

GOD'S VISITS

(Bro. Bakht Singh, Balance of Truth, Dec 1968, Jan 1969)

"I will visit you" Jer. 29:10. This is the promise of God. When the Lord does decide to visit us He continues to visit us many times. Every time He Visits us, He brings greater blessing. The first visit simply assures us of the other visits to come. If we are really willing to obey Him, we will continue to receive blessings in greater measure.

We want to see how we can be fully benefitted and profited when God begins to visit us. This is very beautifully and clearly illustrated by the visits to of God to Abraham.

In Genesis chapter 12 to 22; we read about ten visits of God to Abraham, and roughly, this period covers about forty years. It may be that God visited him more than ten times, but the scripture records ten visits only. At each visit Abraham received a special blessing and a greater blessing than the time before, and the promise of Heb. 6: 14 became more clear and real during those ten visits, judging by Gen. 22:17 and the promise given there by God to Abraham.

This promise from God's Word is for your own personal claim. "Surely blessing I will bless thee" (Heb. 6: 14). God said that to Abraham during the last visit after forty years of testing. The number 40 is a number of testing in the Bible. You will have to go through different tests, before you can enjoy God's blessings.

Now we see how Abraham is called in three places in the Bible the friend of God', (1) James 2: 23 (2) Chron: 2:7 (3) Isa. 41:8, Abraham my friend! What a privilege it is to be called the friend of God! Through that friendship, God wants us to learn from Him and of His servant. Gen. 18: 17, "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?" now in John. 15: 15 the Lord says "Henceforth I call you not servants.., but I have called you friends"

How can the friendship with God be proved and enjoyed? When the Lord does something fresh, during our devotional moments or Bible study or at other times, He gives us a larger spiritual capacity and that leads on to spiritual maturity. The sad part is that most of us remain spiritual babes for many years, and fail to enjoy what God has kept for us. But He is so loving and so patient and full of longsuffering, that He comes to us again and again to teach us and to prepare us. Abraham was visited ten times and every visit God brought Abraham closer to Himself.

There are ten steps of divine friendship. That friendship began in Gen. Ch. 12 when God first appeared to Abraham. In Ch. 22 that friendship had become stronger and matured and more real. God became bound to Abraham. In Gen. 22:13, we see the ram caught in the bush. There was no need for the ram to be caught like this. The ram was not brought there by any man but by God Himself, and there was no fear of the ram running away, because all animals obey God more than we do. God was speaking to Abraham as if to say, "Abraham you have passed your final degree!" He turned round and saw the ram caught in a bush, and through it God was saying to him "Since you have passed that heavy test, like the ram I am bound to you, you can command Me and I will obey you. Till now you were obeying Me, now, whatever you command Me I will do". What fullness of blessing is contained in those words: "Surely in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee." Gen. 22: 17. So when God begins to visit us, He is not going to stop at one visit and at every visit He will bring something more or something better.

Sometimes when our wealthy uncles visit us, at the first visit they bring us a large basket of fruit, at the second visit a smaller basket and on the third visit one still smaller; on the fourth visit nothing at all! They will say: "Please excuse me, I was in a great hurry, and I could not buy anything for the children. Here are four anas, give it to the children" That is how they visit us. Some mothers are like this! When the son-in-law first visits the house he is given fowl-curry, the second time mutton-curry, the third visit Sambar, the fourth visit rasam, and the fifth visit angry words, asking why have you come here?

Our Lord Jesus Christ deposits at every visit a *greater* blessing, then a greater blessing, then a still greater blessing without any limit. When He said "In blessing I will bless", naturally He goes on multiplying and multiplying, and that is quite true. Thus He comes to us and thus He rewards us. We pray that this may be our experience as we walk with Him, and as we go on obeying Him. Don't be satisfied with one visit from God. God has much more for you than you can ever imagine. It gives Him great pleasure to give us according to His riches. For an example read Haggai 2: 3, 9.

The people were longing to see again the glory of the house built by Solomon, which was so glorious. Because of disobedience it had been burnt up. They said "None of us can build such a temple again". But God's Word says "The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the former." That speaks of the living Church of

the Load. Jesus Christ. First of all our eyes go back to the past, remembering all that we received in 1940 or 1941 or at other times. Our faith is that God will give us far more not less. He only wants us to be ready for His visit when He comes, and that requires faith. At every visit, God was strengthening the faith of Abraham. God refers to that condition in Romans 4: 16, which speaks of the time when He passed the final test on Mt. Moriah, and he could see how he was able to enjoy fully what God had for him. Unless we also have such a strong active and living faith, we cannot have true blessing.

Now God has been using in our lives many situations, circumstances, persons, and methods to give us that faith, that we may enjoy fully our share of His visit.

Let us seek to learn what God taught Abraham in those ten visits. In Gen. 12: 1 God appeared for the first time to Abraham, and promised him a seven-fold blessing, which we find in the following two verses.

He was saying to Abraham, as it were:

“Now, Abraham if you want to receive such blessings, be willing to go to a new country, and be prepared to give-up the old friendships and relatives, and be willing to be a stranger upon the earth,” In the same way God visits all of us. When He visits us the first time we have to be brought out of all the old surroundings, old friends, old relatives and made to long for a heavenly city, and a heavenly country.

Have you heard the voice of God? When God tells us clearly! “I want you to come into my new family. I want you to have new friends and to be in a new place for fellowship”, how many of us struggle very very hard, and it takes us many many years to obey God, even in simple things. But God’s word is so clear: “If any man be in Christ he is a new creature, old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” “All things” means all the things of God, and it is for that purpose that God visits us for the first time. You find till you are completely delivered of your old friends, old relations and old ways, that you will never know full blessing. It was not very easy for Abraham to leave his city, and go to the new country. Neither was it easy to leave old friends or relations. But he obeyed God, and that is why he could finally receive from God’s hand what He had promised. You have to say very joyfully: “Lord I am willing and ready to be brought out to a new place. Will you please give me a new heart, a new nature and a new mind”?

Before my conversion I had a very good friend in my College days. We had always been together. For more than 4 years we had that friendship. When I came back to India after my conversion my friend wrote me to come and stay with him for a few days. I went. In the mean time he had become very prosperous and he was a very efficient advocate. In fact he was living in a very big mansion. He never said a word to me about my conversion, but on the other hand he was extremely kind to me in every way. I felt I was a stranger. In spite of all his kindness I felt a stranger because I could not talk to him about the Bible and about God freely. When I spoke to him about the good old days he was very happy, but when I read the Bible he never said a word against it. I could see from his face he was not interested. I used to go to the fields for my quiet time. Early one morning I heard some singing in another part of the field and I saw a mud house there. I stood outside the house, and a man came out and said to me, "Do you want to see anybody?" I said: "I am a Christian, and I heard Christian singing, so my heart came towards you". He said "Please, sir, come inside", so I went inside. There was no table nor chair, nor any furniture, only a mud floor and an old mat. I sat down. I did not know their names, but I was saying to my self "These are my people. They are my people" I was so happy with them. I had found my brothers and sisters. If you are truly born again, you will be far more happy with God's people than with worldly relations, howsoever poor they may be. If your heart does not leap with joy when you find believers, then there is some thing wrong with your salvation. You are still in darkness. Come out right now from your surroundings. Then God will give you everlasting friends, everlasting brothers and sisters, everything for eternity.

In Gen. 12:4, 7, the Lord visited Abraham for the second time as he came into the new land. There he built an altar to the Lord, and by that acknowledged that nobody can become just and righteous by his own efforts. Somebody else must die in his stead. It was for that purpose that God visited Abraham a second time. God cannot reveal to us everything at once. Even though in the beginning we may talk much about our new birth, we do not know the real meaning for sometime. If you ask many people: "How do you become righteous before God?" They will say that righteousness comes by reading the Bible more, and by praying for a long time. But we learn by experience that "in our flesh dwelleth no good thing", as Paul tells us in Rom. 7: 18, after years of experience. It is only by divine visitation that we understand how corrupt we are, and how filthy and defiled our lives have become by sin. God will go on revealing unto us that nothing of the flesh can please Him as far

as He is concerned, Rom. 8: 8. Only by the sacrifices of the Lord Jesus Christ can we become righteous. There is not the least goodness in any one of us. We have to be completely delivered from the old nature.

Many years ago, somebody gave me a red apple, of a very good size, and beautiful colour. On the third day I wanted to eat it, but when I cut it I found it rotten inside. How could I throw that apple away? So I started digging into the apple to see if there was a nice piece in it anywhere. But the whole apple was rotten. Then I threw it away, but it took me some time to do so. I was saying to myself "It looks such a nice apple! It must be worth at least rupee. So how can I throw it away? Let me find some good piece in it," but alas! There was nothing good inside. We have to learn that in all of us, there is nothing good. All flesh is corrupt.

Gen. 13: 14. Here again God visited Abraham. God had told Abraham to leave behind all his relations except his wife, but because of human sympathy, he took Lot his nephew with him. After a time there arose a strife between Lot's servants and Abraham's servants. Abraham discovered his mistake, so he decided they must part. He gave the choice to Lot. He said "If you go north, I will go south. If you go to the east I will go to the west". Lot chose the good plain of Jordan, very near Sodom and Gomorrah and then when Lot was separated from him, God appeared to Abraham and said to him, "Lift up thine eyes" (Gen. 13:14).

There are certain friendships or associations which we think are harmless, but which are against God's will. They make us blind spiritually. Abraham ought to have obeyed God fully; He had no right to bring Lot with him, even though Lot may have wept before him. God had told him clearly: "I want only you two to come out", but because of human sympathy, Abraham took Lot with him. Many of us form friendships without finding God's will and that same association or friendship causes blindness, strife, battles and quarrels. That is why there are many Christian believers in a condition of confusion, which they have made themselves by following their own wisdom and not God's. They despise the will of God and give preference to human wisdom and human affection. Because of this there is nothing but strife every week and every month in the family, in the home. But when you free your self from the association, the Lord will visit you, and give you understanding of your heavenly inheritance. God said to Abraham: "Look northward, south ward, eastward and westward ..." If you want God to visit you, then find out if there is any friendship and

relationship, any union in your home, or in your life against God's will, God's nature and God's word?

Gen. 14:18 gives us God's fourth visit. This time God appears to him through the person of Melchizedek, when Abraham was returning from the battle-field feeling very tired and worn-out.

God knew how he was going to face this big temptation. Abraham had done a great favour to the King of Sodom, for, while rescuing his own nephew Lot, he had rescued some of the men of Sodom. So King of Sodom told him "I am very thankful to you, Abraham. You have brought these men from the battle-field. Now you let the men stay with me, and you take all the spoil". Abraham knew his shoes and shirt were torn, but even though he had no shoe laces or thread to mend his torn shirt, Abraham said to himself: I refuse to take a single thing". So he said to the King of Sodom: "You take your men and your goods lest you should say that I became rich through you". God had appeared to him that he might look to God for everything and not to man.

Now-a-days many so called teachers and many pastors and missionaries depend upon the people for money than God Him self. They depend upon letters, and camera rather than God, and do not know the privileges of being fed by God Himself. Do you want God to visit you? Then do not receive any defiling thing from any man. Don't look to man for support. He is a living God and He shall supply all your need as you believe in Him. Even if you have thirty-eight children He can supply all your needs. Whatever may be your need trust God. There are many who long for God to visit them, but are not prepared to trust God completely. What a joy it is to know that the Lord knows all our need and is interested in even our shoe laces!

For an example of God's care for details see Acts 12: 8. God knew Peter was forgetful. Many of us in our excitement leave umbrellas behind, and all kinds of articles! How often you say yourself; "Where is my hat? Or my shoes? The Lord knew that Peter in his excitement might leave behind his chappals. They were only old sandals not worth 28 paise. Yet when the chains fell off the angel said to him, "Go and put on your sandals"! God is interested in small things. Trust Him. Look to Him and believe in Him. Don't look to any man. Don't receive any defiling help. It is a sad thing when preachers go and beg money from all kinds of people.

Gen. 15: 12 The Lord visited Abraham. So after a few years of waiting God appeared to Abraham. He had said "I have no son. I may die any time. I want to make my will with regard to my property.

I shall have to leave it to my servant Eliezer". Now Eliezer was the faithful servant and steward of Abraham. In his own mind Abraham was planning and thinking about leaving his property to Eliezer. But again God spoke to him in v. 5 He said: "Come outside, Abraham" Evidently the Lord spoke at night. "Look up northward, southward, eastward and westward. Don't look downward. Don't look at your body or yourself. Now count the stars!" Perhaps Abraham began to count the stars, and he must have said. "Lord how can I count them? They are so many. It will take me millions of years". Then God said to him: "So shall thy seed be". God appeared to him to make him look upwards and to keep on looking upwards. Don't look at your human limitations. How many times we look at our troubles and circumstances, surroundings persons, neighbours and ourselves. He is a living God. He has to visit us to teach us to look upwards. Believe that He is alive. Whatever the situation may be He is able. When we keep looking to Him the things which are impossible be come possible.

In the very same chapter 15: 17 God Himself confirmed that what He said was true. In those olden days, when two parties made an agreement, they would take an animal as a sacrifice and divide it into two parts, and both the parties would pass through that sacrifice, Jer. 34:18. Here God told Abraham: "If you don't believe me, you bring the sacrifice and divide it into two parts. Then see the burning flame going through it." In this way God was saying: "Abraham, I will keep my covenant, for I am a covenant-keeping God. Don't look at yourself or your limitations". Our God is a covenant keeping God. Psalms 89, Deut. 7:9. What He says He will do. What He promises, He will fulfill. Again and again we must remind ourselves of the promises which H gave us many years ago. They are being fulfilled today in a greater measure, and as we go on in life there is no end to His blessing.

God again appeared to Abraham in Gen. 17:1 for the sixth time. By this time Abraham had become very old, and had begun to walk like an old man. There are many people who feel very old! A few remarks from the doctor make them feel very old, even though they may be less that 25 years old. If the doctor says; "You have got too much sugar in your system, Mr. So and so, and also your blood pressure is not normal!", from that day they cannot speak loudly!

They say, "What to do? Where to go?" They begin to walk as an old man, and became very old and miserable, and when they have, a slight temperature, they expect everybody to come and see them! Abraham was ninety-five years old and perhaps he had begun to walk with a stick. So God told him: "Now Abraham, you throw away that stick! Walk with me and be straight." So he walked straight "Now, Abraham believe me, that what I have said I will do." Then in verse 3 Abraham fell on his face. When he had become old and his wife also was old and far past child-bearing. He knew that unless God put into them both new life and energy, they could not have a child. From that day onwards he became as a young man. He had six more children later, Gen. 25:1. God had put life into him and the power of resurrection. We do not know the full meaning of that power. Paul's longing: in Phil. 3: 10 "was that I may know him and the power of His resurrection". God has to take us through situations where we can learn how to appropriate by faith the power of resurrection for every need.

Now the seventh visit (Gen 18 1-8 and Ch. 19). When Abraham saw the angels he came running to meet them while Lot sat to receive them. Abraham said: "Please sit for a while and I will bring you some water to your feet and then rest". They agreed joyfully. But in the case of Lot he had to force them to stay. When the angels came into the house of Abraham the whole family were soon busy cooking the food. Three measures of meal and a whole calf were prepared for the guests, Abraham's family helped him with joy. God knew that the whole house of Abraham were happy to serve Him, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24: 15). That is how Abraham received his divine visitors. Then how boldly he interceded with the Lord to spare Sodom and Gomorrah. That is also our privilege. We can intercede for those who are in danger and for precious souls when we know the secret of being visited of God.

In Gen. 21: 9-12 we read of the eighth visit. Here we see the husband obeying the wife. Generally the wife must obey the husband but there are occasions when the husband must obey the wife! When Sarah saw Ishmael mocking Isaac, she said to Abraham "Cast out the bond woman and her son" (Gen. 21:9-10). If Ishmael had stayed longer he would have robbed Isaac of his inheritance. So God told Abraham to listen to his wife. He said "she is quite right. Isaac must have the full portion. Ishmael cannot have anything from Isaac's portion". There are occasions when we are liable to disobey God, even though we are sincere but God has to visit

us to rebuke us. Perhaps God has been rebuking you through some body to save you from making mistakes. Don't be hurt, *it is to save you from mistakes.*

In chapter 22: 1, 2 God visited Abraham for the ninth time. He wanted him to offer his only son Isaac on the altar that He might show him the full purpose of his calling. Straight away he obeyed. In the early days of our Christian life we cannot do that. It is only after many years of preparation that we have such a capacity. Whatever God desires, give joyfully. There is no question whatsoever. He may demand our love and our substance and even our children. Whatsoever He demands give cheerfully. That is how God visits Abraham because He was preparing Abraham for a still greater blessing the next time.

The tenth visit is in the same chapter 22:10-18 "Because thou hast obeyed My voice...". God visited Abraham that He might teach him how to obey His voice whole heartedly. God said to him in verse 17: "In blessing I will bless thee". God wants to visit us, that through us not only one but many people may be blessed, and also to give to us a heavenly vision through faith and prayer. Has the Lord begun to visit you? Then go on claiming by faith the promise of Heb. 6: 14. May the Lord make this true of us. He will go on visiting us wherever we go. May He visit us every day, every month, every year. Let us pray by faith: "Lord verify this promise from Thy word in my life."