

# WHERE ARE YOU?



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## WHERE ARE YOU?

By: Dr. Charles R. Solomon

We are admonished from spiritual infancy that spiritual growth must be a priority. However, it can be a nebulous thing to evaluate and assess. If we think in terms of physical growth, we can look at the increase in a baby's weight or the inches of growth of a young person. So long as they are thriving and growing, health is not an issue; when these indicators fall behind, we find it necessary to consult a physician.

Spiritual growth is often defined in terms of service and how well one learns the disciplines of the Christian life which are both vital ingredients. However, the growth may be more in comparison with others than any yard stick provided by the scriptures. I would like to propose some spiritual mileposts by which we can measure our spiritual progress and determine direction for needed growth. To do so, we will view the spiritual life as a journey and trust the Holy Spirit to show us where we are so we can set our spiritual compass and look to the Word for provisions for our spiritual nutrition. We will be asking the Holy Spirit to show us where we are in His plan rather than to "...compare ourselves with some that commend themselves..." (2 Cor. 10:12) which this passage tells us is not wise! I trust you will indulge me and follow my train of thinking as we embark on this spiritual adventure!

In our greeting each other, it is the usual thing to ask another, "How are you?". The only expected and acceptable answer is, "Fine", whether it is true or not. I would like to submit that it is much more profitable, if not as comfortable, to scramble the letters and say, "Who are you?" rather than, "How are you?" However, this might cause a scramble to come up with an

acceptable reply! The former refers to identity while the latter implies a condition. We could add another dimension and ask “Where are you?”, which refers to location.

Turning to a scriptural analogy that is commonly used in teaching on spiritual growth, we could equate the questions, Who are you? and another, Where are you? If I were to ask you out of the blue, “Where are you?”, you might reply, “Lost, but making good time!” When we are on a journey, it is helpful to have a road map to plan and execute the trip. While on the journey, it is comforting to have occasional signs to reinforce the fact that we are, indeed, on the right road. Just so, it is good to have such a map in mind regarding our spiritual journey. The book of Exodus gives us the example of the Children of Israel being relocated by God from Egypt through the Wilderness and on into Canaan under the leadership of Moses and Joshua. In Hebrews, chapters 3 and 4, this example is used; and we have the admonition that each of us should enter into rest which is typified by Canaan in the journey of the Israelites—also called the Promised Land, which is the abundant life or Spirit-filled life.

In that journey, the Red Sea is typical of salvation or being regenerated; the Wilderness was a time of wandering and, frequently, being at odds with God which corresponds to our carnal state, and the Jordan River, which they crossed to enter the Promised Land, is typical of our participation in the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. From God’s point of view, both aspects of the Cross became true of us at salvation—His death *for* us and our death *with* Him. However, it can be true *of* us and not be true *in* us. The purpose of this article is to help you assess your spiritual journey and allow the Holy Spirit to put an “X” on your road map to show you where you are; *it is difficult to know where to go if you do not know where you are.*

If you have never had a spiritual birth resulting in regeneration, you are yet in Egypt needing to cross the Red Sea. This takes place when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our

Savior and Lord (see Salvation Prayer on page 14). However, you may know that you have been born again but that you have never found the way of victory and rest that the Bible promises and are yet in the Wilderness, so to speak. If so, you may need some instruction in crossing the Jordan just as did the Children of Israel, which is the main purpose of this guide, and which may be found on page 11.

In Deuteronomy 32:10 we read: “He *found* him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he *led* him about, he *instructed* him, he *kept* him as the apple of his eye”. This verse caught my attention as a sequential outline in negotiating the terrain of our spiritual journey as shown in Diagram 1 below.

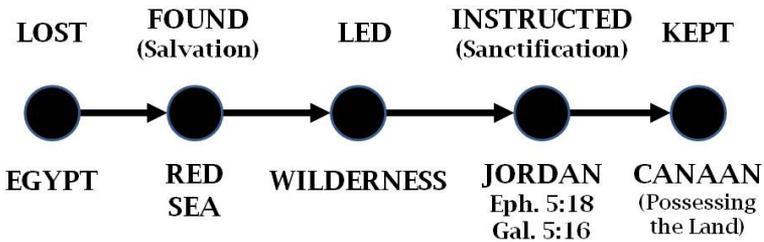


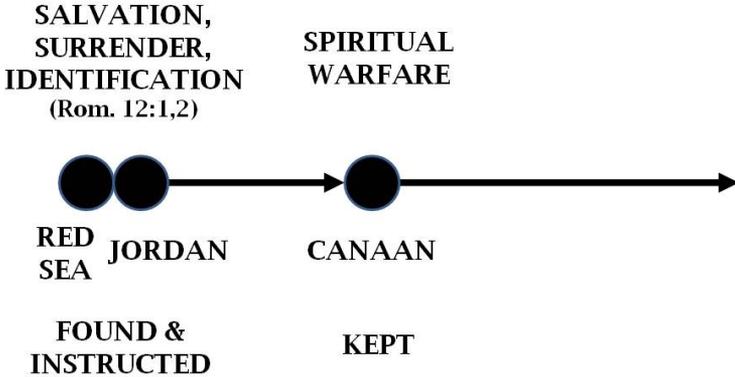
DIAGRAM 1

Using the analogy of the above journey, where are you found as you read this? After the Children of Israel were led by Moses across the Red Sea, they wandered in the Wilderness for 40 years. Just so, many believers wander in their own strength, living life and doing ministry, for several to many years before ever tasting the fruit of the land or entering into rest. You may have been led about without knowing it and you could be approaching the Jordan without even realizing it is there to be crossed. If so, you may need to be instructed in the crossing of it. Such leading may have brought you to the utter end of yourself, where you see the futility of attempting to live the

Christian life in your own strength but are powerless to change yourself or the situation with which you are faced.

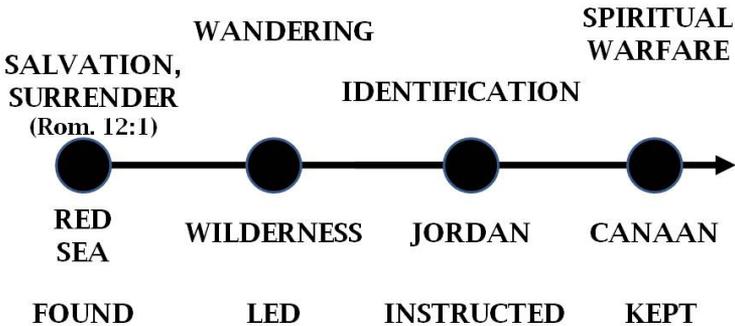
There are three major events in the spiritual journey of believers that are identifiable and which can be compared to the example of the Children of Israel. They are salvation or regeneration, surrender, and identification or the filling of the Spirit. All of these could, and should, become revealed reality at the time of coming to know the Lord Jesus personally; however, the lack of emphasis in our teaching on the second aspect of the Cross, our death and resurrection with Christ, sentences many Christians to wandering in the Wilderness of carnality all of their spiritual sojourn on planet Earth which is a travesty on the gospel. You can know just as surely that you were crucified *with* Christ as you can His being crucified *for* you. However, you must realize that the Jordan is ahead and get your spiritual compass set such that you can be moving steadily toward the Jordan, rather than going in circles in the Wilderness or even being headed back toward the Red Sea which you may have crossed years ago.

The diagrams which follow may be useful in your understanding the spiritual journey and where you might place yourself on your unique path. Diagram 2 shows salvation, surrender to Jesus as Lord, and identification with His death and resurrection becoming experiential reality at the first encounter with Him. When that is the case, the new believer crosses the Red Sea and Jordan simultaneously and begins his journey in Canaan rather than in the Wilderness. He starts in a life of rest or being as opposed to one of striving (doing) and conflict. Even so, he must learn to possess his possessions and to confront the enemy of souls in spiritual warfare or to be kept in Canaan. It is the unusual Christian who follows this path or timeline.



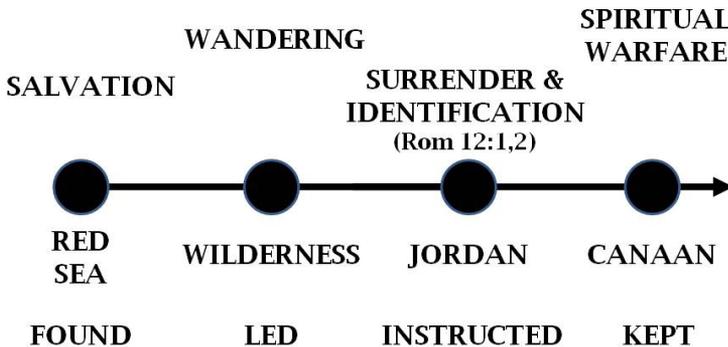
**DIAGRAM 2**

Diagram 3 shows a believer who surrenders to the Lord Jesus at salvation but does not understand his death and resurrection with him so he does a stint in the Wilderness until his death and resurrection with Christ is appropriated by faith, or the Jordan is crossed to use our analogy.



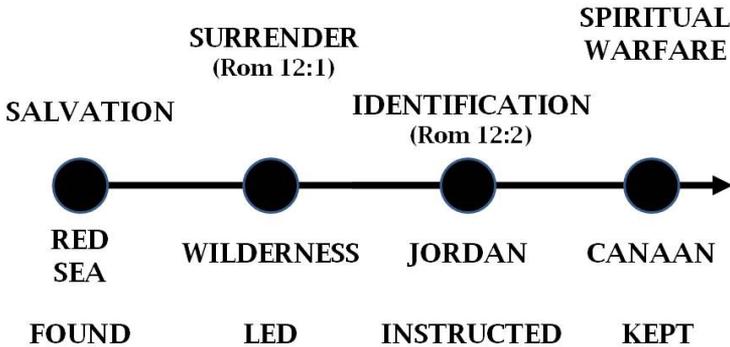
**DIAGRAM 3**

Diagram 4 shows a believer who makes a total abandonment of his life to the Lord Jesus subsequent to his being regenerated or crossing the Red Sea. Simultaneous with the surrender, is the revelation of the Holy Spirit of his death and resurrection with Christ or the crossing of the Jordan.



**DIAGRAM 4**

Diagram 5 shows the three main events on the spiritual journey taking place, with a period of time between, which is the manner in which God dealt with my personal life. I received the Lord Jesus at age 17, surrendered totally to him as Lord at 27 but did not know Him as Life until I was almost 36; thus, I was in the Wilderness for approximately 18 years. However, as I came to the end of my striving and struggling, I had no one to instruct me in crossing the Jordan or even to advise me that the Jordan was ahead. Out of that rugged journey across the Wilderness and having the Jordan sovereignly revealed to me, came the counseling or discipleship approach for which my Lord had been preparing me. It was His purpose to make me into a spiritual Joshua to instruct struggling believers in the crossing of their Jordan and finding the rest that He promised (Heb. 4:10,11)



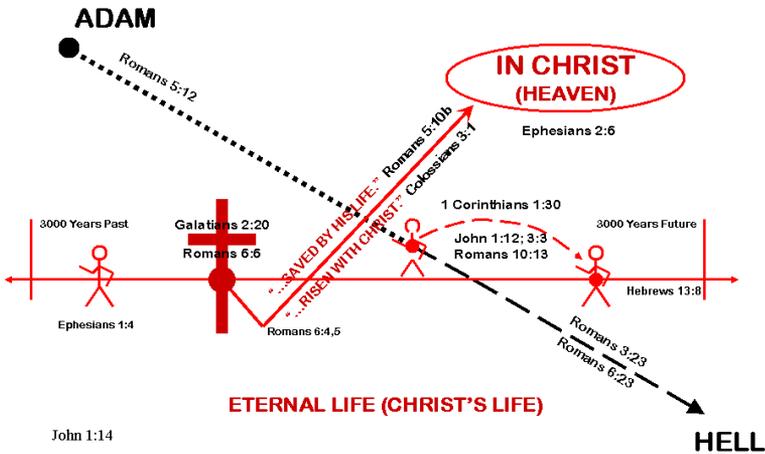
**DIAGRAM 5**

If you are sick and tired of being sick and tired, you just might be a candidate for crossing the Jordan! As you have read this material and viewed the above diagrams, which is it that typifies your spiritual journey? Do you have Spirit-given assurance that you have been born again? (Rom. 8:16,17) If so, was there ever a time that you got alone with God and made a total surrender of all that that you are, all that you have and all that you will ever be to Him? And, if you have done that, has the Holy Spirit revealed to you or made real that it is no longer you but Christ living? In other words, have you crossed the Jordan or are you yet casting a wishful eye toward the Promised Land but fearful to step into the Jordan and expect God to part the waters and take you safely across?

### Instruction in Jordan Crossing

The Line Diagram, which follows as Diagram 6, forms the foundation for instruction in the crossing of the Jordan. Just as there is a 'Romans Road' over which to travel in crossing the

Red Sea for salvation, there is also a 'Romans Road', primarily in Romans 6, for the crossing of the Jordan. Of course, much hymnology muddies the waters of the Jordan by representing it as physical death and Canaan as heaven. It is a picture of death—our death and resurrection with Christ which is the portal or entrance into the victorious life or walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). As you read it and examine all of the scriptures referenced, I would ask you to pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal this truth to you in a way that you will understand so that you might end your Wilderness wandering and move into the Promised Land of peace and rest so that you can cease doing in order to be and begin being in order to do.



**Line Diagram**

(See Chapter 2 of *Handbook to Happiness* for more detail)

The Line Diagram shows the 'life out of death' principle—God's way of disposing of internal conflict. The horizontal line represents eternal life, the life of Christ. By definition, eternal indicates no beginning or end. It exceeds the boundaries of time. Since Christ is God, He has always lived and always will. His life is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8).

As portrayed at the left of the line, Christ “became flesh” (John 1: 14) and lived in a human body for some 33 years. Then, He was crucified, buried and raised from the dead on the third day (1 Cor. 15:3,4). He continues to live today (Hebrews 7:25). Note that eternal life is not only a present and future reality for the believer but also involves the eternal past.

Until we are born again (John 3:3) we are not in the life of Christ-eternal life—but we are in the spiritually dead life of Adam. One can readily see that if any one of our ancestors, represented by the hatch marks on the diagonal line, had been missing, we also would be missing. Physically speaking, our lives had beginning in Adam, so whatever happened to him also happened to us. When he sinned, we sinned. When he died (spiritually), we died - just as we would have died in our great-grandfather if he had died before siring any children. Thus, since spiritual death is separation from God, we were all born dead (spiritually). We need forgiveness for our sins, but we also need life. The Lord Jesus Christ came to give us both—by dying for our sins and by giving us His resurrection life (John 10:10).

If you are a Christian, you already know this much. What you may not yet know is the following; for the believer, physical death is the gateway from life in the world and the presence of sin to life in Heaven and the presence of God. Similarly, another type of death is the gateway from the sinful life of Adam to the eternal life of Christ. When a person is “born again”, he, in the same instant, dies. He is born into the life of Christ but he simultaneously dies out of the life of Adam. Christ comes into our lives when we believe in Him and are born again, but that is not all. We are also made “partakers” of His life—eternal life. Romans 6:3 says we are not only baptized into Jesus Christ (His life) but also into His death. We can’t occupy two opposite lives at the same time—the life of Adam and the life of Christ.

## Your Identity

When we receive Christ by faith, it means that His death on the cross counts as payment for our sins. But it means much more. It also means that we enter into a new life—one that extends forever into the past as well as into the future. To put it another way, we exchange our history in Adam—the bad and the good—for an eternal history in Christ. We inherit a new “family tree”! By becoming partakers of Christ’s life, we become participants in His death, burial, resurrection, ascension and seating in the heavenlies (Rom. 6:3-6; Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:6). He only has one life, and this is the life we receive at our new birth (1 John 5:11-12).

Unless and until we know by personal faith experience that we were crucified with Christ, we will continue to try to live for Christ, using the methods we learned in our old self-lives. The conflicts stemming from our history in Adam will go on plaguing and defeating us. But when, by faith, we take our rightful place at the Cross in union with Christ’s death and resurrection, then—and only then—can we truly “walk in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4b) where “old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Cor. 5:17).

The Cross experience (understanding experientially our crucifixion and resurrection with Christ) is the gateway into the Spirit-controlled life (Gal. 5:16). It is life out of death, victory out of defeat—the purpose and answer for suffering in the life of the believer. Our path to the Cross, as well as the Cross itself, is a path of suffering, but it is the only path that leads to the end of suffering.

Are you weary enough of your internal conflict and constant defeat to put an end to it by faith? Are you willing to die to all that you are so you can live in all that He is? To do so is to exchange the self-life for the Christ-life and be filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit. To refuse to do so is to continue a walk after the flesh and to grieve the Spirit with a continuation of conflict, suffering and defeat.

## Salvation Prayer

If you are tired of the anguish that results from doing things your way, Christ will free you if you will sincerely commit yourself to let Him have His way. If you have never accepted Christ as your personal Savior, your first need is to let God create you anew by giving you spiritual rebirth. You can be born again if you can honestly pray like this:

*Heavenly Father, I have seen that I am a sinner, still in the life of Adam, and that I have committed sins. I believe You sent Your only Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to die in my place for my sins. I also believe He rose again and now lives, and right now I receive Him into my spirit as my Savior. I surrender all that I am, all I have and all I shall be to You. I turn from my sins and my selfish ways to live my new life in Christ. Thank You for saving me. Amen.*

## Identification Prayer

If you have prayed the “salvation prayer”, you have been born again, for God says He gives to all who believe in Christ the privilege of becoming His children (John 1:12). Now, whether you prayed for salvation just now or in the past, praying an “identification prayer” may help you to experience Christ’s life of victory and peace. Before this prayer can be effective, you must be truly sick of your self-life; you must be under conviction by the Holy Spirit of trying to live the Christian life in your own strength, and you must be ready to give up control of your life. If this is your condition, pray in this manner.

*Father, thank you for forgiving my sins and taking me out of the life of Adam and grafting me into the life of Christ. Now that I am in Christ, I believe that I was crucified with*

*Him, buried with Him, raised with Him and that I am seated with Him at Your right hand. From this moment on, I choose to have Your Son, Jesus Christ, live His life in me and through me. I consider myself dead to sin and alive to You, and I am counting on the Holy Spirit to make me aware when I forget my death with Christ and try to live His life for Him in my own human wisdom and energy. I choose to yield my total being to You as an instrument of righteousness, allowing no part of me to be used for sin. Thank you for making Christ and His life real to me. Glorify Yourself through me. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen."*

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### Kept in Canaan

Once the Children of Israel were safely in Canaan, there was the question of pushing out the seven tribes and conquering walled cities as they possessed their possession. Just so, the believer who enters spiritual Canaan has appropriated the life of rest or victory; but every gain will be contested by the enemy of souls. Crossing the Jordan closes the door to the conflict in the Wilderness and opens another where spiritual warfare is of prime consideration. So long as we walk in the Spirit and “take up our Cross daily” (Luke 9:23) and continually (2 Cor. 4:11), we will know rest and victory; when we revert to fleshly activities, we will suffer defeat in the land, just as did the Children of Israel at Ai. Crossing Jordan by faith gets us into the land and

corresponds to the filling of the Spirit or the abiding, abundant life. The Word tells us that we are to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18); it also tells us we are to walk in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16). A walk is a repeated step which means that the filling must be continuous.

May God richly bless you as you dare to take your place at the Cross and be set free from yourself to walk in Him! (John 8:32)

## GOD'S PROCESSING TUNNEL

### EGYPT

As we embark on the journey of life  
And partake of its burdens and cares;  
Ere long we loathe the turmoil and strife  
And seek respite from its snares.

In vain we search for joy that endures  
Among the pleasures and trinkets of Earth;  
Only to find that which beckons and lures  
Is empty and devoid of true worth.

On and on 'til the restless heart cries  
For the relentless ache to cease;  
Oh, for Someone to wipe tears from our eyes (Rev 7:17)  
And flood our beings with peace. (John 16:33)

At length we see that He who died  
Was acquainted with sorrow and grief; (Isaiah 53:3,4)  
And we come, confessing our sin and pride; (Rom 10:9,10,13)  
And, in coming, experience relief. (John 5:24, 8:32)

### WILDERNESS

**I**n this new-found Friend all grace resides  
That abounds to our every need; (2 Cor 9:8)  
The promise is to him who in Jesus abides, (John 15:5-7)  
To him who from Self has been freed.

But the monster Self is a dauntless foe  
That insists on ruling the life; (Rom 7:18,19)  
So, instead of the peace we fain would know,  
We encounter a new kind of strife.

As the battle rages and clouds are dark  
And our way with heartaches is lined; (Rom 7:24)  
We almost give up; we almost give out: when hark—  
A promise: "...I will bring the blind..." (Isaiah 42:16)

Many are the doubts as He leads us along  
By a path that we would not choose;  
But, clinging to Him, we can't go wrong,  
Since our life to save we must lose. (Luke 9:23,24)

As in a tunnel whose center is black  
We yearn for light on our path;  
In the wall of despair we search for a crack  
That we might walk by sight—not faith. (2 Cor 5:7)

The Spirit's discipline, reaching far and wide,  
Denies the comfort we keep demanding;  
But, as we take our place in the Crucified, (Gal 2:20)  
We find peace past all understanding. (Phil 4:7)

## CANAAN

Now, as before, a new battle begins  
For which we are ill-prepared;  
As Satan his fiery darts expends (Eph 6:16)  
To tempt us again to despair.

When he launches his savage attack (1 Pet 5:8,9)  
To regain the ground he has lost,  
We are tempted to quit and turn our back  
On the warfare and its ultimate cost. (Eph 6:12)

In the battle fierce with strength bereft,  
We realize that all is but loss,  
And retrace our steps to the place we left (1 Cor 2:14)  
As He delivers us away to the cross. (2 Cor 4:11)

As our mortal flesh shows our union with Him,  
Jesus' life will be made manifest;  
And the things of this world will ever grow dim,  
As we enter into rest. (Heb 4:3)

Though your way seems hopeless and full of fears,  
God is handling you in love, dear friend;  
No matter how dark your tunnel appears,  
Take heart, there is light at the other end.

Charles R. Solomon  
1968

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