

THE ALMOND ROD

Prophetic Pictures received for today



‘And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see an almond rod.” Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.”’

Jeremiah 1:11-12

John Wright

INTRODUCTION

In the Old Testament there were those, enabled by the Holy Spirit, who had revelations from God through dreams, through what they heard (Prophets) and through what they saw (Seers).

In the New Testament God continued to speak through dreams, visions, and messages whether audible or heard in the inner man. St John's revelations received on Patmos are examples of God's desire to communicate with His people.

Today God has not changed. He continues to speak through His Word, through dreams, prophetic words or prophetic pictures, as well as in so many other ways. If we ask God to speak to us we can be sure that He will, in the way He chooses, as we wait upon Him.

What follows are a number of such pictures or parables which show that Jesus continues to teach in this way if we ask Him.

John Wright
The Feast of the Epiphany
2016

Some Scriptural Pictures or Visions

Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, ‘Look up and see what this is that is appearing.’ I asked, ‘What is it?’

He replied, ‘It is a measuring basket.’ And he added, ‘This is the iniquity of the people throughout the land’

Zechariah 5: 5-6.

The hand of the Lord was upon me, and brought me out by the spirit of the Lord and set me in the middle of a valley; it was full of bones. He led me amongst them and I saw a great many bones on the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry. He asked me, ‘Son of man, can these bones live?’

Ezekiel 37: 1-3.

Peter saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. It contained all sorts of four footed animals, as well as reptiles of the earth and birds of the air.

Acts 10:11—12.

I turned round to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, and among the lampstands was someone ‘like the son of man’, dressed in a robe down to his feet and with a golden sash round his chest.

Revelation 1:12-13.

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1. THE ARROW IN THE QUIVER.

A Vision received by Dr Helen Roseveare

I saw Jesus walking through a forest. He saw a fine, straight branch from a tree. One day it would make a great arrow. So he took his knife and cut off the branch. It was so proud to have been chosen by God Incarnate.

It was still, however, a great shock to be torn away from its mother tree. It was worse when the side branches, all the idolatries which would deflect it from its course, were lovingly cut away. Then the bumps, where the branches had been, were cut away and sandpapered to a smooth finish. Finally Jesus took his knife and ripped down the length of the branch removing its protective bark. Its reputation was gone!

The branch suddenly got an inkling of what Jesus was doing. He was being turned into an arrow, no doubt for some great purpose. He got excited as the steel tip was fitted at one end and the feathers at the other end. Finally the varnish was applied and '*Holy to the Lord*' written in red down the shaft.

Jesus took the branch, now transformed into an arrow, into his hands. The arrow felt the great love of the Lord and his great delight in his creation. No doubt The Lord had prepared him for some great target. But then the arrow was put into the quiver. It was in darkness; there was no presence of the Lord.

The arrow could not know if the war might soon be over before Jesus used him. He could only wait and trust!

2. THE FOXHOUNDS

In prayer one morning I was grumbling about the state of the Church. So often, it seemed, they had forgotten their real call to take the Gospel to the world and instead were more concerned with Church politics.

Then a picture came into my mind. I saw foxhounds in their kennel. There was an open exercise area where they were wandering about looking bored. Some were snarling and backbiting each other. Others were laid out asleep in the sun. One or two were scratching for fleas; not a happy picture.

Then I saw them in full cry after the fox. They were alert, stretched to their limits, bright eyed, working in harmony with a common objective. No boredom or backbiting was evident. They were fulfilled by performing the purpose for which they had been created.

I realised what the Lord was saying. A healthy, happy Church is to be found where witnessing and evangelism are the top priorities.

3. THE THREE WAVES

Received after an inexplicable series of disasters when I lost my health, my wealth and my reputation all in three months!

I was swimming in the sea. In front of me I saw an enormous thirty foot wave bearing down on me. As I am a poor swimmer I knew I was going to drown. But in front of me there was some drift wood lying on the water. I heard the Lord say *'Take hold of the wood.'* As I lay spread-eagled on the wood I realised it was the Cross.

The wave hit me but I floated over the top! Then came a second and third wave. Each time I floated over the top. Then the Lord spoke again, *'I am your buoyancy'*. I began to see that the three waves represented the cancer, the business collapse and the court case.

I saw how God allows Satan to roll down waves of hard circumstances in our lives. But, if we keep our eyes on Jesus and cling to the Cross, we will have the victory and an eternal reward.

The Lord spoke again, *'Look behind you.'* I looked back and saw the three waves hit the beach. They lost all their power as they subsided into bubbles on the sand. The Lord spoke again *'Everything that comes against you is an impostor!'*

'Mightier than the waves of the sea, the Lord on high is mighty.' Psalm 93:4.

4. THE FOOTBALL TEAM

When I asked the Lord to explain to me the difference between an evangelist and a witness.

I saw a football match in progress. The goalkeeper kicked the ball to the backs who passed the ball to the mid field who passed the ball to the forwards who passed the ball to the striker who scored a goal.

The interpretation was clear. In a football team there are ten players whose role is to get the ball to the striker so that he can score.

In a Church, likewise, all are witnesses and some are evangelists. Everyone is involved in achieving the purpose for which they are called, to be fruitful and multiply.

So the football team plays to win the game and the Church works to gather in the harvest of whoever will turn to Christ and be saved.

5. THE PLUM ORCHARD

I saw the Lord walking in an orchard of plum trees. He chose a plum - it was me (and you!) I was excited, what a future was in store for me.

But then I was left out in the sun. I began to dehydrate and I cried to the Lord, but there was no answer. I felt abandoned. In fact, the Lord had never left me. He was just watching over my transformation with loving care. I had not realised that a plum was no use to him. He wanted a prune!

Then I saw that we start our Christian life like plums, full of juice that allows bacteria to breed so that they go rotten. But, when dried out, they are preserved because the moisture needed by bacteria has evaporated.

In the same way Christians have to be dried out too. Our flesh, so easily seduced by the world and the devil, has to have the pride, the ambition, the lust, the self confidence, dried out. Only then we become strong to resist temptation. Then God can use us and trust us with His glory.

Then, as a prune is soaked in water before being eaten, so we are soaked in the Holy Spirit and empowered for service! Blessed by being chosen, then dried out, then filled!

The next Sunday I should not have been surprised to read that it was National Prune Week!

6. THE ROYAL MINT

Once I was asked by a Lebanese business man to arrange for the minting of £10 million in new 1oz gold ‘Cedars’. I was going to make my fortune but the civil war put a stop to it. I never heard from my friend again.

As I was praying about this the Lord showed me the minting process. Gold blanks are put onto the base plate of the press. A ram then comes down with a die of the sovereign’s head. If the base plate remains firm then the sovereign’s head is imprinted on the blank. If it doesn’t the ram has to come down time and time again until the sovereign’s head is imprinted.

In the same way God puts us, like gold blanks, onto His minting press and brings down the ram of circumstances upon us. If we stand up to the pressure, we will be marked with the image of Christ. If we run away from the trial it will have been in vain. God will have to put us through the same process all over again. Some blanks, who resist the pressure, get only a faint impression of Jesus in their character because they will not take the pressure.

It reminded me of all the times God has humbled me. I had the choice to run away or to accept it with praise and thanksgiving. Only when I did the latter was there any lasting transformation.

7. THE NORFOLK BARN ROOF

I was asking the Lord about marriage. With feminism rife, men seemed to be losing their confidence in their God given role as leaders.

Then I saw a Norfolk Barn Roof. The tiles covered the beams. They were of equal importance but had different roles. The beams supported the tiles, while the tiles protected the beams from the weather. In any other relationship the roof failed in its purpose, which was to keep the grain in the barn dry.

Then I saw how this was a picture of marriage. The husband protects and provides for the wife; the wife supports the husband. They are equal but different.

The husband loves his wife as Jesus loves the Church with love expressed as self sacrifice; the wife loves the husband as the bride loves Jesus with love expressed as obedience. If these relationships are maintained, both roof and marriage prosper and succeed in their objective.

My lesson ended with a piece of divine humour.

‘You will notice, my son, that the strength of the roof is in the beams!’

8. THE FIRE HOSES

I was at a Convention of the Full Gospel Business Men in Glasgow. There were some three hundred men present at the Friday breakfast meeting when one of the International Directors from America announced that £20,000 was to be raised that morning for the work of the Fellowship in the British Isles and Ireland.

I can remember putting my hands over my eyes in embarrassment. This ridiculous American didn't seem to realise he was in Scotland! Some rapid mental arithmetic indicated that those present would have to give approximately £66 each. 'Lord,' I prayed, 'get me out of here!'

While the Offering was being taken up I received a picture. As I was quietly praying in the Spirit, with my eyes closed, I saw three canvas fire hoses with brass nozzles. The first nozzle was blocked up with what seemed like Brasso powder. The second was partly so, while the third was wide open. Then God spoke to me, *'Which one are you going to use?'*

The answer was obvious. *'The one with the open nozzle,'* I replied, a bit puzzled as to what this was leading to. *'Which one do you think I am going to use?'* All of a sudden the penny dropped. As firemen need an open nozzle through which the water will put out the fire, so God needs people who have been set free to give through whom He can distribute money for His work.

9. THE HARRIER JUMP JET

In 1983 I was unemployed for two years learning to trust God for his provision, just as He supplied manna and water in the desert for Moses. Susan and I went on a training weekend when we stayed with Colin and Caroline Urqhart in Sussex.

Our visit ended with a beautiful touch of Fatherly love. I was sitting on a low lying branch of a big cedar tree in the garden watching Colin giving his son some cricket practice. I was contemplating with some fearfulness my future. Our money was almost gone. As I watched I noticed a tiny black smut on the back of my hand which I moved to brush away. Then the wonder occurred. The black smut lifted up two tiny black wing pods, out came two incredibly fragile transparent wings and off it flew vertically into the evening air. My Father, knowing my fears, spoke to me gently.

'My son, consider the Harrier jump jet. Consider all the systems necessary to accomplish what it does. Now consider this beetle, how I have created all these systems within a tiny smut, and see, it has no pilot and can even reproduce itself.' The thought of a Harrier jump jet having babies was breathtaking! The Lord continued, *'Now, my son, let us reason together. If I am able to accomplish so much in a tiny beetle how much more can I look after you, O ye of little faith!'*

So, tearful but happy, I walked into the house to tea and to tell Susan the good news that God was still with us.

10. COME INTO THE DESERT

Received as I started two years of unemployment!

I had a dream. I was in a mud hut and sensed I was a Hebrew slave in the days of Moses. Outside I could see vegetables while beyond flowed the River Nile. A thought came to me,

'Come into the desert!'

'But Lord, there aren't any vegetables in the desert.'

'Locusts can destroy vegetables but with me you will lack nothing. Come into the desert.'

Again I argued. 'But Lord, there is no water in the desert.'

'Wells can be polluted, even the river itself, but with me you will have water from the Rock. Come into the desert!'

'But Lord, it is comfortable here, cool and protected from sandstorms.' *'Earthquakes can destroy houses, but under the shadow of my wing the sun shall not burn you by day nor the moon by night. Come into the desert !'*

To my shame I still persisted. 'Lord, we do scratch a living. Pharaoh is not such a bad taskmaster.'

'Taskmasters can become tyrants but my service is perfect freedom. Come into the desert!'

In Egypt, with visible security, there was no need to rely on God. So God led the Israelites through the desert to discover that God can be trusted to provide supernaturally food and water, guidance and even protection for their shoes! God is all sufficient, but we learn this in the desert.

11. THE DAFFODIL BULB

A letter came from a Charity enclosing a Daffodil bulb as a gift. Then the Lord began to speak to me.

‘Consider this Daffodil Bulb. It is brown, wizened, covered in dirt and ugly. As it is it serves no useful purpose. If it stays like this one day it will be thrown into the bin. But should the Daffodil Bulb come into contact with water, something wonderful begins to happen. Shoots appear thrusting deep into the earth. Then, in its season, a flower unfolds, beautiful and fragrant. The Daffodil has achieved the purpose for which it was created.’

It was then that I realised that we, too, are like Daffodil bulbs. We become increasingly dried up with selfishness, and sad as we approach the end of an empty life. Oh, yes, we may have attained riches and worldly success, but there has been no flower, no fragrance in the sight of heaven.

But if we search earnestly for the Living Water to be found in Christ alone, everything can change. The dirt of such things as pride, lust, and selfishness is gradually washed away. Then shoots of love, joy, peace, gentleness and self - control appear. They form the beauty of Jesus in us and their fragrance tells people we have been with Him.

A great film star said at the end of his life, *‘I always felt I was created for some purpose in this life but I never found it, I missed it.’* What will you say at the end of your life?

12. ONLOOKERS

My sermon preparation was in trouble. The readings for that Sunday were such that I could not escape talking about repentance. I knew this would be a switch off. The congregation had been exhorted to repent for years. By now they were bored stiff with the whole subject.

So I asked the Holy Spirit to show me something new about repentance. As I prayed I saw Jesus on the Cross. Beneath Him were a crowd of onlookers. Then the thought came

‘Many people in Church never go further than being onlookers. They attend Church faithfully and help in any way required of them. But to repent they have to join me on the Cross and die to their carnal nature. Only then can they be filled with my resurrection life.’

When the time came for my sermon I explained this to the congregation. At the end of the service a seventy two year old lady said to me,

‘John, I have been an onlooker all my life.’

‘Would you like to repent this morning and join Jesus on the Cross?’ I asked her.

She turned back to her pew. There she knelt down and committed her life to Christ.

13. THE WILD WEST FORT

I was looking at pictures in the Sunday paper of famine in the Sudan. I was crying out to God, feeling helpless. What could one do, apart from sending some money to Oxfam? Then this word came to me, *'You may be upset at some of the world's population dying from lack of food and water; but what do you think it is like for me, Almighty God, when most of the world's population is perishing for want of the Bread of Life and the Living Water which I have given to my Church but which they seldom give away.'*

Later I saw a Cavalry Fort in the Wild West days. There was a parade taking place. The General was taking the salute, the men marched in perfect time, the band played, the ladies were wearing fine hats and splendid dresses. They were all having a great time. Then this thought came,

'This is the Church, but they seldom go to war!'

Later I started reading the obituaries in my daily paper. Marvellous lives were portrayed of soldiers, statesmen and scientists who had made a difference. Then the thought,

'What do you think their obituary is in heaven?'

'I don't know, Lord,' I replied.

'Perished, perished, perished!'

came the answer. Only then did I realise that none of them had any mention of faith in God.

14. POODLES AND DEMONS

I saw demons walking poodles to Church. The poodles were Christians, muzzled and on leads. The demons had names, 'Respectability'; 'Pride'; 'Religiosity'; 'Fear'.

When they got to the Church the demons let their charges go. They scampered into the church yapping, 'Praise the Lord, Glory to God, Hallelujah.' The demons, like nannies, chatted as they waited outside. 'They do like their time in Church each week; it makes them feel good.'

When the poodles came out they were muzzled again, put on leads, and led away to another fruitless week passing people bleeding and dying on the Jericho Road and not even seeing them.

15. THE FISHING BOAT

We were on a mission in Shetland where there was the usual problem of many Churches not realising their prime purpose was to ‘preach the Gospel to the whole creation.’

As I prayed about this I saw a fishing boat with a hive of activity on the deck. People were preparing the tubs for the fish when they were hauled in. Others were mending nets, attending to the sails, washing down the deck, pumping out the bilges. The Captain on the bridge was busy with his telescope scanning the horizon.

I waited for the haul of fish. But there was none. I noticed to my astonishment that they never let down their nets. They were busy doing useful and necessary things, but missing the point of their voyage. I could imagine an angry owner when they got back to harbour with no catch of fish to sell.

It reminded me of the parable of Jesus when the King returns and finds his servants have not been doing what they were told. ‘*They will merit a severe beating*’, He said.

Luke 12:47.

16. SCURVY

I was trying to explain to an evangelical Pastor the need for both Word and Spirit if he was to have a healthy Church. Later I asked the Lord for a picture to illustrate this.

I saw an eighteenth century sailing ship. The crew were looking wasted and ill, going about their duties with difficulty. The Master of the ship was clearly vexed by their lack of strength to do their jobs. Then I got the word, 'Scurvy.'

Down in the hold of the ship I could see crates of oranges. I knew they were the answer to the scurvy but for some reason the Captain was unable or unwilling to understand this.

The interpretation was clear. So many Churches are weak because they lack a balanced diet. Without the Word and the Spirit, without Teaching and Testimony, without input from a variety of ministries, a Church will not reach its God intended potential.

17. THE GUNDOG

I saw a man with his newly trained gundog out for its first day's shooting. The eight guns formed a line and waited for the pheasants to be driven over. The young dog was quivering with excitement. This was what he had been trained for.

Soon a pheasant flew towards them, which his master shot. The dog gazed at its master anticipating the command to pick it up. But his master said, 'SIT!'

Then a pheasant landed to his left. The dog of the next gun ran in to pick it up. '*Look, he is about to steal your bird. Let me go and get it off him*'. But his master said, 'SIT!'

Then the man shot a pheasant that got up to run away. '*Please send me so it won't escape.*'

Again, contrary to all reason, his master still said, 'SIT!'

What the young dog did not know was that at lunch the other guns would congratulate his master on the incredible obedience of his young dog.

So it will be with us when we have given what we could not afford, when we have blessed those who have persecuted us, when we have chosen a path that seemed folly, all out of obedience to the seemingly unreasonable commands of the Holy Spirit. We can only love God by obedience.

18. XIANG FU

One hot afternoon in early September 2005, at the age of seventy one, I was having a Siesta. As I dozed a computer screen suddenly appeared before my eyes. It was weird! Nothing like this had ever happened to me before.

In a black box, in the centre of the screen, white letters ‘Xiang Fu!’ kept flashing on and off at me. They came back three times. I panicked, knowing I had to wake up at once and write the words down, lest they become such stuff as dreams are made of and vanish into thin air.

I then called my son David who works in Beijing and speaks Mandarin. ‘Are the words Chinese’, I asked. David did his research. It turned out that this is a blessing in Mandarin given to a man in his old age.

The subsidiary meanings are to swear allegiance to someone, to subdue something and to be conformed to someone. So when we swear allegiance to Christ and subdue the flesh we are conformed to His image and get blessed in our old age!

19. ANGELS WITH PARACHUTES

The testimony of General Charles Duke *Lunar Module Pilot of Apollo 16*

I once told my father about some friends who were pilots. One day God let them see an Angel sitting on the wing of the airplane. Well, my Dad had a good laugh. ‘If I ever see an Angel, he had better be wearing a parachute.’

Two years later, my Dad was in the hospital. My brother led him to the Lord and a wonderful peace came over my Dad. All his fear of death had departed.

Then Dad died. A couple of hours later I got a call from a friend I had asked to pray. He said, ‘*Charlie, it was about 5 pm that God showed me a vision of two Angels who were coming for your Dad to carry him to Heaven. Has he gone?*’

‘*He died just a few minutes after 5pm*’, I replied, rejoicing that my Dad was in Heaven. Then my friend said, ‘*Charlie, those Angels were a bit strange. They were both wearing parachutes. I have never seen an Angel with a parachute.*’

I was puzzled too until I remembered my Dad’s words ‘*If I ever see an Angel, he’d better have on a parachute!*’

20. THE SEED

At a society infant baptism at a country Church I was grumbling to the Lord. The parents and godparents, as far as I knew, had shown no signs of any interest in God. The Service seemed a sham.

Then, as I prayed with my eyes closed, I saw a seed buried several feet deep in the ground. It remained there for seemingly many years with no hope of getting the warmth needed for germination.

Then I saw an enormous plough cutting through the soil and throwing the seed up onto the surface. There the sun and the rain caused it to grow into a heavy ear of wheat.

The Lord seemed to be saying that, despite my misgivings, He had heard the baptismal vows. The baby, who was now in His book, would one day, in the providence of God, have an opportunity to accept the offer of eternal life.

21. THE THREE BOTTLES

I saw three bottles.

The first was full of dirty water. The Lord explained that these were the people who had never repented and been born of the Spirit. Their fate, sadly, was to be rejected and perish.

The second bottle was full of red wine. These people had repented, been cleansed from the dirt, and been changed from water into wine. The fruit and the Spirit were present. They had a place in Heaven's Cellars.

Then I saw a bottle of Champagne. The cork had popped and the champagne was bubbling out. I saw that these people had been filled with the Holy Spirit as at Pentecost and were bubbling over daily with the joy of knowing Jesus.

Christians, it seems, should be Champagne people!

22. THE HAIR DRIERS

I had been puzzling about how Jesus, who was perfect, could be made perfect through suffering. *Hebrews 5:8-9*. Also how St Paul could perfect what was lacking in Christ's suffering for our sakes.

Then I saw a production line of hair dryers. '*These are all perfect*', the Lord said, '*but they are not complete. They have still to receive the quality control inspector's test certificate*'.

Later I discovered that the Greek word translated 'perfect' also means 'complete'. Jesus was perfect but not complete until tested for obedience.

This is the test that St Paul and all followers of Jesus have to undergo before they are complete, lacking in nothing.

23. THE FLOOD

I was meditating on a worldwide mission that had separated into many parts. There were differences between leaders, as there had been between Paul and Barnabas. So the mission had lost much of the momentum of the Holy Spirit.

Then I saw a shower of rain. Each rain drop was perfect but different in the eyes of its Creator. I saw them splash to the ground and achieve nothing by their death apart from a little refreshment to a plant. They had little power.

But then I saw how the rain can gather into a flood that has such power that it could sweep obstacles aside. The rain drops had to become one, just as Jesus had prayed.

It reminded me of the Prophetess Deborah sending a fearful Israelite General Barak to fight. He was afraid, because his opponent, the Philistine General Sisera , had nine hundred chariots of iron!

But God lured General Sisera to the River Kishon where a flash flood destroyed all the chariots of iron. Victory had come from the God given power of a flood. So I saw that unity in the body of Christ is a source of power to win battles.

24. THE COUNTERFEIT COIN

There is a booklet called, '*Hell or Heaven in the Last Days.*' It gives testimonies of two men who have experienced the horror of hell. They have both been sent back to earth to remind the Church that there is no good news without bad news coming first.

This caused some upset. '*You must not mention Hell*', I was told. '*You must preach about a God of love and grace and mercy.*' 'Lord', I wondered, 'have I sinned'?

As I meditated on this I saw a gold sovereign. On one side was the sovereign's head speaking of grace. But the reverse was blank. I felt the Lord ask me what sort of a coin this was. Obviously it was a counterfeit because it was not complete. Then I realised that, to be genuine, the coin needed a tail on the reverse that spoke of judgement.

Later I saw it confirmed in the Bible when I read:

'But woe to you, Pharisees! For you tithe the mint and rue and herbs of all kinds, and neglect judgement (Hell) and the love of God (Heaven); it is these you ought to have practiced, without neglecting the others.' Luke 11:42.

25. THE ANTS NEST

I was complaining to God about the apparent luke-warmness of many Christians, later confirmed by the Barna Group Report - www.talkingjesus.org.

As I prayed I saw an ANT's nest, and realised this was a picture of the Church. I felt that ants were about to come pouring out of the Church to do their work. Then I remembered that in Proverbs 6:6 God says:

***'Go to the ant, you lazy-bones:
Consider its ways and be wise.'***
Proverbs 6:6.

This was confirmed when later that day I received an email about a prophecy from Dr Sharon Stone. She had also seen an army of ants going to work saving souls. These ants are not great names like Billy Graham, but just obedient slaves of Christ doing **what we are all told to do**.

Witnessing

'If we are not taking a part in Christian witness, we are not just ineffective; we are positively in revolt against Christ. It is sheer hypocrisy to pay lip service to the Lordship of Jesus if we do not heed His command to evangelize.

A dumb Christian is a disobedient Christian.

A Church not engaged in mission is guilty of apostasy.'

John Stott

“This wonderful little book shows how our risen Lord is alive and continues to interact with us today through his written word and sometimes through visions and dreams.

This is an amazing collection of stories that are a source of powerful encouragement for all followers of Jesus”.

The Most Rev. Dr. Mouneer Hanna Anis

Archbishop of the Episcopal Anglican Diocese of Egypt
with North Africa and the Horn of Africa

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