

Creative Faith

By Rev. Joseph Kostelnik, Ph.D.

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Your Faith Sees

I had just returned to my hotel room from the crusade grounds having just spoken to about eight thousand people. The crowds had steadily increased since the meetings had begun with an attendance of about 4,500. As I lay on the bed, reflecting on what God had accomplished in the meeting, I became aware of a sense of disappointment. While we were grateful to God for stopping the rain (the weather had been bad during the other speaker's meetings earlier in the week), I yearned to see the stadium completely full. I remembered the "holes" in the crowd, areas where more people could have assembled. I found myself desiring to see at least 10,000 in attendance by the end of the meetings. Suddenly, God spoke to my heart a phrase that had been with me for months:

"If you don't like what you see, start seeing what you like."

Immediately, I began to pray and intercede for the Haitians who had yet to attend the services. By faith I "saw" those "holes" filled with hungry people. A sense of assurance was dropped into my heart. I told my wife, son and others, "we are going to see at least 10,000 people here before the meetings are over."

By Sunday evening (the last night of the crusade) I was looking out over a crowd of 10,000 people. All the "holes" in the audience had been filled in and the glory of God was manifest to everyone. Perhaps what was more amazing was the conversation

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I had with Bishop Liberius several months after the meetings. He said, “*Brother Joe, it seems our crowd estimates were a little off for the last meeting. I’m told we had closer to 12,000 out the last night! Not only that, but other crusades—from many different denominations—have begun to spring up all over the island. It seems your meetings ‘broke’ something in the spirit world and revival is coming!*”

Needless to say, I was elated and astounded to see Eph. 3:20 lived out in the crusade:

“*Now unto him that is able to do **exceeding, abundantly above** all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*”

HalleluYah!

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Here it was again, another instance of God bringing to pass a faith image birthed in my spirit during prayer. The Lord had—through faith—caused there to be people in the crowd where there had been none only days before. How had it happened? From where had they come? Why did the crowd grow nearly four thousand in one night?

I don’t have all the answers to these questions. But I do know faith—real, Bible faith—changes things, people and circumstances for God’s glory; it causes His will to be done in earth, just as it is in Heaven.

Isn’t this exciting?

Can you see the limitless possibilities that are ours in the Lord Jesus?

The Things Being Seen

“*Through faith we understand that the successive ages stand framed by God’s spoken word, so that the **things which are being seen** have not been made out of the things which are appearing*” (Heb. 11:3, Gk.).

Notice, according to God’s Word, it is eternally the invisible *first*, then the visible. First, the spiritual cause, then the physical

effect.

“Now faith is the confidence of things constantly being hoped for, the conviction of facts not being constantly seen” (Heb. 11:1, Gk.).

The Amplified version adds this insight:

“[Faith perceiving as real fact what is not revealed to the senses].”

Not only is the visible second in God’s creative order of things, but it is *subject to change*.

*“While we are constantly looking not at the things which are constantly being seen, but at the things which are constantly being unseen: for the things which are constantly being seen are **temporal**; but the things which are constantly being unseen are **eternal**” (II Cor. 4:18, Gk.).*

Your Faith Sees

Understand this spiritual fact: your faith has eyes. One writer has said, *“most believers see better spiritually with their physical eyes closed.”*

The things which are visible to the natural eye are all subject to change. In Paul’s case, he was beset with persecutions and afflictions for the sake of the gospel. However, by the eye of faith, he could call those things *“light affliction, which is but for a moment”* (II Cor. 4:17). Not only that but he declared—again by faith—that it *“worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”*

Paul lived by faith and encouraged us to do so.

He speaks of Moses who by *“faith forsook Egypt, not fearing the king: for he endured, as seeing the Unseen One”* (Heb. 11:27, Gk.).

Growing Faith

The seeds of this principle were somehow planted in my heart as a boy. I remember desiring more than anything else in life a suit of armor when I was about 10. How I prayed! As I asked the Lord for the armor, I would “see” it under my bed. Each day

when I came home from school I ran up to my room and looked under my bed. That was faith!

It never appeared under my bed, but several months later, it did appear under the Christmas tree!

Again, when I was in college, I had the biggest crush of my life. The young lady I was so enamored of spent one semester overseas at our school's sister campus. I promised to correspond and she promised to reply. I wrote to her but it seemed she was not interested in replying. I went to prayer and—by faith—*saw* her letter to me in my mailbox. When was I happier: when I sensed the assurance of her reply in prayer, or when I physically opened the envelope a few weeks later?

Spiritual Persistence

When we decided to pioneer the local church I pastor, I *saw* us meeting in the side room of the local senior center. When I applied for the room, I was told it was unavailable. I went back to prayer and again saw us in that room, rejoicing and worshipping the Lord. Needless to say, the room “happened” to become available after all and we first met there before moving to the larger room, a third location and eventually our present location.

What if I had given up?

What is it that your faith “sees?”

Are you willing to be persistent in the spirit until your hope becomes sight?

We negotiated for nearly two years to secure our current church facility. Once while I was praying I saw the words, *White Oak Chapel*, over the door. God spoke to me, “*I’ve given you the land.*” I knew His reference was to the Children of Israel’s blessing of Canaan, a place prepared, flowing with milk and honey, fully equipped with cities they hadn’t founded, houses they hadn’t built, vineyards they hadn’t planted or tended, wells they hadn’t dug, etc. This was a picture of our present sanctuary (it had been vacant for a year, fully equipped for worship, even down to the hymnals in the pews).

At one point in the negotiations the owner said, “*you’re trying to get a Cadillac; maybe you should look at a Chevy* (another,

lesser property he had available).”

We just celebrated our first year in the “Cadillac.”

Miracle Healing

I was preaching in London many years ago. A young lady approached me in the prayer line. She was an American flight attendant who had heard about the miracles in our ministry. Although physicians had told her not to venture out to the meetings (she had a severe back problem and wore a brace under her clothing), she “saw” herself being healed by God. After prayer, she took her brace off and bent and twisted every which way: healed by the power of God through faith! The seen was an injured back, unable to bend or twist, imprisoned by a very necessary brace. The unseen was a new back, capable of doing anything required of it. I could relate hundreds of such stories.

Spiritual Revival

No doubt, things looked pretty bad in Israel during the time of Nehemiah. But the governor refused to live his life by the changeable seen and, instead, plotted his course by the unchanging “unseen.” Bible history records the wisdom of his decision.

Obviously, some British saints had a faith image of a new and different, godly Wales in the early part of this century. The Spirit of the Lord responded and brought a nationwide revival that is still being written and preached about.

Last year I was in Australia preaching in churches and lecturing in a ministers’ convention. As I looked into the faces of ministers and laypersons alike, I endeavored to raise the expectation of the people for a nationwide revival in the land. I encouraged them to see their churches full, to see their newspapers carrying articles of important political, sports and motion picture figures being converted to Christianity. I could sense the despair and discouragement in many of them. I pressed the point by delivering the burden the Holy Spirit had given me months earlier:

“If you don’t like what you see, start seeing what you like.”

I’m repeating that phrase to you deliberately. This is not denying the seen or the problems, difficulties and adverse circumstances; *it changes them.*

The Things Not Being Seen

As we have mentioned, the invisible is always first in God’s creative economy.

“By the word of Yahweh were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the Spirit of his mouth. For he spake and it was; he commanded and it stood fast (Psa. 33:6, 9, Heb.).

“Through faith we understand that the worlds stand framed by God’s spoken word” (Heb. 11:3, Gk.).

God desires, God decrees, God creates. We must do likewise.

*“Now faith is the confidence of things **constantly being hoped for**” (Heb. 11:1).*

This word “hope” means “expect, trust, wait for.” It is in the present tense, middle voice in the original. This means a continuous seeing by faith which is in our own benefit (the meaning of the middle voice).

In other words, we have to look at something; why not the eternal, *unseen*, which we desire and is able—under God—to change the temporal seen (scene)?

Isaiah gives us an Old Testament encouragement along this line.

*“Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind (imagination,” Heb.) is stayed on thee, because he **trusteth in thee**” (Isa. 26:3).*

Trusting in the Lord is seeing the Unseen One.

It looked like the end when Pharaoh commanded Moses and the People of Israel to leave Egypt. Israel was militarily outclassed. Yet Moses was able to endure, without fear, “as seeing the Unseen One” (Heb. 11:27, Gk.).

You can be sure there was no satellite television at the time. How did Moses see the one, true God?

He saw Him by *faith*.

Your Faith Sees

Rather than being the end of Israel, it became the end of the Egyptians!

Faith changes things!

Your faith sees!

Sin, sickness, bondage and failure are all subject to change.

Sin can be forgiven.

Sickness can be healed.

Bondage can be broken.

Failure can be reversed.

Success can be achieved.

These things are everlasting.

Why not decide to begin living by faith and allowing it to see.

Let's walk by faith and not by (physical) sight.

Your Faith Hears

“So then the faith, by hearing, and the hearing, through the spoken word from God” (Rom. 10:17, Gk.).

I read somewhere, years ago, about a lady who was suffering from arthritis. She was also hard of hearing. It seems she was in the basement of the church, cleaning, while the congregation was upstairs in the auditorium singing, “It was good for Paul and Silas.” She misunderstood them and heard, “*it’s good for your arthritis*” and got healed!

Faith comes by hearing (spiritually) a word from God.

Faith Cometh

Thank God, faith does come from Him to us...just when we need it!

According to the scriptures, there are three kinds of faith: saving faith (Eph. 2:8-9), faith the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22), and the gift of faith (I Cor. 12:9; Mk. 11:22).

Regardless of its type, faith originates in God.

For example, in the matter of saving faith, we often speak of “finding the Lord.” But He was never lost! Let’s be honest about it, He found us and gave us the gift of repentance unto life through the preaching of His Word (Acts 11:18).

The Fruit of Faith

The second kind of faith we might translate as trust or the ability to look to the Lord in a general way for sustenance and needed answers to prayer on a daily basis. It is kind of like a muscle which grows with exercise (II Thess. 1:3).

For instance, we may begin our walk with the Lord able to trust Him for the healing of a headache and, years later, for deliverance from a cancerous condition.

The Gift of Faith

And then there is the marvelous manifestation of the gift of faith which makes possible the impossible, moving mountains of obstacles out of our pathway and bringing miracles to pass in our lives. I have experienced this on a number of occasions. It's something like a blanket of confidence that steals over me, granting me an absolute assurance that what I am desiring from the Lord is mine: *now*. Just this year, while in Athens, Greece ministering in a crusade, the gift of faith led me to tell an Iraqi soldier to bend over and touch his toes even though he couldn't due to a war injury and shrapnel lodged there. In a moment he was perfectly healed!

Philip and the Eunuch

This concept of faith coming by hearing is beautifully illustrated in the story of the Ethiopian eunuch's conversion as described in the Book of Acts.

Faith from many directions was required to accomplish this feat for the Kingdom of God.

You will recall Philip, one of the original deacons in the Jerusalem church, began ministering as an evangelist and held a citywide revival in the city of Samaria. Acts 8:26-28 tells of an angel bringing him a word from God to leave the revival and travel to the desert some 60 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

How many of us would want that word?

It takes faith to stay and it also takes faith to go.

No doubt in Philip's flesh, in the natural, he preferred to stay with the crowds and experience more of the Lord's "signs, wonders and miracles." Who would opt for a desert ministry?

Philip needed faith to go.

I remember pastoring a certain church, many years ago. I had invested a lot of time, talent and energy in that ministry. I had gotten the congregation into a new facility and out of debt. Yet, one evening in May, in the middle of my Sunday night message, I literally felt—in the spirit—as though a cord had been cut by the Lord, severing my ties with that fellowship. I could have resigned that night. However, it wasn't until that fall that I followed through.

Again, around the same time, I had a dream in which a man of God was addressing an assembly of ministers (myself included). He walked around the room saying, "*some are called to go and some are called to stay.*" Then, turning to me and pointing his finger in my face, he said "*you're called to go!*"

Needless to say, I resigned the pastorate and pioneered the work I currently oversee, having done extensive apostolic (missionary) work in addition.

Faith + Works = Victory

It's interesting to read what follows the account of Philip's obedience to the word of God through the angel:

*"And he, having arisen, went: and, **behold**, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians" (acts 8:27, Gk.).*

It was *after* Philip went that he beheld the purpose of his calling. God operates on a need to know basis. Our words from God are *daily* bread according to Jesus (Mt. 6:11).

According to one scholar, this eunuch was a potentate and treasurer of Candace the queen. These Ethiopians were proselytes to Judaism. There is a theory that the Queen of Sheba (either Balkis or Maqueda) had a son, Menilek, by Solomon and also converted to Judaism because of him, which, in turn paved the way for Christianity.

Luke's account in the Book of Acts states that the eunuch was

reading from the scroll of Isaiah, chapter 53. No doubt, he was a man of means, since he was able to purchase a copy of the Old Testament scriptures. The question is “why wasn’t he saved?”

Hearing or “HEARING?”

According to the Bible, this man was seeing the Word, saying the Word and, therefore, hearing the Word (from his own lips); yet he remained unsaved.

Why?

Philip’s question furnishes the answer:

“*Understandest thou indeed the things thou readest*” (Acts 8:30, Gk.)?

Hebrews 11:3 reminds us that “*through faith we understand.*”

We don’t necessarily need repetition; we need revelation!

The eunuch’s reply is penetrating:

“*How can I, except some should guide me*” (Acts 8:31, Gk.)?

In other words, the ministry gifts (apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor-teacher, Eph. 4:11), should bring faith to hungry listeners. “Faith *cometh* by hearing” (Rom. 10:17). However, as one writer has put it, faith *leaveth* by hearing what is being preached by some “preachers!”

We certainly can’t expect God to confirm our words of doubt and unbelief!

This word, guide, is used by Jesus concerning the ministry of the Holy Spirit “guiding” us into *all* truth (Jn. 16:13).

“*The Philip, having opened his mouth, and having begun from the same scripture (Isa. 53:7-8), evangelized unto him Jesus*” (Acts 8:35, Gk.).

Praise God!

The Word *of* God became a word *from* God by the Holy Spirit’s ministry through Philip.

Your faith hears.

Abraham

Abraham, the Father of the faithful, experienced the Voice of God, which brought faith in Gen. 15:5-6. There the Lord

promised him his progeny would be as numerous as the stars in the night sky.

In the natural, in the flesh, this prediction seemed to be impossibility. But remember the word of the angel to the Virgin, Mary:

“For with the (one, true) God no spoken word shall be without the power of its own fulfillment” (Lk. 1:37, Gk.).

Can we understand and believe this?

There is no limit to the creative ability of the spoken word of God!

First Isaac, then Jacob, then a multitude were birthed because of the word from God which Abraham heard and believed.

There was a time when I thought I needed money (to pay bills) or healing (to recover from sickness) or strength (to fulfill the will of God).

I’m learning all I need is my daily bread.

This is all *you* need.

Moses

When Moses stopped to investigate the Source of the Power behind the burning bush, the word of the Lord spoke to him, “*Moses, Moses;*” to which he replied, “*Here am I*” (Ex. 3:4).

After this exchange, Yahweh commissioned him to lead God’s covenant people out of bondage in Egypt to the beauty and bounty of the Promised Land.

There is a Jericho (Heb. place of sweetness) for you. There is a promised land awaiting your entrance. It is a place in the Spirit of God abounding with the fruit and gifts of the Spirit, where all your enemies are defeated and all your needs are met. It’s called the Kingdom of God. It is “*righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost*” (Rom. 14:17).

And it is within you (Lk. 17:21)!

Elijah

The great prophet of God, Elijah, heard a word from God more dependable than any weather report (I Kngs. 18:1). After a

three and a half-year draught brought about by the unbreakable word of God, that Voice spoke again:

“Go, shew thyself unto Ahab; and I will send rain upon the earth” (1 Kings 18:1).

The word of the Lord can kill or cure depending upon the Divine will and the response of humanity to His plans, purposes and provisions for us.

Missions Motivation

God has spoken to me a number of times during the past 20 years of ministry concerning where to go, what to do, and how to do it.

In 1975 He spoke to me in a vision and called me as an evangelist.

In 1976 while deep in prayer, I received an apostolic call to the nation of Australia. This was followed by one to Greece (January, 1984), France (March, 1986) as well as many other countries since that time.

While on the mission field (March, 1983) I received a call to pastor a certain congregation when I returned home. In May of the same year, in a vision, I was made to know I would pioneer yet another congregation in America which would also serve as a base of national and international outreach. It has all come to pass as the word of the Lord decreed it.

Jonah

The question is never, “*Is God speaking?*”

Rather, the question is, “*Are we hearing/obeying?*”

The word of the Lord came to the prophet, Jonah, twice (the gifts and callings of God are irrevocable, Rom. 11:29). We read of his original commission to preach to the Ninevites in chapter one, verses one and two, and then (after his disobedience and subsequent repentance) again in chapter three, verses one and two. It was certainly never the will of God for Jonah to procrastinate or delay the fulfillment of his assignment from God. The problem was never God’s; it was Jonah’s.

Your Faith Hears

What has God been speaking to you? What have you done about it?

Paul

Again, in the New Testament, we see this principle being lived out in the life of the apostle Paul. In the Book of Acts, chapter 27, verse 23, we read of an angel bringing Paul a word from God that promised him not only his own deliverance from death at sea but the lives of 276 others on board also!

What was the apostle's response?

*"Wherefore, sirs, be cheered up: for **I believe God**" (Acts 27:25, Gk.).*

What is our response to the word of faith spoken to us by God while in the midst of storm-tossed seas?

It all depends upon our relationship to the Master and whether we are in the habit of asking for and receiving our daily bread.

Do we have ears to hear Paul did?

The time was when he and Barnabas were rejected by some unbelieving Jews. Rather than quit, Paul allowed the Holy Spirit to quicken the words of the prophet Isaiah (in context, spoken to the nation of Israel) in chapter 49, verse six, to him, applying the message to his experience:

"I have set thee for a light of the nations, that thou shouldst be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Yesterday, Today and Forever

God is no respecter of persons. How many of us can testify that God has applied some verse or portion of scripture to our lives. Indeed, after just under seven hours of prayer in June, 1982, God spoke Rev. 3:8 to me, instilling faith in my heart for sponsorship by a full-gospel ministry in Australia which resulted in our mission work there.

Hearing = Obeying

Hearing not only means understanding or having faith for a

particular promise from God, but it also means obedience to that word.

Paul quotes the prophet Isaiah in Rom. 10:16, “*Lord, who hath believed our report?*”

The context of this is clear:

“Oh, Yahweh, who, among all those in Israel who mouth your Name with their lips, really believe (obey) your will with their lives?”

The Master admonished us to be careful of our spiritual hearing (Mk. 4:23ff.). To those who use what they have received (i.e., obedient listeners) more truth would be given.

However, to those who don't put the word heard into practice, even what they have (i.e., wrongly assume they have) will be taken away from them (by Satan).

Faith apart from works (believing, obeying) is dead as the apostle James declares (Ja. 2:26).

But that is the subject of another chapter.

Your Faith Speaks

*“**B**ut we having the same spirit of faith, according as it stands written, ‘I believed, and therefore have I spoken;’ we also believe, and therefore are speaking (II Cor. 4:13, Gk.).”*

The Oracles of God

I was seated on the platform, high above the soccer field. It was the last night of the crusade and a crowd of nearly 12,000 people had assembled from all over the island to hear the gospel and to be healed of their diseases and freed from their bandages. Earlier in the week the meetings had been plagued by inclement weather with one meeting having been cancelled. We had prayed and by the time my meetings began, the rain had stopped. The other speaker joked with me on Wednesday, *“I guess the Lord loves you more than me!”* Suddenly, one of the team leaned over and whispered, *“Looks like our luck has run out.”* Pointing up and behind me to ominous, black clouds forming directly overhead he said, *“looks like the rain has finally caught up to us.”* I looked up and then at him; suddenly I said, *“there won’t be any rain during this meeting.”*

He looked puzzled. I was a bit surprised myself as the words hadn’t come from my head but directly from my spirit. There wasn’t time to pray; fortunately, I had already prayed before I’d left the hotel.

A few minutes later, just as the last of the special music was finishing, the same man came to me smiling. He pointed up again

and said, “*Look at that!*” As we looked overhead we saw the moon shining and the clouds blowing away *in the opposite direction*.

He then showed me his arm. It was red and the skin was rough and blotchy. “*Don’t know what this is, but it doesn’t respond to any cream. Can you pray for me?*” Suddenly, I slapped his arm and said, “*skin, become normal.*” At the close of the service, he ran to the platform and showed me his arm. The skin was no longer rough or blotchy and only slightly pink. The next morning, it was as normal as his other arm.

“If any is speaking, as oracles of God” (I Pet. 4:11, Gk.).

The apostle Peter gave us some pretty sound advice along this line. He alludes to this interesting spiritual fact: *our faith speaks*.

We see this principle displayed throughout the Bible, beginning with the very first Book, Genesis. There we find that the entire created order was spoken into existence by our Heavenly Father. He wants us to demonstrate that cliché, like father, like son. That is, under His direction and authority—with His power—we are to cause His will to be done on earth just as it is in Heaven.

It certainly wasn’t His will for the meetings in Haiti to be disrupted by rain, nor for Larry to suffer with an irritating skin affliction.

Prayer changes things; so does the Word spoken in faith.

The Case of Aeneas

We see this principle beautifully depicted in the healing of Aeneas recorded in the Book of Acts.

“And it came to pass, as Peter is passing throughout all quarters, he came down also to the saints, the ones inhabiting Lydda” (Acts 9:32, Gk.).

This is apostolic ministry. There is more required to claiming the office of apostle than having business cards printed up and introducing oneself as Apostle Smith. It’s embarrassing to see some in the Body of Christ claiming this office because they’ve pioneered a local church or made a brief trip to some foreign field.

How will we know a real apostle?

“Truly, the signs of the apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, in wonders, and mighty deeds” (II Cor. 12:12, Gk.).

Peter’s apostolic ministry took him where the people were with needs. So will yours.

Human Need

“And there he found a certain man named Aeneas, lying down on a bed, who had been continually paralyzed” (Acts 9:33, Gk.).

Here is an interesting thought. When the Bible speaks of believers in the Book of Acts, normally the term disciple is used of them. Here, Aeneas is simply called, “a certain man.” Could it be that he was crippled physically as well as spiritually? Was he lost as well as sick?

What a picture of suffering humanity!

Notice that this was a chronic condition. The scripture says he had been *“lying down on a bed, eight years.”*

Is this *your* situation or the condition of someone *you* know?

Is this not a picture of unsaved humanity, chronically crippled, spiritually unable to get up and go, in need of Divine help and healing?

What *is* your problem?

Is it a chronic condition?

God is looking for *you*.

Verse 33 says of Peter, *“there he found...”*

In other words, he was looking for Aeneas. He must have had inside information. Perhaps one afternoon as he was praying on the housetop (see Acts 10), while his wife was burning the bacon, he fell into a trance. He saw a sinner named Aeneas, a Gentile, without hope and without God in the world. The Holy Ghost quickened faith in his heart for the man’s healing. He knew he simply had to travel to Lydda and put works with his faith.

Cooperation of Gifts

God is not in the habit of sponsoring one man bands. We are

part of one Body, each standing where God has placed us and blooming where He has planted us (I Cor. 12:18, 28).

Last year when I was ministering in Darwin, Australia, the gifts were operating in many of the ministers and their wives during the conference at which I was lecturing. One afternoon during the lunch break, Anne shared how she had been travailing in prayer for a woman of Indian background whom she had seen in a dream. She saw the lady present in a church service who came in the prayer line. She saw me embrace this woman and then speak the word of release. At this point in the dream, the lady fell under the power and rose up healed. Anne felt the woman was suffering from a mental disorder.

The next evening as I was ministering in an Anglican church, the woman appeared!

How exciting it was to act out the vision and embrace her while speaking the word of faith.

She fell under the power and rose up healed. Later, she testified to suffering from a chronic mental condition and being ostracized from fellowship with other believers due to her strange behavior. But God Almighty was able to speak to one of his handmaidens about this woman's plight who, in turn, ministered the information to me. As I acted in faith, the woman was set free to the glory of God.

I say again, God is *looking for* chronically crippled men and women to rescue today!

The Divine Seed

First there is the *human need*, and then there will appear the *Divine Seed*.

Not only will the Lord bring deliverance to hurting humans through the word of faith, but often, one supernatural manifestation is all it takes to open a service or stir a community.

During my second short-term mission trip (to England), the services were often tied up spiritually, due to satanic oppression present in various towns and villages. How frequently was a service opened by an anointed prophecy from the worship leader's wife! In this manner a way for the Word was forged and

faith could then be released through works of obedience.

The Voice of Faith

“And Peter said unto him, Aeneas, Jesus the Messiah is healing you now” (Acts 9:34, Gk.).

This Voice did not originate in Peter’s throat or mouth, but in his belly or spirit (inner man), where he was “joined to the Lord” (I Cor. 6:17).

He was practicing what he preached to us by speaking as the oracles of God.

God’s plan for Aeneas had never been eight years of paralysis; it was always abundant health (Jn. 10:10). It was the enemy, Satan, who had had him bound (Acts 10:38). But into this morass of satanic mischief, the Spirit of God and the word of faith and healing had been introduced, bringing restoration. I like to think of this as Divine Alchemy (see my book, ***Wonder Working Words***).

This is a matter of believing in the heart and speaking with the mouth that which we desire.

It is releasing the faith of God.

God did this, in the beginning (Heb. 11:3).

Again, after the fall of Lucifer and the subsequent and resulting chaos, God recreated the created order in the same way (Psa. 33:6, 9; Gen. 1:3).

Moses spoke the word for his sister, Miriam, who had been smitten with leprosy because of her rebellion. The result? Healing (Num. 12:13).

When Israel struggled in a military conflict with the Amorites and the day wore on too quickly, Joshua spoke the word and even the sun obeyed (Josh. 10:12ff.).

Certainly, our Lord Jesus Christ did this repeatedly (i.e., Mk. 5:41) and taught us to do likewise (Mk. 11:22ff.).

As we have seen, *“faith cometh by hearing (spiritually), and the (spiritual) hearing, through a ‘spoken word from God’”* (Rom. 10:17, Gk.).

It then must be released by words or works.

Peter must have prayed first (and seen Aeneas by faith),

before coming to Lydda, in much the same way as Jesus had done in the case of Lazarus. At the tomb, Jesus said, “*Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me*” (Jn. 11:41).

There is *no record* of Jesus praying at the tomb! When had He prayed (and “been heard”)?

No doubt, before He ever reentered Bethany.

In the case of Peter raising Dorcas from the dead, the apostle prayed first at the very scene of the miracle, just before he spoke the word of faith (Acts 9:40). Here, in the case of Aeneas, his praying must have occurred earlier.

In both cases, the needs were wonderfully met!

The Miraculous Deed

“*Arise at once, and spread a bed for yourself at once*” (Acts 9:34b, *Gk.*).

How fantastic is this Voice of faith!

This phrase Peter used, “*make thy bed,*” can mean that literally, or it may refer to preparing a meal, as it is used of the Passover meal’s preparation. Perhaps he needed food for strength even after the miracle of healing. In any case, the word of God spoken through Peter changed everything for Aeneas. I like to think he was made completely whole that day, in spirit as well as body. I like to think the Holy Spirit would from then on describe him, not as a certain *man*, but as a certain *disciple*.

As we will see in the next chapter, even the spoken word of faith, as powerful and creative as it is, must be responded to by actions of obedience/belief.

We all have a part to play.

God did His part by sending Jesus to provide a full salvation on the Cross (I Pet. 2:24) and in calling and sending forth ministers of the Word, filled with the Holy Spirit and operating in His gifts (Eph. 4:11, I Cor. 12:8-10).

Peter did his part by praying, traveling, and speaking the word.

Aeneas also did his part by receiving, believing and *acting* upon the word he heard.

“*And he arose **immediately***” (Acts 9:34b).

Your Faith Speaks

He didn't pray about it, or call a committee meeting to discuss the possibility of whether God heals apart from medicine.

Neither did he demand to be anointed with oil or to have hands laid on him.

We don't hear him asking "*Where's the scripture for this?*" either.

He simply obeyed.

"Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:6).

A New Knee

Many years ago when I was a missionary to Australia, I was preaching in a large, full gospel church in Brisbane. A young athlete answered the altar call and requested prayer for a bad knee. It seems some cartilage had been damaged and he was unable to bend his knee, let alone participate in sports. Suddenly, I said, "*Kneel down.*" He looked at me, shocked, as if to say, "*I just told you, that's my problem; I can't bend my knee.*" Just as quickly, I noticed faith in his eyes. He closed them, raised both arms and as he did his best, God did the rest and he knelt without pain to the glory of God! He later jumped up and bent every which way, shouting, "*I've got a new knee!*"

God is a God of newness, restoration, refreshing and spiritual renewal. May we be channels of His power to others by speaking in faith.

The Purpose of Miracles

If you have studied our ministry courses, you already know the answer to the question, "*What purpose do miracles serve?*"

What was the result of this miracle of healing?

What happened to the community of Lydda where Aeneas lived?

*"And all that are dwelling at Lydda and Sharon saw him, **who turned to the Lord**" (Acts 9:35, Gk.).*

A few verses later we read the account of Peter raising Dorcas the deaconess from the dead.

What was the result of that sign?

*“And it became know throughout all Joppa; and **many believed on the Lord**” (Acts 9:42, Gk.).*

These two verses are clear enough not to require additional comment.

The Lord Jesus told us the result of our being able to do the (miraculous) works He did and greater ones:

“That the Father may be glorified in the Son” (Jn. 14:13).

The mighty Voice of faith sounded out under God’s authority, at His bidding, accomplishes the impossible, heals the hurting and glorifies the great God of the universe and His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Holy Spirit of God is ready, willing and able to assist us in bringing God’s will to pass in the lives of lost, listless, lifeless human beings.

Will we allow Him to do it?

Your Faith Works

“*F*or as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so the faith apart from the works is dead also” (Ja. 2:26, Gk.).

Missions Faith

Many years ago I was pastoring a certain church and preparing for a short-term mission trip. I was speaking to a brother (a man of means) about the finances required and the deadline that was approaching. He patted me on the shoulder and said, “*the Lord will provide.*”

He did provide, but not through that brother!

The sad part of this story is that the man purported to believe in world missions. Yet, when push came to shove, where was his belief?

It’s amazing to me how many of us honor our Lord with a faith from our lips while dishonoring Him by a lack of it in our lives. How important it is that we strive to walk our talk. Some of our actions in life are speaking so loudly to others that they are unable to hear our testifying or preaching!

Faith – Works = Dead Faith

This is a very simple, yet profound, spiritual equation. According to the Bible, a faith that is not accompanied by corresponding actions of belief/obedience is not really biblical faith at all, but rather, a satanic counterfeit.

“What the profit, my brethren, though any one says he hath faith, and has not works? Can the faith—that one—save him” (Ja. 2:14, Gk.)?

Do you get it?

Here the apostle describes a “said” faith... which is not accompanied by corresponding actions. His reasoning: can *that* type of (“said”) faith save a man? The obvious answer is “No.”

“But if a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of the daily food, and one of you say unto them, ‘be departing in peace, be constantly warmed and filled;’ notwithstanding ye give them not things which are needful to the body; what the profits (Ja. 2:15-16, Gk.)?”

He clinches his argument with verse 17:

“Even so the (said) faith, if it hath not works, is dead, by itself” (Ja. 2:17, Gk.).

This is “said” faith, or “head” faith; it is *dead* faith.

In the verse with which we began this chapter (Ja. 2:26), James declares that a faith without works is as dead as a body without a spirit.

In other words, he refers, not to a living faith being unexpressed, but a dead or counterfeit faith, not originating in the Holy Spirit.

Looking at the situation from this angle, we might see our works as an accurate barometer of our believing. How do we really *know* whether or not we really believe in a particular circumstance? By examining our actions. The acid test of our belief is how it does or does not translate into action in life.

Love is much the same way.

The apostle John reminds us not to love in word (teaching), nor in tongue (speech), but in deed (works) and in truth (reality, rather than hypocrisy, I Jn. 3:18). His example is nearly identical to that described by James: the need for ministry to hurting, needy brothers and sisters in Christ.

True Versus False

James places real and hypocritical faith side by side in verse 10:

“Yea, one may say, **‘thou hast faith and I have works: ‘show me (at once) the faith—yours—apart from the works—yours, and I will show thee (at once) the faith—mine—out of the works: mine’**” (Ja. 2:18, Gk.).

It is far easier to confess something than it is to possess something. Many within the ranks of Churchianity are great talkers. What we need are some doers!

If we believe the gospel is for all, we will witness to everyone within our sphere of influence.

If we believe Christ founded the Church, we will attend regularly and support the ministry with our time, tithes and talents.

If we believe the Bible is God’s Word, we will read, believe and live by it on a daily basis.

If we believe prayer changes things and causes God’s will to be done in earth just as it is in Heaven, we will practice it.

It is possible to deceive ourselves in this area of faith.

Counterfeit Salvation

Many years ago, while serving as a missionary, I preached a citywide crusade in a city in the north of Australia. Hundreds of people attended and God’s Spirit moved in spectacular ways. On one evening, a lady—blind for over eight years—was instantly healed. On another occasion, a young boy whose one leg was fully an inch and a half shorter than the other was healed over a period of several minutes. Onlookers could see his leg slowly grow to match the other.

Toward the close of the meeting, I ministered about the Lordship of Christ, pressing the point that we are saved by receiving Jesus as *Lord*, and surrendering our hearts and *wills* to Him in living faith (Rom. 10:9-10; Eph. 2:8-9).

When I gave the altar call—*for salvation*—about 17 “believers” answered! They had simply had a “head” faith until that night, but had not been truly born again. Someone has said the longest 18 inches on earth stretches between the human head and heart.

“Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the

demons also believe and shudder” (Ja. 2:19, Gk.).

Here is the supreme illustration of head knowledge as opposed to heart understanding.

The one is a fool’s salvation; the other, a full salvation!

“But are you unwilling to know, O vain man, that the (head) faith apart from the works is dead” (Ja. 2:20, Gk.)?

As we have mentioned, a few verses later, James declares:

“For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so the (head) faith apart from the works is dead also” (Ja. 2:26, Gk.).

As I was preparing a message on this subject I asked myself, *“Why didn’t he reverse the order and say, ‘as the spirit apart from the body’?”*

Suddenly, the Holy Spirit enlightened me.

It is because the human spirit *is* alive, even when separated from the body, living on eternally either in Heaven or hell. What James is emphasizing is that such a workless faith is *not*. It is not a living or real faith, temporarily unexercised which he is discussing, but rather, a dead faith, originating in the head, spoken by the mouth in hypocrisy.

Faith is the seed; works are the fruit.

Jesus said, *“wherefore by their fruits (works) ye shall fully know them (false prophets)” (Mt. 7:20, Gk.).*

In other words, the woods are full of this kind.

At the Second Coming, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, the final distinction will be made between those who said only and those who said and *did* (Mt. 7:21-23; 25:41ff.).

What are our works declaring about our faith?

If you believe you are called to the ministry, *what are you doing about it?*

Faith + Works = Live Faith

Here is another simple, spiritual equation.

A faith—spoken or unspoken—acted on by corresponding works of obedience, is a *living* one.

Abraham believed God and demonstrated it by offering his son, Isaac (Gen. 15:6; 22:10). Faith was the seed motivating the deed.

Rahab proved her faith in the spies' word to be genuine by sending them out another way, sparing their lives that they might, later, spare hers and her family's (Josh. 2).

The Bible abounds with such illustrations.

Obedience Brings Healing

Just the other day, a beautiful, young couple in the church brought their little baby to the altar for prayer. He had been diagnosed with a certain intestinal disorder and was scheduled for tests in a few days.

I believe God is a healer.

The couple believe Jesus loves the little children.

The Bible declares the "prayer of faith" shall save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up (Ja. 5:15).

They came; we prayed and God healed.

I put my hand on that little baby and said, "*Intestines: become normal.*"

Sunday morning the young father told me the tests came back negative.

Isn't God wonderful?

How can we determine whether ours is only a *head* faith or *said* faith, in reality a *dead* faith?

By our actions.

Our actions can be a spiritual thermometer, measuring the heat of our belief in the promises of God.

Not only that, but our faith works or releases the power of God into our life's situations.

Disobedience Delays Blessings

Last year I was ministering in New Zealand. Among many who answered an altar call was a young man who requested prayer for his life "to start making sense." The Lord showed me he had a call to the ministry. I told him he would need to come to grips with that fact and begin to prepare himself. As I prayed, he fell under the power. I'm sure God met him there and then but what really counts is what happens later. Will he put works with

his faith?

Real Bible faith, *works*.

Your Faith's Senses

“**A**ll thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and *Acassia*” (Psa. 45:8).

The Scent of the Anointing

A close friend of mine answered the altar call of a visiting evangelist in a certain “full gospel” church. He was seeking a blessing from the Lord. As my friend was prayed over, he fell under the power, but not before noticing a very unusual aroma. He wondered what kind of after-shave or cologne the minister had been wearing.

He hadn’t used any.

What *was* that aroma?

After comparing notes with other spiritual believers, my friend is convinced his faith enabled him to sense—spiritually—the aroma of the Lord’s Anointing.

Who are we to say God cannot allow us—at His discretion—to enjoy the very atmosphere of Heaven through giving our faith a sense of smell?

The verse quoted above may be more literal than some of us Bible-believing Christians have over realized.

This portion of scripture speaks of our Lord Jesus Christ and is quoted by Paul in his letter to the Hebrews. One verse earlier the psalmist says:

“*Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the **oil of gladness** above thy companions*” (Psa. 45:7, Heb.).

Does the Anointing have an aroma?

The inspired penman seemed to think so. Why are we not aware of it?

Perhaps our faith is not always adjusted to the celestial atmosphere.

Sweet-smelling Saints

The prophet Hosea said something interesting regarding God's people exuding an aroma of righteousness. In Hosea 14:6-7, the prophet says of God's People, Israel (after being restored), "*his (Israel's) smell is as Lebanon.*"

Of course this is symbolic of a noticeable change in Israel's spiritual testimony as a nation under God. But can it—by the Spirit—also allow for a literal application?

The Lady in the Choir

For a number of months now I've been praying in our new sanctuary. Among other items, I've been releasing my faith in prayer for a choir during our Sunday morning service. At times I have seen the entire group—robes and all—and also smelled a particular lady's perfume.

Will this take place?

According to my faith: yes!

As we study the history of the modern-day Pentecostal revival, we read of believers—while under the Spirit's Power—smelling the aroma of Heaven.

Who are the to limit God in His demonstrations?

A Sense of Taste

*"Is there iniquity in my **tongue**? Cannot my **taste** discern perverse things" (Job 6:30)?*

Again, in context, this verse of scripture refers, in a symbolic way, to the ability of a child of God to discern good from evil. John the apostle reminds us that this is done by the Anointing (I Jn. 2:27). The question for us is, can it also be literal?

Can the Holy Ghost actually give Spirit-filled children of God today a literal (spiritual) sense of taste?

“O taste and see that Yahweh is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him” (Psa. 34:8).

Certainly, this text is symbolic of the spiritual satisfaction in experiencing the Lord's Presence.

But can it also be literal?

“How sweet are thy sayings unto my taste! Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth” (Psa. 119:103).

Of course, this verse is symbolic of the spiritual benefit of the Word of God to the obedient believer; God's Word is good for us.

But can this experience also be literal?

“Therefore his (unrepentant Moab's) taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed” (Jer. 48:11).

Obviously, this portion of scripture speaks in a symbolic way of Moab's heathen, unbelieving and sinful nature remaining unchanged and unrepentant. But can it also be literal?

I have dealt with demons many times over the years; often their presence is accompanied by an odor. Ministers have mentioned a similar experience in terms of particular illnesses. Some see a dark veil over those stricken with various ailments, still others sense corruption or even death upon entering a sick room.

Needed Confirmation

I remember praying one entire afternoon before formally proposing to my wife. I wanted to be sure she was God's choice (if you think ministry is tough, talk to a minister's wife!), since I know it would be a difficult life for her. Suddenly, I had peace (Phil. 4:6-7) and then tasted something like honey in my mouth. This served as a confirmation in the Spirit that I was being directed by God.

Cancer Cured

Many months ago, during prayer I had a most unusual experience. I tasted the affliction of cancer. I couldn't find any

scripture for such a manifestation, but I didn't find any against it either. In a few weeks I had opportunity to minister to individuals afflicted with the disease. We sent a prayer cloth to one person and later heard their disease went into remission.

God is not limited in His ability to manifest either His miraculous guidance, nor His supernatural healing power. He is sovereign; He is Lord.

Have we not, even in the natural, spoken of a certain conversation, leaving a *bad taste* in our mouth?

Cannot our Spirit-given faith acquire such a dimension?

A Sense of Touch

The Bible records a number of instances where the Presence or touch of the Lord was experienced by one of His own. The prophet Ezekiel writes of God's Hand being upon him, strong upon him, and of falling upon his face due to the glory of God in His house (Ez. 1:3; 3:14; 44:4).

Again, I Kings. 8:10-11, describes the glory of God filling the temple and the priests being unable to stand.

Growing Faith

Several years ago, Jan B. severely twisted her ankle causing a bad sprain. The joint was very swollen and discolored. She and her husband believed in the touch of the Lord and that His Presence was not limited by time or space. Her husband and I prayed over a prayer cloth. He brought it home and placed it on her ankle. How they rejoiced as they watched the swelling go down and the discoloration disappear *right before their eyes*.

Perhaps this experience paved the way—spiritually—for Jan to release her faith on behalf of her son, Kenny.

Heart Healed

It seems Ken had been quite sick for about two weeks; he complained of weakness and chest pains. Soon, he became seriously ill and was taken to the hospital where a battery of tests

was carried out. They showed a growth on the heart or lungs. He was told to continue with his medication (high blood pressure pills), and even though a young man, was informed he had serious heart trouble. His mother prayed; God spoke "*He will be all right.*" Then, her faith was again put to the test. Kenny collapsed at a friend's house, experiencing difficulty breathing and feeling a two ton weight on his chest. He was taken to the hospital with an erratic heartbeat and given more tests.

Jan came to the altar on Sunday morning. We agreed in prayer over a "prayer cloth" which she then took to Kenny, placing it on his chest. When the second series of tests came back he tested normal. The growth was gone. He was told he possessed a strong, healthy heart.

Certainly, God's arm is not too short to save, even with a prayer cloth.

Faith in Action

The touch of the Lord is not reserved only for worship services. Our God is able!

Just the other day I spoke with Jan on the telephone. It seems her little 17-month-old granddaughter accidentally had scolding, hot coffee spilled on her. While others were scurrying to and fro, organizing a trip to the hospital, Jan took the child in the other room and *laid hands on her*, praying for her in the Spirit of Jesus, *in faith*. The little girl stopped crying, the red blotches began to fade and by the time the ambulance arrived, she was waving "Bye Bye" and smiling as she left for the hospital.

The emergency room staff went through their normal procedures, but the healing had already taken place. The next day, when the bandages were removed, the burn marks were gone.

The Power of His Presence

Too often to keep track of, during the past 20 years of ministry (at this writing), God's Power has swept over the congregation causing dozens to fall under the power at once. Last January, a number of individuals fell as if struck by lightning. I

was on the platform praying, several feet away when God's Power fell. Spiritually minded believers can sense this immediately. I have had folks tell me they had trouble remaining on their feet while standing behind the ones to whom I was ministering. God's Power is the most real thing in the world. It is not confined to Greece or any other nation. The question is not, "Is God really able to 'touch' us?" but, "Are we ready to recognize our 'Day of Visitation?'"

As I write these lines, I am aware of the Presence of the Lord challenging me to unite my faith with all those who may read these lines. Let's pray:

"O God our Father, we believe Your Power is here present as we join our faith together according to Your promise, that where two or more are gathered together in Your Name, there You are in the midst.

*In Jesus' Name, let sickness depart, let growths disappear, let cancer die, may arthritis dissolve and infections vanish. Let the blind **see**, let the deaf **hear**, may the lame **walk**, and may deliverance flow for everyone and anyone in need. Let sins be forgiven and give new hope to the discouraged, strength to the weak, faith to the fearful and new vision to the hopeless. By the Blood of Calvary, through the Power of the Spirit of God, in the Holy Name of Jesus, we pray and believe we receive. Amen and amen."*

There it is, my brother, my sister. "Take up your bed and walk;" may you be enabled to do what you couldn't do and enjoy what you could not enjoy, by faith."

Take a moment to write me and share the joy of your victory and deliverance in Jesus.

Creative Faith

“**F**or he spake, and it was; he commanded, and it stood fast
(Psa. 33:9, Heb.).

“If you don’t like what you see, start seeing what you like.”

From the stillness of eternity sounded out the Voice of the Lord and there sprang into being the entire created world order. God desired; God decreed. And God displayed His ability to make something out of nothing.

When the enemy of God and man introduced chaos into the equation, our Lord simply used His Divine Power to re-create.

*“Thou sendest forth **thy Spirit**, they are created: and thou **renewest** the face of the ground” (Psa. 104:30, Heb.).*

In other words, He brings good out of evil (Rom. 8:26-28), our infirmities and the works of the enemy notwithstanding.

What needs created or birthed in *your* experience?

God’s Holy Spirit is ready—right now—to assist you in bringing God’s will to pass in your life.

What is it that needs renewed or re-created in *your* life?

The Word of God and the Power of God—through your faith—are able to completely transform your life.

The Prayer of Faith

How is this possible today, right now?

See It

Form a faith image of that which you desire. Remember, the visible, physical, natural order of life is *subject to change* (II Cor. 4:18). Faith is the substance (confidence, assurance) of things *hoped for* (Heb. 11:1).

Seek It

Next, begin to pray—perseveringly—for your desire to become a reality.

*“What things soever ye **are asking**, when you are **constantly praying**” (Mk. 11:24, Gk.).*

Sense It

If we are diligent in this, there will come a time when *faith*—the assurance—is granted us in prayer; we will know that we know that we know. This confidence comes about through our asking according to His will (I Jn. 5:14-15).

When we pray in the Spirit, we are always praying according to His will (Rom. 8:26-27).

*“And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in **the prayer**, believing, ye shall receive” (Mt. 21:22, Gk.).*

This is Divine cause and effect.

Say It

*“He shall have whatsoever he **sayeth**” (Mk. 11:23b).*

“This marriage shall be renewed.”

“Sickness: stop being.”

“Let there be a full auditorium.”

“The revival is here, now.”

Do you see it, beloved?

Those negative images which bombard you as you enter into prayer are *not* God’s will. God’s will is that *inner desire*, that dissatisfaction regarding the present state of affairs!

God is *“constantly working in us effectively, the willing and*

the doing of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13, Gk.).

He is blessedly able to do, “*exceeding, abundantly above all that we are constantly asking or thinking, according to the power—His—the One (Holy Spirit) which is constantly working in us*” (Eph. 3:20, Gk.).

Think about these four steps to praying the prayer of faith. Practice them. Use them.

Remember, faith doesn't ignore reality; *it changes it.*

The Power of Love

*“But faith, the one which constantly works **through love**” (Gal. 5:6, Gk.).*

What is the Power Source, the spiritual motivation for this faith that desires to see the lost saved, the sick healed, the bound released and the hosts of hell defeated?

The inspiration of the indwelling, Divine, Spirit of Love. God so loved that He gave. Let us do likewise and give of ourselves in prayer and faith which creates His supply to man's need.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR...

Dr. Joseph Kostelnik is founder and president of Gospel Truth Ministries, an apostolic ministry with a three-fold vision: a local church (**White Oak Chapel**), training up and sending out of ministers of the Word (**The Prophetic Voice Institute**), and short-term mission trips to foreign fields as God leads.

He holds a B.A. from Point Park University, an M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary, a Th.D. and Ph.D. from International Seminary, an honorary D.D. from Kingsway Christian College & Theological Seminary and an honorary Litt.D. from International Seminary.

He has served as: pastor, assistant pastor, evangelist, Bible teacher, missionary, author, educator, and media minister. He has ministered in the United States as well as overseas, including: England, Scotland, Australia, France, Greece, Germany, Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, Crete, Haiti and New Zealand and his ministry is marked by the miraculous.

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