

Driven by Six Mighty Forces

Six prominent people, whose histories are recorded in the Book of Genesis, were individually driven by invisible powerful forces. Today, these same mighty forces should be and in some cases are operating in the body of Christ.

Driven! It is to be moved along by a force, such as the wind. An automobile is designed to be guided by a driver, namely, a person. The power supply and the mechanics for motion are contained in the automobile.

The six powerful forces to be discussed were the drivers of these six special people recorded in Genesis. The ability for purpose and destiny is inherent, inbuilt by God, in each individual, yet it requires a driver. What special force drives your life toward a chosen goal? Who is in your driver's seat?

The Book of James talks about people who were doubt driven, lust driven, anger driven, tongue driven, doctrine driven, jealousy driven, ambition driven, envy driven, wealth driven, faith driven, wisdom driven and prayer driven. A person can be driven by the forces of the world or by the forces of the kingdom of God. What force is going to occupy your driver's seat?

Some people are driven by desire, or by boredom, or alcohol and drugs, or driven by circumstances. Time cannot be stopped or started by man. It is a fact that life is constantly in motion, heading somewhere. Life cannot be "paused", as pushing the pause button on a VCR, or put on hold as a telephone, rather from heartbeat to heartbeat, life is moving toward an end. What force is in your driver's seat with its grip on the steering wheel?

The Tumbleweed of the mid-West is an example of being driven by the force of the wind. As the plant dries out in late fall, the specialized layer of cells in the stem facilitates the easy break between plant and root when a strong wind begins to blow. As it rolls down a desert road, a Russian thistle plant does what it does best, disperse seeds that typically number 250,000 per plant.

There are too many people being driven by the wind of circumstance, such as the tumbleweed of the mid-West. "Tumbleweed", Russian Thistle" or "Wind Witch" is the common names of this plant. A twentieth century song immortalized this plant, "Tumbleweeds...see them rolling along, Pledging their love with a song, Here on the range I belong, Drifting along with the tumbling tumbleweeds..." In whatever direction the wind blows, many lives are tumbling along, doing whatever others are doing, saying whatever others are saying, believing whatever others are believing, sowing whatever others are sowing and accepting whatever others are accepting. People are tumbling, tumbling; along life's span, only the wind is at their steering wheel.

1

Driven by a Relationship

Enoch

"And Enoch lived sixty and five years, and begat Methuselah: and Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: and all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: and Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Gen 5:21-24).

When Enoch, the seventh generation from Adam, became the father of Methuselah, Adam was 687 years of age. Enoch was 243 years old when Adam died. It would not be unreasonable to assume they knew one another and Enoch had been taught about God by Adam. Also, Adam's third son, Seth, who was a son in the image and likeness of his father, could have made an impact upon Enoch and caused him to seek after a special relationship with the Lord.

Surely, the hunger to develop a relationship with God was cultivated by the stories about the Garden of Eden and the relationship that Adam enjoyed with God during all those years. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have a conversation with Adam and ask him what it was like to work with God in organizing the new planet earth? Certainly! If you could only imagine the thrill of walking "with the voice of God" each evening, that alone would stir up a desire to have an intimate relationship with the Creator.

David sang this song: "The voice of the Lord is powerful, the voice of the Lord is majestic, the voice of the Lord breaks the cedars...the voice of the Lord hews out flames of fire...the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness...the voice of the Lord makes the deer to calve and strips the forests bare; and in His temple everything says, 'Glory'" (Psa. 29).

Just to have a companionship with the "Voice" of God, to hear His life-enriched words, to feel the refreshment of His presence, and to sense the intensity of His purpose and plans would be so fulfilling. Imagine going to sleep with "God-words and ideas" flowing through our excited mind.

It appears that Enoch had a special revelation when his wife gave birth to their firstborn. The bible informs us that he named him Methuselah, the man of the dart (Gesenius)— literally, man of sending, particularly with reference to water, and hence, the name Siloam (sent, John 9:7), given to a pool at Jerusalem. Hales interprets the name as signifying, "He shall send his death;" and referring to the time when this patriarch was to die. His inspired father, who had announced the approaching judgment of God for the wickedness of a corrupting world (Jude 1:14-15), probably bestowed upon his son the name of Methuselah as prophetic of the impending flood; and accordingly it is computed that Methuselah died that very year in which the deluge began. He is the oldest patriarch on record demonstrating the grace of God and giving mankind every opportunity to change its ways. It has also been suggested that Methuselah means, "When he is dead it shall come."

For the next 300 years, after receiving such a revelation about what was going to happen in the future, Enoch committed to developing a relationship with God. The bible says, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24).

Enoch was "relationship driven", and became so intimate with the Lord that God took him right on into heaven to be with Him forever. Relationship, united with God, assures our translation from mortality to immortality.

"As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for Thee, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God" (Ps 42:1-2)? The word picture is of a deer being pursued by a predator and seeks to plunge into a free flowing stream of water for refuge and refreshment. He submerges himself in the water with the exception of only his nose above the surface. In the same way a believer should seek that special kind of relationship with God. He should be driven by a need to be in touch with God and in tune with His thoughts.

The body of Christ is being adorned as a bride to enter into an eternal relationship with Jesus. It is described by Paul as “having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless” (Eph. 5:27). This process can only be completed through a special relationship with God through the Holy Spirit.

2

Driven by a Name

Noah

Methuselah became the father of Lamech and Lamech became the father of Noah.

By his behavior it is clear that Noah believed in the prophetic name of Methuselah, his grandfather. As his father and grandfather grew older, his faith in God must have been reinforced by them. Noah developed a relationship and communication with God, because it was by faith that Noah began to construct the ark. Faith comes by hearing the words of God.

The bible says, “But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord... (He) was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God” (Gen. 6:8, 9). Even as Enoch sought a special relationship with God, so did Noah. His faith grew in the name of his grandfather, Methuselah, “When he is dead it shall come.” During his daily walks, God gave him the blueprint of the ark to save his family from destruction. The pattern of the ark, the tabernacle and the temple of Solomon, all three were divinely given.

Because Noah was driven by a name, he devoted 120 years to constructing the ark in a world steadily deteriorating into extreme and unimaginable wickedness. The last days are described as the “days of Noah,” therefore we should follow the example of Noah and develop a meaningful daily walk with God.

If you are driven by a God-inspired name that bears a message, you can survive in all kinds of evil circumstances. When the people around Noah ridiculed and scorned him, he kept on working and believing in the message of God. Man’s natural reasoning is opposite to the wisdom of God.

The Bible progressively unfolds the invisible attributes, eternal power and nature of God through His names. “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse” (Rom 1:20). From Adam to Abraham, God was known by the name of Elohiym, the Creator God. “Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these {stars,} the One who leads forth their host by number, He calls them all by name; because of the greatness of His might and the strength of

{His} power not one {of them} is missing” (Isa 40:26). “Thus says God the LORD, who created the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and its offspring, who gives breath to the people on it, and spirit to those who walk in it” (Isa 42:5).

"It is I who made the earth, and created man upon it. I stretched out the heavens with My hands, and I ordained their entire host” (Isa 45:12). There was a determining and designing force behind what we call heaven (planets, stars, galaxies) and the earth. Elohiym, not only designed the universe, but in His great power, created it out of nothing.

To Adam, God was Elohiym, but to Abraham, God revealed Himself as El-Shaddai, the all-sufficient One. El is in reference to the power of God to create, while Shaddai defines His sufficiency to keep

His word. The word is connected with a root that signifies a breast. As a baby gains strength from the nourishment provided through the breast of his mother, Abraham was assured that he would be sustained and shielded from dangers that existed in the land of Canaan. He was a foreigner, surrounded and outnumbered by idol worshipers, yet he was not to fear, but believe in the covenant keeping God. "He has remembered His covenant forever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations, {the covenant} which He made with Abraham and His oath to Isaac. Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion of your inheritance" (Ps 105:8-11). Abraham was driven by a name, and his faith was accredited to him as righteousness.

Even as Abraham received an additional revelation of God through a special name, so did Moses. "And God (Elohiym) said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations" (Exod 3:14-15). "I AM WHO I AM" or YHWH, rendered LORD, which is derived from the verb HAYAH. The two verbs connected together form the proper name Jehovah. The name conveys the personal, continuous, absolute, self-determining existence of God. I AM whatever is needed to deliver the nation of Israel and lead them into the land of Promise. Through ten major displays of power, the LORD led Israel out of Egypt, and from thence He revealed Himself progressively according to their needs: I AM your Healer (raphah: Ex 15:26); I AM your banner (nissi; Ex. 17:15; I AM your provider (jireh: Gen. 22:14); I AM your peace (shalom: Jud. 6:24); I AM there (shammah: Ezek. 48:35); I AM your righteousness (Tsidquenuw: Jer. 33:16); I AM your shepherd (raah; Psa. 23:1). Moses was driven by a **name!**

The church, the called-out-ones, is also driven by a name! When the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph, he was instructed to name the child, "Jesus"! The name "Jesus" is the transliteration of the Hebrew word which comes over into English in the name "Jehoshua or Joshua". It means Jehovah saves or I AM your salvation. When John, the Baptist, was asked, "Who are you?" He replied by quoting Isaiah 40:3, "A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD (Jehovah) in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God" (Isa 40:3). The delivering God of the Old Testament "became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Jesus declared to the unbelieving Jews, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am" (John 8:58). Jesus is the great I AM of the age of Salvation. Jesus said, "I am the bread of life" (Jn. 6:35), "I am the light of the world" (Jn. 8:12), "I am the door" (Jn. 10:7), "I am the good shepherd" (Jn. 10:11), "I am the resurrection" (Jn. 11:25), "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn. 14:6). There is no other name given whereby we might be saved. (Acts 4:12).

Even though the name "Jesus" was a common name during His earthly life, because of His triumph over sin, disease and death, that name was elevated over every name whether in heaven, the earth or under the earth. Phil. 3:9-11. It is at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It is in the name of Jesus that devils must flee, the sick are healed; and those who have drunk poison and who have been bitten by poisonous snakes shall live. The name of Jesus incorporates all that God is, all that God can do, all that God intends to do. Through the name of Jesus the fullness of God's power and provision flows toward His first love, the church. This name opens the gates of the reservoir of His grace and compassion. No wonder Isaiah, the Prophet, writes, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; and the government will rest on His shoulders; and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of {His} government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore.

The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this” (Isa 9:6-7).

And as the Bible closes out the story of the redemption and salvation of mankind, John writes, “The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen” (Rev. 22:21).

The bible instructs believers to pray in the name of Jesus, to baptize in the name of Jesus, to ask in the name of Jesus, cast out demons in the name of Jesus, and to do all in the name of Jesus. Even as Noah was Name driven, so is the church of the living God.

3

Driven by a Promise Abraham

“Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:1-3).

Abram and his family lived in the land of Ur, and according to Joshua 24:2, his family worshiped idols. Then the question arises: How did Abram come into communion with God in order to receive the great promise?

In my research it was discovered that Noah was 875 years of age when Abram was born. That means that Abram had the opportunity to develop a relationship with Noah before he died at the ripe old age of 950. Noah and Abram overlapped 75 years. If you will notice that Abram left the land of Ur at the command of the Lord when he was around 75 years of age.

God made this promise to Abram: I will make you a great nation, I will bless you, I will make your name great and in you I will bless the nations of the world. Abram by faith, taking hold of the promise of God, bid the land of Ur good-bye, and set his face toward the land of Canaan.

He had delays in route to Canaan. One of those was at Haran, and it was there that Terah, Abram's father died. They had traveled around 700 miles, not really knowing where they were headed. Faith does not know where, but you keep going anyway! The meaning of the name Terah is *delay*. When the delay is buried, then you journey on, not turning back thinking that delays are God's denials. He was driven on by a promise from God.

Even as Abraham was driven by a promise, so we, too, must be driven by the same promise. What kind of suggestion is this? Do I mean that we have the same promise as Abraham? The answer is unequivocally, “Yes!”

Paul presented this anointed persuasive argument: “Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, {saying} "All the nations shall be blessed in you.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer” (Gal 3:6-9).

Who are the sons of Abraham? Who are blessed with Abraham? It is the believer! Paul continues his argument: “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29). We as believers should be driven by the same promise given to Abraham. The natural promise is mainly concerned with the land of Canaan. The supernatural promise is Christ, the seed of God, and He is the blessing to the entire world. We are those believers who are extending the promise into the entire world. To be driven by the promise is to fulfill the great commission, “Go, ye, into the entire world....!”

Too many believers are driven by the “first line of the promise”, “And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing” (Gen 12:2). Hundreds of Christian books have been written on how to become materially prosperous and too few books have been written on the “bottom line of the promise”, to be a blessing to the entire world. The promise- driven-life must include both top and bottom lines.

The destiny of the body of Christ is to be a blessing unto all the families of the earth, and that means, we are to export the “good news” of Jesus Christ to every man, woman and child. I am convinced that when the emphasis is adjusted to the bottom line, God will take care of the top line of the promise. It was the complete promise that drove Abraham into the land of Canaan.

Material prosperity is temporal. Spiritual prosperity is eternal. The life-span of the first line of the promise is short-lived, but the life-span of the bottom line overlaps eternity. Balancing the top and bottom lines of the promise is an urgent responsibility of the leaders of the church. Believers must be driven by the total promise!

It has been reported that on a local telethon a year or so ago and a not too well known minister, helping to raise funds, was taking pledges to get people saved and healed. This kind of method to raise money is appalling. He just kept saying, "If you want your loved ones saved and healed, make a pledge to this station. What were even worse people starting sending in money, pledging \$50.00 to get their loved ones saved and healed? This is absurd! If this isn't making mockery of the free gift of salvation, I don't know what is.

I personally witnessed a few years back, an evening speaker at a major convention make an appeal for those who wanted to be healed to come with a hundred dollars, and then he would pray the prayer of faith for them. To make it worse, he offered to touch the person if they would give \$1000.00. This type of practice is shameful. Selling the gift of healing and attempting to buy material prosperity is wrong. God wants us to prosper and be in health but His blessings are not for sale. Don't you believe otherwise!

Regardless of all the religious charlatans, erroneous and sickening methods used by so-called preachers of the gospel, the original promise made to Abraham still stands. It cannot be cancelled out by selfish and ambitious preachers, who are vultures with backward collars, preying upon desperate, hurting and needed people.

There is enough of the power of God contained in the “Abrahamic promise” to complete its intended purpose. As Abraham was promise driven, so we too, are heirs of the promise and are being driven into all the earth.

“And the LORD appeared to him and said, do not go down to Egypt; stay in the land of which I shall tell you. Sojourn in this land and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham. And I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven, and will give your descendants all these lands; and by your descendants all the nations of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 26:2-4).

When famine came to Canaan and Abraham was between Bethel and Ai worshipping God, he made a wrong decision and migrated to Egypt for relief. In the land of compromise there will be trouble and heartache, and sometimes great loss. Abraham, fearing for his life, told a half-truth about his relationship with Sarai. He said, “She is my sister.” In the land of compromise your integrity is challenged. The attempt to walk the fence between the world and God’s will is always a compromise and very dangerous.

The devil, the author of compromise, is actively using this strategy to weaken the witness of the believer. You cannot afford to compromise your conduct, your speech and your calling. The first step that contributed to the downfall of Saul, the first king of Israel, was compromising the commandment of God—utterly destroy the Amalekites and their livestock. He spared the best of the livestock and Amalek, the king. He cancelled out his blessings with his act of compromise.

On the other hand Isaac, took hold of the word of God, and refused to leave Canaan even though the famine was severe. Circumstances should not determine your decisions, but only what God has said to you. Circumstantially driven is dangerous!

One Sunday evening at my home church, I made my way down to the altar bench while the people were singing these words, “Where He leads me, and I will follow.” These words transcended from words in a song into penetrating words of fire in my heart. I recognized that God was calling me into special service. I have held this word in my heart ever since and it has driven me through many years. It has caused me to crisscross this nation, go into many countries of the world, even to the point of encircling the globe, preaching and teaching the gospel. It caused me to turn my back on secular advancement and focus on advancing the kingdom of God. One word from God changed the life course of a fourteen year teenager and it can do the same for you.

On my third trip to the Philippines in 1984, one early morning in Dumaguete City, Negros Island, I heard these words as the sun was rising over the eastern horizon, “I want you to return to the Philippines three consecutive years and hold seminars, and then I want you to hold a major convention and bring those pastors together.” I was faithful in holding the seminars, but when I thought it was time to hold the convention, nothing would come together. After a year or two, I laid it to rest on my imaginary shelf, then in late 1991, Benito Pacleb, came by our home in Albany, Oregon. He reminded me of the words that had come to me that morning in his home in Dumaguete City. He said, “I believe it is time.” In 1993 we held that convention in the Sports Arena and 2500 pastors came together. I was driven by a personal word of God.

Regardless of what the people did to Isaac, he refused to leave Canaan. He would dig a well and the Canaanites would take it from him. He would dig another well and the same thing would happen. But he was driven on by the word of God until there was room made for him in the land of Promise. Apostle Paul, while lying face down on the road to Damascus, heard these words, “And the Lord said I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.” But arise, and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you; delivering you from the {Jewish} people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you, to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light

and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me. Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision” (Acts 26:15-19).

Paul was driven by a word of God until he finished his course. What Word has been given to you? It is not to your benefit to compromise that divine word.

The word of God can be compared to a sail on a boat that fills itself in the wind of the Holy Spirit. Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to the wind. One cannot see it, but it has substance that can be evidenced by what it affects. The wind can cause the waves of the sea to raise, the trees of the field to sway, to cool the face of one who is hot, but the wind itself cannot be seen. It is an unseen force that has power. The Word that God has given to you also can drive you along in the direction that God wants you to go. It is unseen; however, it is a force!

5

Driven by a Vision

Jacob

Jacob was fleeing for his life. He had cheated his brother out of his birthright and first-born blessing and Esau was planning to kill him.

Jacob had forced himself to travel around 48 miles in his haste to escape from the murderous plan of his brother, Esau. It was the very spot where Abraham had built an altar and worshiped God many years before, in between Bethel and Ai. It was here that the exhaustion of the journey caught up with him, and he selected a stone for a pillow, wrapped himself up in his garments and fell asleep. Suddenly, he had a vision.

“And he came to a certain place and spent the night there, because the sun had set; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it under his head, and lay down in that place. And he had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said, I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants. Your descendants shall also be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread out to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and in you and in your descendants shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with you, and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you” (Gen 28:11-15).

The direction of the Lord came to Abram as a promise, it came as a word to Isaac, and now it came as a vision to Jacob. From that moment on, Jacob was driven by a vision!

Jacob received the revelation that there is a connection between heaven and earth, and the angels of God see to it that the will of God in heaven prevails upon the earth. And now since the cross of Christ, Jesus becomes the connection medium between heaven and earth. Whatsoever is bound in heaven is bound on earth and whatsoever is loosed in heaven is loosed upon the earth. Your faith is the ladder to connect with heaven, where Jesus is seated on the throne.

Jesus spoke prophetically to Nathanael based on the vision of Jacob: “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man” (St.

Jn. 1:51).

Traditional myths about Jacob's pillar:

According to Adam Clark there is a foolish tradition that the stone set up by Jacob was afterward brought to Jerusalem, and sometimes later it was brought to Spain, from Spain to Ireland, from Ireland to Scotland, and upon it the kings of Scotland sat to be crowned. Edward I had it brought to Westminster; named it Jacob's pillar and placed it under the chair on which the king sits when crowned!

Standing in the middle of the Great Mosque of Mecca is the Ka'ba, a cubed shaped temple supposed to have been rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ishmael. Reverently draped in black cloth throughout the year, it beckons to every Muslim of the world to come to its sacred ground. Placed into the Eastern corner of the Ka'ba rests the Hajar al-Aswad (literally the black stone). Pilgrims climax their pilgrimage to Mecca by kissing or touching the black stone, believed to be Jacob's stone.

When Jacob returned from the land Haran to Canaan, he was instructed by God to go to Bethel where he had received the vision. God again appeared to him and changed his name from Jacob to Israel. Jacob was driven by a vision, not a stone! Some religions major in constructing buildings around relics and they are called holy shrines. People flock to certain so-called holy shrines for miracles, to see visions and hear from God. To be shrine driven leads to disappointment, but to be vision driven leads to success.

Religion will take a vision that someone receives and turn it into a shrine of worship. Near the city of Lome, Togo is a sacred lake. Tradition has it that a girl received a vision of Mary holding the baby Jesus. Some years ago the Pope of the Catholic Church paid a visit to this lake to disallow or validate the authenticity of this vision. After surveying the lake and listening to the description of the vision, he validated the vision. The people took the boat and enshrined it in concrete. Now people come and worship at the shrine.

King Hezekiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. He "broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan" (2 Kings 18:4). While Israel was in the wilderness and because of their disobedience, they were bitten by poisonous snakes. According to the instructions of the Lord, Moses had a bronze serpent made and placed it on a pole. By looking at the bronze serpent, those who were dying from the bites of poisonous snakes were healed. They turned what had been a miracle deliverance of God into an idol of worship. Jacob was driven by vision, not by a stone that he slept on.

Gideon took the plunder from the defeated Midianites and made a golden ephod. The people of Israel turned the ephod of gold, a divine symbol of victory, into a shrine to be worshiped. The people forgot their miraculous deliverance and instead made it into an idol of worship. Again, Jacob was driven by a vision and not a symbol.

Paul, after traveling hundreds of miles, without any Holy Spirit results finally came to the end of the road, Troas on the sea shore. It was here that he had a vision of a Macedonian man pleading, "Come and help us!" From that point Paul was driven by a vision into Europe and in less than 20 years penetrated as far as Rome, the capitol of the world. He could have constructed a shrine in Troas, but instead he was driven by the substance of the vision.

Religious people flock to shrines all over the world to possibly experience some kind of miracle, but people who are in tune with what God is doing, are being driven by a special vision that through Christ God has connected the earth with the heavens, and whatever is bound in heaven is being bound

on earth and whatever is loosed in heaven is being loosed on earth.

6

Driven by a Dream

Joseph

“Then Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. And he said to them, “Please listen to this dream which I have had; for behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and lo, my sheaf rose up and also stood erect; and behold, your sheaves gathered around and bowed down to my sheaf.” Then his brothers said to him, “Are you actually going to reign over us? Or are you really going to rule over us?” So they hated him even more for his dreams and for his words. Now he had still another dream, and related it to his brothers, and said, “Lo, I have had still another dream; and behold, the sun and the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.” And he related {it} to his father and to his brothers; and his father rebuked him and said to him, “What is this dream that you have had? Shall I and your mother and your brothers actually come to bow ourselves down before you to the ground?” And his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the saying {In mind.}” (Gen 37:5-11).

The brothers of Joseph threw him into a pit to die because of his God-sized dream. Dreaming God-sized dreams can be rather expensive — it can cost you immensely! Following God’s dreams might cost you unexpected and severe persecution. You might be hated, plotted against, misrepresented, misunderstood, lied about, rejected, simply because you are following God-given dreams for your life! In other words, when you follow God’s dreams for your life, you will face some costs, which are imposed by others.

Doug Murren in *Keeping Your Dreams Alive When They Steal Your Coat* writes, “It isn't the dream that gets tested--it's the dreamer. When God gives a dream, there's nothing wrong with it. But the dreamer probably needs a lot of work.”

At that time, a coat of many colors was a symbol of royalty and leadership. And where do we find Joseph wearing his coat? Out in the pasture! Just a bit pretentious. Joseph had to lose his coat—and his pride. His jealous brothers promptly stripped him of his status, but God doesn't undress him of divine given dream.

Are God-given dreams worth following? Yes! It will not, however, be easy. There will be some people who want to see you fail, to fall flat on your dreaming face! Their attitudes and actions will impose some costs upon your life when you set out to follow God’s vision. Let’s face it, some people possess callous hearts; they can mistreat you and then go about their daily routine as though they have done nothing wrong. Some people have selfish attitudes. They are first on their own agendas and they could care less about your God-given dreams. There are some dangerously deceitful people in the world. They will do whatever it takes to get their way, even if it means lying about you. Be aware that there are some hypocritical people in this world. They can act like they are standing for what’s right, while at the same time their lives are rotten underneath the surface. They are high on legalism and low on love. These people will always cost you something when you set out to believe and follow God-sized dreams.

Remember, no matter how others might treat you, no matter how callous their hearts might be, no matter how selfish their attitudes might be, no matter how deceitful their ways might be, no matter how hypocritical their lives might be, they are not in charge of your destiny. God is! What others

mean for evil, God can make good out of it. Joseph being sold in Egypt, to one of Pharaoh's officials, had Joseph right on schedule for his God-given dreams to come true.

Rueben, the oldest brother, convinced his callous hearted brothers it would be better to sell Joseph to some traders on their way to Egypt than to leave him in the pit to die. Joseph was sold as a slave to a prominent man in the government for eleven years. Then he was framed by his master's wife and she stripped him of another coat— his success. Potipher, his master, had him put in the maximum security prison with the worst criminals of the land.

But our experiences, as painful as they may be, are never wasted in God's plan. For eleven years Joseph learned the Egyptian language, culture, and management skills. And, most of all, he was being molded into the person who could see the dream fulfilled.

In all of these horrible experiences, Joseph was driven by his dream. For 13 years he suffered one reverse after another. There is nothing in the scriptures that indicate Joseph ever expressed any bitterness. He knew his dream was from God and it kept his attitude right and he made the best of his circumstances. Unknowingly, he was being trained to rule the greatest country in the world. He learned business management under Potipher; he learned to live godly regardless of the temptation; he learned how to deal with cruel, shrewd, and evil people while in prison. Because of the favor of the Lord, his integrity and training, when Pharaoh appointed him as ruler over Egypt, he was ready to serve out the purpose of God for his life.

When he was called out of prison to be presented before Pharaoh, he still possessed his dream in the purity that it was given.

Never allow your God-given dream to die because of adverse circumstances or seemingly time delays, but constantly fan it in the presence of the Lord and rehearse it continually in your walk with the Lord. In due season it will come to pass.

Does the Holy Spirit still give believers visions and dreams? In Joel 2:28, Joel prophesied that the Holy Spirit would give believers visions and dreams when God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter, exercising the gift of prophecy, confirmed Joel's promise, "Your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams" (Acts 2:17).

Sometimes, we must surrender our dream to God, as seen in the case of Abraham when God said, "...Offer him (Isaac) there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you" (Gen. 22:1). You must be willing to allow God to hold and take responsibility of your dream. A God-sized dream must be attached to faith.

God-given dreams are consistent with His word, His character, and His purposes. Most importantly, they are affirmed by God.

Joseph, standing before the Pharaoh of Egypt in his prison clothes, was only a moment away from the fulfillment of his dream. He had been stripped of his pride by his brothers (coat of many colors) stripped of his success by Potipher, and now Pharaoh stripped him of his prison clothes and clothed him with his kingly robes. When the last trumpet sounds, every believer will be stripped of his mortality and weakness and be clothed with immortality and glory. Praise God!

Today, with the pressures of the world against Christians and the Bible, believers, young and old, need to be encouraged to be open to God-given dreams and visions. The Holy Spirit wants to use them to encourage us to trust God, believe His Word, and rejoice in the hope of the future that His

Word promises.

Conclusion

Six prominent people in the book of Genesis were driven by different and powerful forces; Enoch was driven by a unique relationship with God; Noah was driven by a prophetic name; Abram was driven by a promise from God; Isaac was driven by a word from God; Jacob was driven by a vision from God and Joseph was driven by a dream from God. Each of these forces drove them into their fruition of purpose.

What are you driven by? The wind of the world or the wind of the Holy Spirit. When a person is in pursuit of the pleasures, riches and comforts of the world, he is driven by the wind of the world. When a person is in pursuit after the things of God, he is driven by the force of the Holy Spirit. By faith we spread out our sails into the wind of the Holy Spirit. Behind every God given word, vision and dream is the force of the Spirit. This force is manifested through the enabling gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, knowledge, discernment, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, tongues and interpretation so tongues.

There are forces that divide, forces that destroy, forces that cause defeat, however there are six Special Forces that drive an individual into the arms of God purposes.

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