

**MODELS FOR
NATURAL AND
SPIRITUAL PARENTS
AND THE
CHILD'S RESPONSIBILITY
TO THE PARENTS**



B. R. HICKS

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Chapter One

Jacob's Preparation To Be The Father Of An Entire Nation

In His Holy, Divinely Inspired Word, God has given fathers and mothers instructions in how to be good parents. God also has given children instructions which they need to follow in order to fulfill their moral obligations to their parents.

True parenthood involves exercising righteous rulership and authority over our children. Therefore, being a true parent, in either the natural or spiritual realm, consists of much more than the procreative act which brings about the conception and eventual birth of a living child.

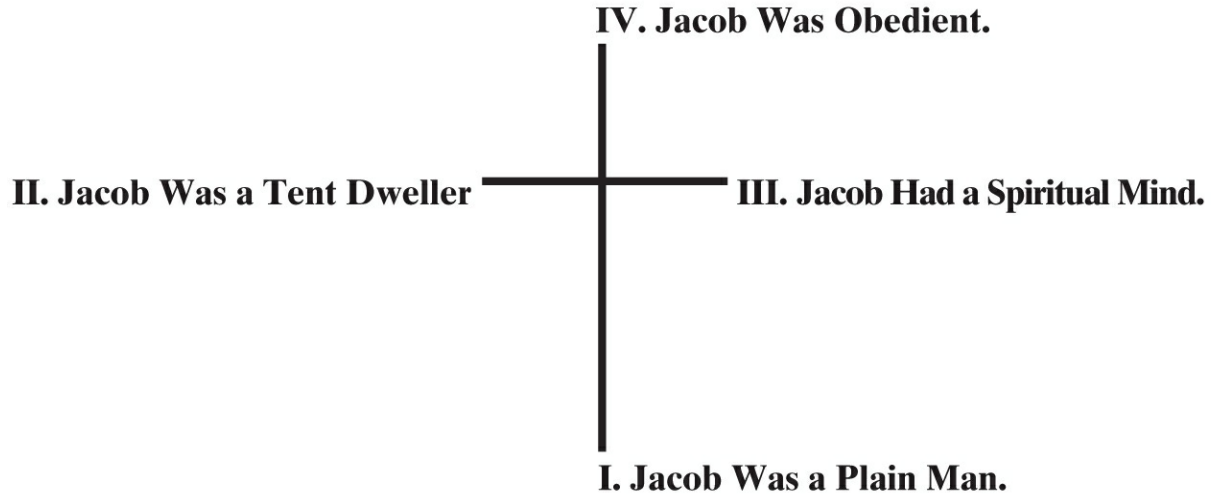
The *seeds* of being a true parent in adulthood begin to grow in childhood. This Principle is clearly revealed in the life of Jacob. Out of Jacob's loins issued the twelve tribes of the Nation of Israel who became known as the Wife or Bride of God after they had entered Canaan's Land. Consequently, Israel pictures the Bridal Relationship that must be generated and brought to birth as a living experience before we can enter into a mature spiritual relationship with the LORD.

As we view the inner attitudes that prepared Jacob to father the twelve tribes, which formed the twelve roots of the family tree of the Nation of Israel, we shall understand what attitudes must be present in our heart in order for the spiritual Bridal Relationship with the LORD to be born in our life.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents. And Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of *his* venison: but Rebekah loved Jacob. And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he sware unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright (Genesis 25:27-34).

The following Stature of Truth explains Jacob's preparation for being a good father.

Jacob's Preparation For Being a Good Parent



I. Jacob Was a Plain Man.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and **Jacob was a plain man**, dwelling in tents (Genesis 25:27).

Many people think that Jacob was a liar and a cheat; but if they would study the Bible carefully, they would see that God does not share their low, mean opinion of this man. In His Word, the LORD repeated how much He loved Jacob.

O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph. For the LORD most high *is* terrible; *he is* a great King over all the earth. He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of **Jacob whom he loved**. Selah (Psalm 47:1-4).

But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, **O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine**. When thou passest through the waters, I *will be* with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I *am* the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt *for* thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. **Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life** (Isaiah 43:1-4).

In view of these Scriptures, are we going to say that the LORD God specially loved a liar and a cheat?

The Hebrew word for *plain* shows how highly esteemed Jacob was in God's Eyes. Being a *plain* man was one of Jacob's inner attitudes that made him a good parent.

The Hebrew word for *plain* is *tawm*, a plural word meaning to be complete, to be morally pious, to be gentle, to be dear, coupled together, perfect, plain, undefiled, upright. Jacob did not spend his early years developing the cunning, subtle, deceitful wisdom used by Esau, who displayed his fleshly, carnal nature in his pursuit of prey.

Jacob's inner thought-life was plain before God. His gentle wisdom was born out of a heart that was in union with the complete Truth that he had learned in the tent of Abraham, his grandfather. His coupling together with the Truth

on the pleasurable theory side and on the painful experience side made Jacob morally dear, pious, and precious in God's Sight. It made him undefiled, upright, and perfect, as far as he had grown in God. No man with this plain attitude toward God and toward His Truth could be guilty of lying and stealing. Remember, Jacob was specially loved by the LORD for his *plain* nature.

As a matter of fact, Esau was the one who stole the birthright from Jacob while the twins were still in the womb of their mother. The warfare over the birthright became so great that their mother, Rebekah, went to enquire of the LORD about the intense struggle going on within her being.

And the children struggled together within her; and she said, *If it be so, why am I thus?* And she went to enquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations *are* in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and *the one* people shall be stronger than *the other* people; and the elder shall serve the younger (Genesis 25:22,23).

The Hebrew word for *struggled* is *raw-tsats*, meaning to crack in pieces, break, bruise, discourage, oppress, struggle together. The struggle for the birthright went far beyond the normal movements of unborn children. These two boys were struggling for an Eternal Inheritance.

While in the womb, Esau succeeded in getting the upper hand over Jacob; therefore, he preceded Jacob as the firstborn in the natural realm, but he could not force the LORD to promise the spiritual birthright to him. Before either child saw the light of day in this world, the Promise went forth from the LORD that the elder would serve the younger (Genesis 25:23). Although Esau managed to be born first, Jacob came out holding to his heel. By his acts, Jacob demonstrated that the spiritual battle for the birthright was not over and that part of him was born at the *same time* as Esau. Hence, later, Jacob could say that he was also a firstborn.

Rebekah's love went to Jacob, the plain, upright, undefiled son who had the call of God upon his life; whereas, Isaac's affection was joined to Esau who supplied him with the wild meat for which his fleshly heart yearned.

II. Jacob Was a Tent Dweller.

And the boys grew: and Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and **Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents** (Genesis 25:27).

God never wastes words. Sometimes Truth is found in very short statements. Such is the case in the words used to mention the fact that Jacob dwelled in tents, which is another of Jacob's attitudes that made him a true parent.

In eastern countries the father and the mother had separate tents. If a man had more than one wife, each wife had her own tent. As the children grew older, they each had a tent. When the Spirit of God said that Jacob *dwelled in tents*, the LORD was telling us that Jacob visited his father's and mother's tents for instruction and that he also visited his Grandfather Abraham's tent for the same purpose.

The use of the word *dwelled* shows how wholeheartedly Jacob accepted his father, mother, and grandfather's instruction. The Hebrew word for *dwelled* is *yaw-shab*, meaning to sit down, to judge, to dwell, to remain, to return, to marry. Since Jacob was a single man, at this point in his life, the dwelling or the marrying had to be in the spiritual realm rather than in the physical realm. Jacob was a good father because he dwelt in tents, where he married his spirit and soul to the Spiritual Truths he received from both of his parents and his grandfather Abraham.

Even in the natural realm, there are certain lessons to be learned from a mother that cannot be learned so readily from a father and vice versa. For example, the mother usually is the one who teaches the children to brush their teeth; to clean their fingernails; to eat with their mouths closed; to use a napkin; to wipe their feet at the door; and countless other little things in life.

In many instances, a woman usually is more gentle and compassionate than a man. Therefore, most of the time, these virtues can be learned more quickly from the mother than the father. If a boy will stay close to his mother while he is young, he will learn some of the more refined qualities which he will need later in dealing with his own wife and children.

Homemaking is no small joy. But, if a son will dwell in his mother's tent to receive instruction in Truth and will marry his soul to what he learns, he will gain an appreciation for the duties and responsibilities of a wife and mother; then, he will possess understanding and knowledge which will aid him greatly in ministering to his own wife, in due season.

Of course, not all valuable lessons are learned from the mother. Jacob spent time in his father's and grandfather's tents, too, learning how to be a good family man. He did not waste the strength and energy of his youth in the field, hunting wild animals, as his brother Esau did.

The field speaks of the world. Unfortunately, many people are under the delusion that every boy must go out into the world to sow his wild oats. However, we should remember that the person who sows wild oats has more trouble settling down and becoming a good family man than the person who never sows wild oats. The restless feelings experienced by many married men are the result of the wild, animal spirits they learned to fellowship while they were out in the worldly *field*. The more a man runs in the field with these cunning wild spirits, the less satisfying will be his relationship when he decides to settle down to one wife.

If a young man wants to be a good husband and father, it behooves him to dwell in the tents of his father and mother in the natural realm and in the tents of God's Word and Spirit in the spiritual realm.

III. Jacob Had a Spiritual Mind.

And Jacob sod pottage: and Esau came from the field, and he *was* faint: And Esau said to Jacob, Feed me, I pray thee, with that same red *pottage*; for I *am* faint: therefore was his name called Edom. And Jacob said, Sell me this day thy birthright. And Esau said, Behold, I *am* at the point to die: and what profit shall this birthright do to me? And Jacob said, Swear to me this day; and he swore unto him: and he sold his birthright unto Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentiles; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised *his* birthright (Genesis 25:29-34).

Jacob possessed a spiritual mind, which is one of the most important inner attitudes a true parent can have. From the beginning, he had a regard for the birthright, a regard which increased as he dwelled in his mother's tent and heard her rehearse the LORD's Promise to her that the birthright was to be his and not Esau's.

No man in the Bible had a higher faith than did Jacob. In giving the prophetic blessing to his son Joseph, Jacob testified that his blessings had prevailed above the blessings of his progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills (Genesis 49:26). Jacob was not talking about some earthly hill in Canaan's Land; he was speaking of the everlasting hills of faith. Jacob walked upon a higher hill of faith than Abraham and Isaac had walked.

Abraham had believed God for one supernatural son in his and Sarah's old age, while Isaac had believed God for two miraculous sons to be born out of his wife's barren womb. But, Jacob believed God for ten sons in the fruitful wombs of Leah and his concubines and two sons in the barren womb of his beautiful, beloved Rachel.

Both Abraham and Isaac walked according to the Light which had been revealed to them personally, but Jacob walked for many years without a personal revelation because he walked solely by the light of his mother's faith. The LORD did not appear to Jacob, saying, "Yea, I say unto thee that thou shalt receive the birthright. I, the LORD, promise it to you. Fear not! Just trust in Me, and I shall bring it to pass." These words of Light were given to Jacob by his mother Rebekah.

It takes much humility to walk by faith, even when the Light has been given to you personally, but it takes far more humility and far more faith to walk by the Light that has been given to someone else and, then, passed on to you. Jacob possessed this highest class of faith. In regard to the promised birthright, he walked in the Light of Truth that had been given to his mother — not Light given to him personally.

Jacob's regard for the birthright went beyond a theoretical love for the Truth. He was willing to suffer hunger and privation in order to gain the promised birthright. Contrary to popular opinion, Jacob did not take advantage of Esau. He was not thinking, "I will have a delicious meal cooked so that I can coerce Esau into giving me the birthright when he comes home from the field. He will be starving and too near death to think rationally. I will get him to sell his birthright before he knows what he has done." No! Jacob was a plain man in his thinking. He was morally clean, undefiled, and upright in his dealings with God and with man.

God's Spirit of Prophecy probably came to Jacob through his mother since this was God's way of leading Jacob as a son who was still in subjection to his mother. It was revealed to Jacob *when to make* the red pottage; *where to take* the red pottage; and the appropriate *time to take* the red pottage to Esau. Hence, it was not a happenstance that Jacob was at the right place at the right time with the right kind of red pottage when Esau returned from his wild hunting trip.

The Hebrew word for *red* is *aw-dome*, meaning to be rosy or brilliant. Jacob's red pottage had the brilliance of the LORD's Prophetic Glory on it.

In order for Jacob to give his specially anointed red pottage to Esau, he had to fast. He had to deny himself the pleasure of satisfying the natural needs and cravings of his body with the natural side of his red pottage, and he had to deny his spiritual soul the spiritual enjoyment of the rosy brilliance of the LORD's Glory upon his red pottage. Nevertheless, Jacob denied himself all these pleasures so that he might lay hold of the greater blessing of his Eternal Birthright which would grant him the privilege of being the father of the Nation of Israel and the carrier of the Seed of the Messiah.

Close examination of the Scripture shows that Esau was the one who lied to get the red pottage for which he had not worked. The Hebrew word for *faint* is *aw-yafe*, meaning languid, faint, thirsty, weary. There is a diametric difference between being *weary* and *dying*. Esau used cunning wisdom, trying to trap Jacob into giving his natural life's substance away for nothing; he was lying when he claimed to be dying. If Esau really had been that near death, one bowl of soup would not have saved him.

The birthright was a tremendously valuable possession, both naturally and spiritually. On the natural side, it entitled the holder to a double portion of the father's goods. On the spiritual side, it allowed the holder to be the Priest, the King, and the Prophet of the family, at that time; and it gave the holder the privilege of carrying the Spiritual Seed of the Promised Messiah for the future.

Seriously, Jacob could not have believed that Esau would have exchanged the priceless treasure of the spiritual birthright for a bowl of lentil soup that would be forgotten in a matter of minutes unless God had revealed to him, through his mother, the Prophetic Truth of the whole matter. Jacob's offer, then, was a test to see whether Esau would highly esteem the birthright.

The birthright meant everything to Jacob, but it meant nothing to Esau. Jacob proved his high esteem for the spiritual birthright by being willing to give his food for it, the food which represented his natural life, in exchange for the spiritual Life of the birthright. If Esau had felt even a small measure of spiritual desire and respect for the birthright, he would have laughed at Jacob's offer to buy it with a bowl of lentils. However, nothing in Scripture indicates that Esau hesitated in the least. He willingly sold the birthright to Jacob, although it was not rightfully his in the first place.

First of all, Esau, the elder brother, despised the birthright, inwardly, in his heart. Then, he despised it outwardly, before the world. He ate and drank, rose up, and went his way, feeling quite satisfied with his profane transaction. At the moment of selling his birthright, Esau did not experience any feelings of remorse, nor did he have any spiritual desire to change what he already had done, through his carnal choice, although his regrets could not have changed the situation anyway.

Of the two brothers, only Jacob possessed the spiritual mind which allowed him to appreciate the invisible, but true, riches that belonged to the holder of the birthright. His spiritual mind was what strengthened him with the inner fortitude needed to deny himself momentary natural satisfaction in order to gain Eternal Spiritual Prosperity. Because Jacob possessed the spiritual quality that was willing to suffer pain in the flesh for the sake of true Eternal Pleasure and Prosperity, he was able to pass the spiritual treasure of the birthright on down to his children. (A father cannot pass to his children something he does not possess.)

Jacob's son Joseph inherited his father's spiritual mind that also worked righteously within his soul when he refused to sin with Potiphar's wife. He chose to suffer false accusation and imprisonment for righteousness' sake rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Obviously, Esau lacked this particular class of spiritual substance. He sold his claim to Eternal Riches in exchange for a bowl of red lentils because he was unwilling to suffer a few hunger pangs in his flesh.

IV. Jacob Was Obedient.

And Rebekah spake unto Jacob her son, saying, Behold, I heard thy father speak unto Esau thy brother, saying, Bring me venison, and make me savoury meat, that I may eat, and bless thee before the LORD before my death. Now therefore, **my son, obey my voice according to that which I command thee....** And his mother said unto him, Upon me *be* thy curse, my son: **only obey my voice**, and go fetch me *them* (Genesis 27:6-8,13).

The Bible's first mention of Jacob's obedience relates to an incident involving his mother while he still lived at home.

An old adage says "He who cannot obey cannot command." This certainly is true. We never can be good rulers unless we are good *obeyers*. Regardless of how high we go in this world, someone always is over us. We always

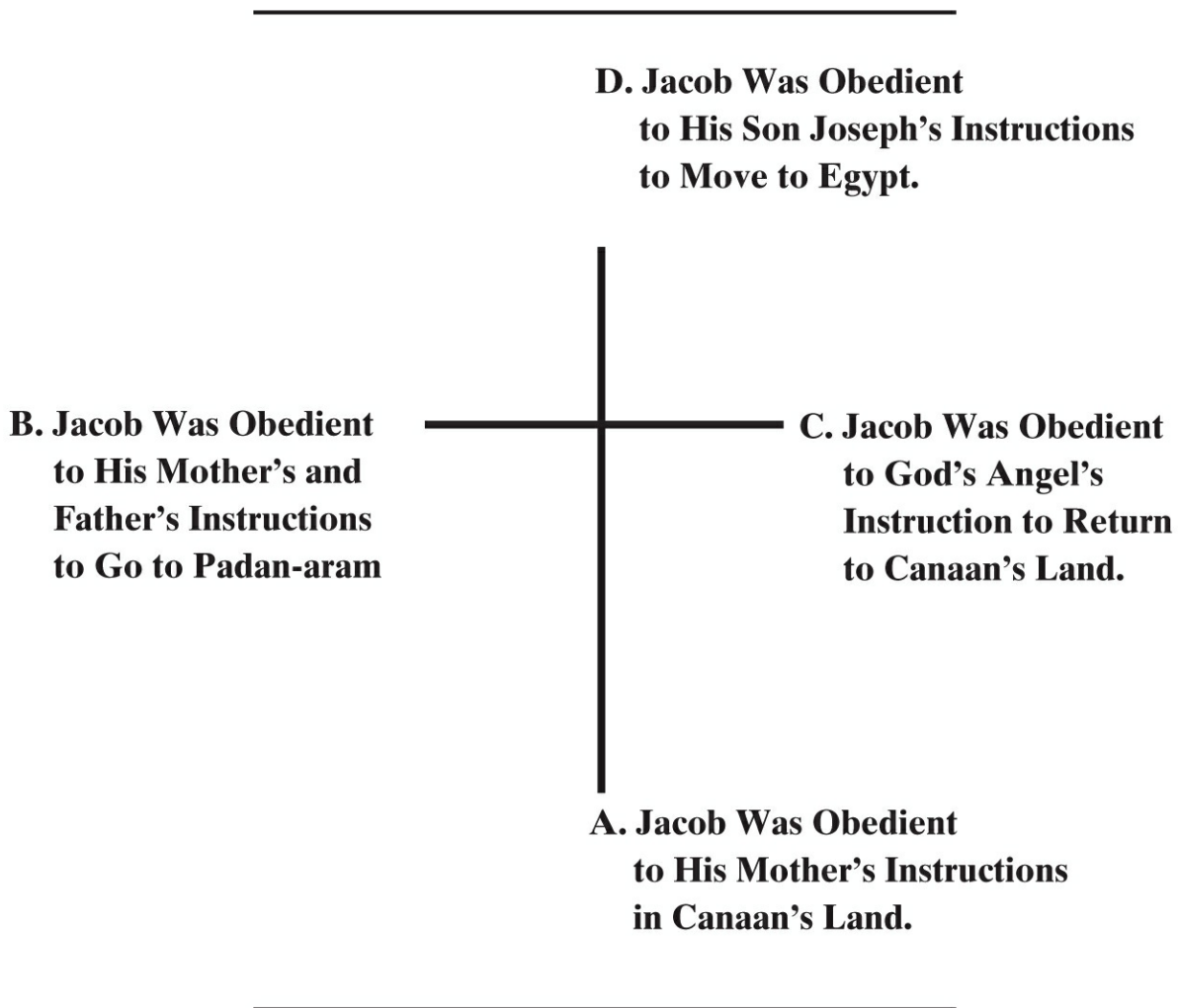
must obey someone. Even monarchs, who may retain absolute rule, as far as other human beings are concerned, must answer to God Who is the Sovereign Head over *all* His Creation.

Obedience was the first Law God gave to Adam-male and Adam-female in the Garden of Eden. Unfortunately, they failed to obey. Obedience to the Will of God is the thing that forms the riverbed in our spiritual soul, which will be filled with the Living Water from the Throne of Grace.

In the New City, which is the Bride, there is a River running down the middle of the Golden Street. In order for this River to exist, a place had to be hollowed out of the Golden Street of God's Perfect Will so that the River could flow through it. Unless we have obeyed God's Perfect Will, there is no Riverbed prepared within us to receive the clear, cool, crystal Water from the Throne of Grace when the LORD is ready to release it into our soul.

Since obedience plays such a vital part in being the Bride, it is understandable that obedience was important in the life of Jacob, the man who begot the twelve tribes or twelve roots of the family tree of Israel which, in turn, became known as a Bridal Nation or the spiritual Wife of God after Israel had entered into Canaan's Land.

Jacob's obedience is revealed in the following Stature of Truth:



A. Jacob Was Obedient to His Mother's Instructions in Canaan's Land.

And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim, so that he could not see, he called Esau his eldest son, and said unto him, My son: and he said unto him, Behold, *here am I*. And he said, Behold now, I am old, I know not the day of my death: Now therefore take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow,

and go out to the field, and take me *some* venison; And make me savoury meat, such as I love, and bring *it* to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die. And Rebekah heard when Isaac spake to Esau his son. And Esau went to the field to hunt *for* venison, *and* to bring *it*.... Go now to the flock, and fetch me from thence two good kids of the goats; and I will make them savoury meat for thy father, such as he loveth: And thou shalt bring it to thy father, that he may eat, and that he may bless thee before his death. And Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, Behold, Esau my brother is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man: My father peradventure will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me, and not a blessing.... And he went, and fetched, and brought *them* to his mother: and his mother made savoury meat, such as his father loved (Genesis 27:1-5,9-12,14).

The conversation between Isaac and Esau, to which Rebekah referred, took place in Isaac's tent, which means there was no way, in the natural realm, for Rebekah to have heard what was said since she was in another tent. Therefore, God had to have allowed her to hear, supernaturally, Isaac's plan to bestow the blessing of the birthright upon Esau, in spite of the fact that he knew the LORD had promised it to Jacob while the boys still were in Rebekah's womb, and in spite of the fact that he knew Esau had sold his claim to the birthright.

Jacob was not a young child when Rebekah commanded him to obey her in following her God-given plan so that he could obtain the prophetic blessing which was a part of his birthright. In order to prevent Isaac from giving the blessing to Esau, Jacob had to follow his mother's directions. It is amazing that Isaac would desire to give to Esau what did not belong to him anyway. Jacob was a grown man, about forty years old, when Rebekah commanded him to help her obtain the prophetic blessing from Isaac. What his mother ordered him to do was not a small matter, either. His very life was at stake, for he could have received a curse instead of a blessing if Isaac had discovered he was not Esau.

Jacob's primary interest was in the spiritual side of the birthright, which permitted the holder to carry the Seed of the Word of Promise given to Adam-female. This Supernatural Seed was to be a Serpent-Bruiser, a Life-Giver, and a Life-Blessor of all the world. Jacob knew that the Promise was not going to be fulfilled in his day, but something in him wanted to carry, for even a little while, the Seed of Promise of the Messiah Who would bruise the Serpent's head.

Jacob was willing to chance being cursed in order to get this Seed of Blessing which, ordinarily, was handed down to the firstborn son. Thus, Jacob made deep surrenders to obey his mother that day. He surrendered to die under a curse, trying to get the birthright, rather than to live without it. (If Jacob were willing to surrender to being cursed just to carry the "Seed" Word of Promise of the Serpent-Bruiser and Life-Giver, then, certainly, we should be even more willing to suffer in order to carry God's quickened Word in our heart, which is God's Fulfilled, Promised Word in the form of Jesus Christ, the One Who can bruise Satan under our feet, right now, and the One Who can give Life to us, right now.)

Jacob's surrender and obedience to his mother changed the whole course of the Seed of Promise. According to natural laws of inheritance, the birthright would have gone to the fleshly Esau, and the Promised Seed would have been passed down through his sons. In that case, the Arabs, rather than the Jews, would have had the Promise of the Messiah. But, Jacob's obedience purchased back the birthright for the spiritual lineage of Isaac so that the Messiah might be born according to God's ordained Master Plan. Jacob's obedience to his mother, while he was in Canaan's Land, transferred the blessing of the birthright to the right person.

B. Jacob Was Obedient to His Mother's and Father's Instructions To Go to Padan-aram.

And Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and Esau said in his heart, The days of mourning for my father are at hand; then will I slay my brother Jacob. And these words of Esau her elder son were told to Rebekah: and she sent and called Jacob her younger son, and said unto him, Behold, thy brother Esau, as touching thee, doth comfort himself, *purposing* to kill thee. **Now therefore, my son, obey my voice; and arise, flee thou to Laban my brother to Haran;** And tarry with him a few days, until thy brother's fury turn away; Until thy brother's anger turn away from thee, and he forget *that* which thou hast done to him: then I will send, and fetch thee from thence: why should I be deprived also of you both in one day? And Rebekah said to Isaac, I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth: if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these *which are* of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me? (Genesis 27:41-46).

Jacob's second example of obedience was in connection with his mother's and father's instructions to go to the land of Padan-aram.

Rebekah was a tremendously spiritual person. Therefore, she could discern the thoughts of Esau's heart. The Bible tells us that Esau *said in his heart* that he would kill his brother. He did not make audible, loud, proud boasts about his plans. He carried a secret plot in his heart. Again, only God could have informed Rebekah of the wicked thoughts and intents of Esau's heart. God's Infinite, Divine Ears heard what Esau had said in his heart; therefore, He told Rebekah so that she could help carry out His Purposive Will to protect His beloved Jacob.

However, when Rebekah heard about Esau's secret design and determination, she did not go directly to Isaac with the information. This proves that God could not trust Isaac concerning His Protective Plan for Jacob because Isaac was not as spiritual as he should have been in his relationship with Jacob and God's Purposive Will for him. If Rebekah had told Isaac what the LORD had revealed to her about Esau's plan to kill Jacob, Isaac would have said, "This is ridiculous, Rebekah. I do not believe it. My beloved son Esau would not kill a thing except a wild animal." So, Rebekah wisely used another method of enlisting Isaac's aid in getting Jacob out of Esau's reach, which prevented Esau from murdering his brother.

Knowing that Jacob had a great spiritual mind of faith, Rebekah spoke first with her son so that she might prepare him for moving to his blood relatives in the faraway land of Mesopotamia; thus, she shared the Truth with him about his brother's murderous plan.

Afterward, she approached Isaac with a complaint against the heathen daughters of the land, saying that she did not want Jacob to take a wife from among these idolatrous heathen, as Esau had done. There was no deceit in Rebekah's dealings with her husband. She simply used a natural level of communication — the only level, at this point, that the earthly minded Isaac could understand about the situation between Jacob and Esau. Isaac neither would have heard, nor would he have received a direct spiritual approach to the problems between Jacob and Esau at this time because of his natural partiality toward Esau.

Rebekah did the best spiritual thing she could have done under the circumstances, according to God's Purposive Will. Consequently, the LORD honoured her spiritual efforts. This is evident in the fact that Isaac joined his wife's plan in sending his son Jacob to Padan-aram.

And Isaac called Jacob, and blessed him, and charged him, and said unto him, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan. Arise, go to Padan-aram, to the house of Bethuel thy mother's father; and take thee a wife from thence of the daughters of Laban thy mother's brother. And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; And give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee, and to thy seed with thee; that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham. And Isaac sent away Jacob: and he went to Padan-aram unto Laban, son of Bethuel the Syrian, the brother of Rebekah, Jacob's and Esau's mother. When Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob, and sent him away to Padan-aram, to take him a wife from thence; and that as he blessed him he gave him a charge, saying, Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan; And that **Jacob obeyed his father and his mother**, and was gone to Padan-aram; And Esau seeing that the daughters of Canaan pleased not Isaac his father; Then went Esau unto Ishmael, and took unto the wives which he had Mahalath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son, the sister of Nebajoth, to be his wife (Genesis 28:1-9).

Jacob was an obedient son. At forty years of age, he still was obeying the spiritual instructions and admonitions of his mother and father.

Traveling in Jacob's day was a far cry from what it is today. Jacob had no car or train or airplane to speed him to Padan-aram. No fancy motels existed in which he could rest and refresh himself. He made the lonely journey, on foot, through rough terrain that was infested with wild beasts, thieves, and robbers. With the open sky for a canopy, Jacob pillowed his head on stones that first night away from home. It was not an easy way for the flesh, but Jacob obeyed his parents' instructions.

Jacob was under subjection to the Truth that came through them. His obedience is a rebuke to the many young people who delight in rebelling against the instructions they receive from their godly parents. Jacob's life serves as a reminder that we never get too old nor too big to receive and obey the Truth through our parents, both naturally and spiritually.

While Jacob slept that first night at Bethel, God gave him a dream in which he saw a ladder stretched from Earth to Heaven, on which Angels ascended and descended. The LORD stood above the ladder and spoke directly to

Jacob, who received a great revelation of the Promise of God's future Blessing, which included all the following things:

- God promised to multiply Jacob's Seed.
- God promised that Jacob's Seed would inherit Canaan's Land.
- God promised that all the families of the entire Earth would be blessed through Jacob's Seed.
- God promised that the Omnipresent, Protective Presence of the LORD would keep him and bring him again to Canaan's Land.

Jacob personally experienced this great visitation from the LORD that night in Bethel because he was obedient to the words he had received from his father and mother.

This happened before he had arrived in Padan-aram, a northern region in Mesopotamia. Other blessings awaited him when he reached the house of his mother's brother, Laban. During the twenty years of service to his uncle, Jacob retained his life, obtained his wives and his twelve children (eleven sons and one daughter), and all his material substance. This prosperity would not have been his if he had been a disrespectful, disobedient son. Apart from his obedience to flee from Canaan's Land, it is very likely that he would have lost his life at Esau's hands had he remained in Canaan's Land.

Some people are under the delusion of their diseased perception of reality that if they obey the Governing and Guiding of the Holy Ghost, through His Witness, that they will just float into great prosperity on a painless, flowery bed of ease. The Truth is that Jacob was in God's Purposive Will when he was in Padan-aram; yet, God's Purposive Will included suffering, pain, and crucifixion for his flesh while he was there. All was not pain, however, for Jacob found that God's Purposive Will also included the pleasure side of the Scales with the Glory of His Precious Presence. It also included the privilege of having the LORD commune with him by speaking directly to him. In addition, it included seeing a vision of going on for God and growing up in His Spiritual Likeness.

When Jacob awakened after his wedding night, he had the lowly Leah for a wife because his Uncle Laban had dealt deceitfully with him. Having this dastardly act perpetrated on him after having worked seven years to get his beautiful, beloved Rachel for a wife, he might have said, "This is it! I have had enough of this suffering. If I cannot have my beloved Rachel, I am going home." Instead, Jacob said, "I am going to humble myself and stay here until I receive Rachel, the one I love."

This is the way we should feel toward our beloved Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ. We should be willing to accept any suffering and any humiliation in order to know a real heart-union with Jesus Christ. If we accept the lowly "Leahs" (the pain and humiliation) in our life, and if we keep gratitude in our spirit for God's Purposive Will which allows these lowly "Leahs" to be given to us, and if we keep believing Him to fulfill His Promise to us, we can rest in complete confidence that we will receive our beloved "Rachel" of exaltation in due season.

This was Jacob's experience in Padan-aram, and it will be ours, too, if we follow his example of obedience to the Word (pictured by Jacob's father) and the Spirit (pictured by his mother).

C. Jacob Was Obedient to God's Angel's Instructions To Return to Canaan's Land.

And **the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, saying,** Jacob: and I said, Here am I. And he said, Lift up now thine eyes, and see, all the rams which leap upon the cattle are ringstraked, speckled, and grised: for I have seen all that Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Beth-el, where thou anointedst the pillar, and where thou vowedst a vow unto me: **now arise, get thee out from this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred** (Genesis 31:11-13).

Jacob was twenty years older, when he returned to Canaan's Land, than he was when he had arrived in Padan-aram. He was a father with eleven sons and one daughter; yet, further humility and further obedience to God's Angel (the Lord Jesus Christ) were necessary before he could be brought back into Canaan's Land.

In order to obey the words of the Angel of God, Jacob had to make some tremendous surrenders because of his past and present situations. He did not know whether or not Esau's murderous anger still burned against him from the past, and he was well-established in Padan-aram for the present. He had his wives and his children, and he owned great material substance, which God had added to him because of his righteousness in all things. Jacob stood to lose all these things, plus his own life, should Esau still have it in his mind to kill him, when he returned to

Canaan's Land. Yet, Jacob surrendered to obey the Voice of God's Angel, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who said for him to return.

After Jacob had returned to Canaan's Land, he sent word to his brother Esau that he had returned. When Jacob knew that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men, he made arrangements for the order in which his family would meet Esau. Jacob put the concubines and their children out front to meet Esau. Then, Leah and her children were placed in the second position, and behind them were placed his beautiful, beloved Rachel with their beloved son Joseph. Jacob put his most treasured possessions behind so that they would have a better chance of escaping in case Esau came warring and fighting.

After causing his entire family to cross over the ford Jabbok, Jacob stayed to wrestle with the Angel of God (the Lord Jesus Christ in Angelic Form) until the breaking of the day.

In the process of wrestling, Jacob's thigh, symbolizing the seat of his physical procreative powers, was touched and bent into a curved position as a demonstration of the humble, bent position his human will must take in his relation to the Divine Will of God. Spiritually speaking, Jacob's will entered into a complete spiritual marriage union with God's. It was out of this spiritual marriage union between his human will and God's Divine Will that Jacob received the Promise of his name or nature being changed from *Jacob*, which means *heel-catcher* and *supplanter*, to *Israel*, which means *he will rule as a Prince with God*.

Since Jacob did not become a *ruler* and mighty commander in the Land of Canaan until after he had become an *obeyer*, first to his mother, and, then, to his mother and his father, and, finally, to God Himself, neither can we expect to ascend into the place of true spiritual rulership and authority until after we have surrendered to follow the pathway of obedience to those who are over us, as Jacob did in both the natural and spiritual realms.

D. Jacob Was Obedient to His Son Joseph's Instructions To Move to Egypt.

Haste ye, and go up to my father, and say unto him, Thus saith thy son Joseph, God hath made me lord of all Egypt: **come down unto me, tarry not:** (Genesis 45:9).

Jacob probably expected to spend his remaining years in Canaan's Land, but God ordained otherwise. In his old age, Jacob had to surrender to obey the command of his son Joseph and move to Egypt, another unknown land. However, Jacob and Joseph went through many heartaches, sufferings, humiliations, and years of testing and growth before God required the greatest surrender of all from Jacob in his old age — which was to obey his son and go to Egypt.

We know the story of how Joseph's brothers cast him into an empty pit and, later, sold him into Egyptian slavery, causing their poor father to believe that his favorite son, by his beautiful, beloved Rachel, had been killed by wild beasts.

During all the years of Joseph's slavery and imprisonment, God was faithful to balance Joseph's scales of pain and pleasure. Although Joseph had entered Egypt as a servant, the blessings of the LORD were upon him to prosper him in his service. Consequently, he found grace and favour in Potiphar's eyes and was given charge of all his master's goods until Potiphar's lustful wife became angry and lied about him because he refused to join her in sinful adultery against his God and his master. Even during the following years of imprisonment, Joseph had the LORD's Mercy working to give him favour in the sight of the Keeper of the prison, and, soon, he was put in charge of all the other prisoners.

In due time, God's Sovereign Headship made a way for Joseph to be taken out of the prison and exalted to a high position of rulership and authority in the land of Egypt. Only Pharaoh himself exceeded Joseph in power and honour. Yet, in spite of the fact that he lived and worked among heathen, Joseph retained his spiritual integrity with the LORD God of Israel.

During the prophesied seven years of plenty, Joseph stored up corn for the seven years of famine which were to follow. Hence, when the seven years of famine covered the land, Joseph was in charge of dispensing the corn to the hungry people.

Since the famine touched all the countries, including Canaan's Land, Jacob was compelled to send ten of his sons into Egypt to buy corn. Only Benjamin, the other favorite son born to Jacob by his beautiful, beloved Rachel just before her death, stayed at home with his aged father. None of the brothers who had sold their young brother Joseph into slavery recognized him in his exalted form, but Joseph knew them. If his fleshly mind and will had been ruling, he could have taken vengeance on those who had been instrumental in bringing pain and humiliation to him, for in

his hands he held the power to take their lives or save their lives.

He could have denied his brothers the food necessary to sustain their lives, if he had chosen to do so. However, because he had a personal acquaintance with God's Sovereign Headship of Mercy, Joseph was able to extend Mercy to his brethren. Later, when he revealed himself to them, he spoke no harsh, bitter words of resentment for having been sold into Egyptian slavery; instead, he looked beyond his brothers and gave God the credit for having sent him ahead to preserve the lives of the children of Israel. "And God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God:..." (Genesis 45:7,8).

After having given God the honour due His Name, Joseph gave his brothers words to carry back to their father. Then, notice Joseph's humility. Instead of saying, "Thus saith the second ruler of Egypt, thy son Joseph," Joseph first reestablished the father-son relationship by giving his father the exalted, authoritative position and himself the humble, subjective position. Only then did he mention the exalted seat to which God had lifted him in the eyes of the world. Thus, Joseph's words went forth as the call of a son rather than the demanding edict of a king.

However, Joseph was not the only one to exemplify humility on this occasion. Jacob was an old man at this point in his life, so his flesh could have said, "I am too old to make such a long trip into a strange, foreign land. I still am the father; if my son wants to see me, let him come to me. As the lord of Egypt, he can travel wherever he pleases, or he can send the food up here. He can keep me alive without my obeying him." But, being a spiritually minded person, Jacob was able to recognize God's Sovereign Headship in the midst of the situation. Therefore, Jacob heeded his son's words to leave Canaan's Land and go to Egypt.

Nevertheless, that night, before Jacob went on his way down to Egypt, he went to Beersheba and waited on God for confirmation that it was His Perfect Will for him to go down to Egypt in obedience to his son's command. Jacob heard God's Voice, saying, "...I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation: I will go down with thee into Egypt; and I will also surely bring thee up again: and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes" (Genesis 46:3,4).

Jacob's obedience to his son's voice was to have far-reaching effects concerning the growth and birth of the tiny Nation of Israel. The House of Jacob went down into Egypt with just seventy souls. They came out a Mighty Nation of Israelites, numbering 600,000 men, not counting the children and the mixed multitude that went up with them. Consider, beloved, the great blessing that God put on the Seed of surrender and obedience growing in the heart of just one man. The Nation of Israel still is existing and growing. It still is multiplying and being blessed because of Jacob's surrender and obedience.

Those of us who desire the Stature of the LORD Jesus Christ, the Spiritual Bridegroom, to be conceived and developed in our heart and life should be greatly challenged by the surrender and obedience in Jacob's life. We should begin crying and praying for the LORD to work in us the same spiritual virtues of surrender and obedience that prepared Jacob to father the twelve tribes which grew into a Bridal Nation that entered into a Spiritual Marriage Relationship with the LORD.

Jacob was a plain man, undefiled and upright in his thinking. These spiritual characteristics allowed him to be coupled with pleasurable Truth and painful Truth, with equal surrender, obedience, dedication, and loyalty. He used no cunning worldly wisdom to try to escape pain nor to increase the pleasure that God had ordained for him in His Purposive Will.

Jacob was a tent dweller, indicating that he spent time receiving the instructions of his father Isaac, his mother Rebekah, and his grandfather Abraham, who were pictures of God's Word and God's Spirit that instruct and teach us how to grow up in the Measure of the Stature of the Fullness of Jesus Christ.

While dwelling in the tents of his parents, Jacob married, as it were, his soul and spirit to God's Word and Spirit that came forth through his parents. Jacob possessed a spiritual mind which permitted him to walk by faith, for many years, in the light of revelation that was given to his mother Rebekah, until he reached the age that the LORD could appear to him personally.

This same spiritual mind allowed Jacob to see and appreciate the invisible but true riches that belonged to the holder of the birthright. Jacob's spiritual mind also made him willing to suffer pain in the flesh and to lay down his natural life, if need be, in order to gain Eternal Spiritual Prosperity.

Jacob was an obedient person all through his life. For his obedience to his mother, Jacob received the transferal of the birthright blessing. For his obedience to his father and mother, he received a vision of the LORD at Bethel, and he gained his wives, his children, and his material substance in Padan-aram. For his obedience to the Angel of God at Mahanaim, he received a curved thigh and a change of his name or nature. From being Jacob, he became Israel, a Prince with God. His obedience to his son's call to go down to Egypt brought about the birth of God's Bridal

Nation, whose families left Egypt many years later and returned to Canaan's Land. This same Bridal nation of Israel will also be carried over into the Eternal Rule and Reign of God and the Lamb.

If we allow Jesus Christ to crucify our cunning craftiness, our fleshly independence, our carnal blindness and ignorance, and our fleshly rebellion so that the same spiritual attributes of Jacob might be brought to birth in our heart and life, we also can expect to enter into the same Blessing, the same Prosperity, the same Unity of the LORD's Holy Name, and the same experience, in our heart and life, of having the manifold Fruitfulness that Jacob experienced in his heart and life.

Chapter Two

Hannah's Ministry Of Love As A Mother

God's Word says, "...children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward" (Psalm 127:3). Children are a gift bestowed by God's Grace. Children are a heritage, not a reward. They are God's Property that we inherit for Christ's Sake in this world. We are joint heirs with Christ; therefore, we inherit the care of His Seed, His Children. We should account our children as *blessings*, not *burdens*, and trust the LORD to feed their mouths with meat, both naturally and spiritually.

Thy wife *shall be* as a fruitful vine by the sides of thine house: thy children like olive plants round about thy table (Psalm 128:3).

A true wife is like a fruitful vine, bearing numerous grape-clusters or Christ's precious Seed, called children, by whom both God and parents are honoured. Remember, although a vine is a tender, fragile plant that needs to be cherished and supported, it is an unspeakably precious plant because of the fruit or children it bears.

If this verse were limited to the natural realm, some people might feel cheated because, for one reason or another, they are unable to bear natural children. Yet, not one person can accuse God's Nature or His Righteous Judgment of being unfair because it also is possible to bring children to birth in the spiritual realm.

Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? *or* shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children (Isaiah 66:8).

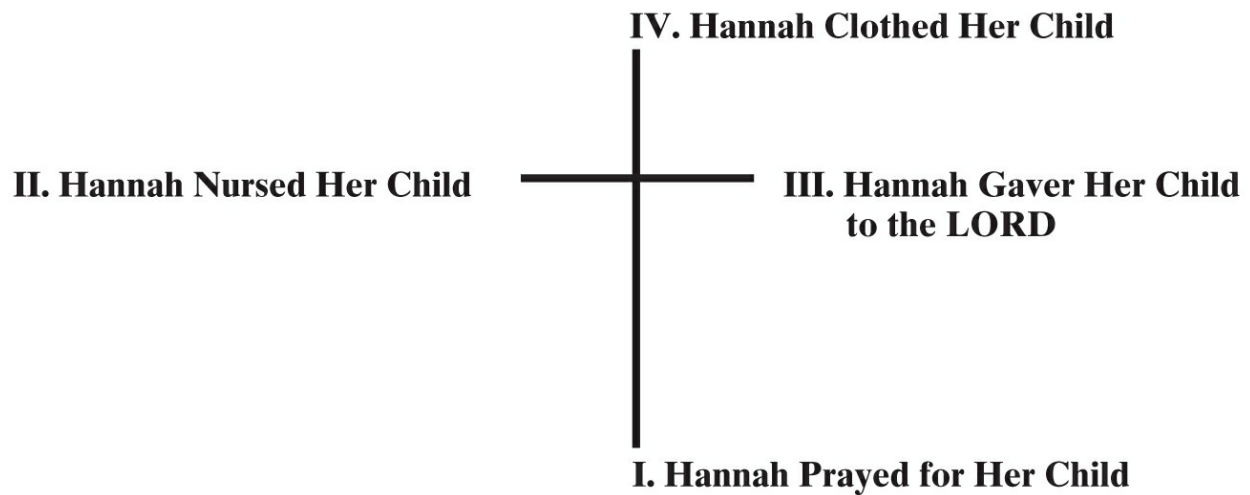
When Zion travails by God's Holy Spirit, she brings forth many spiritual children. This spiritual Principle was personified when Israel's remnant of exiles returned from Babylon. This remnant rebuilt the Temple and the city, restoring worship, praise, and prayer to the LORD. When she began to travail in God's House, God blessed her with a new heritage. Her rapid transformation from desolation of children to a teeming population, both naturally and spiritually, was miraculous.

When we come together in spiritual Union with the Bridegroom, the LORD Jesus Christ, through His Word and through the Spirit of prayer, He rewards us with spiritual children.

Motherhood presents a sacred privilege and, at the same time, a great responsibility. The dignity, the grandeur, the tenderness, the Everlasting and Divine Significance of true Motherhood is unspeakable. Frequently women become natural mothers ignorantly; therefore, they are without appreciation for the privilege of being a mother. As a result of their ignorance, they are without the necessary knowledge of assuming their spiritual obligation of true Motherhood.

Hannah, the mother of the Prophet Samuel, was one woman who highly esteemed the Eternal Blessings and the awesome responsibilities that go with mothering a child.

The following Stature of Truth shows how Hannah fulfilled her serious responsibilities as a mother.



I. Hannah Prayed for Her Child.

And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head (I Samuel 1:10,11).

The opening verses of the Book of First Samuel show that Hannah was the favoured wife of Elkanah, a Levite living in Mount Ephraim. Annually, Elkanah traveled with his entire family from his home in Ramathaim-zophim to Shiloh, where he worshipped and offered sacrifices to the LORD. It was his custom at this time to divide a portion of his goods to his second wife Peninnah and to each of her children. To Hannah, he always gave a worthy portion, although she had borne him no children.

Hannah was blessed in many ways. Her husband loved her above all but the LORD; she could travel; and she possessed material goods. In spite of all this, she was unhappy because the LORD had shut up her womb.

Barrenness was regarded as a reproach in Hannah's day. This in itself was enough to bring suffering and shame to any eastern woman, but Hannah's torment was increased by her rival's fruitfulness. Each time Peninnah gave birth to another child, it proved Elkanah's power to father children.

Yet, Hannah was childless, and she humbly had to admit that it was because of a personal deficiency. Her soul burned with shame. Her arms ached to hold a child as only the arms of the barren can ache. Neither Elkanah's love nor his sympathetic words had power to fill the void felt by Hannah. Driven by desperation, she prayed for the LORD to give her a child.

The riches of her husband's love and devotion and her desire to bear his child ever created in her an urgency to seek the LORD in prayer for a child. All of Hannah's material possessions never drove her to pour out her soul in desperation to God, but her "shut up" womb did sorely press her to seek the LORD in intercessory prayer. The LORD did not shut up Hannah's womb because he hated her. On the contrary, barrenness opened a realm of intercessory prayer to Hannah that she never would have known through prosperity.

And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in

peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him (I Samuel 1:12-17).

Such a fire of suffering engulfed Hannah that it was as though her very soul were being melted and poured out. The Hebrew word for *poured* is *shaw-fak*, meaning to spill forth (blood, liquid, metal, or even a solid, i.e., to mound up); to expend (life, soul, complaint, money); to sprawl out, cast up, gush out, pour out, shed. Thus, Hannah's soul poured out greater intercessory agony to the LORD than her mouth was able to express.

While interceding and travailing in the spirit, she received a rebuke from the High Priest who had been observing her mouth. As the spiritual leader of all Israel, Eli should have recognized spiritual desperation. He was the one who should have understood and helped Hannah. Instead, he proved his lack of discernment by interrupting her intercessory praying; moreover, he accused her of drunkenness.

Thinking to expose Hannah as a sinner, a drunk, Eli revealed his own spiritual poverty. Eli's spiritual ignorance brought suffering to Hannah, but she never took up a bitter, resentful spirit against God's servant. She offered no long, self-pitying personal defense. Neither did she make a counter charge against Eli. She simply said that she was of a sorrowful spirit and not drunk as he supposed.

This kind of beautiful behaviour in the Spirit does not belong to the flesh. When misunderstood or falsely accused, the flesh instantly rises to its own defense. Hannah was able to keep her own spirit rightly low and humble because of the spiritual understanding she had gained while praying and pouring out her soul to the LORD.

Beloved, the LORD used suffering and barrenness to establish Hannah's prayer life. Before she became fruitful, she counted Motherhood a great privilege worth praying for, a privilege worthy of pouring out her soul for. Long before she had held any visible evidence in her arms, she travailed in her spirit and soul to bear a child. After receiving assurance that God had heard her petition, Hannah was happy. She worshipped the LORD while her arms were still empty. As a result of her spiritual travail, Hannah received a son who grew up to be one of the greatest Prophets in Israel.

The LORD grants spiritual Motherhood to hearts that are desperate to see the Kingdom of God increased. This kind of Christian possesses a desire so great that he or she is willing to pour out his or her life's energy in Intercession and Travail for souls to be born in God's Kingdom. These souls weep and mourn in agonizing intercessory and travailing prayer before the LORD's Throne. Worldly Christians may level false, evil charges of heresy — even demon possession — against their fellow brothers and sisters who pray as Hannah prayed because they fail to recognize the Spirit's moving. Thus, they fail to appreciate the depth of intercessory and travailing prayer which flows out from the heart that longs to see spiritual children born into God's Kingdom.

However, all these sufferings are reckoned as small and insignificant to the soul who hears the LORD's Promise of a spiritual son. Real joy, praise, and worship issue out of the heart that has been melted and poured out in prayer to God, the same way it came out of Hannah's heart when she was assured of a son. Good mothers, in both the natural and spiritual realms, are praying mothers.

II. Hannah Nursed Her Child.

Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD. And the man Elkanah, and all his house, went up to offer unto the LORD the yearly sacrifice, and his vow. But Hannah went not up; for she said unto her husband, *I will not go up* until the child be weaned, and *then* I will bring him, that he may appear before the LORD, and there abide for ever (I Samuel 1:20-22).

Wealthy eastern women frequently hired wet nurses to suckle their babies. In this way, they could enjoy the blessings of motherhood while being free of its burdensome and sometimes painful responsibilities. Hannah was not a selfish mother. By contrast, she poured out her life in intercessory and travailing prayer for Samuel to be conceived. She also shared her own life from her own body with him during the months preceding his birth. After his birth, she continued to give her own life from her own body by nursing the child.

Nursing mothers cannot escape self-denial. The two go together. The mother willingly adjusts her eating habits because she wants to give the baby the richest, most nourishing milk possible. She eliminates favorite foods rather than to chance upsetting the baby's sensitive digestive system. Regardless of how tired the mother feels, she rises in the middle of the night to feed her child. Her diet, her rest, and many of her social activities are affected as long as she is a nursing mother.

Hannah sacrificed and stayed home while Elkanah and the rest of the family made their annual trip to Shiloh. A wet nurse could have been used to give milk to Samuel's body, but the babe gained something by nursing at his own mother's breasts that he never could have received from another person. Only Hannah could have provided her son with milk so richly anointed with her motherly love and with her mother's prayers.

Since it was customary for eastern mothers to nurse their children for as many as five years, Hannah had plenty of time to rock and caress Samuel. She had many opportunities to pray for him, to pray over him, and to pray with him. She could sing to him and talk to him about the LORD. During those few nursing years, Hannah ministered enough comfort and security and instilled enough fear of God in Samuel to sustain him all the rest of his life. What a mother was Hannah!

In most instances, modern motherhood presents a diametrically different picture. While still in the hospital, the baby is fed animal milk or artificial milk out of a bottle. At home, the bottle is propped on a pillow while the TV lulls the child to sleep. The sound of prayer is unfamiliar to many babies. It is no wonder, then, that we have such a flood of mentally and emotionally disturbed children, today. Our world has too few really spiritual, praying mothers who nurse their babies — women who are willing to sacrifice their forms and deny themselves of prideful future-forms in order to minister to the emotional and spiritual needs of their children, as well as give food to their physical bodies.

Sadder still is the baby's plight in the spiritual realm. Instead of a loving spiritual mother travailing her child to birth in God's Kingdom, she leaves her child to be born spiritually into God's Kingdom through some other source. Consequently, these kinds of children never have the blessed privilege of being trained by their own spiritual mother who should have reared them on the sincere Milk of God's Word and Spirit.

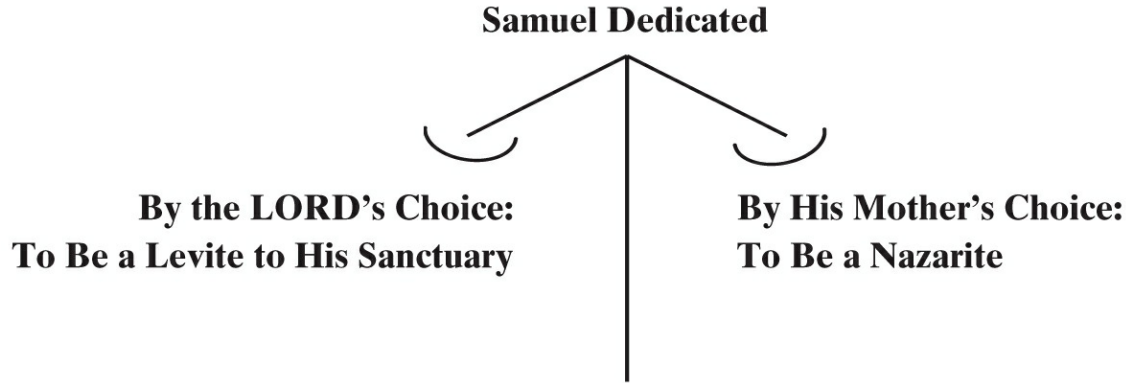
Sometimes, a newborn Christian who has no spiritual training nor background in God's Word and Spirit may have a difficult time discerning and choosing a church that has the Life of God's Word and Spirit. The diet of some churches consists of large portions of the dead letter of the Holy Scriptures that are laced together with their ritualistic forms. Their dessert may include a variety of programs and fund-raising drives designed to keep the newborn baby's mind off his inner hunger for God's Living, Sincere Milk and for the Power of prayer of the Holy Spirit. The obituary of countless baby Christians could rightly read: *starved for Truth and reality and choked on fleshly works*. Beloved, only God's Pure, Unadulterated Word and Spirit contain enough life, love, joy, and peace to assure spiritual survival. All of man's philosophies, doctrines, and programs are poor substitutes for a *spiritual nursing mother* who is giving Christ's Life-giving Truth with the Almighty Power of His Spirit to His newborn children. Every new Christian needs someone who loves him enough to make the spiritual sacrifices necessary to keep the little one growing in God until he is strong enough to find his own food in the Word of God by the Power of the Holy Ghost.

III. Hannah Gave Her Child to the LORD.

And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head (I Samuel 1:11).

In agony of soul, Hannah prayed and made a vow to the LORD.

Samuel was born a Levite; hence, he already was consecrated unto the LORD because the tribe of Levi, who had defended the LORD's Holy Name at Mount Sinai, was separated completely unto the LORD to serve in His Sanctuary. When Moses descended from Mount Sinai, after having received God's *Torah*-Truth, he discovered the people had made an idolatrous image of a calf, which they were worshipping. Therefore, he cried, "Who is on the LORD's side? Let him come unto me." The Levites immediately gathered around Moses, and as a reward for their faithfulness to the LORD on this occasion, they were selected by the LORD as the special servants and ministers in His Sanctuary. So, Samuel was a part of this dedicated group; nevertheless, Samuel's mother vowed to dedicate Samuel for the second time, consecrating him as a Nazarite to the LORD.



A Nazarite was one who was engaged by a special vow to the LORD under the Law. Being a Nazarite required total abstinence from wine and all intoxicating liquors and the fruit of the vine. Nazarites also allowed their hair to grow without being shorn or cut, and they had to avoid being contaminated with dead bodies (Numbers 6:2-7). Some Nazarites were bound by their vows of separation for just a season. However, Samuel was a perpetual Nazarite by the vow of his mother.

Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to God as a living sacrifice, a spiritual Priest, and a perpetual Prophet to the LORD for all the days of his life. Samuel was of a Pure and Holy character for all the days of his life. Even as a child, Samuel was favoured with the revelations of the LORD's Master Plan and Purposive Will while he served in His Temple. After the deaths of the wicked members of Eli's family and of Eli himself, Samuel became the perpetual Prophet and Judge of Israel for all the days of his life.

Samuel revealed his true inheritance, as had his forefathers at Mount Sinai, by banishing idolatry out of Israel and by restoring worship of the one True God.

Sometimes pledges and vows that are made out of desperation are forgotten by the person who vowed them after the crucial situation has been resolved. After the emergency is over and after God has answered, many people seem to forget they ever said or promised a thing to the LORD. This was not the case with Hannah, however.

Samuel's name means *asked of God*. Thus, each time Hannah spoke her son's name, she recalled the time when barrenness had driven her to ask the LORD for a man child. Many times each day, she was reminded that Samuel only was loaned to her; he belonged to the LORD. For a season, she was allowed to love him; pray for him; nurse him; and minister to him. Yet, while doing these things, Hannah foresaw the inevitable day of separation.

And when she had weaned him, she took him up with her, with three bullocks, and one ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine, and brought him unto the house of the LORD in Shiloh: and the child *was* young. And they slew a bullock, and brought the child to Eli. And she said, O my lord, *as* thy soul liveth, my lord, I *am* the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the LORD. For this child I prayed; and the LORD hath given me my petition which I asked of him: Therefore also I have lent him to the LORD; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the LORD. And he worshipped the LORD there (I Samuel 1:24-28).

Hannah freely and willingly lent Samuel, all the days of his life, to the LORD, from Whom she had received him. The same Hebrew word *shaw-ale* is used both for the words *lent* and *asked*. Hannah had asked for a son, and God had loaned her a man child. When the child was weaned, she, then, returned him to the LORD as she had promised.

Some mothers might have disqualified old carnal-minded Eli as a fit guardian for their sons. Eli's carnality and old age were against him. His lack of spirituality was also very evident by his inability to discern the difference between spiritual travail and physical drunkenness. Furthermore, he had shown no burden for his own sons' spiritual condition since he had placed no restraints on their greedy, wicked behaviour in God's House. They had brought shame and disgrace to the following: the LORD, the LORD's Priesthood, their father, the Nation of Israel, and the Gentile world round about. Yet, Eli never raised his voice to rebuke, to reprove, nor to require his sons to change

their immoral behaviour. Certainly, Eli's wicked sons would be poor spiritual examples for a young, impressionable child; yet, Hannah offered no excuses in an attempt to keep Samuel at home. She did not cling to her son as if he were a personal possession. She had prayed for Samuel and had walked through the valley of the shadow of death to give him life. She had sacrificed for him. She had given still more of her life by nursing him.

Counting these things as small interest on the loan God had given her, Hannah committed Samuel back to the LORD and returned home, leaving the young child in the care of the LORD and Eli, the elderly, carnal Priest. The LORD was completely faithful to Hannah's trust in Him, in spite of the deplorable condition of the High Priest and his sons. The LORD faithfully taught and trained Samuel in the way in which he should go, both in his spiritual education and moral development. The only influence and training that Eli and his sons gave Samuel was by teaching him the way in which *not* to go.

All our natural children and also our spiritual children belong to the LORD. We are privileged to have them for only a little time to lead them to the LORD and to teach and train them to love the LORD. Eventually, children must be surrendered back into the care and keeping of the LORD, Who gave them to us.

God has a special calling on each child's life. If we seek to hold a child beyond God's ordained time, we slow that child's spiritual growth unto maturity and delay the fulfillment of God's Perfect Will in his life. May we learn to follow Hannah's example of giving our children back to the LORD and trust Him to perfect that which concerns them.

IV. Hannah Clothed Her Child.

But Samuel ministered before the LORD, *being* a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought *it* to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice (I Samuel 2:18,19).

Samuel was one of the very few Jewish children who were privileged to wear linen ephods because he came from the tribe of Levi, the tribe which exclusively made up the Old Testament Priesthood. Some mothers, upon relinquishing their child to the Priesthood, might have felt justified, then, in saying, "Well, I have done all I can for my son. I have given him the best years of my life. He will never know how I suffered on that trip to Shiloh. Why, I almost died just thinking about having to return home without him. If Samuel gets mixed up with those wicked sons of Eli, it will be his own fault. Whatever he chooses to do with his life, now, is up to him. I trained him right." No such remarks came out of Hannah's mouth.

Young Samuel stayed in Shiloh, but his mother returned home with the burden of responsibility for him, and each year she brought him a coat which she had made for him. In Biblical days, when a woman made clothing, the task included preparing the yarn and spinning the thread, in addition to weaving the garments. All the work was done by hand. Providing clothing for the household was a time consuming, burdensome job, not something accomplished in a single visit to the local department store.

While working on Samuel's coat, Hannah had plenty of time to pray for her son. "LORD, bless Samuel. Keep Your hand upon him. Keep his soul clean and unspotted from the evil and wickedness surrounding him. LORD, Samuel belongs to You. I am believing you to keep his heart and his love for Yourself." Loving hands caressed the garment as it progressed toward completion. Invisible cords of love encircled each natural strand of thread. The fragrance of countless prayers of intercession for his spiritual welfare permeated the coat presented yearly to Samuel.

All during the year, Samuel wore the visible evidence of his mother's love and concern. Natural threads protected his physical body, but his spirit and soul were warmed and bound up with the invisible cords of love. The anointing of his mother's prayers lingered to encourage and inspire Samuel when trials and temptations came against him.

Through prayer, Hannah gained discernment which always allowed her to gauge her son's growing stature. As she enlarged the size of his literal coat from year to year, she increased the love and prayers that covered his maturing spiritual stature. Never did Samuel suffer from lack of spiritual clothing. He was overshadowed by God's Omnipresent Word and Spirit. And, each time his fingers rubbed across his coat, he felt a tangible witness of his mother's love and prayers.

Natural children and spiritual children are all like Samuel in this respect — they outgrow their clothes. Spiritually speaking, their arms dangle out of sleeves which once seemed long on them. Yesterday's love does not suffice today. Yesterday's prayers do not cover today's needs. Hannah did not wait until Samuel *needed* a new coat;

instead, she began preparing it early in the year.

A good spiritual mother has an equal responsibility to her natural and spiritual children. When she prays, the LORD will let her discern her child's spiritual needs in time to provide an abundant reserve of love and mercy and patience. He will show her where to increase the prayer support so that the child can stand true to God through life's dark night seasons.

Hannah was an example of a good spiritual mother. She prayed for her child. She nursed her child. She gave her child to the LORD, and she clothed her child. This faithful ministry did not go unnoticed by the LORD. He honoured Hannah and blessed her with more children. Three other sons and two daughters were born to her (I Samuel 2:21).

God's Moral Principles never change. Spiritual travail is a necessity for bringing forth spiritual children. More love, more prayers, more faithfulness, and more concern is needed to see that these children reach spiritual maturity.

Let us accept the responsibilities of spiritual Motherhood; then, just as the LORD increased Hannah's ministry, so also will He cause children to be born into the Kingdom of God through our love, concern, and faithfulness to pray.

Chapter Three

The Virgin Mary's Supreme Sacrifice As A Mother

One of the sweetest and dearest words in any language is the word MOTHER. Many have eulogized her for her love, understanding, and comfort. The very word *Mother* carries the meaning of hovering or covering over, nursing or nurturing, comforting, overseeing, and overshadowing. These are just a few of the beautiful aspects of a true mother. The poet and songwriter aptly wrote the following words:

M is for the million things she gave me.
O means only that she's growing old.
T is for the tears she shed to save me.
H is for her heart of purest gold.
E is for her eyes, the love light shining.
R means right, and right she'll always be.
Put them all together; they spell Mother,
the word that means the world to me.

Being a mother in either the natural or the spiritual realm is one of the greatest privileges in the world. Yet, no person ever earned the name Mother without much suffering.

From the moment of the child's conception, the mother begins to experience a joining with her child that is unique from all other relationships. Before she is consciously aware of the baby's presence, the mother assumes the role of guardian and protector of the child that grows in her womb. A part of every bite of food that she eats goes to sustain and nourish its life, and for nine months, she shares every waking and every sleeping moment with that child. Yet, from the time she goes down into the valley of the shadow of death to bring her child to birth, she begins to experience the suffering of being separated from the one who was a part of her very own being.

In the natural realm, a child usually is very close to his mother during the first few years of his life, but the day comes when she must surrender him into the hands of a stranger called *Teacher*. For the child, school days represent the beginning of an independent life which increases with each passing year. The child no longer needs mother to bandage his wounds and kiss away his hurt. By the time a child reaches his teenage years, his mother's active role of comforter, protector, and guardian practically comes to an end. The final separation comes when the child reaches maturity and leaves the nest to take a companion and start his own home.

These are all natural surrenders that every mother must make as her child grows to maturity. Few know, however, the greatest surrender, the supreme surrender that a mother must make, which is the surrender to stand by without interfering as God works His Perfect Will in the life of the one whom she spent years protecting.

The Virgin Mother of our Lord (and, hence, *blessed among women*) was from the tribe of Judah, of the lineage of King David.

The Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, made the supreme surrender as her Son hung on Calvary's Cross. Her experiences as a mother teach us how to make the same surrenders in our own life for our natural *and* spiritual children.

God never asked the Virgin Mary to make the *supreme* surrender of her Son at Calvary until she, first, had made many lesser surrenders. First, she put her own life in jeopardy by accepting the Seed of the Living Word into her womb and becoming with Child by the Power of the Holy Ghost. She knew that, since she was only in her espoused or engaged stage to him, Joseph and all Israel would think that she had played the part of a harlot when it was discovered that she was with Child.

According to Old Testament Law, the daughter who played the whore was stoned to death.

Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and **the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house:** so shalt thou put evil away from among you (Deuteronomy 22:21).

The immoral whore in the Old Testament Dispensation was brought to the door of her father's house and stoned because her father's house was the first one dishonoured and disgraced by her wanton, whorish deed. The Hebrew word for *folly*, here, is *neb-awlaw*, meaning foolishness, wickedness, crime, punishment, vile, villainy, wanton. *Neb-aw-law* does not indicate a weakness of reason, but its root indicates incapacity to discern moral and spiritual relations and rights, which leads to an intolerant repudiation in practice of the relations and rights that the *Torah-Truth* imposes. Consequently a wanton, whorish deed in Israel was an unspeakable, sinful offense against the LORD's *Torah-Truth*, against one's father's house, against the national moral standard and conscience of Israel, and against each holy virgin in Israel. So, the wanton, whorish woman degraded herself and all God's people.

If the wanton whore were a Priest's daughter, she was burnt with fire.

And **the daughter of any priest, if she profane herself by playing the whore**, she profaneth her father: she **shall be burnt with fire** (Leviticus 21:9).

Although a Priest's daughter was married, she was still a member of the priestly family, both from her father's house and her husband's house. Therefore, the strict law of morality and demands of Holiness especially remained for the Priest's daughter. If a Priest's daughter committed the crime of immoral acts, she polluted and profaned both herself and her father's house. A Priest's daughter had great honour to lose when she defiled and disgraced herself and her father's house. She lost her privilege to eat of the LORD's Holy Bread and Meat from His Sanctuary. She lost the respect of her father and his house and the Nation of Israel. She, who had enjoyed the special Presence of the LORD's Fire in His House, as a priestly daughter, was punished with the LORD's jealous Fire which consumed her. The wanton whore's punishment consumed her. The wanton whore's punishment of Fire was equal to her crime against the LORD's Holy Fire in His Sanctuary.

The Virgin Mary surrendered to accept shame, dishonour, disgrace, and possible death in order to mother the LORD's Word. The Holy Ghost brought the Father's Power from the Highest, causing the Immaculate Conception to take place within Mary's womb. Thus, Jesus Christ's special House or Body was miraculously built, which consisted of a mixture of Humanity and Divinity. When the Virgin Mary accepted Gabriel's Promise from God that she would conceive in her womb *without knowing* a man, she had no way of realizing in advance that God would send an Angel to Joseph, her espoused husband, to explain her supernatural conception and thereby save her from death.

While Jesus was still a young child, the Virgin Mary and Joseph surrendered to be separated from friends, loved ones, and country in order to protect the Living Word. Taking Jesus, they fled into Egypt to escape the murderous wrath of a jealous king.

Until Jesus was twelve years old, Mary's whole life revolved around caring for her Son. At this point in His Life, however, Jesus Himself began laying the foundation for His mother's final surrender, even before He officially had entered into His Ministry.

During one of the family's annual trips to Jerusalem, Jesus quietly separated Himself from the company and tarried in the city. His parents searched the city for three days before finding Him in the Temple, surrounded by learned men. Mary acknowledged her motherhood by saying, "...Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father [*His adopted father Joseph*] and I have sought thee sorrowing" (Luke 2:48). However, on this occasion, Jesus never conceded to His earthly relationship by calling her "Mother." Instead, He said, "... How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). Although Jesus returned to Nazareth with His earthly parents and was subject to them in natural matters, He reminded Mary that His obligation to His Heavenly Father surpassed all His earthly ties. His Life belonged to God and not to His Mother.

Long before Jesus ever reached the Cross, Mary, His Mother, had to start surrendering for God's Will to be done in her Son's Life. If she had failed to be faithful in the lesser surrenders, she never could have made the supreme surrender recorded in the Gospel of John.

After the Lord Jesus Christ began His public Ministry, His Mother Mary was mentioned only four times in the

Sacred Scriptures. Each of these occasions was a time of humility surrender for Mary.

IV. Mary Was Commanded to Tarry in Jerusalem to be Baptized by the Holy Ghost Along with Jesus' Disciples.

II. Mary's Attempt to Speak to Jesus While He Was Teaching Further Proved Her Role in Her Mature Son's Life

III. Mary Surrendered, at Jesus' Crucifixion, To See Her Son Suffer in Doing God's Will

I. Mary Was Rebuked by Jesus at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee

I. Mary Was Rebuked by Jesus at the Wedding in Cana of Galilee

And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; **and the mother of Jesus was there:** And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, **the mother of Jesus** saith unto him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do *it* (John 2:1-5).

Jesus wrought miracles according to the Father's Purposive Will. He miraculously turned the water into wine at a marriage in Cana of Galilee.

Jesus' miracles were solemn signs and sacred seals of the Divinity of His Doctrines. Jesus, His Mother (her most honourable title), and His Disciples were there. There was a lack of wine for all the guests at this particular wedding, so Mary solicited Jesus to do something to meet this great need. Jesus rebuked and reprimanded Mary by asking, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?"

When Jesus was still at home, as the Son of Man, He remained under subjection to His Mother and recognized her as His Mother. However, once He had gone forth as the Son of God, in His public Ministry, His Father was His Divine, Sovereign Governor and Guide. Thus, He looked to His Heavenly Father for all things He was to know, to teach, and to do. Consequently, He addressed Mary as "*Woman*," putting her in the same class as other women who should not be usurping the Governance of His Heavenly Father in His Ministry and Life. By His rebuke, He enlightened His earthly Mother and relatives that they were not to expect special privileges because they were His kindred according to the flesh.

Jesus did not have to be counseled by His earthly Mother to do good. The Heavenly Father has appointed the Son of God to be our Advocate and Mediator. But, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, never was appointed by God to be our Advocate and Mediator with the Son of God. For this reason, the Son of God rebuked His Mother for this idolatrous thought.

Jesus waited until the *hour* when all the wine pots were empty; then, He commanded that they be filled with water, which He transformed into wine by His Father's Purposive Will and Power. Mary willingly humbled herself and came under subjection and surrender to the Son of God on this occasion and besought the servants to obey Jesus' Words and not make the same mistake that she had by trying to dictate to Jesus what He was to do.

II. Mary's Attempt To Speak to Jesus While He Was Teaching Further Proved Her Role in Her Mature Son's Life.

While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee. But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother (Matthew 12:46-50).

There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother (Mark 3:31-35).

Then came to him *his* mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. And it was told him by *certain* which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it (Luke 8:19-21).

Jesus was interrupted by His Mother and brethren while He was teaching God's Word. Why had they not been to hear Jesus' discourse on God's Truth from the beginning? Frequently, those who are the closest to God's Fountainhead of Truth are the most negligent. Familiarity and easy access can breed some degree of ungrateful contempt.

Jesus' relatives did not listen to Him that day, but they interrupted others who were listening gladly. Mary commanded, as it were, her Son to stop and listen to her. She had not yet learned that she could no longer command Him to be in subjection to her. Jesus ignored the interruption, but He asked the bearers of tidings from His Mother this question: "Who is my mother?" Then, He established the new order of relationship in His Kingdom by stating that whoever performed His Father's Purposive Will, the same was His brother, sister, and mother. Thus, Mary, again, had to humble herself and surrender to be further separated from her Son, on one side of the Scales.

III. Mary Surrendered, at Jesus' Crucifixion, To See Her Son Suffer in Doing God's Will.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalena. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, **he saith unto his mother**, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*. After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst. Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put *it* upon hyssop, and put *it* to his mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost (John 19:25-30).

In His public Ministry, the Son of God always referred to Mary as "Woman." Yet, as He hung upon the Cross, He provided for her natural welfare. His Sufferings defied all human description and understanding; yet, in the midst of His unparalleled Suffering, he took care of His dear Mother. Jesus called her "Woman," not "Mother" —not out of

disrespect — but out of His Providing Love for her. He directed her to look upon John as her new son and to be a mother to him. Jesus placed great confidence in His Disciple John by saying, “Behold, thy mother!”

Mary the Mother of Jesus had surrendered to her new name, “Woman,” which Jesus, the Son of God, called her. And, she also had learned not to command Him nor dictate to Him what He should say or do.

Love never spared Mary the sight of her Son hanging between Earth and Heaven. Along with the Apostle John and a few others, she stood as close to the Cross as possible. Her heart must have been bleeding as she gazed upon His intense Suffering; yet, no record was made of her screaming and crying. She suffered in silence. Mary proved her surrender to the Son of God and to His Heavenly Father by not begging Him to come down from the Cross because she could not bear to see Him suffer such agony. Mary had a revelation that her Son was hanging there in God’s Purposive Will; therefore, she stood quietly by without murmuring or fretting. Beloved, a true mother must surrender for her children to suffer in the Will of God.

Although Mary realized that Jesus was in God’s Will, she still stood by. The words *stand by*, in the Greek, mean to stand beside, to exhibit, to recommend, to substantiate, to aid, to assist, and to yield. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was standing by, yielded to the Will of God. She was standing by just in case she might be able to assist Him a little bit in His suffering on the Cross.

While Mary stood by with the Apostle John and others, Jesus looked down upon His Mother and said, “Woman, behold thy son!” Turning to John, he said, “Behold thy mother!” These words from Jesus severed, forever, the earthly relationship between Son and Mother. His Words were like a sharp two-edged Sword, piercing even to her soul. Yet, Mary accepted the cutting without a murmur. Jesus’ sharp Words were a fulfillment of the Prophecy made by Simeon the day Mary and Joseph presented Jesus in the Temple. “(Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed” (Luke 2:35).

The Sword could not have been a literal one, for a sword could not pierce nor strike through the soul. The Book of Revelation explains the kind of Sword that can pierce the soul. John saw a vision of Jesus with a sharp two-edged Sword coming out of His Mouth. “And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword:...” (Revelation 1:16). The Greek word used for *sword*, in this verse, is the same word that is used in Luke 2:35. The Sword that pierced Mary’s soul was the cutting words, “Behold thy son!” and “Behold thy mother!” Never again could she stand by in that special place as His Mother, able and ready to assist Him. He was telling Mary, “You cannot assist Me. I must pay this price by Myself. You must separate yourself from Me.”

Jesus’ Words having pierced her soul, Mary accepted the cutting of the sharp two-edged Sword from His Mouth, which resulted in her being separated from her Son, and she surrendered for her Son to do the Will of God, although it meant His suffering in Death, Hell, and the Grave. Mary surrendered for God to work redemption without any help or assistance from her.

Often, we face similar situations with our natural or spiritual children. Sometimes, they are determined to go their way, the way of the world and the flesh, and no amount of pleading or reasoning seems to avail. Then, we can only stand aside and lift up both hands in surrender to God, trusting Him to redeem them.

Beloved, this is not an easy, light surrender, for God’s Redemptive Will led Jesus through Death, Hell, and the Grave before the Father’s Exalted Glory, Resurrection Life, and Almighty Power were manifested in His Life.

This type of surrender includes fathers as well as mothers, for the Principle is applicable to both parents. Each parent must surrender to stand still and let God’s Redemptive Will be worked out in the child’s life.

It is a great privilege to be a mother, both naturally and spiritually, even though it may mean much suffering as the LORD’s sharp, two-edged Sword pierces the soul, even as it did Mary’s soul. But, pain and sorrow are not the whole picture, for it is a joy and a delight to see one’s children overcoming their flesh and pressing on toward spiritual maturity in Jesus Christ.

The LORD’s Reward always follows the pain of His sharp, two-edged Sword. Mary experienced great joy after the resurrection of her Son, for she was one of the one hundred and twenty waiting in the Upper Room when the Holy Ghost, with His cloven Tongues of Fire, appeared and sat upon each of them.

IV. Mary Was Commanded To Tarry in Jerusalem To Be Baptized by the Holy Ghost Along with Jesus’ Disciples.

And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, *saith he*, ye have heard of me.... But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and

in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.... Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas *the brother* of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, **and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren** (Acts 1:4,8,12-14).

The Gift of the Holy Ghost had been (1) promised assuredly by the Father; (2) its coming had been prophesied by the Prophet Joel; (3) Jesus' Disciples had waited for it; and (4) it was received by Jesus' Disciples in the Upper Room.

The recipients of the Baptism of the Holy Ghost were the preachers and planters of Christ's Gospel and Good News of Salvation. Mary, Jesus' earthly Mother, was sent along with all the other Disciples to receive this Heavenly Gift that also would lead her into all Truth.

Mary never would have been lifted up into this new spiritual relationship with the Holy Ghost and His cloven Tongues of Fire if she had refused to surrender in her heart for her earthly relationship to her Son to be severed.

Although Mary had the privilege of mothering the physical Body of Christ, the Living Word, we also, as Christians, have the opportunity of *mothering* God's Word in our spiritual loins, minds, and hearts until it can come to birth in our life in the form of Righteous, Holy Deeds of Truth.

How can we *mother* the Word of God? Just as the Virgin Mary received the Seed of Promise from the LORD that created a Human Body for Jesus to dwell in, we can choose to accept the spiritual Seed of God's Word to dwell in our New Heart within our human body that already has been created. It may be a very small Seed of Truth, but it will grow into a large Tree of Life if we hold it in our heart, praying and weeping over it with love and appreciation.

As a mother rocks her babe, we rock the Word in our bosom, as it were, by meditating on it. Instead of reading and forgetting the Word, we must hold it close, giving it our life through prayers, tears, and through working to keep it in our remembrance, as a nursing mother gives her life to her child and constantly keeps it in her remembrance. As we nurse God's Word, by telling Jesus how sweet He is and by offering to Him our life, our soul, our all, God's Living Word grows in our heart. When this happens, God's Word is mingled with our innermost being; therefore, it becomes ours! Consequently, no one nor no thing has power to take the LORD's Word of Truth from us.

A natural mother oversees her baby and defends him from all enemies. When God's Word is born in us, we will have the same desire to defend it and to take a public stand for it. However, there are other times that we come to the place of defenseless helplessness; therefore, we have to cast ourself upon God's Redemptive Mercy and Grace and cry to God to defend and to redeem both us and His Word.

A good mother is one who is surrendered to defend when it is God's Time and Will for her to do so or to back off and let God redeem the situation when it is His Time and Will to do it for her. Mary protected and cared for Jesus when He was young, but when He reached maturity, He spoke for Himself. Later, she had to trust her Son for providential care.

After the Living Word has reached maturity in our heart, we do not have to defend nor protect Him. God's Living Word speaks for Himself. Although God's Living Word passes through Death and Hell, it will rise again. The Truth will live!

Let this be a lesson for our own life. The more Satan tries to destroy God's Word in us, the more it will live, if we treat it as a mother treats her babe.

Beloved, we do not attain the depths of surrender that the Mother of Jesus did, as her Son hung on the Cross, unless we begin by making daily surrenders all along life's journey. We may not have reached the place of supreme surrender, but knowing there is such a place in Christ Jesus gives each of us something for which to strive, to struggle, and to stride forward to attain.

May the LORD help us follow the example of the Virgin Mary who was a surrendered mother, both in the natural and spiritual realms. Let us be faithful mothers of God's Word.

Chapter Four

Children's Responsibility Is To Honour Their Parents

God has a simple and sure formula for a long life, which is found in Exodus 20:12: "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee."

The parents' faithful transmission of God's *Torah*-Truth to their children and the children's willing acceptance of God's *Torah*-Truth form the bond of unity that holds the family together and blesses the children with long life in God's Promised Land.

In Ephesians 6:2 Paul says, "Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise." The great duty of children is to obey their parents because God has used parents to give existence to their children. Consequently, parents have a double portion of authority from God, naturally and spiritually. God's Word demands that the children be obedient to their parents, both inwardly, by love, and outwardly, by expressions and deeds. Good parents teach their children about the LORD and about good manners, good health, good habits, and the evil things to avoid. In all these things, children need to respect, reverence, and obey their parents.

God promises a long life to children if they honour their parents.

There are no better examples of giving honour to parents than the stories of King David's sons. In David's sons, we see how sure God's Word is both to reward the obedient children with long life and to punish disobedient children by cutting off their lives prematurely and preventing them from living long on the land. As we study the lives of King David's sons, we see how God rewarded them with blessing or judgment, according to the honour or dishonour the sons showed to King David, their father. How each son dealt with his parents directly affected the son's length of life on this Earth.

David's firstborn was Amnon. His unholy passion for his half sister, Tamar, caused him to accept the wicked advice offered him by his friend, Jonadab, who had suggested that Amnon use trickery to gain access to his half sister so that he could satisfy his lust by forcing his way with her.

And when she had brought *them* unto him to eat, he took hold of her, and said unto her, Come lie with me, my sister. And she answered him, Nay, my brother, do not force me; for no such thing ought to be done in Israel: do not thou this folly. And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go? and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king; for he will not withhold me from thee (II Samuel 13:11-14).

Amnon's wanton deed was *abhorrent* to God; his wanton deed showed his godlessness, impiety, and disrespect for his parents; his shameful, sinful deed brought disgrace and dishonour upon his half sister; his abominable, lustful rape of his half sister brought about death to himself. Amnon killed Tamar's virginity; therefore, he reaped the death he had sown by having his own life taken by the hand of Tamar's brother.

Amnon brought great dishonour to his father's house by defiling his half sister. From that day, Absalom, Tamar's brother, determined to kill Amnon, and he finally succeeded two years later.

Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon; then kill him, fear not: have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled (II Samuel 13:28,29).

Absalom told his servants that when his half brother Amnon's heart was merry with wine, he could be caught off guard and easily killed. So, Absalom's servants killed Amnon to satisfy their master's angry hate and to wreak

vengeance upon Amnon. What despicable deceit Absalom used in order to kill his half brother Amnon! Absalom hid his malicious, murderous intent toward Amnon under a beautiful cloak of feasting, fun, and friendship. So, when Amnon's senses were relaxed, trustful, and dulled by wine, Absalom's servants took advantage of his unguarded state and killed him. What impious defiance Absalom displayed against the LORD's Divine *Torah*-Truth! What an audacious affront to his father who was the king!

According to tradition, Absalom was next in line for the throne, after Amnon, the firstborn son of David, had been killed. However, Saul and David had been *elected* Kings of Israel, so the Hebrew tradition of primogeniture was not fixed. In David's case, his choice (and God's choice) for the throne was Solomon.

Absalom no doubt knew of David's promise that Solomon would sit on his throne. Nevertheless, with Amnon out of the way, Absalom began a plot to usurp the kingdom from his father David. He took advantage of the king's age and the press of his work to use craftiness and flattery to win the people's hearts. He built up a strong rebellion against his father, but his pride and arrogance trapped him. After Absalom had caused his father, King David, to flee from his throne in Jerusalem, he continued to pursue his father with his army of rebels in hopes of killing him and securing the throne for himself.

One of Absalom's proudest possessions was his long hair, which was the very thing that held him captive in the branches of an oak tree, as he fought in a woods against his father's soldiers, and was killed by Joab.

And Absalom met the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon a mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went away.... Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee. And he took three darts in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak (II Samuel 18:9,14).

All of Absalom's deceitful stratagems and all his royal, handsome elegance failed to save him from Joab's deathly darts. Absalom had sown death by killing his brother Amnon; therefore, he reaped death to himself from Joab, the general of his father's army.

Absalom's diseased perception of reality prevented him from seeing that he was neither strong enough in military power nor experienced enough in war to win against his father David, who had been called, chosen, and ordained of God, and who was an experienced warrior from his youth up. How could the soft, sissy Absalom think that he could win against his father when none of King David's enemies ever won against him, including lions, bears, Goliath, and King Saul. What blind terminal ignorance Absalom had to possess in order even to imagine that he could dethrone his father and get away with it. Moreover, with Almighty God on David's side, Absalom had to have lost all sane reasoning.

Absalom's life and death teach us that if we have godly parents, we must be very careful about trying to dethrone their authority by setting them aside and, thereby, trying to destroy them.

We hear nothing about David's next son, so it is assumed that he died while still young.

King David's fourth son, Adonijah, already had two examples before his eyes, through his brothers Amnon and Absalom, of what not to do; yet, he chose to follow his brothers' wicked ways of dishonouring their parents. He, too, tried to place himself on David's throne by taking advantage of his aged father; thus, he dishonoured and disgraced him on his deathbed.

It must have seemed a small, simple thing to Adonijah to make himself king in place of his father who was old and apparently on his deathbed. He had the support of King David's spiritual leader, Abiathar, and he had the support of King David's great man of war, Joab; therefore, he must have considered himself invincible because of his allies. Abiathar the Priest, and Joab, captain of David's army, were his accomplices. It could have been that Abiathar the Priest thought that because Adonijah had exalted himself, coming with fifty men running before him (which was the number of the royal bodyguard) that the king had already appointed him. Or, Adonijah could have lied to the Priest to gain his favour. It could have been that Abiathar had carried a secret accusation and blame in his heart against King David because Saul had murdered his priestly family at Nob, when Saul had had all the Priests killed, there, except for Abiathar who had escaped and gone to David for protection. Nevertheless, Abiathar should have sought God's mind in the matter from the *Urim* and the *Thummim* before committing himself to such an evil alliance. He was without excuse before God for his actions.

Before we choose sides, we should know who God's opponents are. God was not for Adonijah's opposition, so Abiathar and Joab were on the losing side from the beginning because they did not find out whom God had chosen

for the throne before they joined the prideful, power-hungry, self-exalted Adonijah. Neither Abiathar nor Joab were prepared for Adonijah's defeat.

While evil was working against Solomon (through Adonijah, Abiathar, and Joab) who had been promised the throne by King David, good was working for Solomon through the following persons: the LORD God, the Supreme, Sovereign Ruler over all; David the King; Solomon's mother Bathsheba; Zadok the Priest; Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the Priest; Nathan the Prophet; Shimei, a mighty man; and Rei, a mighty man.

There were many more with Solomon than there were with Adonijah. If God be for us, who can be against us?

Going against God's Will and dishonouring our parents may seem a small, simple thing. But, it is the height of treacherous betrayal. Our actions may seem to go unnoticed before God and man, but God always is watching, and He always has some person watching us. Nathan the Prophet and Zadok the Priest were aware of Adonijah's conspiracy against God's Will and against King David, his father. Nathan took counsel with Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, who in turn informed King David of the sacrifices Adonijah was making and of the coronation party he was staging. Although King David was aged, he acted speedily in fulfilling his promise to Bathsheba to put Solomon on his throne.

After renewing his vow that Solomon would rule in his stead, David said, "...even so will I certainly do this day" (I Kings 1:30). Solomon truly had invincible backers standing with him; consequently, no one was able to take the throne from Solomon.

It means everything to have King Jesus and your mother on your side; and to have a Priest and a Prophet with you; and to have the King's royal, mighty men as your supporters; then, no one can keep you from God's Throne.

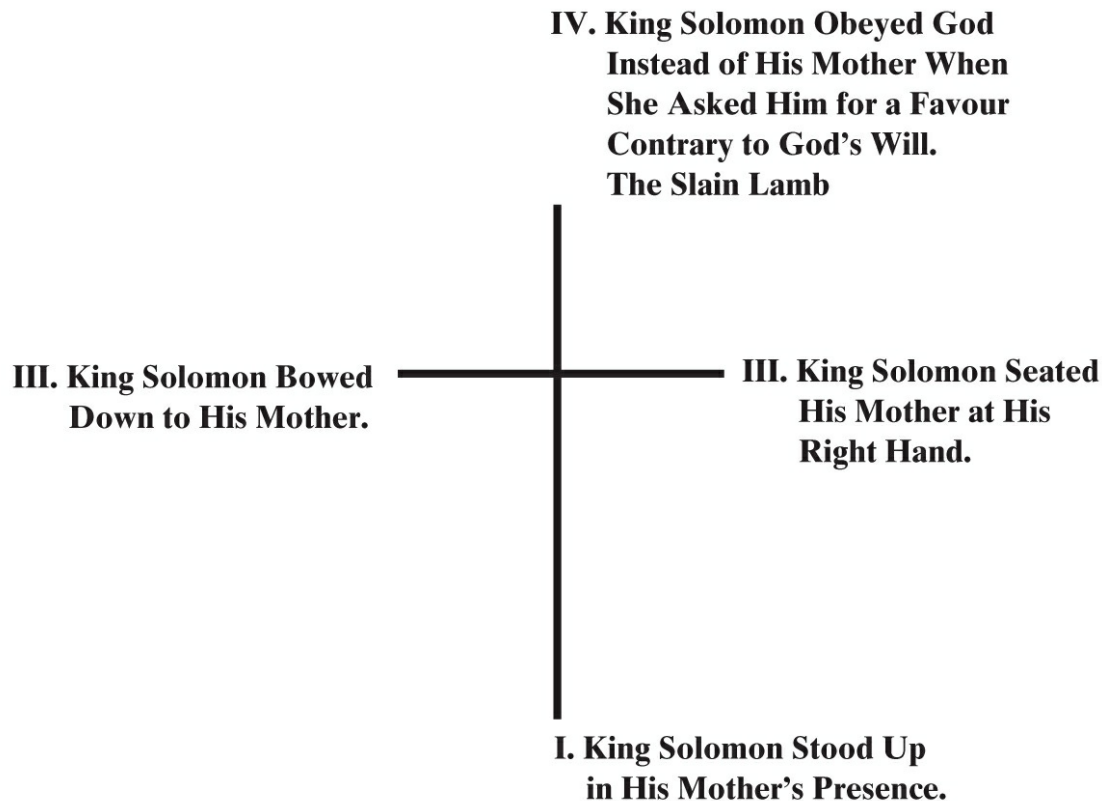
Thus, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, three of King David's sons, have taught us what *not to do*: We must not dishonour our parents! However, Solomon, King David's other son, has taught us what *to do*: We must honour our parents.

After King David's death, Solomon ruled on his father's throne. He is our example of a son who gave honour to his mother.

Even though Solomon greatly respected his mother, he did not defect from God's *Torah-Truth* when she asked him to deviate from God's Will; thus, he brought honour to her instead of dishonour.

There is a Stature of Truth in First Kings 2:19 which shows how Solomon, although he was her king, still honoured his mother Bathsheba.

Bath-sheba therefore went unto king Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah. And **the king rose up** to meet her, and **bowed himself unto her**, and sat down on his throne, and **caused a seat to be set for the king's mother; and she sat on his right hand**. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; *I pray thee*, say me not nay. And the king said unto her, Ask on, my mother: for I will not say thee nay. And she said, Let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife. And king Solomon answered and said unto his mother, And why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he *is* mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah. Then king Solomon swore by the LORD, saying, God do so to me, and more also, if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life. Now therefore, *as* the LORD liveth, which hath established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. And king Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada; and he fell upon him that he died (I Kings 2:19-25).



I. King Solomon Stood Up in His Mother's Presence.

Solomon rose up from his throne to meet Bathsheba when she went in to speak with him. This was a Jewish custom. Orthodox Jewish children never were allowed to remain seated when their parents entered a room. They stood up as a great mark of respect for them. Likewise, Solomon stood up out of respect for his mother, although he was the King before whom all Israel bowed in submission and subjection.

II. King Solomon Bowed Down to His Mother.

Solomon bowed his body in deep respect and reverence, recognizing her as his most honoured mother.

Solomon remembered that Bathsheba, his mother, had helped to place him on his father's throne. His act was a voluntary expression of his gratitude. He always acknowledged that he owed his great exaltation as King of Israel, God's Bridal Nation, to the Most High God and to his mother. The least children can do is show an appreciation to their parents for having been clothed, fed, and helped to a place of accomplishment by them. A child may not have asked to be born, but that does not excuse him from obeying God and his parents. It is God's Will for children to be grateful for what their parents have done for them.

III. King Solomon Seated His Mother at His Right Hand.

Solomon seated his mother at his right hand. The *right hand* is the place of all power. Mark's Gospel says that the Lord "was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." (Mark 16:19). Jesus said in Matthew 28:18, "...All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Yet, God the Father is above all, for the Apostle Paul said, "For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is

excepted, which did put all things under him” (I Corinthians 15:27). God, the Unbegotten Father, cannot put Himself under the feet of anyone. Verse twenty-eight goes on to say that the Son shall “be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.”

Bathsheba occupied the place at the King’s right hand in Solomon’s Kingdom; yet the throne was not under her feet, for Solomon occupied the throne. She could have had anything she wanted from Solomon, provided it was according to God’s Purposive Will.

IV. King Solomon Obeyed God Instead of His Mother When She Asked Him for a Favour Contrary to God’s Will.

Solomon never imagined that his mother would ask something *out* of God’s Will, but she did. She asked for Abishag, the Shunammite to be given to Adonijah for a wife; therefore, Solomon was not disrespectful in denying her request. When Solomon inherited his father’s throne, he also inherited his father’s possessions which included Abishag, David’s virgin servant girl.

Since King David never took Abishag for his wife, Solomon was free to take her for his wife. So, how revolting and how brazenly arrogant for Adonijah to push Bathsheba to ask Solomon for Abishag to be given to him as his wife! Solomon denied this dishonourable request. We do not bring dishonour to our parents if our disobedience to them is a result of our obedience to God. Children should be sure when they take a stand against their mother or father that it is the parents who are going contrary to God’s Will and not them.

Abishag was the young virgin who had been given to King David with the hope that her youth and beauty would revive his fading spirit. David never knew her as a wife; however, because David owned her, she was a queen in his kingdom. In accordance with the traditions of the day, everything that belonged to King David, including Abishag, was given to Solomon when he was anointed as the official, ruling king over Israel. Had Solomon denied Abishag’s place, as a queen with him, he would have been denying his right to the throne. He knew it would not please God for him to give away part of his inheritance in his father’s kingdom to his enemy Adonijah.

Solomon had once spared Adonijah’s life when he had tried to steal his father’s throne. It was Adonijah who had conspired with Abiathar and Joab to seize King David’s throne. But, for his abominable effrontery in asking for Abishag, King Solomon’s inherited Queen, King Solomon had Adonijah slain. Thus, we see the early end of all of King David’s three sons: Amnon, Absalom and Adonijah, each of whom brought dishonour to him as their parent. And, we see the long and glorious reign of King Solomon, King David’s son, who brought his father honour.

God, as always, was faithful to fulfill his Promise of Blessing or Judgment, depending upon King David’s sons’ honouring or dishonouring of him as their father.

Every year there is a day set aside to honour mothers and a day to honour fathers, but we should not let that be the only time we show our parents appreciation. Take time to write a note saying a simple, “I appreciate you!” Or, drop them a beautiful card, or take them some flowers; maybe a telephone call will surprise them and let them know you care. Small tokens of love can mean more than an expensive gift. Our heart reaching out to them in gratitude for all they have done for us is what counts the most!

