



RIVERS of GRACE



THINGS NEW AND OLD FROM THE BIBLE

Vol. V

Hollywood, California April, 1941

No. 4

“MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY” - *By Gordon Bennington*



Gordon S. Bennington
1901 - 1965

I feel it will be best to give a brief background of my life. I was born in Trenton, New Jersey. Father and Mother separated when I was two-years old; Mother married again but was never happy. When I was five years old my mother died. She had wished one time when her sister's child died that - it had been me. Life had been so bitter to her she would have liked if God would have spared its ordeals for me-but God knows best. After my mother's death, my grandfather took me to raise. He was living with his second wife and had a large family of his own, so, I really wasn't wanted and I always felt it. I was a great lover of Alger books, maybe some of you remember them. They always pictured the hero running away from home and going to the big city and making good. Tony the Peddler, Tom the Tramp and so forth.

At the age of thirteen things were unbearable to me, at least in my own estimation. My grandfather was old-fashioned and very close. He made me wear cowhide shoes with wooden soles and clothes like he were when he was a boy. I was a misfit at school; all the children shunned me because of my peculiar appearance.

One day I got into a quarrel with my Aunt, there were blows and, she said, "Either you leave or I leave." She cried a long time and kept saying those words. So I decided the time had come. I had thought of it before but just never got started. I packed my belongings in a red bandana handkerchief like the boys in the story books did, tied it on a stick, put in. on my shoulder and started out into the world. I went to Philadelphia, about 60 miles from my grandfather's home. I lived in places of vice, slept in flophouses and ate nickel meals, using any means to get a living. When I was a little past 15 I got a job with the Y.M.C.A. in the check room while they were giving me a course that would have prepared me to be a secretary. I had worked there about 3 months when war was declared. The drums were beating, the bands were playing and my patriotism was at a high pitch. I stood it about 7 days, then lined up behind the band and marched down to the recruiting station. They had me jump around on one leg, then on the other, say Ahh, etc., all the buddies will

understand. The old trained eye of the army doctor looked me over, he smiled, and asked me how old I was. I told him 18. He looked at the other officer and smiled knowingly and said, "Ah, let him go." So I went.

I was sent to the Mexican border first with the 6th Calvary and from there to the 3rd Ammunition train with which I went over seas. I spent 18 months altogether over seas. We were the second last of American troops to return from Germany. I shall never forget the lonesome feeling when I returned home; no one to meet me. The rest of the boys had loved ones to gather them in their arms while I wandered aimlessly around Philadelphia and was soon skinned out of the money I had received when discharged. I decided to go back to my grandfather's. When I arrived they told me that they thought I had died.

Three days after I reached my old home my grandfather died so I again felt moved to leave, and did so the day after the funeral.

The war had left me with a terrible wanderlust and I could not settle down. I would stay on a job a few weeks and due to the nervous strain left from the war I would go all to pieces. I eventually arrived in Detroit, Mich., broke and hungry. I stayed at McGregor Mission, an institution still there. Across the street was a Gospel Mission and I noticed a sign on the window, "Coffee and Doughnuts after Services". Eventually I mastered my pride and slipped into a back seat. . The sermon was over and the last part of the altar call was being made. I saw some of the wrecks of humanity, Paregoric hounds, Jamaica Ginger and Canned Heat drinkers going up for prayer and these dear Christian people kneeling with them there - it touched my heart. I always told folks from that day forward if I ever got religion, I want the kind those folks had that made you want to pray with folks that need prayer. I got my coffee and doughnut and left. I do not remember hearing the Gospel that night but the scene never left my mind and I spoke of it many times after that.

I enlisted again for three years in the Hawaiian Islands. During my stay there I went into the depths of sin. Dope, gambling, drink - anything, the sky was the limit. Only God's Grace kept me from being a physical wreck. I was discharged in San Francisco and from there went to Fresno. I met a young man there and we became friends. He gave me his address in Kansas City, and told me to drop in and see him if ever in that city. After about a year of wandering similar to those told of before, I found myself in Kansas City and decided to call at my friend's address. He had not returned as yet but his mother invited me to board with them while I was in the city, which I did.

About six months later I became associated with the Western Electric Co., traveling for them installing in telephone offices. It was on my travels that I met my wife, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was love at first sight and it didn't take me long to ask the question. I

gave up my work with the Western Electric, as I didn't want to travel and went back to Kansas City alone to look for work. During my absence, I found that my friend's whole family had become very religious. as I then called it. They had all been saved and filled with the Spirit while I was gone. They began to tell me about the meetings and what the Lord had done for them. The one sister spoke to my heart especially. She had such a disagreeable disposition before she was saved and now she was so different. Being in great need at the time I decided to go to church with them. It was the first time I ever remember hearing the Gospel and I was 24 years old. I had always thought some people were naturally good and others naturally bad, but when I heard that all were sinners and above all that Christ came to save sinners, that was news to me and good news. Many had tried to clean me up but this was the first time I ever recall hearing the Gospel. I would have gone to the altar that night but no one asked me to. I told them about it when we reached home and there were plenty to ask me the next night. The Lord came into my soul and gloriously saved me. The next day the lady I was staying with sent me for something downtown and I was so overcome with the goodness of God that He would receive a vile sinner like me that I wept against the street corner. Sat down on the curb and wept and came home without what she sent me for. I guess the people that saw me thought I was crazy or drunk but I had just gotten my right mind.

Three weeks later I was filled with the Blessed Holy Spirit according to Acts 2:4 - and after studying the word for nearly four years, entered the ministry through a call from God. Oh dear ones that's why I love Him so. As I look back at the life He saved me from it causes me to weep with gratitude. All that I am or ever will be is because of the marvelous Grace of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Won't you turn to him today? He will save you now and in years to come you will look back, as I look back, to the day when you decided for God as the most important day in your life.



*The Bennington Family
in 1941*

*Joanna, David and
Deborah Bennington on
Back Row*

*Gordon Bennington,
Gordon Jr. and
Grace Bennington on
Front Row*

Gordon Bennington Timeline

(1901-1965)

- 1901 Gordon Stanley Bennington born on October 12, 1901, in Trenton, New Jersey, the child of Gordon Stanley (32) and Amelia Rackawack Bennington (25). He married Grace Mabel Perales on June 21, 1924, in Tulsa, Oklahoma. They had five children in 12 years. He died on May 10, 1965 in Alameda County, California, at the age of 63.
- 1903-04 His mother and father divorced and his father left and moved to California.
- 1907 His mother who had remarried and was pregnant with her second child, died after an accident of slipping on some ice. Gordon Bennington was only age 5.
- 1910 Resided with his Pennsylvania Dutch grandparents in Lehigh, Pennsylvania, with much family friction
- 1914 Left home and lived on the streets.
- Spring of 1917 - Lied about his age and enlisted in the Army at the young age of 15. Served on the Mexican Border first then sent overseas to France and Germany.
- 1919 Honorably discharged on August 30, 1919, at Camp Merit, New York at age 17.
- 1920 Moved to Detroit, Michigan area and was homeless.
- 1920-23 Enlisted in army again for 3 years and served in the Hawaiian Islands
- 1924 Moved to Kansas City area and worked and traveled with Western Electric Co.
- Early June
1924 Met his wife, Grace Perales (from Texas also visiting a sister in Tulsa), at the popular Casa Loma Ball Room ("Where All Tulsa Dances") located at the Crystal City Park in west Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was love at first sight and they married two weeks later.
- 1924 Gordon Bennington married Grace Perales were married June 21, 1924, by Minister J.W. Abel at the First M.E. Church of Tulsa with Faye Burritt Emery and Mrs. Curtis Galloway (both of Tulsa) standing as witnesses.
- 1925 Saved at a meeting led by A.S. Copley at the Christian Assembly in Kansas City, Missouri. Filled with the Holy Spirit three weeks later.
- 1925 Daughter Deborah Ruth Bennington born May 9, 1925, in Kansas City, Missouri
- 1926-29 (Some length of time during this period) Attended Grace and Glory Bible School and sat under teachings of A.S. Copley and Mary M. Bodie.
- 1929 First Pastorate in Pattonsburg, Missouri
- 1929 Began meetings with Alice Schnackle in St. Joseph, Missouri
- Oct. 1929 Moved to Sandy, Pennsylvania and pastured in Dubois, Pennsylvania
- 1932 Held services at Sanford and Borger, Texas and Richardson, Kansas

Gordon Bennington Timeline

(1901-1965)

1933	Pastored in Delton, Colorado, Lived in LaJunta, Colorado.
Jan. 1934	Traveled east with W.J. Franklin to Toledo and Fremont, Ohio, Philadelphia and Dubois, Pennsylvania
1934	Lived in Topeka, Kansas
1935	Opened Emmanuel Gospel Church in Los Angeles, California
1936	Began radio program
1937	Mary M. Bodie visited the Benningtons in California and stayed with them for a brief time.
1940	Lived in Los Angeles, California - Pastored Grace Tabernacle in Hollywood, California.
1941	Broadcasted "Rivers of Grace" radio broadcast on KGER from Hollywood, California
1965	Gordon Stanley Bennington died on May 10, 1965, in Alameda County, California, when he was 63 years old.