

*Chapter 22***Visions of the Lord**

BY A. C. VALDEZ, JR.

My story begins several years ago while I was pastoring a church in Phoenix, Arizona. I was greatly burdened in my soul, because I felt we were not seeing the results we should in the way of souls being saved and believers going on with God. I found out that all over America and throughout the world, many were falling by the wayside and spiritual stagnation was prevalent. The hearts of Christians were getting hard. Backsliders were going deeper into sin, and sinners were even more wicked than at any other period in the history of the world. Recent authenticated statistical reports uphold what I say, as to the degrading conditions of the world today. Surely there must be a way out in such a wicked, perverse generation of time. My heart was broken and crushed, and the burden for a lost and dying world gripped my soul.

One day while in prayer, with my Bible open before me, my eyes fell upon a Scripture that seemed to loom right up before me. The Scripture was Psalm 119:126, "It is time for thee, Lord, to work: for they have made void thy law." In my prayer I said, "Yes, dear God, the people have been so wicked and the

Christians have grown so cold, and by their actions and deeds they have made void Thy law. Since they do not keep Thy commandments, it is time for Thee, Lord, to work." Precious friend, when man moves out of the way and God steps in to work, you will see more accomplished in five seconds than any man can do in five years.

GROANINGS AND TRAVAILINGS

Shortly after this, I was awakened out of my sleep one night with a very heavy burden gripping my soul. I went into the church prayer room and prayed until break of day. A few days later this same burden came upon me again. Once more I spent hours in groaning and travailing in the Spirit.

At the time I did not understand what this burden was for, but I felt I would die. All I could do was pray until relief would come. The burden would leave me for several days and then it would come back upon me. If this burden had remained upon me constantly, I have no doubt but that I would have died. It would be hard for anyone to appreciate how I felt or what I went through, unless one had gone through a similar experience.

This burden was upon me approximately two years, lifting from me for several days and then returning. At times I became desperate and fasted and prayed for hours at a time. Once I was convinced my time had come, and other times I felt possibly some member of my family was to be taken away.

Reflecting upon those days of fastings and waitings, I can now see the hand of Almighty God, as He was purifying me and preparing me for the ministry that was some day to cause thousands to come to Christ and many thousands to be healed.

A MESSAGE AT MIDNIGHT

One night about midnight, I was awakened out of a deep slumber. I felt a presence enter my room that frightened me. Then I heard soft footsteps coming into my room and my heart stood still. A voice came out clear and distinct, saying, "Son!" I looked, but could see nothing but darkness. The voice spoke the second time, "Son!" This time I definitely knew God was speaking to me, and I trembled with fear.

I was not in the presence of a president or an earthly king with splendor and power, but I was in the presence of God Almighty, Creator of the heavens and the earth . . . One who speaks the word and worlds come into existence suddenly. Yes, I was in the presence of the King of kings! I trembled, realizing the fragility of poor humanity in the presence of God.

A VISIT FROM ANGELS

Realizing my need of help in this momentous hour, I cried out to God to please give me the strength to take in this most glorious and supernatural event. Immediately, angels from heaven were dispatched to my bedside and began to minister to me. I felt something warm touch the top of my head and flow to the bottom of my feet. Divine strength came into me, and immediately I felt at ease and comforted and my entire body seemed to be in a glow of glory.

THE GIFT IS GIVEN

The third time the voice said, "Son!" This time, with my ears tuned to heaven and my spirit under control, I listened with eagerness in that solemn hour. The voice said, "I am giving to you the gifts of healing: power to open blind eyes; to unstop

deaf ears; to cause the dumb to speak; the cripples to walk; power to cure cancers and tumors, and sicknesses and diseases of all kinds. I give unto you power and authority over demons, and I want you to tell the people I am coming soon!"

PROPHECY

There were many other things the voice told. Some were prophetic, concerning my own life, which happened exactly as the voice of the Lord said they would. My wife and I have gone over some of these prophetic utterances and have marveled at the accuracy of the prophecies, a number of which have already been fulfilled to even the most minute details.

MIRACLES TAKE PLACE

Following this experience, I began to pray for the sick and afflicted, and many mighty miracles were performed in the Name of Jesus. True to the prophecy, blind eyes were opened; the deaf heard; the dumb spake; the cripples walked; cancers were healed, and many other divine cures too numerous to mention.

TWO THINGS GOD ASKED ME TO DO

However, there were two things that God asked me to do that I resisted. The first was leave my church and take the message to the nation. The second was to acknowledge publicly that God had given to me the gifts of healing. Those two things were difficult for me to do. I did not actually come out and tell God I would not do those two things, but I just kept putting God off.

I hated to leave my church. I was deeply attached to my flock. I loved them as I would my own children and many of

them had been born into the faith through my ministry. I had pastored this congregation for approximately ten years in all, and I knew it would be difficult for me to break away from them.

The one thing I especially resisted was to publicly acknowledge the gifts of healing. There is much criticism attached when one claims to have the gifts of healing. In times past, and even now, there are those who claim to have the gifts and do not possess them. Such a thing has brought reproach and much persecution to those who do have the genuine gifts of healing. Any man who dares to claim he has the gifts of healing is going to be persecuted and most of his persecution will come from lukewarm and backslidden church people, and, sad to say, some ministers.

Now my friend, when God tells you to do something, you had better do it, regardless of what the price may be. If you do not do what God tells you to do, you will suffer for your disobedience. This thing I learned from experience, which you will presently see.

God was blessing my ministry and hundreds were being healed. My congregation was overjoyed and grateful recipients of the wonderful new ministry given their pastor. Many were being saved and my church was experiencing a time of reviving. But I was not carrying out the order God had given me to leave my church. I was so absorbed in my new success and with plans and thoughts for the future of my church, that I had completely neglected to fulfill what God had commanded me to do. I had not acknowledged the gifts! I had not left my church!

I was so intensely interested in my local efforts and in my own church affairs, that I had completely forgotten God's plan for me. After a few months, I noticed my ministry did not have the effect it formerly had. Fewer people were being healed. The power I once had seemed to be ebbing and becoming less

and less every day, until finally I realized something was wrong somewhere. I prayed and sought God, but still to no avail.

WIFE BECOMES ILL

Then one day my wife became very ill and was confined to her bed. Her illness became more serious, and I began to pray and seek God in her behalf. Instead of getting better, she rather grew worse, and her condition became desperate. I knew something must be done. With the duties of my pastorate, and being up with my wife at all hours of the night, fasting and praying for God to heal her, and realizing the intense seriousness of my wife's illness, my spirit began to break. Apparently, all that I might do by fasting, praying, and hoping brought no relief. I felt like a little mouse who had been cornered by a hungry cat and there was no way out.

WIFE'S CONDITION BECOMES MORE CRITICAL

In desperation, when I saw that all I had done was to no avail, and my wife hopelessly sick and on the border of death, I cried unto God and said, "Dear Lord, I have prayed and fasted. I have wept until there are no more tears. My body is worn and my spirit is crushed. I know, dear Lord, this has come upon me for some disobedience on my part. I know it is my fault somewhere, dear Jesus, but my prayers are not answered and I have come to the end of myself. Please, dear Lord, forgive me for leaning on the arm of flesh, but I am not able to bear this anxiety any longer." When I said that prayer in desperation, I rushed my wife to the hospital and the best doctors in the land were immediately brought to her side.

For days those doctors nobly fought for the life of my devoted wife. She was given penicillin and sulfa drugs to bring

down the raging fever in her body. All attempts to save her began to fail one by one. It was one disappointment after another. One failure piled on top of another failure. Still I kept hoping, praying, and trusting that maybe, at the last moment, a miracle would take place and my wife would begin to recover.

ALL HOPE GONE

Then that dreadful moment came. I was advised to get ready for the shock. My wife could not live. All hope was gone. The last tie had, at last, broken and the angels would soon come to bear the spirit of my poor, tired, and suffering wife. Relief from a world of pain and woe was now to come only by the gentle release of death. When the full realization of this event began slowly to dawn upon me, it seemed nothing in the world more dreadful could happen.

REFLECTION OF THE PAST

I reflected upon the past years of our happy life together working for Jesus in His great vineyard. Together we had worked side by side, bringing precious souls to Christ. The road had not always been easy, but we had shared each other's burdens with a smile. We had wept together. We had smiled together. In sorrow, we shared as one, and, thank God, not all had been sorrows, but we had our times of rejoicing also. Now the time had come when death must separate us, and it was more than I could bear. I shall never forget those terrible moments.

I left the hospital and rushed to the church which I was then pastoring. In the lonely quietness of that little church, I began to weep like a child, until it seemed my soul, spirit, and body were like liquid. My spirit crushed and broken, I found myself

talking to God as though He were standing right before me. "Dear God," I said, "of all men I am most miserable. I have prayed, but no help is to be had. Now, dear God, all I can say is as even your servant Job did say, 'Thou hast given and thou hast taken away, blessed be the Name of the Lord.'"

GOD ANSWERS

In that moment of deepest sorrow, I began to feel a presence fill the place, until the very atmosphere seemed to radiate with God's glory. Then out of the stillness the voice of the Lord came with such tenderness, even as a father, saying to me, "Son, remember what I have asked thee to do, and yet you have not done those things."

Then I remembered that God had asked me to leave my church and to acknowledge the gift. I cried unto the Lord and said, "*Dear Lord, if you will only heal my wife, I will do anything you ask me to do, regardless of what it is.*" God knew I meant that with all my heart, for in the next moment the dear Lord spoke and said, "My son, be of good cheer, for the work is done!"

WIFE MIRACULOUSLY HEALED

I knew that everything would be all right now. It just had to be! The glory of the Lord came down into my soul, and I do not know just how long I stayed there rejoicing in the glory of my wonderful Saviour. All I know is that about nine-thirty that evening I found my way to the telephone and called the hospital. The first one to answer the telephone was the nurse who had attended my wife. She immediately recognized my voice and said, "*Rev. Valdez, I have great news for you. Your wife is going to live!*"

No one can ever know how happy I was at such wonderful

news. I felt just like I was walking on air, and all I could do was weep, my heart was so full of gratitude.

My wife began to mend immediately and her recovery was amazingly fast. As soon as she returned from the hospital, we began to make immediate plans to leave our parish and let God lead us into the field to which He had called us.

MY FIRST VISION

One night, soon after this, God gave me a marvelous vision.

I was awakened out of my sleep by the sound of a multitude of voices singing. The song they were singing was in a minor refrain, and was a plea for Jesus to help them. It was not a song of triumph and victory, but a song of sadness and pleading for help.

As I sat upright in my bed listening, a panoramic picture swept before my eyes. I beheld a huge sight of a nation of people in desperate need. These people showed the marks of pain and suffering and intense agony. A man walked up to me with his sick wife in his arms. She was the very sight of death. Her face was distorted and lined with agony. The man said, "Please pray for my wife that God will heal her, for God has sent you to us."

When I saw their despair, I wept with pity for them and said, "My friend, I wish I could do something for you, but the power I once had is gone and I can do nothing for you."

The man's countenance dropped, and in great sadness he said, "If you can't help us, then we shall surely perish."

Quickly, I realized that since God had entrusted me, at one time, with the gift of healing, I would be held responsible at the day of judgment for not fulfilling the need of the people in the calling which God had given me.

POWER RETURNS

In desperation I cried unto God and said, "Please, dear God, trust me with this gift just one more time that I might minister to these poor and needy people."

God heard that cry of my heart, and immediately I felt my body surge with healing power and I placed my hand upon this poor, sick woman. She was instantly healed and jumped from her husband's arms every whit whole.

Immediately there appeared a blind man standing before me. I placed my hand upon his eyes and he went away seeing. The lame passed before me and leaped for joy. All manner of sickness and diseases were cured in a moment.

A NEW SONG AS VISION ENDS

In this vision, it seemed I had been ministering to these afflicted people for hours, when I noticed the mournful song that had been sung by this great multitude had faded away, and from the opposite side came a heavenly anthem of joy and gladness. I looked where the sick and afflicted came from and saw the number had diminished to a mere handful.

From the opposite side, I saw these same people, but now, instead of showing the marks of pain and agony, there was joy and sunshine written on their faces. They were rejoicing and clapping their hands as they sang a new song. Rather than the song in minor refrain, it was a song of triumph, victory, and joy, and their faces were radiating with gladness.

The voice then spoke to me, in the vision, and said, "These afflicted I am sending you to, for my Blood was shed for them. Take this message to the nations and be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life."

I LEAVE MY CHURCH

We had already made plans to leave my church, and I shall never forget how difficult it was to sever those ties which held us to the little church we loved so well. The parting made our hearts to bleed, but we knew God was in it all and we wanted to do His will. We went to Lake Charles, Louisiana, and conducted a two weeks' revival. God blessed in a very sweet way, but the gift did not return. From there we went to several other places.

MY SECOND VISION

Then one night I was awakened out of a deep sleep by a presence that entered my room. The glory of the Lord began to fill the room, and I knew I was about to experience another supernatural visitation, as the glory of the Lord began to charge the atmosphere of that bedroom. The fear of the Lord came upon me and I began to quake.

As I looked up, I saw the ceiling of that dark room begin to fade away, and in the heavens appeared a light slowly descending. My eyes followed this glorious sight until it had come right into my room, and as it did, my bedroom became as light as day.

Words cannot describe this marvelous heavenly light. Where my room had been completely dark just a few minutes before, it now was brilliantly lighted. Even the designs of the wall-paper could be plainly seen and every detail of the room was clearly visible, and nowhere could any shadows be seen.

A PILLOW DESCENDS

Following this light, there appeared a pillow coming down from heaven. As I looked at the pillow, fear struck my heart

and I turned my head from the sight of it. I knew upon that pillow would be revealed to my eyes a sight that I would fear to look at.

Then I began to feel the pillow rest upon my chest. As I did, I cautiously and slowly turned my head. There lying upon that pillow was the lifeless form of our youngest child, my little boy. Yes, this man-child which we had prayed for, God had given us. I then heard a voice saying, "This child which I have given thee, wilt thou give back to me?"

I was stunned for a moment, but I realized God was speaking and I must answer at once. So without any further delay, I said, "Yes, dear Lord, if you want this child, you may take him."

GOD PROVIDES A RAM

I felt sick after I said that, and asked God to give me grace. I felt like a knife had pierced through my heart. It was not easy to give up my child. I would rather die a thousand deaths than do that.

I awoke my wife and told her about it. We both felt sick in our hearts and very sad. Each day we expected to see that little fellow be taken away from us, and our hearts were heavy. Thank God, I am able to say, at the time of this writing, we still have our little boy. I firmly believe with all my heart that God was trying me even as He did Abraham of old. God asked Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice, and when the Lord saw Abraham was willing to do that, God prepared a ram for the sacrifice and Isaac was spared. I feel so grateful to my heavenly Father because He prepared a ram for me and spared my "little Isaac."

GOD BRINGS BACK THE GIFT

God spoke to me that same evening and told me the gift would return and to begin to prepare myself for it. I immedi-

ately began to wait upon God, even as the one hundred and twenty did in the upper room just before the day of Pentecost. With anticipation I began to look for it and to expect it.

To Jesus I give all the glory, as I know He is the One who is doing the healing. If God were to lift this gift from me, I could do nothing whatsoever.

I realize the sacredness and responsibilities of this holy gift, and each day I prayerfully ask God to guide my footsteps, my actions, words and thoughts; and that my soul, mind, and body be constantly kept pure and sanctified in the Blood of Christ.

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