

## Epiphanies In Our Lives

Harmony B.C., April 27, 2007 (Morning)

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Isaiah 63:1 Who *is* this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this *that is* glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.

Epiphany: a sudden moment of understanding that causes a character to change or to act in a certain way. From the Greek epiphania "manifestation,"

(1) a usually sudden manifestation or perception of the essential nature or meaning of something (2): an intuitive grasp of reality through something (as an event) usually simple and striking (3): an illuminating discovery, realization, or disclosure by a revealing scene or moment

### I. Do Modern Day Christians Have Epiphanies?

C.H. Spurgeon and the revelation about his ministry and labors

Dwight L. Moody underwent a deep spiritual experience, not unlike a "second conversion," in 1871.

Professor Arvid Gordh (professor at the Chicago Bethel Baptist Seminary in early 1900) had a profound spiritual experience at some meetings in Chicago in February 1909.

Some of you

Me

### II. Biblical Epiphanies

Moses at the burning bush:

Exo 3:1-4 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, *even* to Horeb. 2 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush *was* not consumed. 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. 4 And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here *am* I.

Abraham and Lot at the destruction of Sodom: Genesis 18-19

Three entities appear to Abraham as he sits in his tent door in the heat of the day and they are asking questions about Sodom

Two of those entities appear at Lot's doorstep and are there to inspect Sodom.

Jacob at Bethel:

**(Jacob is on his way back** home and his servants bring him this message) Gen 32:6 And the messengers returned to Jacob, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him.

**This about Jacob at Bethel:** Genesis 32:24-25 And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. 25 And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.

Gideon hiding and threshing wheat by the winepress in Ophrah: Judges 6:11

Jdg 6:11-12 And there came an angel of the LORD, and sat under an oak which *was* in Ophrah, that *pertained* unto Joash the Abi-ezrite: and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the winepress, to hide *it* from the Midianites. 12 And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him, and said unto him, The LORD *is* with thee, thou mighty man of valor.

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace

Dan 3:20-21 And he (Nebuchadnezzar) commanded the most mighty men that *were* in his army to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, *and* to cast *them* into the burning fiery furnace. 21 Then these men were bound in their coats, their hosen, and their hats, and their *other* garments, and were cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.

Dan 3:25 He (Nebuchadnezzar) answered and said, Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.

The Church at Pentecost: Acts 2:1-4

Act 2:1 -2 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. 2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Paul on the road to Damascus - Acts 9

Act 9:1-5 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: 4 And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks.

John on the Isle of Patmos-Rev. 1:9-11

Rev 1:9-11: I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ. 10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, 11 Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send *it* unto the seven churches which are in Asia; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

### III. Common Denominators of These Epiphanies

### **A. They come at times of spiritual and/or emotional crises**

Abraham sees Lot polluted by the Sodomites; Abraham is old and he knows it, and he has no heir from Sarah's womb.

Lot is in the lowest spiritual condition of his life living among them

2Pet 2:8 About Lot: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed *his* righteous soul from day to day with *their* unlawful deeds);

Jacob at Bethel: He has moved and uprooted his entire family; His life and family seem to be in jeopardy from Esau

Gideon at the winepress in Ophrah

Israel was at its lowest spiritual ebb and totally subjugated by the Midianites

Jdg 6:2 And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel: *and* because of the Midianites the children of Israel made them the dens which *are* in the mountains, and caves, and strongholds.

Jdg 6:6 "And Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites..."

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego

Israel was a subject state to the Babylonian empire and had no national rights, nor any power.

They were by law commanded to practice idolatry

The church at Pentecost: Acts 1-2: They had been left alone for months after Christ went back to heaven; they as yet had no empowerment from the Holy Spirit as a separated and commissioned body. They had an enormous responsibility assigned to them for which they had no guidance beyond the charge of the great commission. They were facing an impossible task, against impossible odds, in a world of impossible wickedness and unprecedented opposition.

Paul on the road to Damascus: The churches of the Lord were in peril; Saul of Tarsus had authority and commission from the Jewish Sanhedrin to bring Christians (heretics) to justice; Saul of Tarsus was heaping up great wrath against himself by killing the Lord's church members.

John on Patmos: He has been exiled; put out of commission in the mind of the powers of the day; no doubt his experience was a great trial. The other apostles were undoubtedly dead or imprisoned by this time, and there seemed to be no solace in the world to be found by John. And if that was not enough, the churches were entering an era of great temptation and falling away.

### **B. They are about bringing the recipient face to face with the Lord or His workings**

Abraham in his hour of crises about the seed of promise and about his nephew is suddenly brought face to face with how God looks at those things

Lot, who is making great headway at ruining his life, is snatched out of the fire

Jacob who appears to be at the brink of extinction and is fraught with fear suddenly has the opportunity to wrestle with the angel of God for a blessing

Gideon is down to hiding and without any comfort or confidence about Israel ever getting out from under the Midianite oppression and God sends a messenger to shore up this valorous man's courage and purpose

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego have been put to the ultimate trial...death by fire...and the Lord stands with them in the furnace to reward their stand for truth

The church sees the evident manifestation of the power of God in fulfillment of the Lord's promise of for their commissioned work

Paul on the Road to Damascus sees Christ and is blinded by the vision of the one he had been persecuting

John at Patmos receives earth shaking insights about endtime plans of the Lord directly from the mouth of Christ

**C. They alter the lives and thinking of the recipients and have far reaching effects**

Abraham is forever marked as the father of the faithful and holy scripture records that he believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness (Gal. 3:6).

Lot is driven away from the wickedness that festered in his life.

Jacob became the faithful witness to the preserving power of God and fathered the patriarchs of Israel

Gideon led the small army of God in putting the enemy to rout and destroying their hold on Israel

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were literally snatched out of the flame...you judge whether that altered their lives or not.

Every time a Syrian saw those three men they were without doubt reminded of the great power of Jehovah

The church at Pentecost spread the gospel throughout the world...those members became powerful witnesses about Christ's saving power

Paul became the greatest missionary in history and left us sacred scripture of the new testament by which the entire Christian world receives guidance for daily living and teaching about the great purposes of God for the church and the world.

John was comforted and his writing of Revelation has edified the church through the ages and has shaken the world.