

VICTORY THROUGH THE BLOOD OF JESUS

"The personal experience of this christian, Nse Abraham Akpan, of Ikono Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria, is just one of the uncountable present-day miracles of victory over sin and the powers of darkness, such miracles confirm the fact that the God of the miracles of old is still working miracles every day and every where in the lives of those who trust in Him. They also attest to the constant faithfulness of the Lord Jesus Christ to the promise of His abiding presence with His followers in Matthew 28:18-20:

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.
"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:
"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen".

"I thank God for the opportunity He has given me to praise Him for what He has done for me. As a school boy, I was a slave to sin in every sense of that word. Young as I was, many of the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:19-21 found vivid examples in my daily life. I excelled in lying and deceit so much that my record would be very difficult to break. I can now regretfully remember how my parents often fell victims of my lies and deceitful tactics. I was also very intolerant, proud and quarrelsome. No wonder, therefore, that I was more often than not engaged in physical combats with my school-mates. What an opportunity each of such occasions offered me to display my wickedness and brutality.

This was my position when God found me and helped me out. How did He do it? A young man, a member of the Apostolic Faith Church, requested me to join him in a domestic work. It was while we were on this work in his house that he drew my attention to my need of Jesus Christ. I will ever continue to praise God for helping me to accede to this man's request. It was the very first time I ever heard the story of salvation. My heart was so thrilled that when he went further to invite me to a meeting of the Apostolic Faith Church at Ibiaku Ntok Okpo, I readily agreed to be there. And by the grace of God, I was there!

I was left in no doubt in this memorable meeting about the step I had to take if I wanted the freedom and peace which only Jesus could give. I went straight into business with God, confessing my sins, pleading the Blood of Jesus Christ and making a covenant with God that, should He save my soul, I would never go back into my sins and would serve Him to the end. Heaven came down and the joy of salvation filled my soul. I knew, without anybody telling me, that my sins had been forgiven and that the Blood of Jesus Christ had availed for me. I have since known the freedom that Jesus promises in John 8:36.

"If the son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed".

This happened in 1964 and things have never been the same with me again. My lies, deceit, ill-temper and fighting spirit are no more. I have since been living a new life of victory over sins.

Not quite long after Jesus saved my soul, I heard about the two other spiritual experiences of entire sanctification and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. I consecrated further in prayer and the Lord blessed me with these experiences. I have thereby known the fullness of God in my life more than when I had only the experience of salvation. The Blood of Jesus Christ through which I acquired these three Christian experiences has always proved sufficient for me in every aspect of my life. Through faith in that Blood, God heals me free of charge whenever I fall sick, He offers me protection and anchor in dangerous and puzzling moments of life and also prospers all my endeavours.

Something happened in 1982 which reassured me that I took the right decision when I gave my life to Jesus Christ. That incident practically demonstrated the reality of Jesus' claim that "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth". (Matthew 28:18). I was living at Number 6, Atan Road Ikot Ekpene, at that time. I was preaching the message of salvation to a woman. In the process, she raised a number of issues which I believed would be better resolved in the meeting of the Apostolic Faith Church. Therefore, I invited her to our meetings.

It was at this stage that a young man intruded into our discussion. Thinking that he was genuinely interested in what I was saying, I intensified my effort to make the message sink into both of them. As the discussion progressed, the man was gradually coming out in his true colours. It turned out that he was a loyal messenger of satan. He started by querying my belief in the existence of God and challenging me to prove it. I simply drew his attention to the creation of God: the world He has set spinning in space; the sun, the moon and the stars; the trees and the flowers that bloom with their amazing variety of colours, and the birds that sing day by day praising their maker. The creation, I added, had not only proved the existence of God beyond every reasonable doubt but had also revealed His infinite majesty and power. I also stressed the love of God for sinner, the love which sacrificed Jesus Christ for the sinner's redemption. I concluded by encouraging him to prove the existence of God in his own life's experience by confessing his sins and praying through to salvation.

Unfortunately, this man turned down my advice. He decided to engage God in a power contest instead, thereby kicking against the pricks. He boasted that he would prove satan's power, if challenged, by conjuring money out of the orange tree in front of my house and enquired whether my God could do the same. I replied that my God did not approve of that magical way of making money but that He wanted people to earn their living. I warned him that such gimmicks are used by satan to entice his followers and lead them into sorrow but that "the blessing of the LORD, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow with it" (Proverbs 10:22).

That reply was too much for this young man. He was no longer willing to talk. He was determined to fight. I little realised that God would be magnified through that decision and that God would use it not only to prove His existence to the man but also gain a convert from the secret society to which he belonged.

"Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (Psalm 76:10).

The man raised his right hand in an attempt to give me a resounding slap. The hand suddenly became stony stiff and immovable up there! After making several futile efforts to bring the hand down, he raised an alarm for help. This alarm attracted a large number of people who were curious to see what was happening. I told him that his disregard for God was the cause of his problem and that if he could say aloud "There is God", his problem would be over. He had no sooner responded with an extra-loud "There is God" than his hand came down and became normal. He had shamefully lost that first round but his inclination to resume the fight any moment from then was as strong as ever. As he was leaving the scene, he threatened that he would be better prepared to continue the fight the following night and that he would then scrape off all the hairs on my head and show off the superiority of his sorcery. I was confident that my Lord was up to the task.

True to his threat, this man came knocking at my door the following night. Having forgotten his threat, I first mistook him for an armed robber who could kill me if he entered and found no money. I became somewhat apprehensive of danger. However, I quickly dialled the royal telephone to the Throne of Grace in agonizing prayers and immediately found mercy and grace to help me in this moment of need. This night the visitor gave me three minutes to open my door or face the grim consequences of noncompliance. At the end of these three minutes of grace, I saw the door mysteriously open on its own bringing me face to face with the sorcerer who threatened me with a good night fight. He was boiling with anger as he voiced his decision to destroy me without mercy for my refusal to open the door for him. God had already worked a miracle which was yet unknown to me. Even though the door was

wide open before him, the Lord had confined him to where he stood such that he dared not advance toward me. As I sat watching from my bed, I saw and heard him crying that a big fire lay before him about to burn him. I did not see the fire but I knew then that God had sent the hosts of heaven with chariots of fire to protect me. Although, physically I was the only one in the room, I realised I was not alone. Jesus was with me and that was all I needed. The man started pleading in panic that the fire be removed. He did this for hours, entirely helpless and powerless to get through. He left the spot and went away just before dawn with his mission unaccomplished. God had again won the second round. How much I praise Him for His love and protective power.

I thought the sorcerer would on this occasion accept defeat and never again contend with God. I was mistaken. Satan is a terribly wicked task-master. After this encounter, I left my Atan Road residence for another one at Okop Eto Road. As I was returning from the market one day, this same man was shadowing me on a motor-cycle to my new residence. He repeated his intelligence work behind me the following day as I was returning earlier from the market to get prepared for a security assignment at the Apostolic Faith • premises that evening. This time I tried to confuse him by walking past my house. When I discovered that he was determined to persevere, I tried to save time by heading for home. He was, therefore, able to follow me right to the gate leading to my house. He spent a considerable time studying the place so closely before leaving that I was convinced that he was planning another major offensive.

He wasted no time. He must have come back the following night with legions of demons; his attack was much more forceful and deadly. Both the gate leading into our compound and the entrance door into the house amazingly opened for him. He sternly ordered me to open the door of my room and "call that your God again today and see if He will be able to deliver you". I just prayed that Jesus should envelop me in His all-powerful Blood. Indeed, "the name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe" (Proverbs 18:10).

As on the earlier occasion, the door opened on its own after about five minutes. I prayed again that God should see me through just as He led Moses and the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea. An immaculate white screen immediately stood between the two of us. The side facing him was covered with blood while the white side was facing me with the inscription, "The Blood of Jesus", written in small letters. As I continued to pray, the letters grew bigger and bigger until the inscription overspread the whole screen. There was a grave by my bed; I fell into this grave but my head was up outside it. I just continued to shout "the Blood of Jesus". The man brought out something like a manual fan which sparked off a big flame. However, a strong wind suddenly arose in the room forcefully pushing the screen against the flaming fan. The fire was thereby utterly extinguished.

The man remained undaunted. He quickly brought out another equipment, like the type used by welders, from which fire gushed dangerously. That wind also blew the fire out. He decided at this juncture to give me a few minutes of grace before his next attack which he threatened would be more fatal and decisive. He tried to taunt me by advising me to call upon my God and see whether He could deliver me from that round. I pressed on in prayer firmly believing that God would keep me to the end of his witchcraft onslaught.

He resumed from the recess by bringing out a white bottle from his pocket and opening it. A lizard-like creature and a giant scorpion came out of it. The lizard-like creature had a human head and neck. This puzzling creature and the scorpion tried to penetrate through the screen but fire came down from God and reduced them to ashes. After this, the grave was no more and the sorcerer too was no where to be found! God had fought the final battle and won. When I was sweeping the floor in the morning, a great amount of blood lay under the ashes of the two burnt creatures.

I went straight to report the victory to the District Overseer of the Apostolic Faith Mission in the Cross River State, Rev. Samson Ekanem. He rejoiced with me and affirmed it was because of occasions like I had gone through that the Word of God enjoins Christians to put on the whole armour of God. He

exhorted me to remain steadfast in the Lord.

As I was returning home from the evening revival and evangelistic service of the Apostolic Faith Church one Sunday evening, a man held me tight on the road asking me to tell him the superior secret society to which I belonged or else he would not let me go. He went further to bind me with a rope so tightly that I felt constrained to tell him that my society was beyond the sky and that I was just returning from the gate of Heaven. I added that even though I was on the earth, I constantly spoke to Heaven and got a reply. Before I gave him this information, however, I managed to ask him the reason for his question and he had confessed that members of their secret society had prevailed everywhere with their witchcraft and sorcery except in my case. I realised that he shared the same society with the man who determined to destroy me. He told me that one member of the society (presumably the man troubling me at night) had died in a trial of power with me and he accused me of killing him. I declined that responsibility. Believing that he could continue the fight where the other man stopped, he threatened to meet me after his return from a power — seeking journey to Egypt.

I attended the 1983 Annual Camp-meeting Convention of the Apostolic Faith in Lagos. On the Wednesday of the last week of the Convention, I met this new man again shortly before the evening revival and evangelistic service. He was, to my greatest surprise, begging me to forgive him. When I pressed to know how he had wronged me, he confessed that he went to Egypt as he threatened and came back with two types of juju -- one small and the other big. The small one was to be pointed at me so that I would fall down dead on the spot while the big one was to be aimed at any Minister of the Apostolic Faith who dared to challenge his presence on the mission's premises so that the Minister too could die on the spot. Having failed to find me in the Cross River State, he decided to travel to Lagos and got me on the Campgrounds. Wonderfully, he had attended some meetings and God had saved his soul!

I exhorted him never to go back into the unfruitful works of darkness because all power belongs unto Jesus Christ. I thank God for the victory freely available in the Blood of Jesus Christ. May God keep me steadfast and establish this new convert in the faith. Amen.

N. A. A.

Having read the foregoing testimony, what other practical, vivid and convincing fulfilment of God's promise contained in Isaiah 54:15-17 do you require before you can cast in your lot with the mighty Saviour of the world? He is the only One who can deliver you from the power of the enemy and save your soul from destruction.

"Behold they shall surely gather together, but not by me; whosoever shall gather together against thee shall fall for thy sake.

"Behold, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument for his work: and I have created the waster to destroy.

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper: and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD" (Isaiah 54:15-17).

Seek the Lord now. Pray and make reconciliation with God