

BARGAINING
FOR PURE *Gold*



FEIKOAB PARIMAH

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DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this book to all those who have sacrificially given out their material and spiritual resources to advance the course of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

INTRODUCTION

Spiritual and material gifts are blessings from God and not rewards in themselves. That is to say, they are a means to an end and not an end in themselves. It will therefore be out of place for us believers to view them as trophies from our Lord.

God gave some of us material blessings as a test to give us the chance to be catapulted into true spiritual riches. Unfortunately, many are spending them prodigally on their own lusts.

Conversely, some of us who are endowed with spiritual blessings are also abusing it by trying to always make gain out of them. We are, according to 1 Peter 4:10 supposed to use our gifts to serve one another as stewards; “As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good managers of the grace of God in its various forms.”

In this book, I will also attempt to show why in Isaiah 11:2 the prophet Isaiah combined the seven dimensional manifestations of the Spirit the way he did, by evidencing how they are related to each other.

“Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful.” 1 Corinthians 4:2

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Chapter



REQUIRED OF STEWARDS

There are so many areas in our lives God will in the end require that we render accounts unto Him. For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be rewarded according to our works. I believe it is against this background that Paul gave the following caution;

"Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful." 1 Corinthians 4:2

We are, according to the above scripture required to be faithful with whatever resources God has endowed us with (be it physical or spiritual). Believers are expected to be faithful with the gifts God has given them. Knowing we are all part of the body of Christ and for that matter we need one another, it will be out of place for us to try to make gain out of the spiritual gifts God has

given unto us (purely by His grace). As touching material things, we are also supposed to use them faithfully for the benefit of the whole body. It is in light of this notion that the writer of 1Peter made it clear that, we are to minister to one another as good stewards;

"As each has received a gift, employ it in serving one another, as good managers of the grace of God in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10

Since the church of Christ is likened unto a body, and has different parts with different roles assigned to them, we are to know that not all the body is likely to be financially endowed. In the same way it is very possible that not all of us would be given the ability to work for example miracles or to heal (a few could however be endowed both spiritually and materially). In view of this, the writer of 1Peter is calling on believers to use their endowments from God for the mutual good of the body. No wonder the early church in the beginning chapters of the book of Acts had this testimony concerning them that, they had all things in common (as they learned to share what they had). These days it's rather

unfortunate, some who are spiritually endowed seek to always make gain out of their gifts. This is likely to happen when there is no contentment in a man's life. I believe those in the church who are materially blessed are partly to blame since most of them do not rise up to the call of duty to supply the financial needs of those who are gifted spiritually (there is however no excuse for this state in the church of Christ). Permit me to say at this point that, though spiritual and material gifts are blessings from God, they are not in themselves the rewards of God. These are a means to an end and not an end in themselves. Why then should some of us view them as trophies from God?

Believers should come to terms with the fact that all we have been given is supposed to be put to use for the benefit of the whole body (be it local or international). This will guarantee our reward from God. There is therefore the call for all of us to be good stewards of the gifts and blessings of God.

One does not need abundance before he or she can put to use the blessing and gifts of God. Scripture

makes us to understand, the one who is faithful in the small that he or she is been given (as a matter of rule) will be faithful when much is entrusted into his or her hands. I believe most of us are not making much spiritual advancement as is required of us from God simply because we have not been faithful with what God has already given us. Due to this, we are largely stagnated. Spiritual stagnation is likely to cause one to be severed from the vine as in line with the following scripture;

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the farmer. Every branch in me that doesn't bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that bears fruit, he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me."
John 15:1-4

One of the major reasons that account for the high rate of spiritual poverty in the church these days could be

simply attributed to the unfaithfulness of many of us with regards to unrighteous mammon. Jesus taught, if anyone is faithful with unrighteous mammon then the person is qualified to be entrusted with true (spiritual) riches. Thus, the person will be rich in faith;

"If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, how will you commit to your trust the true riches?" Luke 16:11

From the above scriptures it stands to reason out that it is not possible for an individual to live an unreasonable luxurious life style and still be rich towards God. Could it be, so many of us have failed this test and are consequently languishing in spiritual poverty? There are some of us I believe God gave some material blessings just to see what we would do with them. Unfortunately we spent (and are still spending) them prodigally on our own lusts. Had we understood this truth that those material possessions were just spring boards to catapult us into riches in faith, we would have parted with them for the good of many.

Satan has succeeded in deceiving so many of us into thinking that, when we live a luxurious life style it shows we are children of God. Little do we know, he (Satan) has rather caused us to turn the blessing of God into a curse in our own lives. Satan hides this truth from us that, amassing this world's goods to ourselves breeds covetousness and idolatry in our hearts.

For the church to outwit the devil in his subtlety and craftiness, we need to possess the mind of Christ as Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 2:16; "For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him?" But we have Christ's mind."When we activate the mind of Christ in our lives, we will not seek the applause of the world but rather make ourselves of no reputation as in line with Philippians 2:7-8; "but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross." This is very important for us as Christians, for we are living in an era of great deceit from the kingdom of darkness. Knowing this truth about the spiritual atmosphere in which we live, we are being

called upon by God to understand what His will is, as stated by Paul in the following Scripture;

"Therefore don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is." Ephesians 5:17

We can only understand what the will of God for us is in this end-time if only we choose to possess the mind of Christ as stated earlier on. This calls for us to be imitators of God;

"Be therefore imitators of God, as beloved children. Walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling fragrance." Ephesians 5:1-2

Paul and the other disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ chose to imitate God. If they did, why shouldn't we also follow their steps as a people called out of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ? Ignorance, as we know from Christ's teachings in Luke 12:47-48 is never an excuse for our failure to do what pleases the Lord. This as a matter of fact receives a just punishment from the Lord on the Day of Judgment. No wonder Paul in the

scripture mentioned earlier, instructs us to understand what the will of God is. Believers are therefore supposed to know on individual basis what the will of God is, pertaining to the blessing or gifts the Lord has given them(for we are merely stewards).

When so many of us come to terms with the truth that our godliness accompanied with contentment is great gain (1Timothy 6:6), we will not live in excesses (but only satisfy our needs). The truth is, when a child of God decides to live in frugality, he or she makes tremendous advancement in the Spirit realm (which is great gain) contrary to the deceit from the pit of hell that opulence is a practice of heaven on earth. By the way none of the Apostles of our Lord encouraged this kind of impure thought.

The prophet Elisha in the Old Testament lived basically on his needs upon discerning the spiritual climate of Israel in his days. Is therefore not a surprise that he refused to make financial gain out of his office. He refused to take money and other material provisions from Naaman. Knowing the times in which he lived, and

expecting his servant Gehazi to follow his footsteps, pronounced a curse on Gehazi and his family simply because he chose to make profit out of the ministry;

"He said to him, Didn't my heart go with you, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive groves and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave to you, and to your seed forever. He went out from his presence a leper [as white] as snow." 2 Kings 5:26-27

Paul in the New Testament along with those in his missionary team (as we may choose to call it) never made gain of the people they ministered to as in line with the following scripture;

"Did I take advantage of you by anyone of them whom I have sent to you? I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him. Did Titus take any advantage of you? Didn't we walk in the same spirit? Didn't we walk in the same steps?" 2 Corinthians 12:17-18

He knew, there was the tendency for one to abuse his office; "What then is my reward? That, when I preach the Good News, I may present the Good News of Christ without charge, so as not to abuse my authority in the Good News." 1 Corinthians 9:18. Most at times when a man is blessed with spiritual gifts, there is the likelihood that other weak men will be at the mercy of such an individual. This, when care is not taken can lead to the abuse of the gifts by way of making gain out of them. Jesus foresaw this (as something that will prevail in the days of his second coming) and thus why we should all be wary lest we are caught off guard;

"But if that servant says in his heart, 'My lord delays his coming,' and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, then the lord of that servant will come in a day when he isn't expecting him, and in an hour that he doesn't know, and will cut him in two, and place his portion with the unfaithful." Luke 12:45-46

I believe Christ trained His disciples in order for them to learn how to deal with unrighteous mammon. So in

sending them to preach the kingdom of God, He instructed them not to take money with them, but to live on provisions made available for their needs;

"Into whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace be to this house. If a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on him; but if not, it will return to you. Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Don't go from house to house. Into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you.'"
Luke 10:5-8

This type of training helped them throughout their ministry in the sense that, they all lived on provisions made available for their needs. They also saw to it that, they met that of fellow believers. They clearly understood their Lord's teachings that, there is no way one can serve mammon and still be His disciple. They worked with both their spiritual and material blessing without amassing wealth to themselves.

It is important for us to note, there is no way an individual can minister with his or her spiritual and material gifts for the good of many (without making gain), if he or she does not first of all give him or herself to the Lord. This was the secret of the believers at Macedonia. They first of all gave themselves to the Lord and thereafter laid down their lives for the brethren;

"Moreover, brothers, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the assemblies of Macedonia; how that in much proof of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality. For according to their power, I testify, yes and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord, begging us with much entreaty to receive this grace and the fellowship in the service to the saints. This was not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us through the will of God."
2 Corinthians 8:1-5

To underscore the importance and the blessedness of ministering to others in humility, we know that the believers in Macedonia continued to give liberally even in their poor state (begging Paul to accept their service to other saints). They were really good stewards as the writer of 1Peter and Paul required.

Chapter

2

THE MANIFESTATION OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS

The importance of ministries in the body of Christ cannot be over emphasized seeing they are indispensable for the winning and discipling of souls until the glorious appearing of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ. Paul in his teachings bordering on spiritual gifts and their manifestations had this to say;

"Now there are various kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are various kinds of service, and the same Lord. There are various kinds of workings, but the same God, who works all things in all. But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the profit of all." 1 Corinthians 12:4-7

From the above scripture we are being made aware, there are different ministries and it is the Lord who gives

these ministries to men as He wills. Let us bear in mind that for the proper functioning of these ministries there is the need for the manifestation of spiritual gifts. Also within these ministries, there are also different operations of the Spirit. However, these ministries are not the same but they are all supposed to work towards one goal. They are to work towards the maturity of individuals so that they can be Christlike. Let us remember we have been made aware that, the gifts and ministry we receive from God (though they are blessings) are not rewards in themselves. God He is concerned about how ministry work is being carried out towards the raising of disciples.

In preaching the gospel, there is the urgent need for us to understand what the gifts and ministries in the body of Christ stands for and the role they play. The ministries and the gifts of God stand and prove the authenticity of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Gifts and ministries are in operation simply because Christ arose from the dead;

"But to each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Therefore he says,

"When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men." Now this, "He ascended," what is it but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ;" Ephesians 4:7-12

From the above scripture it stands to reason that, men wouldn't have received the Holy Spirit (with His gifts) if Christ had not risen from the dead. So for men to know Christ arose from the grave with power, we His disciples have to manifest this power which is demonstrated through gifts and ministries. This is one of the meanings of the resurrection power of Christ. Another meaning of the resurrection power is power over sin. Therefore it is for the understanding of the resurrection power of Christ that these gifts and ministries are being given.

Let us further look at what the resurrection power of Christ is all about. As earlier mentioned, it stands for the power of the believer to overcome sin as Christ was not held captive by death. If Christ was not held captive in the grave (power of death) then we His disciples can also live above sin by not walking in darkness (serving sin). This is what scripture means by been translated from darkness into light.

Furthermore it can be understood that the resurrection power of Christ stands for the future appearing of Christ and the resurrection from the grave, of those who died in Him. The resurrection power signifies the proclamation that Christ is alive forever more and those who believe in Him(though they die in the flesh), shall live forever and also reign with Him.

If these are what the resurrection power of the Lord signifies, and gifts and ministries are a prove of the truth that Christ indeed arose from the dead, then these gifts and ministries are supposed to carry out the proclamation and projection of the risen Lord. They are also there to display the power of God and most

importantly to prepare men and women for the second coming of the Lord.

From the look of things, many 'ministries' these days are not focused on what the resurrection power of our Lord is all about. I believe there are reasons for this unfortunate development. Some may be due to lack of knowledge and understanding about what the resurrection power of the Lord is, in relation to spiritual gifts and ministries. It is also possible some ministries are not from the Lord.

I earlier made the point that though there are different ministries, yet they all have one focus and goal (that is, making men Christlike). This is what the Apostles meant by **the faith**. The writer of Jude makes it clear, we are to earnestly contend for **the faith**;

"Beloved, while I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I was constrained to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." Jude 3

This presupposes that, the faith has already being defined for all of us. Therefore it will be out of place for any ministry to arise and cause men to deviate from the teachings of the Apostles and still claim to be a ministry from God. We are being called upon as end-time pilgrims to endure sound doctrine. The reason being, the end-time spiritual atmosphere will cause many not to endure sound doctrine as 2 Timothy 4:3-4 reveals. If a 'ministry' arises and its focus is not to help men follow the steps of Christ as revealed in the scriptures or make them godly, then that ministry is not birthed by God. The truth is, every ministry from God preaches the gospel (not another gospel) which includes the love and judgment of Christ.

It can be said that Paul's ministry was different from Titus and the others in his missionary team but yet they all walked in the same Spirit and steps. They were not the same, but had one motivation and focus as in line with the following scripture;

*"I exhorted Titus, and I sent the brother with him.
Did Titus take any advantage of you? Didn't we*

walk in the same spirit? Didn't we walk in the same steps?" 2 Corinthians 12:18

Paul made it clear to the church in Rome, if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ then he is none of His. In effect what Paul wants us to understand is, as believers we ought to be imitators of God (Christ) just like the Apostles. He admonished the church at Corinth to follow him as he followed Christ; "I beg you therefore, be imitators of me....even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brothers, that you remember me in all things, and hold firm the traditions, even as I delivered them to you." 1 Corinthians 4:16, 11:1-2. Individuals make up ministries. Therefore if we are supposed to have the Spirit (manner of life) of Christ, then by extension our ministries ought to have Christlikeness as its main focus. Jesus told His disciples that, He was sending them into the world just as the father did. This is the same thing Christ is still echoing in our ears today (for He does not change).

"Jesus therefore said to them again, "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you.""
John 20:21

He (our pattern of life) worked very hard with all the father had deposited inside Him. As a matter of fact He declared, His father was always working and that is why He too could not help but work. Likewise, we are supposed to always put to use all that Christ has endowed us with (both spiritual and physical) thereby laboring with them (if possible laboring much, as in line with Romans 16:12). Paul made it abundantly clear, the grace of God which was bestowed upon him was never in vain, as he labored more abundantly with it;

"But by the grace of God I am what I am. His grace which was bestowed on me was not futile, but I worked more than all of them; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." 1 Corinthians 15:10

Therefore as the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every true child of God, let us serve others with it by the meekness and gentleness of Christ.

Chapter

3

THE SEVEN DIMENSIONAL MANIFESTATIONS

*"For, behold, the stone that I have set before Joshua; on one stone are seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the engraving of it,' says 'Yahweh of Armies, 'and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day."
Zechariah 3:9*

The stone the prophet was talking about was Christ Jesus, and the eyes were symbolic of the seven dimensional manifestations of the Holy Spirit in His life and ministry. In Revelation 5:6 we see the Lamb of God who was slain from the foundations of the earth (standing in the midst of the throne of God) having seven horns which are also symbolic of the ministry of the Holy Spirit in Christ's life. In Isaiah's prophecy concerning the messiah, he states the same seven dimensional manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life and ministry of Christ;

"The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on him; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh." Isaiah 11:2

The reason for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit in these dimensions in the life of Christ was to empower Him to carry out His assignment on this earth to the fullest. It is interesting to note, the anointing upon(in) Christ's life was for Him to labor in the vineyard of His father, and not just for fun;

"The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is on me; because Yahweh has anointed me to preach good news to the humble; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening [of the prison] to those who are bound to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;" Isaiah 61:1-2

"But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, so I am working, too."" John 5:17

In the same way, when God endows us with gifts and financial blessings it is expected that we labor with them and not for mere gain. I believe when this truth is clearly understood by all of us we will let love for humanity be the driving force for the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's gift(s) in our lives. Love does not seek its own; "Let no one seek his own, but each one his neighbor's good...doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil" 1 Corinthians 10:24, 13:5

Let us now move on to look at how the seven dimensional manifestations of the Holy Spirit are to be seen in our lives as believers. It is important to note how the prophet combined the manifestations. I will endeavor to show how they are linked together.

Chapter

4

WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING

"The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh." Isaiah 11:2

The reason I believe the prophet combined wisdom and understanding is, they are all acquired when one departs from evil or sin.

According to scripture both wisdom and understanding attracts the favor of God into a man's life. When Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, God also brought him into favor (KJV) with the prince of the Eunuchs; "Now God made Daniel to find kindness and compassion in the sight of the prince of the eunuchs." Daniel 1:9. Proverbs 13:15; "Good understanding wins favor; but the way of

the unfaithful is hard.” This scripture makes us to know, good understanding gives favor. It can therefore be deduced from it that Daniel had good understanding [hated evil (Psalm 119:104)] which drew the favor of God into his life. Proverbs 14:35 says; “The king's favor is toward a servant who deals wisely, but his wrath is toward one who causes shame.” This means, had it not being for the fact that Daniel was wise, he wouldn't have obtained favor from the prince of the Eunuchs. So later we learn in Daniel 1:20 that Daniel and his friends were found ten times better than their colleagues with regards to matters of wisdom and understanding;

“In every matter of wisdom and understanding, concerning which the king inquired of them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters who were in all his realm.”

It therefore stands to reason that both wisdom and understanding bring the favor of God into a man's life.

We as believers also need the operation of this dimension of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Since I have already established the link between wisdom and

understanding, I will further narrow down on wisdom. Scriptures make us to know, the earth has wisdom as its foundation. Consequently we can also say, wisdom is greatly needed for the laying of every foundation in our life. That is why even before a man becomes a disciple of Christ, he must first of all dig deep and build his foundation upon the rock; “Everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, and does them, I will show you who he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock. When a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it was founded on the rock.” Luke 6:47-48. Any man who does so is deemed to be a wise man (since he is a doer of the word of God). In Jesus' parable about the sower, it was those who had understanding (in the sense of doers of the word of God) who became fruitful. Before we continue, let me state that we have earthly wisdom and heavenly wisdom. James defines for us what these two kinds of wisdom are;

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by his good conduct that his deeds are done in gentleness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, don't boast and don't lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, sensual, and demonic. For where jealousy and selfish ambition are, there is confusion and every evil deed. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceful, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." James 3:13-17

From James' definition, we realize the wisdom which is of the earth manifests itself in envy and strife which leads to confusion and evil work. This tells us, wherever there's evil then it means folly is reigning. However, the wisdom which is heavenly is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits etc. This goes to buttress the point that when we possess this heavenly wisdom we will depart from sin, thereby giving us understanding; "To man he said, 'Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. To depart from evil is understanding.'" Job 28:28. Also, it will make us fruitful

in the Lord, according to the meaning of the parable of the sower; "What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word, and understands it, who most certainly bears fruit, and brings forth, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty." Matthew 13:23. So, because Daniel possessed the wisdom (from above) and understanding, they caused him not to defile himself with the portion of the Kings meat.

In our day and age, wisdom is indispensable for anyone who wants to please the Lord as an individual or even as a leader. Paul could boldly say, he was a **wise** master builder when he was writing to the Corinthian church;

"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another builds on it. But let each man be careful how he builds on it." 1 Corinthians 3:10

Being a wise master builder simply meant he operated with the wisdom of God in his ministry. This guided him as to how to build the lives of men and with what

materials to use. Why did Paul call himself a wise master builder seeing he never concentrated on building physical structures? I believe he understood that our Christian call is to build the lives of men (who are the true temples of God). No wonder he says there is coming a day when our work shall be tested to found out what sought of material it is made up of. It is only wisdom which will help us set our priorities right.

These days it is rather unfortunate, many are concentrating their efforts on physical structures (though they may be needed) to the detriment of the quality of life (soul) of men. This is a contradiction of the lives of the apostles. Due to the importance of wisdom in leading the people of God, the first deacons in the book of Acts 6:3, 5 had to possess it; "Therefore select from among you, brothers, seven men of good report, full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business... These words pleased the whole multitude. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus, a proselyte of Antioch". This is so because it is wisdom which helped

them to channel the resources of God in the right direction (wisdom is profitable to direct). In other words wisdom (KJV) is an essential ingredient for a ruler to help him in the proper administration of his office as in line with Proverbs 8:14-16; "Counsel and sound knowledge are mine. I have understanding and power. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule; nobles, and all the righteous rulers of the earth."

When Moses was about to depart, God told him to anoint Joshua to take over the leadership mantle. It is interesting to note, scripture only mentions the fact that he (Joshua) was filled with wisdom after Moses the servant of the Lord had layed his hands on him. I believe scripture hyped wisdom in this sense because of its importance in aiding Joshua lead the people of Israel;

"Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands on him; and the children of Israel listened to him, and did as Yahweh commanded Moses." Deuteronomy 34:9

Solomon in his days also underscored the importance of understanding but God deemed it necessary to give unto him wisdom and understanding. The reason he asked for understanding was, to discern between good and bad; "Give your servant therefore an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil; for who is able to judge this your great people?" 1 Kings 3:9. Wisdom is so vital, scripture admonishes us to seek it early in our lives; "I love those who love me. Those who seek me diligently will find me." Proverbs 8:17. In the end the wisdom we possess will also be brought to bear to help us inherit eternal life as in the parable of the **five wise virgins**; "But the wise answered, saying, 'What if there isn't enough for us and you? You go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves. While they went away to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.'" Matthew 25:9-10.

Chapter



COUNSEL AND MIGHT

"The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh." Isaiah 11:2

In this chapter I will attempt to show the relationship that exist between counsel and might and how they are so essential to our Christian walk. First of all I will like us to look at counsel.

God is the originator of all we see on this earth as well as beyond. In fact scripture makes us to understand, He never sought counsel from any one in order to create this universe. Thus, everything created (both visible and invisible) are the products of the mind of God. Counsel can be said to be the mind of God

concerning a particular issue or thing. It is He who declares the end from the beginning and His counsel stands forever;

"Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not [yet] done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;" Isaiah 46:10

From the above scripture we can say, God has in mind what He desires the world to be and it is that desire which will be fulfilled no matter the plans of the devil. God originally intended the world to be a peaceful place full of love and obedience to Him, but the devil interrupted this agenda by causing man to sin against Him. This led to chaos and rebellion in this world which necessitated the death and resurrection of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ to restore the earth back to God's original intent. This will however have its final consummation in the millennial reign of Christ. In the end it is God's counsel which will definitely stand.

Men are destroyed when they do not know the counsel (or mind of God) concerning a particular issue. That is

why counsel is very important in the lives of believers. No wonder princes need it in order to exercise dominion; “Counsel and sound knowledge are mine. I have understanding and power. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule; nobles, and all the righteous rulers of the earth.” Proverbs 8:14-16. Scripture declares that, God performs the counsels of His servants. Does this suggest, every counsel taken by the servants of God is performed by Him? I do not believe so, but to the contrary He only performs counsels which are in line with His. Servants of God according to their job description are to possess the counsel of God and not their own counsels. In other words they are expected to have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16). Isaiah said in Isaiah 50:4 that he was given the tongue of the learned in order to know what to speak to those who are weary; “The Lord Yahweh has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with words him who is weary: he wakens morning by morning, he wakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.”

Many of us often take our own counsels and expect God to perform them. We in effect try to make God our errand boy. These often sight the case of Elijah in the scripture below;

"Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the foreigners of Gilead, said to Ahab, As Yahweh, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."
1 Kings 17:1

We should note, Elijah was a true man of God who spoke the mind of God. He only said 'according to my word' simply because God's word had turned to be his word. This state has always being the desire of God for us as disciples of Christ. Even in the days of Moses, God wanted to relay this truth unto us and thus why for one, He told Moses He had made him a god. The other was when God turned the **rod of Moses** into the **rod of God**;

"Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I have made you as God to Pharaoh; and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet." Exodus 7:1

"Yahweh said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." He said, "Throw it on the ground." He threw it on the ground, and it became a snake; and Moses ran away from it. Yahweh said to Moses, "Put forth your hand, and take it by the tail." He put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand. . . . Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. Moses took God's rod in his hand" Exodus 4:2-4, 20

The writer of 1Peter 4:11 instructs that if anyone is to speak, he should speak as the oracles of God. Meaning, whenever we want to speak anything, we should ask ourselves, if Christ had been here will He speak that way? Thus, we should speak as if He is the one speaking. Speaking as the oracles of God also signifies speaking the counsel or the mind of God (Christ).

The reason why God permitted Paul to include his thoughts in some of his writings, which were later on canonized is because he was so filled with the word of God and faithful to the extent, his thoughts were the thoughts acceptable to God;

"But this I say by way of concession, not of commandment." 1 Corinthians 7:6

Even in his farewell speech to the disciples at Ephesus he told them he had not shunned from declaring unto them the whole counsel of God; "for I didn't shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God." Acts 20:27. Our words or counsel becomes that of God when we lay down our lives and pick up that of Christ.

Christ was working with the apostles and confirming the word they preached with signs and wonders simply because they delivered His whole counsel to their listeners. We should remember that while He was on earth with the disciples, He commanded them to let His words abide in them and then they will receive whatever they asked from Him;

"If you remain in me, and my words remain in you, you will ask whatever you desire, and it will be done for you." John 15:7

The above scripture gives us more understanding as to the fact that the request of the apostles would only be granted if they abide in the word and the word in turn abides in them. Thus, they were to ask according to the counsel of God and it will be performed. The prophecy concerning Christ was, He was (is) a counselor (in other words he possessed counsel);

"For to us a child is born. To us a son is given; and the government will be on his shoulders. His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
Isaiah 9:6

Since Christ possessed counsel, He never did anything for the father on His own accord, but always dug into the mind of the father to know His will and to do it. In effect, He always spoke what the father told Him to speak. Scripture states clearly (that) the one who is sent from God speaks the words of God;

*"For he whom God has sent speaks the words of God;
for God gives the Spirit without measure." John 3:34*

Though at a very tender age, Samuel always spoke all that the Lord told him; "Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him. He said, It is Yahweh: let him do what seems him good. Samuel grew, and Yahweh was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." 1 Samuel 3:18-19. It is not a wonder that, the Lord never watched any of his words to fall to the ground (they were all performed). This Samuel was a type of Christ.

One of the factors which accounted for the success of Christ's deliverance ministry and miracles was, whatever He saw the father do, the same He also replicated on earth. If He saw the fathers mind concerning a particular individual was for him or her to receive a miracle at a certain moment, He quickly cooperated with the father and enforced His will on earth. It is God's desire for us to know His mind concerning every issue and act in line with His instructions. When this is grasped, I believe we will

achieve a lot of success in the miraculous to the glory of His name.

It can also be said that the miracle of salvation which is the product of the counsel of God for the souls of men is engineered by the Spirit of might. Christ preached with might as He did not preach like the scribes and Pharisees but as one with authority (Mark 1:22). It was the Spirit of might which raised Christ from the dead. This same might also worked in the life of Micah and helped him to declare Israel's sin to her;

"But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Yahweh, And of judgment, and of might, to declare to Jacob his disobedience, And to Israel his sin"
Micah 3:8

Due to the significance of counsel in the life of a child of God, Moses hinted that, would to God all His people were prophets;

"Moses said to him, Are you jealous for my sake? would that all Yahweh's people were prophets, that Yahweh would put his Spirit on them!"
Numbers 11:29

Thus, it is God's desire that we all carry His mind just as Paul said in 1 Corinthians 2:16. This will help us believers to discern whatever situation we find ourselves in. The friends of Job misjudged him simply because they did not know the mind of God concerning what he was going through. However, Job himself knew the counsel of God concerning his situation. He knew, he was only being tried and afterward the best would come out of him;

"But he knows the way that I take. When he has tried me, I shall come forth like gold." Job 23:10

If we have the counsel of God, then we will have an understanding of 1 Peter 1:7.

Chapter

6

KNOWLEDGE AND THE FEAR OF GOD

"The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Yahweh." Isaiah 11:2

I will try my best as the Lord enables me to show the relationship between knowledge and the fear of God. However, I will narrow down to the fear of God. To underscore the importance of the fear of God in the life of an individual, the Psalmist shows us the blessedness of fearing God;

*"Praise Yah! Blessed is the man who fears Yahweh, who delights greatly in his commandments."
Psalm 112:1*

Not only is a man blessed when he fears the Lord, but God also delights in such a person. Scripture gives us a definition of the fear of God as departing from iniquity. We also learn that, the fear of God is the beginning of knowledge. Therefore one only gets the knowledge of God when he or she fears the Lord;

*"The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of knowledge;
but the foolish despise wisdom and instruction."
Proverbs 1:7*

On one side of the coin the above scripture gives us the relationship between the two. On the other side, knowledge of God in a certain direction is able to cause one to fear the Lord. We know from scripture that, it was the knowledge of the counsel of God which made Job to fear the Lord.

These days I believe the reason most us do not fear God is, we lack the knowledge of who God is (especially with regards to His holiness). It can therefore be said that the fear of God will set the tone for one to acquire the knowledge of God and vice versa.

This relationship will only be realized when leaders cultivate the fear of God in their lives. This will enable them possess the knowledge of God to in turn impact that knowledge into their followers to generate the fear of God. Consequently, when the followers also possess His fear as a result of the knowledge they have acquired, they will also qualify to get more knowledge of the Lord.

What does it mean to really fear and know the Lord? I believe from the scriptures, when one fears God, he will do His will. It is not just enough having a head knowledge of God. Our knowledge should be translated into practical obedience; "This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments. One who says, "I know him," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in him" 1 John 2:3-4. The Psalmist understood this truth, and that is why he prayed that God should teach him **to do** his will;

*"Teach me to do your will, for you are my God. Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness."
Psalm 143:10*

Please notice from the above scripture, he did not just want to know the will of God, but also wanted God **to cause him to practice** (do) it. One of the major proves of the fact that we fear God will be obedience to the great commission as stated in the accounts of both Matthew and Mark. According to the commission, we are to teach all nations to observe **all** that is in scripture in relation to our dispensation. Therefore it is the duty of leadership to teach the whole counsel of God and followers to also observe all.

We are left with the choice to either fear God willing (reverentially) now or a day is coming, the dread of God will fall upon us to cause us to fear Him (which will be too late). The angel in revelations with the everlasting gospel proclaimed that all men should fear God;

"I saw an angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal Good News to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language, and

people He said with a loud voice, "Fear the Lord, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and the springs of waters!" Revelation 14:6-7

So in preaching the gospel, we must both live in the fear of God and teach others to also fear Him. There are so many scriptures which draw our attention to the fact that there is a great need for us to fear the Lord. One day we will all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. The signs and wonders we see are supposed to cause us to fear Him and not for fun and pride. I think one of the scriptures which should cause us to reverence God in fear is that, He is a consuming fire;

"Therefore, receiving a Kingdom that can't be shaken, let us have grace, through which we serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:28-29

God is no respecter of persons as in line with 1 Peter 1:17. As a result, we are not supposed to have men's persons in admiration (we can however honor those to whom honor is due). The apostles, because they

feared the Lord, chose to always obey God than please men (Acts 5:29). We have however being fore warned that in the end-time there will arise mockers who will have men's persons in admiration; "These are murmurers and complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaks proud things), showing respect of persons to gain advantage." Jude 16. May we not be counted among the number in Jesus' name. Elihu understood this and thus why he feared God. This made him not to give flattering titles to men;

"Please don't let me respect any man's person, neither will I give flattering titles to any man. For I don't know how to give flattering titles; or else my Maker would soon take me away." Job 32:21-22

Two men in history who did not fear God tasted the judgment of God. Nebuchadnezzar was turned into a beast until he learned how to humble himself and to fear God. The other is Herod who was eaten by worms for not giving glory to God. The former had a chance to repent but the other had no chance. This is the kind of God we must fear and love.

ARE YOU PREPARED FOR CHRIST'S SECOND COMING?

Please note that...

The first Adam disobeyed God and because of his disobedience sin entered the human race, resulting in the spiritual death and separation of man from God; “Therefore, as sin entered into the world through one man, and death through sin; and so death passed to all men, because all sinned...So then as through one trespass, all men were condemned; even so through one act of righteousness, all men were justified to life.” Romans 5:12-13, 18.

The last Adam (Jesus Christ) obeyed God in order to take away sin from the human race; “But God commends his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8.

Your part of the arrangement is to receive the grace or free gift of God's salvation by faith (Romans 4:16-17).

You must understand that, faith without works is dead, so God expects you to obey and receive this free (but

costly) gift of salvation with your free will; "But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God's children, to those who believe in his name: who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13.

The most important decision you have to make now is to be born again (John3:1-8). Being born again is to repent of your sins and to submit yourself to be baptized by immersion as well as receive the Holy Spirit; "Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Acts 2:38.

The grace of God is not a license for you to sin, but rather to receive strength to live in obedience to God's word (Titus 2:11-14).

You therefore have to (as a matter of necessity), live a holy life and walk as Christ did, and not to live in hypocrisy; "However God's firm foundation stands, having this seal, "The Lord knows those who are his,

and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." 2 Timothy 2:19. "Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure." 1John 3:3.

If you walk in the light of the above scriptures and make 2 Peter 1:2-10 your guiding principle, you will never live a defeated Christian life, thereby ensuring you are found in Christ even at His glorious appearing.

I however caution that you be wary of people who preach Another Gospel, Another Jesus and Another Spirit as in line with 2 Corinthians 11:1-4.

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