

Adventures in God



Truth, Faith, Love: My God-Given Goals (Part 3)
by Derek Prince

The most dramatic, single change was in the Bible. The previous day when I read it, it was a dreary, remote, unintelligible, baffling book. And, extremely boring. The next evening when I opened the Bible it was as if there were only two persons in the universe, God and me. The Bible was God speaking personally to me—and it's been that way ever since, which is nearly fifty-four years. I have never had any problem believing the Bible is the true, infallible, inspired Word of God. I never had to reason it out, I never had to go through a lot of processes, I just knew this is God speaking to me.

Well, that was my conversion. Well, let me tell you what happened next. Honestly, I just hope I'm right because I couldn't go back to my sermon now, I've gone too far in the other direction. I can prove I've got an outline, it's here.

I come from a totally military family. Every male member of my family I've ever known had been an officer in the British Army. So, they decided I was eligible for promotion. I was in the medical corps because I had volunteered in order not to have to carry arms. They sent me off to a place called Leeds which was a vast parade ground. There, together with about I think about twenty other potential non-commissioned officers we went through this process of being trained to train people. Well again, for me with my military background that was no problem at all. I have a strong voice so I could get people moving in any direction with the right command without any problem. "Move to the left and freeze. Quick, march." I can still do it, you see!

But, this strange laughter would keep coming back. I mean, I really wasn't in control. I remember one time I got this squad of soldiers retiring; in other words, going away from me on this vast parade ground. And I wanted to give them the order to return and I couldn't get it out, I was laughing. I had lost control of the situation and they were almost disappearing over the horizon, I thought what is going to happen? Because, in the army the only person who could cancel the order is the one who's given it. But anyhow, at the last moment the Lord intervened and I got them turned around and coming back.

After I got back from Leeds I was lying once again on my straw mattress. The other soldier was out at a dance and I was just pondering on all the unusual things that had been happening to me. I felt a fire in my belly. Now I remembered

hearing in church that Jesus said, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And I said to myself, that's where it is, it's in my belly. And this fire started to move up inside my chest and into my throat. And then I found something like a piece of hard rubber bouncing about against the back of my throat. I thought what is that? Then I realized it was my own tongue! But I was not moving it. So I felt a sense of fear but I thought, "No, I've come this far now. If I turn back I'll never get this far again." So I let it all happen and I started to stammer very inarticulate sounds. But as fear receded and I felt this is all right, I began to speak what sounded something like Chinese to me—I have no idea what it was.

Well, a little while later I heard footsteps in the corridor and I knew my friend was coming back from the dance. I thought to myself, "He already thinks me strange, if he comes in and hears me speaking this strange language, he'll think me stranger still." So I thought I'll just give him a word of explanation. I had no idea I could explain something I didn't understand myself but when I tried to explain, it came out in the other language! So sure enough, he thought me stranger still! But he was a good friend, his attitude was everybody's got the right to do his own thing. If that's his thing, let him do it. I tell you, if he'd been religious I would have had a hard time.

Well, now I was so ignorant, you see, I didn't know you had to go to church to get saved. I didn't know you had to go to church to get the baptism in the Holy Spirit. I didn't even know what the baptism in the Holy Spirit was. And I was so ignorant that I didn't know you had to wait six months before you got any spiritual gifts. So from then on every time I spoke in tongues I got the interpretation.

And the first time it ever happened was a real milestone in my life. It's very vivid to me even today. I spoke this strange language and then I began to speak in English like in the same rhythm as the language that I'd spoken before. I said to myself this must be a translation of what I'd been saying. And I knew enough to know that the word interpretation was in the Bible. I got the most vivid word pictures of things that I didn't know really what they were. But in the middle of it I got a few sentences that I have never forgotten. I very, very seldom say it in public because it could sound presumptuous. But tonight I somehow feel God wants me to say it. And what I got was this, and there was no explanation, no preamble, I didn't know anything about revivals, I just got the words. And I remember them vividly.

> "It shall be like a little stream, and the little stream shall become a river. The river shall become a great river. The great river shall become a sea. And the sea shall become a mighty ocean and it shall be through thee."

I had no understanding of what that could mean but I have never forgotten it. Those words are as vivid to me today as they were then. But I'd have to say I have seen God gradually making it happen. After that everywhere I went I got the word Palestine in my mind. There wasn't a state of Israel in those days. So I talked to my dear Pentecostal friends and said, "It's funny, everywhere I go I get the word Palestine in my mind." So they, using their strange jargon, said, "God must be calling you to Palestine." I thought what does that mean?

Well, about three or four weeks later the army sent us overseas. They never told us where they were going. We started from Glasgow, went almost to North America, went down the North Atlantic, around the Cape of Good Hope and came in in Durban after being one month at sea. We went into Durban and it was like going from hell to heaven. All I wanted was to find somewhere where I could find people that had what I had. I wandered through the streets of Durban trying to explain to people what I was looking for. And somebody directed me to a place which was a mission run by a Norwegian. I got in there and I thought, "Thank God, I'm home. This is where I belong." I knelt down, started to pray and I couldn't even pray, I started to sing in the Spirit. I've never done it ever since. My voice filled the whole auditorium. It was my song of thanksgiving to God for having brought me to my brothers and sisters in the Lord. In the natural, and especially in South Africa at that time, you understand, it was totally unconventional. For me, I was probably at the top of the list of people who would never do a thing like that.

However, the British Army took me where God wanted me. I got to North Africa, got off the troop ship and heard about Pearl Harbor and discovered that America had come into the war. I didn't realize the significance of it at the time but I spent the next two years in the deserts of North Africa. I think I understand somewhat why the Lord took Israel through the wilderness, through the desert, to the Promised Land. Because, a desert strips you of any nonessential. All sorts of things that you would consider important just have no further significance. In fact, in the desert there are about four or five things that matter. Number one is water, first and foremost. Number two is food. Number three is shelter. Number four is transportation. And all the elaborate, intellectual folderol that I had been associated with at Cambridge just dropped off. I had no church, there was only one other believer in the unit of 200 men. My only resource was the Bible. Oh, I thank God for two years with nothing but the Bible. I would have gladly gone to a church but there was no church to go to.

Well, then I got sick with eczema, which is very easy to get sick with in that part of the world—bad climate, very bad food. I did go to Cairo for a few days on leave and I encountered a very strange lady who was 75 years old at that time and had been, and still was, an officer in the Salvation Army. She was a brigadier because that was her husband's rank and he had died. She was a tongue-speaking Salvationist and in those days they were few and far between. She had a little meeting of soldiers from all parts—American, New Zealand, Australian, British. I went there and she said to me, "Derek, God will heal you." So I thought "God will heal me." I went back and I said, "God's going to heal me." And, He did.

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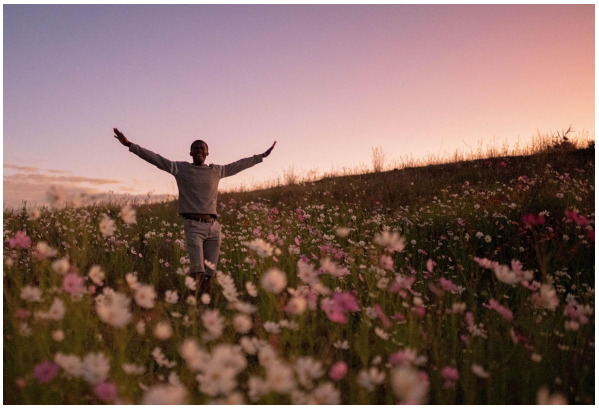
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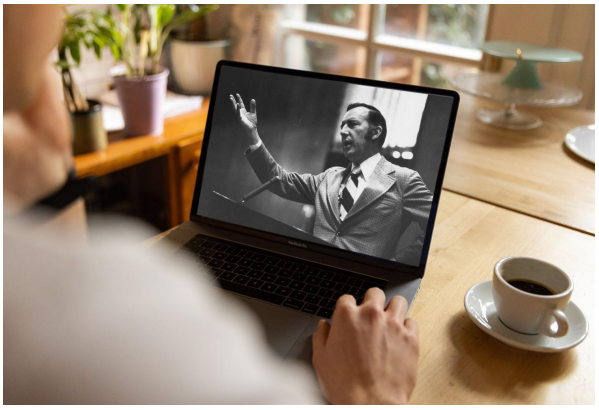
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