do everything I can to present it clearly as I ought,” as Paul prayed. We want to present the Gospel clearly. We want to speak the Truth accurately and handle the Word of God correctly. We’ve got to do that, and we’ve got to be equipped for the works of service toward that end. That’s all true. But when everything is said and done, we cannot do anything by ourselves. “Apart from Me, you can do nothing.” We’ve got to get it through our heads that our knowledge and persuasive skills are not



the end of things and that God Himself has got to work with us confirming His Word. If He doesn’t do that, we’re without hope.

That’s why the Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Muslims are converting more people than we are. It’s because we are relying on argument rather than on God. Do you see that? It’s because we’ve not asked Him, “Confirm Your Word by the acts from heaven that follow it.” We try to argue people into believing what we believe. The end product of that is usually shallowness. We go over land and sea to make a single convert but they’re just as impotent as we are. Have you noticed that? Am I saying something that you don’t recognize as you look around and scan the religious horizon? It’s not right, and it’s not the Christianity you read about in the book of Acts. The Kingdom of God does not consist of mere words, ideas and belief systems, but of power. It consists of God intervening on the face of this earth. “Come, Thy Kingdom. Be done, Thy will. Intervene with humans and it will testify to Your presence, Your holiness and Your purposes.”

Care Enough to Die

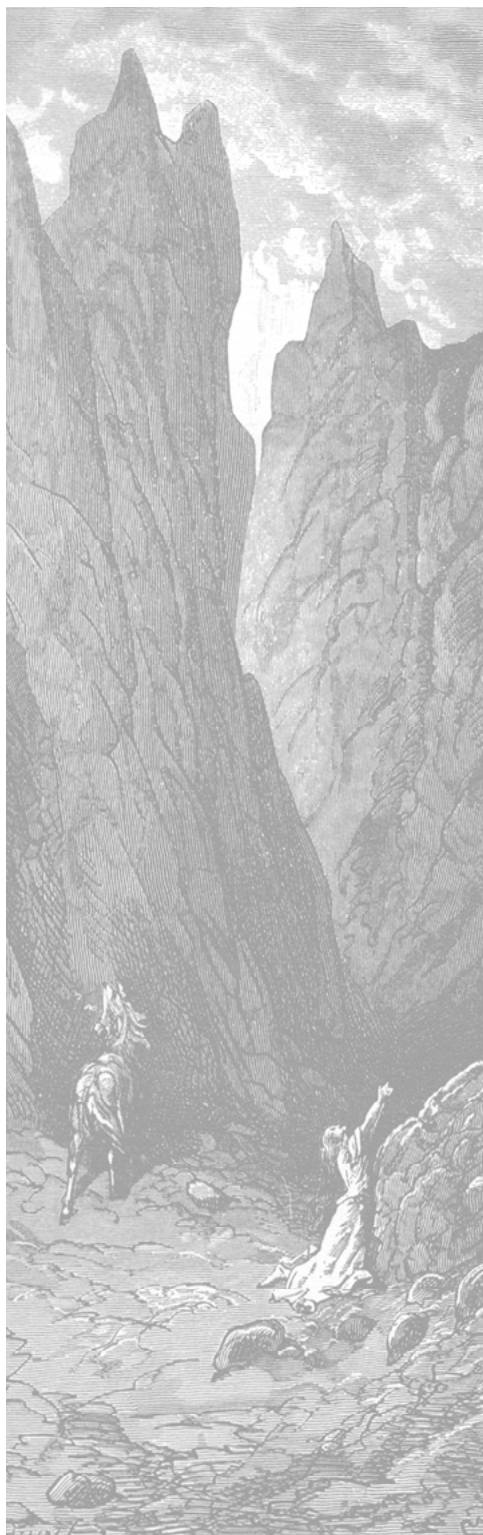
God is looking for a people that will be an inheritance to Him, as Paul said (Eph. 1:18). We have to have that kind of heart and be willing to die to see that come to fruition. Jesus taught us to pray, “Come, Thy Kingdom. Be done, Thy will” (Mat. 6:10). He said those words in the imperative tense so that’s why I’ve been saying it that way too. In teaching us to pray that way, He gave us two examples. One was about the persistent widow and the judge (Luke 18). You can see the drive and great persistence there. The other example was the man at midnight that went to his friend in order to get bread (Luke 11). It says the man didn’t give him bread because he was his friend, but because of the man’s shameless persistence. Because of that, he came down and gave him as much as he wanted.

In James it says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” (James 5:16). Right after that it says that Elijah was a man just like us. He was just like us and he prayed and the heavens were shut up for three and half years. He prayed again and heaven released the rain. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Like the man at midnight and like the widow with the judge, we’ve got to be pushing and driving into these things. We’ve got to care enough to die, to see “on earth as it is in heaven.” The Kingdom of God is entered forcefully, and the violent take it by force (Mat. 11:12). That’s got to be our heart, our passion, our purpose and the only thing that we live for. It’s got to be that the reason we breathe air is to see the manifold wisdom of God made known to the principalities and powers. We live that the gates of hell would no longer prevail against our children, our co-workers, and the marriages around us. We live so that the drugs, the attitudes, the blasphemy, the hostility, the cheating, and the immorality would no longer prevail.

It’s got to be our full heart and will to die for those things—and dying isn’t such a big deal if you understand the Kingdom of God. What, after all, am I really risking? What if I was to die of starvation? Or what if I died in a car crash or for some other reason? If I lost my life while in the pursuit of “on earth as it is in heaven,” there would be nothing but reward from it. I would lose nothing.

Why should I make an idol out of my life? If it’s my will to not make an idol out of my job, or family, or possessions, or hobbies, why should I make an idol out of my physical life which has no more eternal value than my CD player? What does it matter if we risk even our lives to see on earth as it is in heaven? So what? That’s what the Kingdom of God is all about.

I’m urging you to put aside anything that stands in the way. If it’s selfishness, put it aside. If it’s immorality, drive a stake through it now like Phinehas did (Num. 25:7-8). If it’s lust



or pride or ambition, drive a stake through it like Phinehas did. If not, you will be turned over to your delusions and have no part in the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom will be taken away from you and given to a people who will bear its fruit (Mat. 21:43). Drive a stake through those things or you’ll live to regret it.

There are some things for which there can be no repentance. Esau sold his birthright for a little bit of fleshly-appetite indulgence, and even with tears he couldn’t change God’s mind – it was over with (Gen. 25:29-34). Moses struck the rock and it was over with (Num. 20:7-12). There was no going into the Promised Land for Moses, and he could not bring about a change of God’s mind. (We don’t have any record of him even trying, but I think he knew God too well for that.) Or remember when the spies went into the land and came back with a bad report? Then they changed their minds and said, “Oh, let’s go in and take the land anyway.” Do you remember what happened to them? Executed. God struck them down (Num. 13-14). They could not bring about a change of His mind. We can’t just say, “Oh okay. I get it. Now I’ll go in.” Wrong.

Your lives are very short, and I’d encourage you to nail everything that stands in the way. Put them totally aside. Be like the persistent widow and like the man at midnight with his friend. Be like Elijah, a man just like us. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.” Drive into God’s will and don’t give up. Care about these things.

Care that God would make for Himself a great Name on this planet. Care that the mountain of the Lord’s Temple would be established as Chief among the mountains, and all the nations would say, “Come, let us go to the house of the Lord” (Is. 2:2-3). And they would stream into it because they know the Lord, He is God. Cry out that He would make for Himself a great Name. Make that the passion of your existence and let absolutely nothing get in the way of that. Don’t let marriage, or romance, or jobs or anything

at all get in the way of that. Joel said, “Let the bridegroom and the bride come out of their chamber” (Joel 2:16). Forget your wedding night because this is so much bigger than that. That’s got to be our heart.

“Oh, I just bought some oxen. I have to go try them out.”

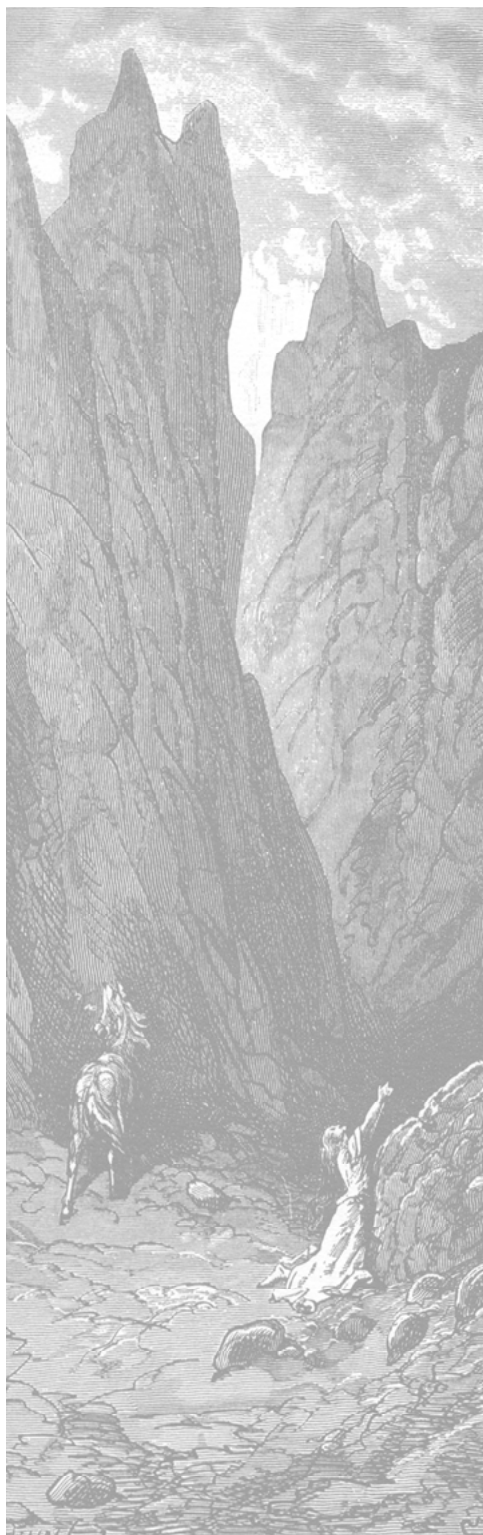
“I just got married” (Luke 14:15-24). Let none of those things stand in your way. Remember that Esau could bring about no change of God’s mind once he had sold his birthright. Today is the day of deliverance, so do not harden your hearts (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3). You’re going to have to move on ahead.

After God’s Own Heart

“The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go” (Acts 3:13).

God glorified His servant Jesus. Why did He do that? Why did He exalt Him and give Him the Name above every other name? He exalted Him because He made Himself nothing and took on the form of a servant and became obedient to His Father, even though it cost Him His life. Zeal for His Father’s House consumed Him and just lit a fire in Him. He was a torch burning for the glory of God. He had no other selfish ambitions or vain conceits, but He emptied Himself. “Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus...” is the introduction to that passage. Because He had that attitude, “God highly exalted Him and gave Him that Name above every name” (Php. 2).

God confirmed Him because He was a man after His own heart. He was *the* Man after His own heart. He glorified His servant, Jesus. Why? Because His servant, Jesus, lived for Him. David was a man after God’s own heart too. Why was



he a man after God’s own heart according to Acts? “Because he did everything I told him to do” (Acts 13:22). That’s why he was a man after God’s own heart. It wasn’t that David sat around and hummed and swayed back and forth and lifted his hands in the air. It wasn’t a mystical idea. He was a man after God’s heart because he did everything the Father wanted him to do. That’s the challenge that’s in front of us.

It is entirely possible to harden our hearts at this instance in time. That is what tends to happen over the course of time when you hear the Word of God and it comes to you and touches you and your eyes light up – but you don’t do anything about it. So, harden not your hearts and instead cry out to God and give Him no rest until He establishes Jerusalem as the praise of the earth (Isaiah 62:6-7). That has to be your heart. Give God no rest until He establishes His people as the praise of the earth. Give Him no rest until His mountain is established as chief among the mountains and not a byword among the nations (Ps. 44:14) or a land called desolate (Is. 62:4), which is what the world thinks about it right now.

If you were to take a poll in the United States or anywhere else asking what Christianity is to the world, the feedback you’d get is that it’s just another idea or hobby. It’s a byword. There’s nothing about it that would cause men to say, “Whoa, these people that have turned the world upside down have come to our city also!” (Acts 17:6). Nobody responds that way to today’s Christianity. They don’t care about it or really notice it. Maybe in a communist country they wouldn’t like our philosophy, but they aren’t threatened by it because *God* is in it. The people’s hearts are not melting as they did in Rahab’s day (Joshua 2:8-11) or as they did in the Philistines’ day because the Ark of God was coming and a great shout had gone up from the Israelites (1Sam. 4:5-9).

I want to encourage you all to not get sidetracked with religion here. This is big stuff. It’s important and it’s

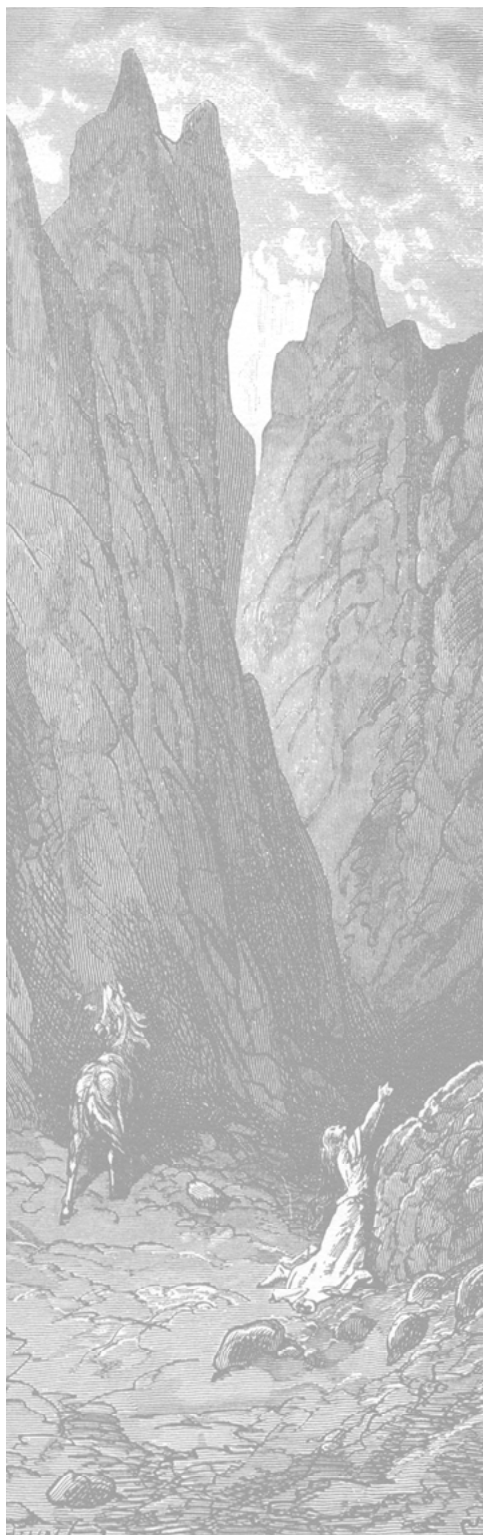
essential. If your heart isn't wide open to what we're talking about right now, and if you're instead sniffing porridge, then you'll die in your sins. You'll die in your hardness of heart, and you'll always be chasing a new idea or system or program or format. You'll always be running after little side things which will never have God's thumbprint on them. It'll never be, "God pouring out what you now see and hear." You'll die in a mundane existence of statistical probability. I hope that idea makes you sick.

It makes me sick to think of any of us settling for the mundane, so that's why I'm talking about these things. You don't need to be sitting around 20 years from now singing a few songs and having a few prayers and God not be in it. I don't want that to happen to you. I'm all for singing songs and praying prayers—you know me well enough to know I'm not knocking those. I'm just saying that if it's not God, I don't want any part of it. We may as well join the Kiwanis Club or the Lions' Club. If God's not in it, I don't want it. And I hope that's true for you all, too. Where God is, there's no mistaking it. You don't have to drum it up and you don't have to have a pep rally to prove anything. Where God is, there will be no mistaking it. He did create the universe after all. He's a Big Guy.

Declare the Kingdom!

"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus" (Acts 4:29).

The declaration or proclamation of the Word of God and the testimony of the Word of God by the stretching out of His hand to do something that's undeniable are always intimately linked together in the Scriptures. God stretches



out His hand to confirm the Word that's been spoken. "Yes, this is My Word. The Lord, He is God." That has got to be the way we seek after the propagation of His Kingdom.

It's not that I'm trying to reason people into the Kingdom of God. The heart of it is that I am declaring to them that the Kingdom of God has come. I'm not trying to back-pat anybody and use my persuasive skills and beg them to be a part of the Kingdom of God. My job is a declaration and a proclamation of what God has done and is doing and will do. And I make no apologies for that.

Friendship evangelism is out for me. I'm all for being friends of people, and I'm going to lay down my life for them. That's what Jesus did. He came to serve, not to be served. That's who Jesus is, so if Jesus lives in me, I will lay down my life for every man I come into contact with, even those that consider themselves my enemies. I'll die for them if the heart of Christ is really living in me and through me. By that I don't mean that I'll be gruff and uncaring and rude. But I do mean this: I can put my hand on their shoulder and look at them with eyes of love and say, "God is not up for a vote. He doesn't need your permission to be Lord. He *is* Lord, so bow your knee. I declare to you the Kingdom of God. If you'd like in on it, that's fine. If not, one day all of His enemies will be made His footstool. So, choose to be the footstool if you wish."

That's the nature of it and that's the kind of declaration that God follows with His testimony. It's a declaration and a proclamation, not idle reasoning or philosophical arguments or the "Romans road" approach or door-knocking house to house. It's a proclamation that God is sovereign—the Good News. Paul says, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news" (Romans 10:15). He's quoting Isaiah and if you go back and look it up, Paul just left off the colon and the end part of it, which is, "Our God reigns" (Isaiah 52:7).

That's the Good News: our God reigns. He's Lord of all, He's King of kings, and He's coming on His white horse,

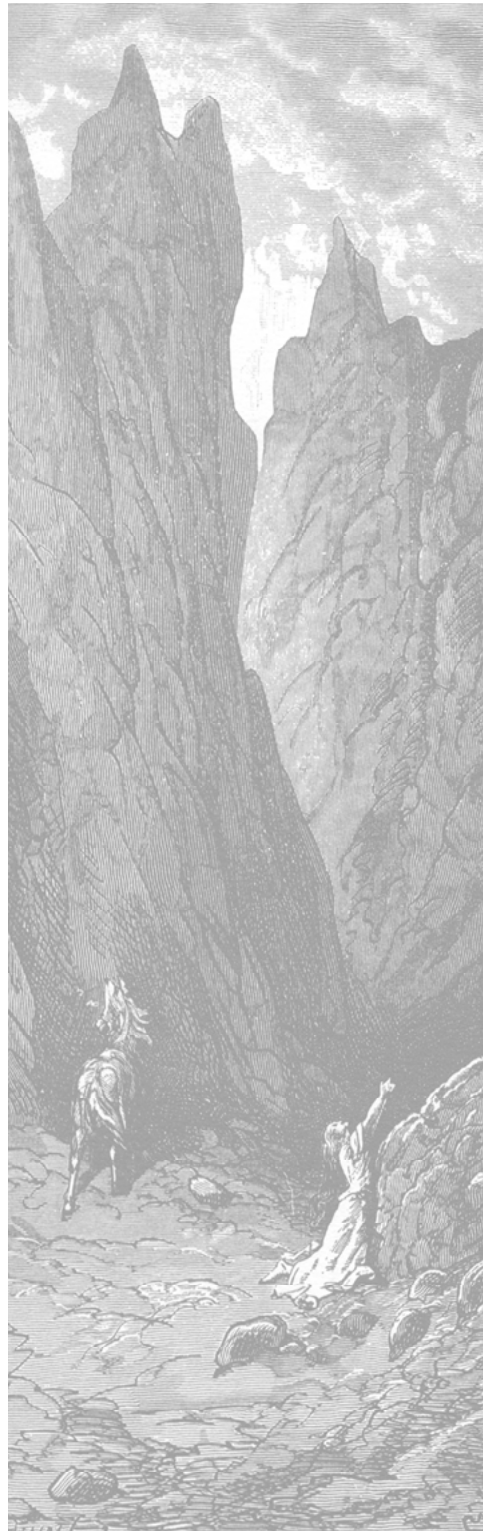
Faithful and True, to judge the nations with an iron scepter. He's going to come and tread out the winepress of the wrath of God Almighty. All the enemies of God will be made His footstool. That's the nature of this Kingdom and so we say to people, "If you want in, praise God. If you don't, that's your choice, but I beg you and plead with you to save yourselves from this corrupt generation." That's the heart and the message that God follows: Jesus is Lord. It's not that someday out there He will be Lord. It's that He is Lord now.

You do not need to beg people, "Pretty please, make Him Lord?" The message is that Jesus Christ *is* Lord. He is the King of all the kings and the Lord of all the lords. He is the ruler of the heavens and the earth and those under the earth. That's what it's all about. And God will follow the proclaiming of that kind of message that lays bare the heart and declares Him to be who He is.

"And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6).

Notice those words again—*"hearing and seeing the miracles which he did."*

Remember in Acts 13 when Paul met Elymas, Bar-Jesus, the "son" of Jesus, the impostor of Jesus? The proconsul Sergius Paulus was being persuaded by this man, Elymas. Whoever he was, he must have been a very respectable kind of guy to be able to persuade a Roman proconsul. He must've been a shrewd three-piece-suit-and-leather-briefcase kind of guy to have that kind of influence on a man of proconsul rank. This Elymas was no fool and no court jester. Paul came to him and said, "You're a child of Satan and an enemy of everything that's right. When will you stop perverting the right ways of God?" Paul, being full of the Spirit of Jesus said those things and then struck him blind. At that, Sergius Paulus said, "I believe."



Do you see what happened there? Let there be something they can see and hear. Let it be so. In Elymas' case it was something that he could hear and *not* see! "God, join Yourself to these words. Prove and confirm these words." Let it be so.

That has got to be our heart: "God do something. Pour out something that can be seen and heard. Prove Yourself. Confirm Your Word. I can't do it and it's not something I can persuade men about. The Kingdom of God does not consist of all of my words. It consists of power. And God, let these seeds be something that produce a crop. He who plants is nothing and he who waters is nothing. Only God can give the increase, so to Him be the glory."

God Showed Up

"And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:45).

At the beginning of Acts 10, you see Peter having a big argument with God, as you may recall. He went up on the roof and was a little hungry, waiting for dinner. In a trance he had a vision. A sheet came down with all of these unclean animals and God said, "Take, kill and eat." And Peter said, "No way, Lord."

There's the power of traditions for you. His tradition was so strong, so embedded, and so engrained in him, that God Himself spoke and Peter said, "No, God." That's how powerful traditions are. Three times he said, "No, God. No, Lord." So, Peter is pretty pig-headed at this point. Then a few things begin to happen. God tells Peter that some men are going to show up at his door. "Ding, dong," goes the bell. "Oh, these must be the men that God just told me about. All right." So Peter invited them into his home,

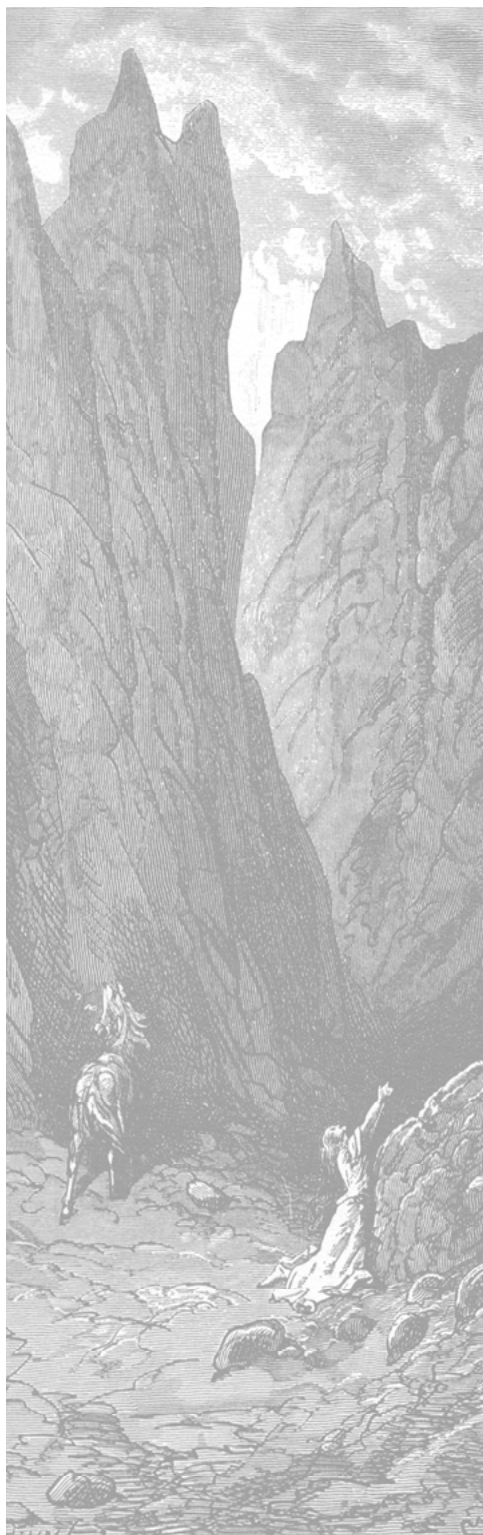
which in itself was an act that a Jew wouldn't be very prone to do. And it says Peter became their host.

So, Peter then goes with those men—which again, there wasn't much of a precedent for going with Gentiles, anywhere. He went into their home too. The first thing he said was, “You know I shouldn't even be in here. But I am because God told me to. I saw a trance and it said, ‘Don't call any men unclean that God has called clean.’” Peter finally understood what the vision was all about. But even so, he was just getting into his “sermon” now, and he starts off with, “What do you guys want anyway?”

He still hadn't quite made the link about what God was trying to do. He's talking away and to him the Kingdom of God is consisting of mere words. But then God showed up, and they began to speak in languages they hadn't learned. Something bizarre was going on.

Later in Acts 11, Peter is recounting the issue to the Apostles who were questioning him, “Peter, what are you doing, going into the home of these Gentiles?” And Peter said, “You don't understand. I had the same attitude you guys have, but God showed up. I couldn't stop it. So I said, ‘What hinders these men from being baptized in water?’ God visited them the same way He did us. Remember the words of John that he would baptize in water, but Jesus would baptize in the Holy Spirit. So I couldn't stop it. God showed up. All of my traditions had to melt. All of my prejudices, my biases, and all of my scriptural knowledge had to go to the wayside, because God showed up and it was undeniable.”

Let that be the thing that marks your life—the Word of God coming forth clearly. Let your passion and your fervent, effectual prayer, like the man at midnight be, “God, pour out something men can see and hear. Break the bondage of tradition that is stronger than the Lordship of Jesus Christ. God, pour out something that will wake



these people up. I can't do it. My words are not persuasive enough and I'm not smart enough. They might even know their Bibles better than I do. But God, show up and break the prejudices and biases in a way that can't be denied.” Make that your prayer, would you please?

“If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?” (Acts 11:17).

That ought to be the remark that everybody makes when they hear the Word of God from us. “Who am I that I could withstand God, in spite of all my biases, prejudices, and religious upbringing? Who am I that I could withstand God?” Let that be the comment that people make when they walk away from an encounter with the Christ in you – the same way as they responded when they encountered the physical Christ when He walked on earth. “Who am I that I could withstand God?”

Barnabas had the same attitude when he went to Antioch to see what was happening there:

“When he came and he had seen the Grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord” (Acts 11:23).

Here's Barnabas showing up in Antioch because the Apostles who had sent him there were saying, “Something weird is going on in Antioch.” Men had been scattered by the persecution in Jerusalem several years earlier (Acts 8). So, men had traveled some 700-800 miles to go up to Antioch, and it says God was giving increase there. Many people, multitudes, were believing in the Lord, and Barnabas shows up at the Apostles' command to go and find out what's going on up there with the Gentiles.

These new converts in Antioch weren't even Samaritans. They didn't have any of the Jewish traditions or know any of the Talmud or the Pentateuch. They didn't know any of

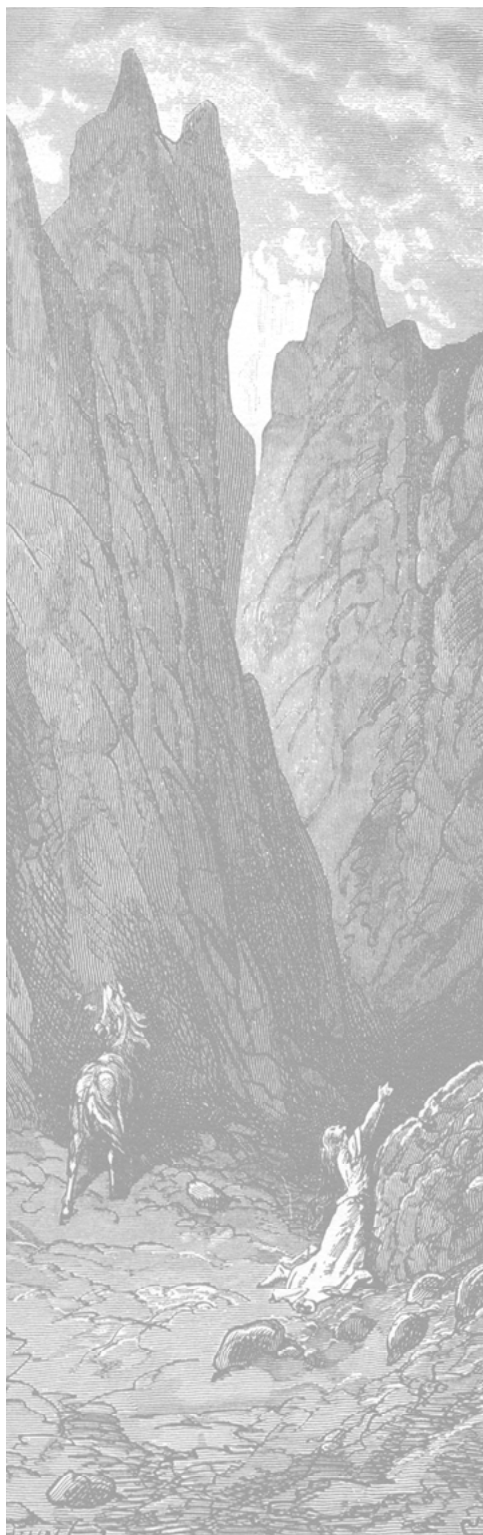
it, so all of a sudden they had a totally non-Jewish church in Antioch. Barnabas goes up to see what's going on and finds a bunch of uncircumcised Gentiles. How could it be? Barnabas showed up and notice what he said: "When he came and he had seen the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord."

He saw the grace of God. He saw God manifested in their presence and said, "Who am I that I should withstand God." And he encouraged them. Years later, it would still be an issue whether all those guys should have been circumcised or not (Acts 15). But Barnabas saw the grace of God and that was all he needed to know. He didn't have to reason his way through the whole thing. If God shows up, men are without excuse and without argument.

Pray that God will show up and the grace of God will be manifested. "With great power the apostles testified and great grace, *mega-charis*, was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). Grace was on them all.

"And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom but in demonstration of Spirit and power, that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God" (1Cor. 2:4-5).

If you read through First and Second Corinthians, you'll find that Paul and Apollos had this thing going on that was hard for Paul. Maybe some other time we can talk about that. Paul makes a sarcastic comment about, "I didn't need letters when I came to you" (2Cor. 3:1). He said that because if you look back in Acts 18 and 19, you'll see that Apollos got letters from the brothers in Ephesus to go to Corinth. Paul is leaving Corinth after establishing the church, and Apollos is leaving Ephesus heading toward Corinth, and he's coming with letters in his hand. So Paul is constantly making these sarcastic comments like, "Well, all right, he was persuasive and powerful in speech and I didn't come



with that kind of persuasion. If you're comparing my contemptible speech to that of Apollos, you've got the wrong man. But let me tell you this much: it was with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power lest it be based on my persuasive skills, wisdom, and knowledge."

In 1 Corinthians 4 he says, "I apply these things for my sake and Apollos' sake," referring to, "my conscience is clear but that doesn't make me innocent. God will judge on the appointed day, the motives of men's hearts." Paul didn't want to touch it. He didn't want to deal with it about Apollos directly, but there was definitely some tension there and you see it showing up again and again.

Here's the point I want to make. If you don't have persuasive skills or eloquent speech, and your knowledge and wisdom aren't monumental, that's all right because unlearned and ignorant men turned the world upside down. "Not many of you were wise," was the comment he made to the Corinthians (1Cor 1:26), because being wise or persuasive isn't the issue. The issue is that God has hidden these things from the wise and the learned and the scholarly and revealed them to those who are as little children, with tender and obedient hearts (Luke 10:21).

Paul said, "I don't have to have persuasive skills and eloquence because God attested with the Spirit and with power." To the Thessalonians he said the message came to them "with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction was upon you" (1Thess. 1:5). It was like he was saying, "I rest my case."

God showed up. God showed up! That's got to be the cry of your heart with every step you take on planet Earth. With every step you take on this globe let it be with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Let great grace be manifested wherever you go. God showed up. You don't want to be another good Joe with a different philosophy as you argue your case. Let it be something that's undeniably

God. Not with eloquence, human persuasive skills and human wisdom, but rather, “God, pour out something men can see and hear. Let it be a demonstration of Your Spirit and of power.” I risk my life crying out for that. Let it be Deity and not man.

Not Words, but Power

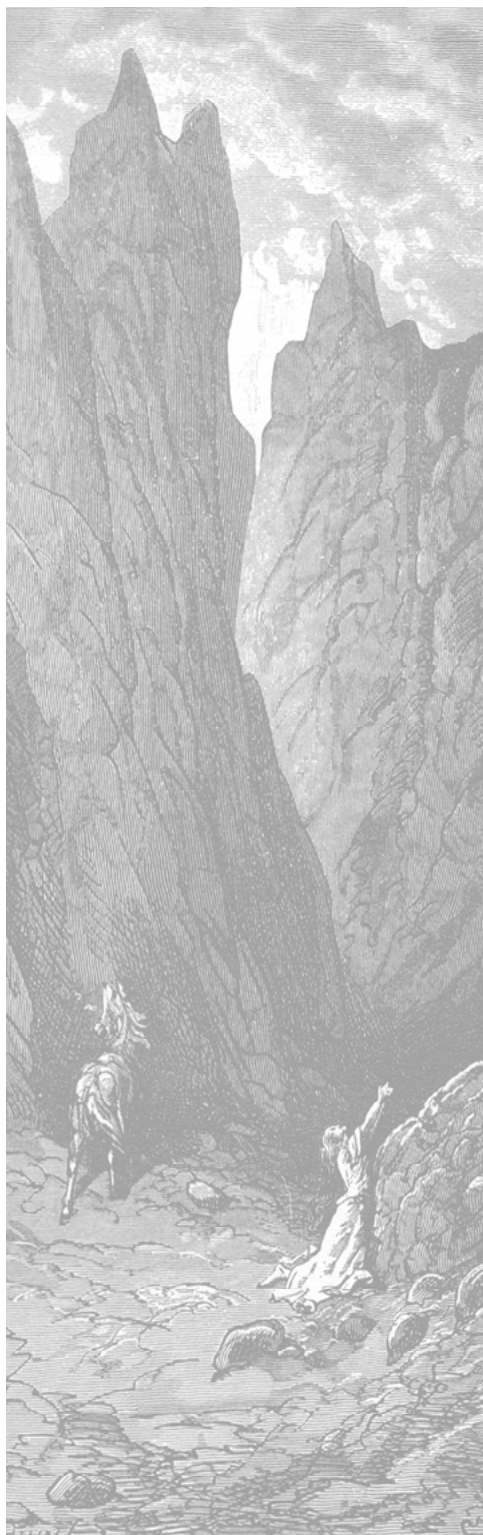
We’ve talked about this passage some already.

“Now some are puffed up, as though I were not coming to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord wills, and I will know, not the word of those who are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word but in power” (1 Cor 4:18-20).

The context was that some people claimed they had knowledge and had it all together. But he said, “I’ll find out what these people are made of soon enough. I’m not coming to you with words, but with power.” A confidence is there. “I know that God is confirming my word by His activity. It’s undeniably Deity that follows me.”

He was saying, “Some are puffed up, but it’s okay. It’s no problem and I’m not worried about it. We’ll hoe through that row. You have 10,000 tutors but not many fathers. Examine yourselves to see if you are in the faith. See if the Spirit of Christ isn’t living in you. After all, that’s what it’s all about. Has not your life changed by my interaction with you?” He’s reasoning with them and in this case he says, “A demonstration of Spirit and of power is the proof that God is in this. It’s not just my words.”

“I have become a fool in boasting; you have compelled me. For I ought to have been commended by you; for in nothing was I behind the most eminent apostles, though I am nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were



accomplished among you with all perseverance, in signs and wonders and mighty deeds” (2Cor. 12:11-12).

He said, “I’ve become a fool in all of this boasting. But I’m not any less than the eminent apostles though by my own admission, I am nothing. Truly the signs of a sent one were accomplished among you with all perseverance in signs and wonders and mighty deeds.”

And that’s not a mark just of an apostle, that’s a mark of a sent one. Philip did great signs and wonders, and he wasn’t an apostle, but an evangelist. Jesus said that signs would follow those who believe and proclaim His word (Mark 16:17). “Go into every nation and baptize. Teach them to obey everything I commanded you and I will be with you to the very end of the age. I will be with you” (Matt. 28:19-20). That’s not meant to be something to just comfort or encourage us. That has to do with a demonstration of the Spirit and of Power.

Remember what Jesus said when He came down from the Mount of Transfiguration and those men said, “Why weren’t we able to cast out these demons?” First He made fun of them, “Oh, you perverse and unbelieving generation.” He was surprised that they couldn’t handle it. Or when they woke Him up in the hull of the ship, He said, “Come on you guys...I’ve been with you and you still don’t believe? All right, all right. ‘Peace be still.’”

It’s like Jesus was always surprised at their responses. He was caught off guard. God gets caught off guard by our unbelief. He’s surprised that we think of ourselves as mere men. He’s surprised that we have such a low estimate of His work in us and on this earth that we’re caught off guard by a storm. We’re not able to deal with it, but He expects us to be able to. Maybe it needs to be dealt with by prayer and fasting—by that fervency of spirit that says, “No, I won’t accept the natural! I won’t accept the predictable. I won’t accept the statistically probable. I won’t accept it.” Some

kind only come out by prayer and fasting: “If you say to this mountain, ‘Be thou removed and cast into the sea,’ not doubting, it will be done.” That’s normal Christianity, not some hyper-spiritual verse. That’s the nature of the Christ-Life.

“Christ in you, the hope of Glory.”

“Apart from Me you can do nothing. This is how you show yourselves to be my disciples, by bearing much fruit.

“Greater things than these shall you do.”

“If any of you says to this mountain, ‘Be thou removed and cast into the sea,’ it will be done.”

“God has poured out these things you now see and hear.”

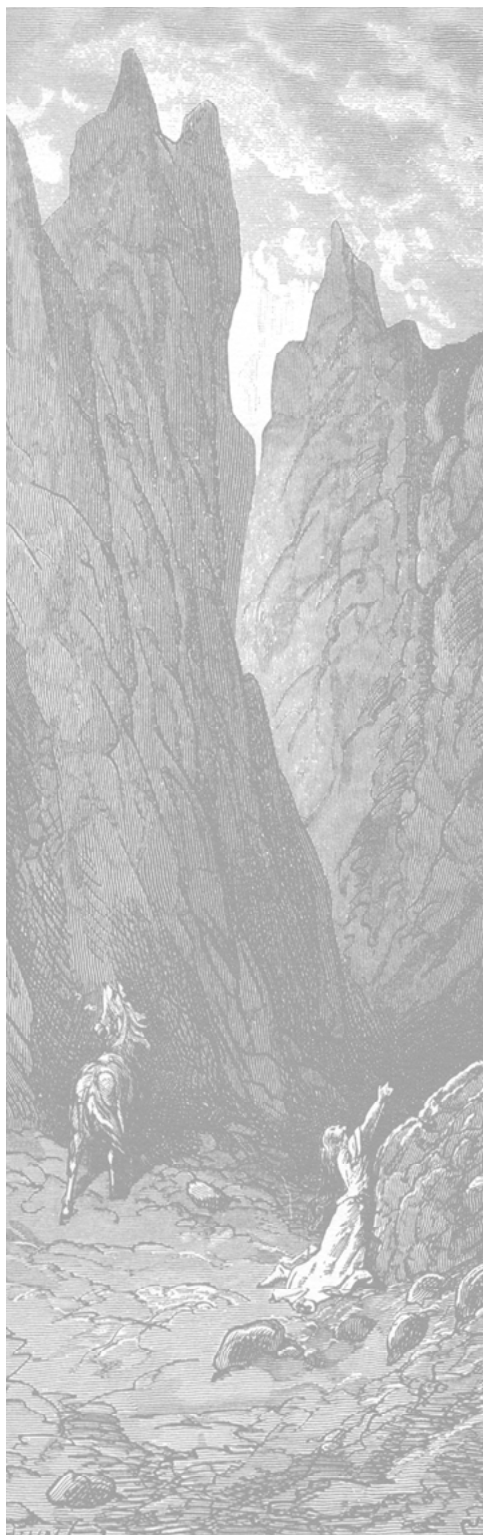
The Lord, He is God—He is God! Paul talked about using divine weapons to tear down satan’s strongholds. We need to see that and we need to see the gates of hell not prevailing against His Church. In order to do that, it will involve the use of divine weapons.

Your Presence, Oh God!

“Moses said to the LORD, ‘You have been telling me, “Lead these people,” but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, “I know you by name and you have found favor with me.” If I have found favor in your eyes, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people.’

“The LORD replied, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’

“Then Moses said to him, ‘If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people



unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?” (Exodus 33:12-16).

He said, “God, don’t send us anywhere, don’t ask me to do anything unless Your presence is going to go with us. If people can’t distinguish the things I’m saying and doing from all the other jargon and philosophy in the world, then don’t even send me. Strike me dead right here. I don’t want to go anywhere unless Your presence goes with me.”

“If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth? Remember this nation is Your people.”

Give God no rest until He makes Jerusalem the praise of the earth. Make His people, the Israel of God, the Church, as Paul called it, the praise of the earth.

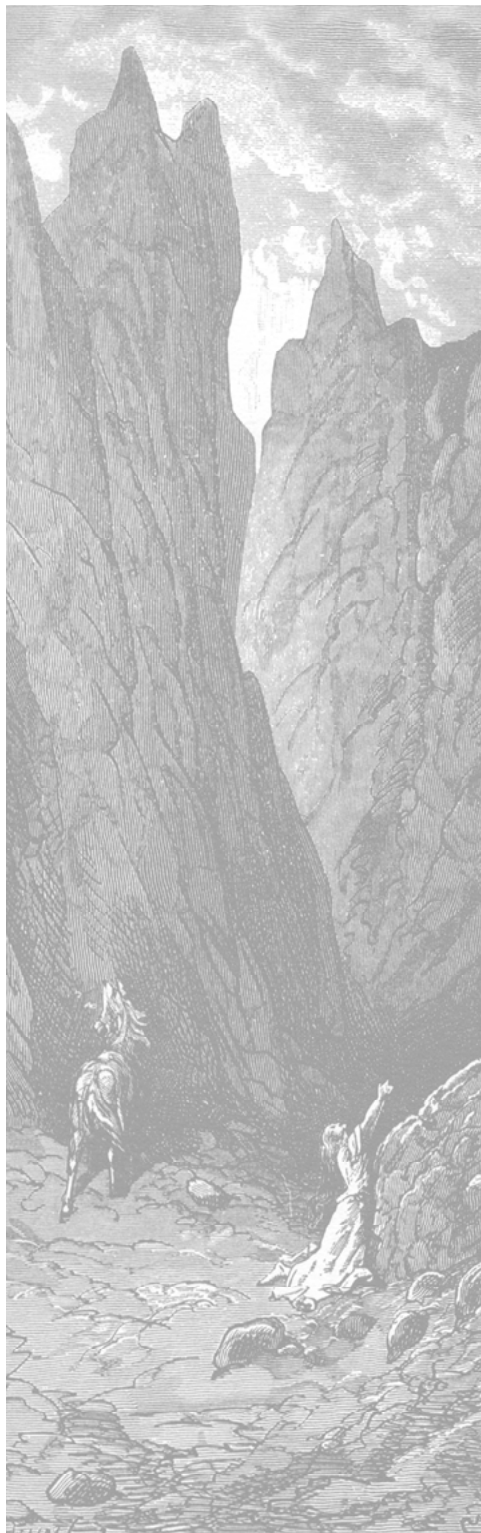
Father, the tremendous quantity of words, even those that have gone out in the last little while are a grievance to You if we are settling for those things merely as words. The planting is nothing and the watering is nothing. Only You and the increase You give means anything in the eternal realm. Apart from You we can do absolutely nothing. Our God, we plead with You that our efforts and existence here won’t be explained simply by the natural, the predictable, or the statistical. Our God, we need Your presence to go before us and to go behind us as a rear guard. Please don’t send us anywhere, to do anything, unless You go with us, always to the very end of the age.

The “great commission” is a joke, our “churches” are a joke and our existence here is a sad, sad tale unless Your will, Your purposes, Your presence, and Your glory go before us. We ask that You would put Your words in our mouths and confirm Your words by Your life, Your presence, and Your power that follows.

We're sick and tired and in fear and trembling like our brother Paul was, lest our words be eloquent and filled with knowledge and stinking scholarship and yet have no Spirit and no Power. Our God, we pray that You would help us to see these things and be bond slaves to Your Word and to this Truth that was spoken of. I pray that You would expose in every heart, every mind, every imagination, every hand, every eye, every ear, every lip, every place where our feet go, that You would expose all of those things that are just for us. Expose Esau's bowl of chili, or our rock that we are tempted to strike, our ambitions, our idols, our golden calves. Our God, give us a clear vision of that golden calf in our lives that we are worshipping and calling on to let us out of Egypt. Free us from the bondage and please ruin us for anything except Your complete and full will.

God, we want to be a part of a people that the gates of hell do not prevail against any longer after 2000 years of a prevailing kingdom of darkness. We want to be a part of a people through which are shown the manifold wisdom and Glory that You have, to the principalities and powers and to the people of this world.

We want to be a part of that and ask that You would expose in our lives anything that separates us from that. We don't want to have the Kingdom ripped away from us and given to another people that will bear its fruit and don't just talk about it and sing about it. Our God, help us in these things and lift us up. We pray to You with everything within ourselves, even at the risk of our own lives. We pray that You would wake us up and shake out the cobwebs and break the hypnotic trance that we're in and the religious rituals. Break us free from all those things and lead us in the path of everlasting into Your ways. We pray in the Name of Your Son Jesus, the Mighty, the Powerful, and Glorious Name. The Name at which every knee will bow.



Chariot of Fire

I hope this song typifies your heart. It would break my heart if it doesn't...

*I rise up to worship
I stand to acclaim,
The King of all Glory
Christ Jesus His Name.
I ask you, King Jesus,
Fulfill this desire,
Ignite me and make me
A chariot of Fire.
Come ride on my life, Lord Jesus Christ,
My King and my Master.
Come ride on my life to this one goal
I wholly aspire.
Come ride on my life, Lord Jesus Christ,
My King and my Master.
Come ride on my life and I will be
A chariot of Fire.*

M.P.
Indianapolis, IN
1988