

A hand is shown holding a white rectangular sign with a black border. The sign is tilted upwards and to the right. The background is a dramatic sky with orange and yellow clouds at the top and dark purple clouds at the bottom. A bright light source, possibly the sun, is visible behind the hand, creating a lens flare effect. A small white feather is attached to the top left corner of the sign.

**IMPORTANT
SIGN POSTS FOR
BELIEVERS**

FEIKOAB PARIMAH

Unless otherwise stated, all scripture quotations are from the World English Bible (WEB). All emphasis are mine.

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DEDICATION

To Gbadago Mensah (Sylvester) a co-laborer in His vineyard.

INTRODUCTION

There was a time in the life of the Israelites when they offered to God lame sacrifices which did not cost them. This is simply because they stopped fearing God as the prophet Malachi makes us to understand. God however made it known; He was going to curse even their blessings.

God according to His wisdom decided to call us gentiles in order to make His name great among the nations, intending to provoke the Israelites to Jealousy. With such a great privilege, we are to beware not to repeat the example of the Israelites. The proof of a cursed blessing is when in spite of our abundance or prosperity, we are not able to use them for anything beneficial to the kingdom.

This book is therefore supposed to draw the attention of Believers to certain cardinals of the Christian faith in this end-time, to live in total obedience to God. We are to give Him quality sacrifices in our Christian devotion as we enthusiastically work towards His glorious appearing.

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CHAPTER

I

WHO SHALL ABIDE IN THY TABERNACLE

"Yahweh, who shall dwell in your sanctuary? Who shall live on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly does what is right, and speaks truth in his heart; He who doesn't slander with his tongue, nor does evil to his friend, nor casts slurs against his fellow man; In whose eyes a vile man is despised, but who honors those who fear Yahweh; he who keeps an oath even when it hurts, and doesn't change; he who doesn't lend out his money for usury, nor take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be shaken." Psalm 15:1-5

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In every generation, there is always the need for men who will continually abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, and our generation is not an exception. The main reason the Lord promised and gave His Spirit is that we will have His abiding presence in us in order to have a living relationship with Him. This intent of God was made known to us when Christ had a discourse with the Samaritan woman at the well. Christ makes us to understand that, if we believe in Him, He will give us a kind of water (His Spirit) which will never make us thirst. This is so because it will be a well in us springing forth into everlasting life. Thus, we will have the fore taste of heaven on earth and continue with this joy(living relationship) in heaven after we leave this earth.

"But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life." John 4:14

If we grasp this intent of God for the gift of His Spirit and the kind of relationship He wants us to have, then there is no way we will be famished. In the period of spiritual dryness there is the need for men who will continually be in the presence of God to receive from Him a message for His people at all times. Thanks be to God

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there are those who are in constant tune with Him, knowing His mind concerning situations at any given point in time. Unfortunately these kinds of men are in short supply. It is however the will of God that all His children be in constant touch with Him.

Those who are sent from God are those who remain in constant touch with Him. They are positioned in order to speak the mind of God and not their own. John the Baptist testified concerning Christ that, He was sent from God and in effect spoke 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

Jesus later told His disciples that, He was sending them just as His father had sent Him. As a consequence, they were not to speak of themselves but to always receive of the Spirit and deliver His mind to His people. There is therefore the need for us to always pray as Jesus instructed, for Him to send in more laborers into the field. It is only when we have men and women sent from God that we can be guaranteed of receiving continuous nourishment through the right knowledge of God. In the days of Jeremiah, God requested the people of Israel to ask of Him and He would give them

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Pastors after His own heart who will feed them with knowledge and understanding;

"And I will give you shepherds according to my heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding." Jeremiah 3:15

Everyone who claims to be sent from God must pass the test of scripture. We have the true prophets of God and the false prophets. The false prophets can be categorized into three different groups. The first group is those who are sent from the pit of hell by Satan to deceive many;

"Now therefore send, and gather to me all Israel to Mount Carmel, and the prophets of Baal four hundred fifty, and the prophets of the Asherah four hundred, who eat at Jezebel's table." 1 Kings 18:19

"Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." 1 John 4:1

Then we have those who are people's prophets. In other words they speak what the people want to hear. These groups are normally permitted by God when people refuse to pay heed to the truth. In the days of

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Ahab, Bible makes us to know, he had his own prophets who spoke what he wanted to hear. Micaiah was however an exception as he spoke what God wanted the people to hear;

"Yahweh said to him, 'How?' He said, 'I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' He said, 'You shall entice him, and shall prevail also: go forth, and do so.'" 1 Kings 22:22

"But as for you, don't you listen to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreams, nor to your soothsayers, nor to your sorcerers, who speak to you, saying, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon'" Jeremiah 27:9

The last category of the false prophets is those who send themselves. Scripture makes us aware, in the days of Jeremiah this group of prophets did abound. They began to run whereas they had received no word from the Lord. They saw vain visions and had false dreams thereby misleading God's people. They could be sincere, but their sincerity did not negate the fact that they were false prophets in the sight of God;

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"Then Yahweh said to me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name; I didn't send them, neither have I commanded them, neither spoke I to them: they prophesy to you a lying vision, and divination, and a thing of nothing, and the deceit of their own heart."
Jeremiah 14:14

Apart from these groups of prophets, we have the true prophets (prophets of the Lord). Since they are the servants of the most high, they pledge their allegiance to Him. They speak what God wants His people and the nations to hear, but not what the people want. That is, they have the word of God and speak it faithfully damning every consequence because of their love for God and His people;

"But Jehoshaphat said, Isn't there here a prophet of Yahweh besides, that we may inquire of him?"
1 Kings 22:7

When it comes to apostles, we have four categories. The first group is what I will term as satanic apostles. I choose to call them so because they have their commission from the devil. As Satan is very subtle and cunning, these his apostles are also very cunning. Paul alludes to the fact that since Satan himself

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masquerades as an angel of light, his apostles also masquerade themselves as ministers of righteousness;

"For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as Christ's apostles."
2 Corinthians 11:13

The second group of apostles is those who are made by men. It will surprise us to know, some men and women call themselves apostles simply because men pronounced it on them and ordained them to be. Some even view apostleship as the highest rank you get to after serving the body of Christ for some number of years. Paul did not see his apostleship to come from this source;

"Paul, an apostle (not from men, neither through man, but through Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)" Galatians 1:1

From the above scripture, we can get the third group of apostles. This is made up of men and women who proclaim themselves to be so. They may have their own selfish reasons for taking this calling upon themselves or they may just be living in self-deception.

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The fourth and the last group of apostles are those chosen by Christ and ordained by Him. They carry in a sense the commission Jesus carried. Their task is to reveal Christ to the dying world by their practical way of life and the preaching of what the gospel really means. Jesus told His disciples that; "as my father has sent me, so send I you". Therefore they are sent by Christ Himself and Christ speaks through them as Paul told the Corinthian church. Everyone who claims to be sent from God must pass the test of scripture;

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the assembly of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in the whole of Achaia" 2 Corinthians 1:1

"Seeing that you seek a proof of Christ who speaks in me; who toward you is not weak, but is powerful in you." 2 Corinthians 13:3

The distinguishing feature of the apostles of Christ from the other three is, they basically understand and live the sacrificial life in order to be Christlike as living representatives of His. They do not love the world neither the things that are therein. In other words they live a life devoid of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes

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and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). However, we are all called to be Christlike in every department of our lives.

There are also false and true evangelists. The false evangelist does not first and foremost preach true repentance. They will preach seemingly 'nice' messages to the lost but will not call them to repentance and obedience to the gospel. Mostly they also perform miracles after which an 'altar call' is made for those who want to receive Christ into their hearts (with repentance and baptism missing) by repeating certain prayers. Though I do not underrate the power of confession, I believe the first step towards salvation is repentance. In the end these false evangelist produce tares instead of wheat and no wonder the lives of such 'converts' are never challenging to the world as there is no difference between them and the people of the world.

The true evangelists preaches repentance, baptism and the need for men to consider their ways and turn to the Lord through obedience to the gospel;

"Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come times of

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refreshing from the presence of the Lord. . . But when they believed Philip preaching good news concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women."
Acts 3:19, 8:12

Finally, true Pastors and teachers are those who care and nourish the flock of God through the teaching of the unadulterated word of God accompanied by exemplary living and laying down of their lives for the sheep;

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." John 10:11

The true servants of God in effect, are those who see themselves as unworthy servants and do what they are supposed to do.

"Even so you also, when you have done all the things that are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants. We have done our duty.'" Luke 17:10

They are co-laborers with God and not masters. They recognize that necessity is laid upon them to reveal the whole counsel of God to men no matter the cost, in obedience to the Lord at all times. Paul saw his calling in this fashion;

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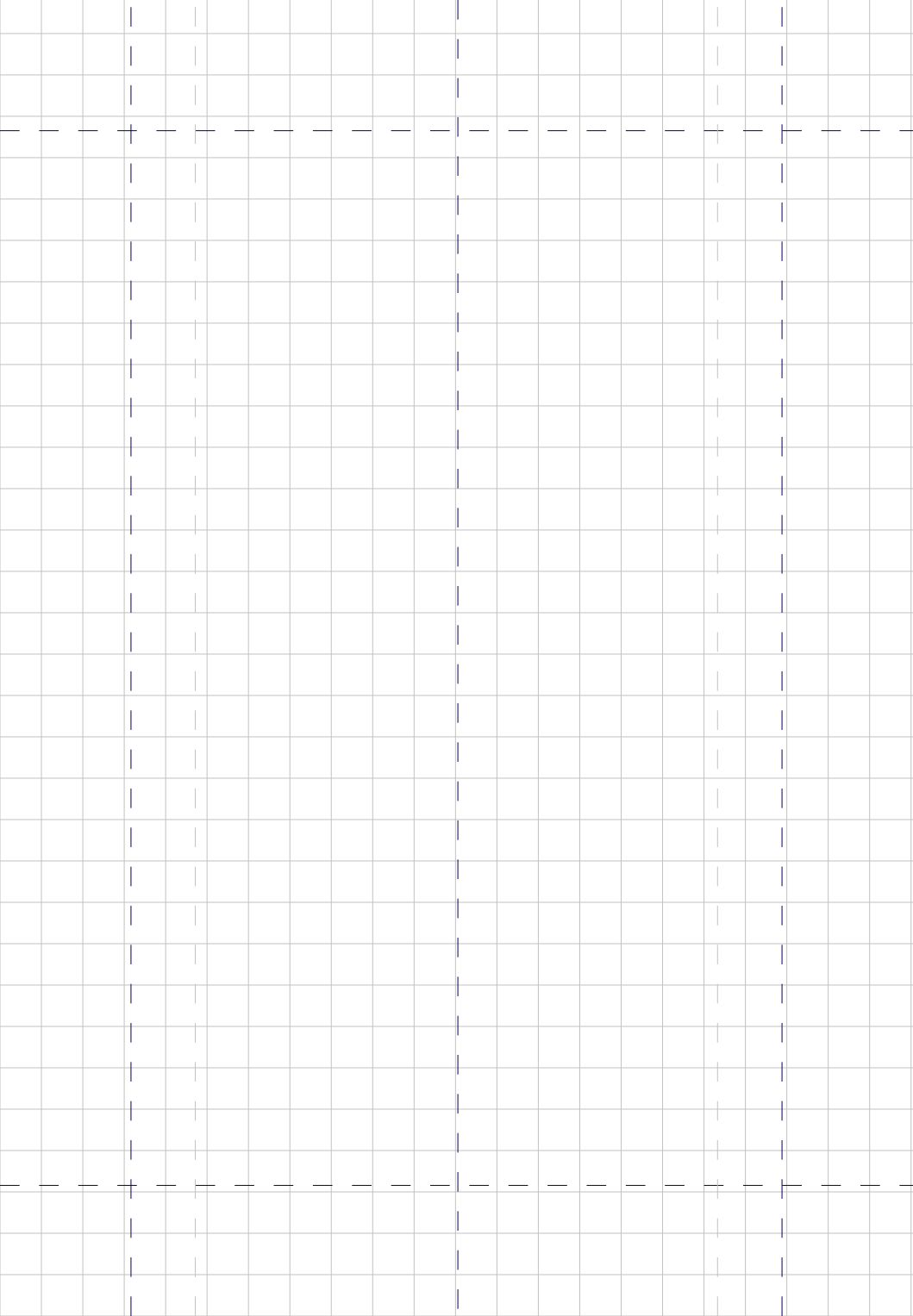
*"For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! For if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me."
1 Corinthians 9:16-17*

Further, all true men and women of God take the message of God to Ezekiel very seriously;

"When I tell the wicked, 'You shall surely die; and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hand. Yet if you warn the wicked, and he doesn't turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.'" Ezekiel 3:18-19

as well as the command of Paul to Timothy;

*"Pay attention to yourself, and to your teaching. Continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you."
1 Timothy 4:16.*



CHAPTER 2

MALACHY TO THE HEATHEN

We the children and servants of the most high God must learn to fear Him and to relate this fear and reverence to other men. How do we expect the unsaved to fear Him if we ourselves do not? It is only when we fear God (with its corresponding manifestation in the way we serve Him) that the world will bow to our God.

In Israel men were taught, the fear of God was supposed to be an integral part of the life of a child of God or a Jew. At least the confessions of two important figures in Jewish history attests to this fact. When Jonah was sent to Nineveh to prophesy to the city, he

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decided to disobey God (which we are aware of) and the fact of the consequence of his actions was clear for all to see. When the storm arose and blew vehemently against them, the men of the ship asked him of his identity, to which he answered in the following manner;

"He said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear Yahweh, the God of heaven, who has made the sea and the dry land." Jonah 1:9

Notice in his introduction he makes mention of his citizenship as a Jew and the fact that he feared God. In the end (by the confession of Jonah), the people in the ship made a commitment to worship the God of the Jews.

In the days of Mordecai, the Jews were about to be annihilated because Haman hated them and had moved the king to make a decree for the entire Jewish nation to be wiped out. Before this, Haman had been promoted by king Ahasuerus and a command had gone forth from him that men bow and reverence Haman.

Mordecai upon being questioned as to why he did not pay homage to Haman, cited the following as his basis for not bowing and giving reverence to Haman;

Malachy to the heathen

"All the king's servants who were in the king's gate bowed down, and paid homage to Haman; for the king had so commanded concerning him. But Mordecai didn't bow down or pay him homage. Then the king's servants, who were in the king's gate, said to Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the king's commandment? Now it came to pass, when they spoke daily to him, and he didn't listen to them, that they told Haman, to see whether Mordecai's reason would stand; for he had told them that he was a Jew."
Esther 3:2-4

The original intent of God was to use the Jews as an example to cause other nations of the world to fear and bow before Him in submission. However, they often failed Him. He then purposed that through the preaching of the gospel, the heathen world would believe, have faith and greatly fear His name in order to provoke the Jews to jealousy and turn them back to their Lord;

"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, then where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is the respect due me? Says Yahweh of Armies to you, priests, who despise my name. You say, 'How have we despised your name? You offer

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polluted bread on my altar. You say, 'How have we polluted you?' In that you say, 'Yahweh's table contemptible. When you offer the blind for sacrifice, isn't that evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, isn't that evil? Present it now to your governor! Will he be pleased with you? Or will he accept your person?' says Yahweh of Armies. Now, please entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With this, will he accept any of you?" says Yahweh of Armies. Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you," says Yahweh of Armies, "neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations," says Yahweh of Armies."
Malachi 1:6-11

We Gentiles are therefore expected to learn from the Israelites and not repeat their mistake in not fearing the Lord. If He has had mercy on us and by His grace we have being engrafted into the true olive, let us serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Hebrews 12:28b).

Malachy to the heathen

We as Christians are supposed to put on Christ, having put off the old man and its lusts thereof. When we put on Christ, we will have distinct characteristics from the people of the world. This is only made possible by us walking in the Spirit in order not to fulfill the lust of the flesh. By the seed of righteousness being deposited in us we are to continuously get nourishment from the word of God so that we will bear the fruit of the Spirit (which is an outward expression of the work of God in us by our cooperation). No wonder Paul could say he bore the distinguishing marks of Christ on (in) his body;

"From now on, let no one cause me any trouble, for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus branded on my body." Galatians 6:17

The Jews in Malachi's days offered unto God sacrifices which did not cost them simply because they did not fear God. We are not to follow their example, but to make sure we always give to God a sacrifice which cost us and is acceptable in the sight of God. If this is not done, disgrace will come upon us and our blessing will even be cursed;

"Now, you priests, this commandment is for you. If you will not listen, and if you will not lay it to heart, to

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give glory to my name," says Yahweh of Armies, "then will I send the curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Indeed, I have cursed them already, because you do not lay it to heart." Malachi 2:1-2

Our blessing is cursed when in spite of our prosperity and abundance we are not able to use them for anything beneficial to the kingdom. It is possible to see many of the children of God these days spend prodigally without increasing the fruit of their righteousness. I believe this ought not to be, since we are blessed to be a blessing. We will always be in a position to be heard by God when we fear Him as Christ did.

"He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear" Hebrews 5:7

CHAPTER 3

COME OUT AND BE SEPARATE

"Therefore, "'Come out from among them, and be separate,' says the Lord. 'Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you. I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters,' says the Lord Almighty." 2 Corinthians 6:17-18

From the above scripture, we believers are to be separate from the people of the world in our deeds. Though we are in the world, we are however not of the world. Our manner of life is supposed to be directly at variance with the people of the world. It is when we separate ourselves and not partake in the unfruitful works of darkness that God shall be our father and we,

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His sons and daughters as the scripture implies. Thus, those who have God as their father separate themselves from the unfruitful works of darkness by the inner workings of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

Therefore our prayers become effective when we separate from the people of the world in word and indeed. The prayer model Christ gave His disciples starts with the phrase, *our father*. From the scripture above, we learn that we can only call God our father when we are separate.

In the following scripture we are made aware there is an earnest expectation of the creature for the manifestation of the sons (and daughters) of God;

"For the creation waits with eager expectation for the children of God to be revealed." Romans 8:19

That is to say, God's creatures are looking out for men and women who have come out from the world and are separate. It is such a privilege for us to be called the sons of God. However this privilege also comes with a responsibility of coming out and being separate.

There was a young prophet who was sent by God from Judah to Bethel to prophesy. God gave this young

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prophet clear cut instructions not to partake in whatever was being offered at Bethel. His only task was to go and deliver the word of God and to return without delay;

"The man of God said to the king, If you will give me half your house, I will not go in with you, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place for so was it charged me by the word of Yahweh, saying, You shall eat no bread, nor drink water, neither return by the way that you came. So he went another way, and didn't return by the way that he came to Bethel."
1 Kings 13:8-10

This young prophet however did not obey the commands of God completely, but ate in the house of an old prophet in Bethel. The young prophet was supposed to be separate but in disobedience chose to identify with the sins of Bethel by partaking in their food (that is not to say we should not eat in this world, but the Spirit of the scripture is what I am looking at).

In this matter of separation, the life and obedience of the Rechabites is also worth pondering over; "Jeremiah said to the house of the Rechabites, Thus says Yahweh of Armies, the God of Israel: Because you have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all

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his precepts, and done according to all that he commanded you” Jeremiah 35:18. These Rechabites though they were in the land of their sojourning, chose to obey the commands of their father and so, were a separate and peculiar people.

According to 2Peter 3:3; “knowing this first, that in the last days mockers will come, walking after their own lusts”, there will come scoffers in this end-time who will follow their own lusts. Thus, they will not see the need to separate themselves and to be sober, but will live like the people of the world. We are not to be scoffers, being willingly oblivious of the imminent return of the Lord. As we go about our normal day to day activities, we are to live as those who have being translated from darkness into the marvelous light of Christ. This will ensure that, the Lord's second coming does not take us unawares;

“But you, brothers, aren't in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief. You are all children of light, and children of the day. We don't belong to the night, nor to darkness” 1 Thessalonians 5:4-5

In the days of Jeremiah, God gave Baruch the wisdom to live according to the times in which he found himself. This was how God chose to bless Baruch. God made

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him aware he was going to destroy what he had made in the whole land. For this reason he was counseled not to seek great things in the land since they were all going to be destroyed eventually;

"The message that Jeremiah the prophet spoke to Baruch the son of Neriah, when he wrote these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, saying Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, to you, Baruch: You did say, Woe is me now! for Yahweh has added sorrow to my pain; I am weary with my groaning, and I find no rest. Thus shall you tell him, Thus says Yahweh: Behold, that which I have built I will break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up; and this in the whole land. Seek you great things for yourself? Don't seek them; for, behold, I will bring evil on all flesh, says Yahweh; but your life will I give to you for a prey in all places where you go." Jeremiah 45

God gave Baruch the wisdom to live, knowing the end of the things in the land. Additionally, his life was going to be preserved. In the same way, God has given us His children, the fore knowledge of what is going to befall the world in the end. We have been made aware

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that, all we see are eventually going to be dissolved. Since judgment has already been passed on this world, God tells us the kind of people we ought to be through the writer of 2 Peter;

"Therefore since all these things will be destroyed like this, what kind of people ought you to be in holy living and godliness, looking for and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, which will cause the burning heavens to be dissolved, and the elements will melt with fervent heat? But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, seeing that you look for these things, be diligent to be found in peace, without blemish and blameless in his sight." 2 Peter 3:11-14

As we talk about separation, let's bear in mind there is physical separation as well as the spiritual. Though physical separation is important in certain cases, it is the spiritual separation which is of paramount importance. Even though the people of Israel left Egypt physically, yet Egypt did not depart from the hearts of most of them. No wonder they gave Moses a hard time leading them, which eventually led to the destruction of most of them in the wilderness. We as believers should

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always ensure that we do not make room in our hearts to go back into the world. We should not desire to go back given any occasion. The fathers and women of faith never made room for a turning back, but made it plain by their words and deeds that they were just strangers in the land with heaven as their focus;

"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen {TR adds "and being convinced of"} them and embraced them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. If indeed they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had enough time to return. But now they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them." Hebrews 11:13-16

In separation we are to draw near to God for Him to also draw near to us. I always find it mind bugling when many claim to be close to God whereas their manner of life is not at all different from the people of the world. As a matter of conviction, anyone who is close to God is automatically far from the world and its lusts thereof.

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God always has a way He separates the righteous from the wicked. In the days of Moses, Korah, Dathan and Abiram alongside their collaborators were swallowed by the earth for rebelling against the leadership and authority of Moses;

"Yahweh spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the congregation, saying, Get away from around the tent of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Moses rose up and went to Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. He spoke to the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be consumed in all their sins. So they got them up from the tent of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood at the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little ones...and the earth opened its mouth, and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who appertained to Korah, and all their goods. So they, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into Sheol: and the earth closed on them, and they perished from among the assembly. All Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them; for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up."
Numbers 16:23-27, 32-34

Come out and be separate

God made sure He separated the rebellious from the obedient. Jesus gave a certain parable in Matthew 22:11-14 about a wedding where many were invited and given wedding garments as a proof of their invitation. A man was found in the wedding having no wedding garment, suggesting that he was not invited. Upon questioning, and without a satisfactory reason for being at the wedding, he was consequently bundled and cast out into outer darkness. This is how the end will look like.

Again Christ hints us about the sheep and goat separation in (Matthew 25:32-33). We may deceive ourselves to be part of the flock of God whereas our deeds give evidence to the contrary. There is surely coming a time that if we do not make a choice of separating ourselves from the things of the world, Christ Himself will do the final separation. Even in the resurrection, at the appearing of Jesus Christ the dead in Christ will rise first. There will be a separation of those who died in the Lord from those who refused His Lordship;

"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with God's trumpet. The dead in Christ will rise first then

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we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. So we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore comfort one another with these words."
1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

When we are seeking the living, you should be found among the living but not among the dead. Light and darkness does not have anything in common. As Christ suffered without the camp let us follow also the faith of those who have the rule over us (thus the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ). They chose not to bow to the existing systems of their times, but were a different breed of people obeying the gospel;

"This is now, beloved, the second letter that I have written to you; and in both of them I stir up your sincere mind by reminding you; that you should remember the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandments of us, the apostles of the Lord and Savior" 2 Peter 3:1-2

Presently God has His system of separating the righteous from the unjust. Scripture makes us to understand, God knows how to deliver the righteous out of temptation;

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"No temptation has taken you except what is common to man. God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able, but will with the temptation also make the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." 1 Corinthians 10:13

*"Because you kept my command to endure, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, which is to come on the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."
Revelations 3:10*

One thing we must recognize is, those who will be saved in the end are those who are really living in obedience now and continue to do so. We should not be in the habit of postponing obedience. It is likely we will not get the chance to obey again, as it will be too late. At least the parable of the ten virgins gives us this understanding;

"Then the Kingdom of Heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps, and went out to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. Those who were foolish, when they took their lamps, took no oil with them but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. Now while the bridegroom delayed, they all slumbered and slept.

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But at midnight there was a cry, 'Behold! The bridegroom is coming! Come out to meet him! Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out. 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. Afterward the other virgins also came, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us...' " Matthew 25:1-13

From this parable we learn that, those five wise virgins who were ready to meet the bride groom were those who had their lamps continuously glowing. They also had foresight as they took extra oil. In the case of the foolish virgins, their lamps were not burning continuously and they lacked endurance. They once had their lamps burning, but now the case is different. So there was certainly a difference between those who were wise in the end and those who were foolish.

In the days of Noah you will realize, it was only his family which was ear marked to be saved;

"But Noah found favor in Yahweh's eyes... The earth was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. God saw the earth, and saw that it was corrupt, for all flesh had corrupted their way on the earth. God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them. Behold, I will destroy them with the earth... I, even I, do bring the flood of waters on this earth, to destroy all flesh having the breath of life from under the sky. Everything that is in the earth will die. But I will establish my covenant with you. You shall come into the ship, you, your sons, your wife, and your sons' wives with you." Genesis 6:8, 11-13, 17-18

According to the scripture above, God had already passed Judgement on the wicked and saved Noah because he was the only righteous man he could find on the face of the earth. God already knew because man was rebellious, there was no way he was going to repent. Noah therefore preached as a testimony against them.

In the case of Esau, he did not only loose his blessing, but first of all despised his birthright and then sold it. He therefore lost his blessing because it was tied to his birthright. So when he lost his birth right, the loss of the

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blessings was just a consequence of his actions;

*"Jacob said, "First, sell me your birthright. Esau said, "Behold, I am about to die. What good is the birthright to me? Jacob said, "Swear to me first." He swore to him. He sold his birthright to Jacob."
Genesis 25:31-33*

*"He said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? For he has supplanted me these two times. He took away my birthright. See, now he has taken away my blessing." He said, "Haven't you reserved a blessing for me?"
Genesis 27:36*

Paul makes this clear to us in the New Testament in his letter to the Thessalonians. He makes us realize that, people are normally deceived and disobedient because truth was first presented to them and they rejected it. When we reject truth, we have no option than to pay heed to lies;

"and with all deception of wickedness for those who are being lost, because they didn't receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Because of this, God sends them a working of error, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be judged who didn't

Come out and be separate

believe the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

There is a time God finally gives up on a man when he continuously lives in disobedience. The reason many will be judged is simply because they were given an opportunity to escape and they ignored it. Those who will be saved in the end are those who have chosen to obey the truth now. So the unrighteous will continue in their wickedness without understanding (Daniel 12:10). This is why right from now the Lord continues His separation process in the Spirit, delivering the righteous from temptation and reserving the wicked to be punished (2 Peter 2:9).

We are however advised in 2 Timothy 3:1-5 to turn away or separate ourselves from the following vices as it will characterize the end-time;

"But know this, that in the last days, grievous times will come. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, no lovers of good, traitors, headstrong, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God;

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holding a form of godliness, but having denied the power thereof. Turn away from these, also."
2 Timothy 3:1-5

CHAPTER 4

CALLED TO ENDURE

"Because iniquity will be multiplied, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end, the same will be saved." Matthew 24:12-13

There is a call for us believers to endure till the end. This presupposes that we will in one way or the other in our Christian journey face circumstances which will necessitate that we remember and pay heed to the above scripture. As unpleasant as certain ordinances of man may seem, we are to submit to them provided it does not go contrary to the word of God; "Therefore

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subject yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether to the king, as supreme" 1 Peter 2:13. Christ endured even the contradiction of sinners and we are called upon to follow His steps. In all that Christ went through, He did not swear nor curse those who persecuted Him. According to the scripture below, we are called unto blessing, which makes us blessed;

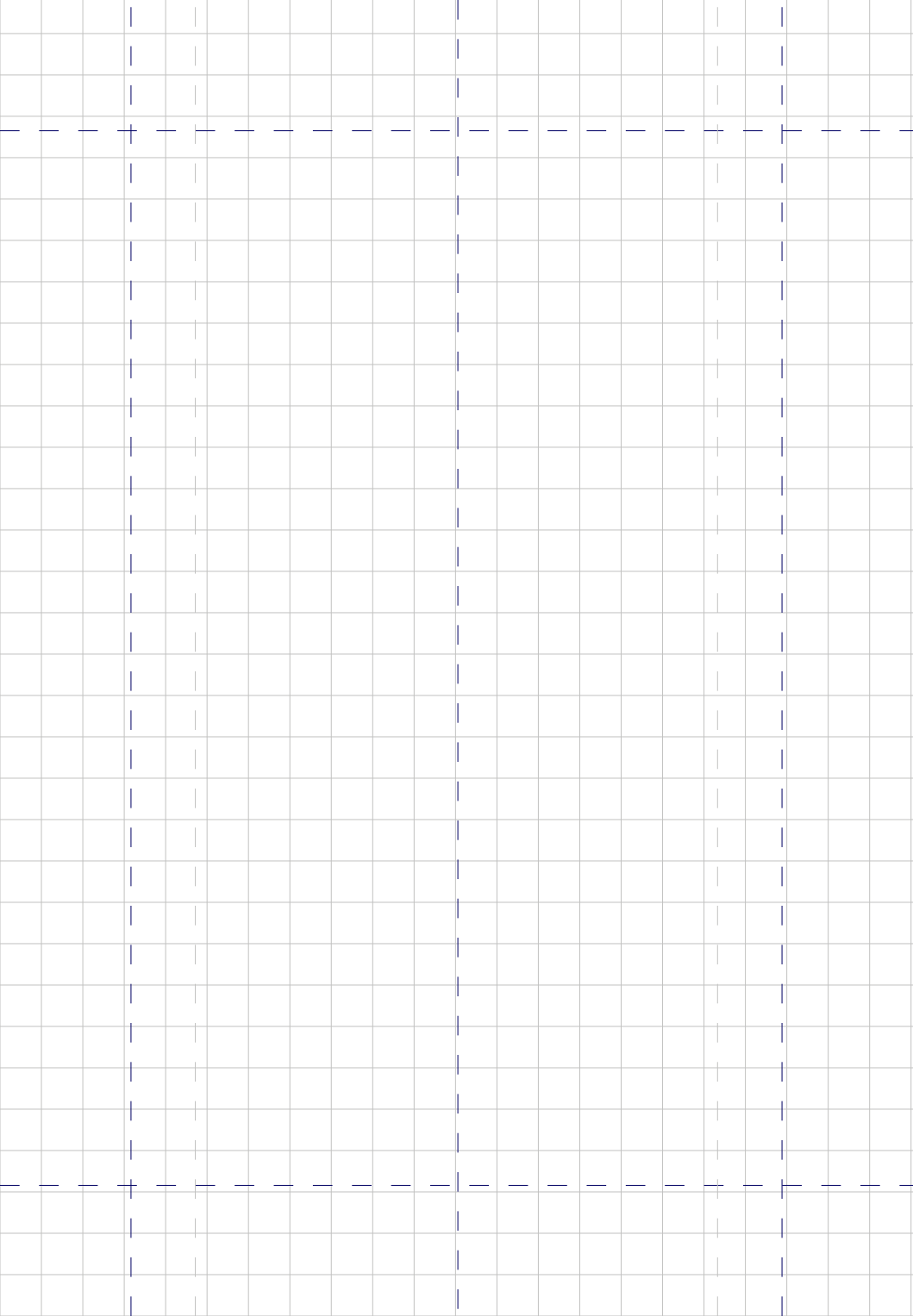
"Not rendering evil for evil, or reviling for reviling; but instead blessing; knowing that to this were you called, that you may inherit a blessing." 1 Peter 3:9

If we are therefore blessed in Christ therefore we are to bless lives and not to curse them. Let us remember the promise of God unto Abraham was, he was blessed to be a blessing. The writer of James makes this clear that, fresh and bitter water does not flow through one channel. It is either we bless or curse them. We as Christians are however called to bless people, no matter what;

"With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who are made in the image of God. Out of the same mouth comes forth blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send out from the same opening fresh and

Come out and be separate

*bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brothers, yield olives,
or a vine figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water
and fresh water." James 3:9-12*



CHAPTER 5

OBEDIENCE

The subject of obedience is very essential to our Christian lives. The scriptures makes us understand that when Christ appears the second time He will be taking vengeance on those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel;

"Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay affliction to those who afflict you, and to give relief to you who are afflicted with us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, giving vengeance to those who don't know God, and to those who don't obey the Good

News of our Lord Jesus," 2 Thessalonians 1:6-8

It is therefore imperative we make all diligence to know the will of God and to obey it. In Christ's teachings in Luke 12:47-48, He makes us to recognize that ignorance is not an excuse to disobey the will of God. From the above scripture we realize, the obedience to the gospel is in the continuous tense. This tells us that after our initial obedience to the gospel, we must press on in living out the gospel. Obedience to the gospel is therefore a continuous and every day affair.

In matters bordering on obedience, it is important for us to note that, understanding does not really play a major role. Knowing the will of God is key. This is why we are supposed to live by faith and not by sight. Though we may not understand the instructions God may be giving us at certain points in time, we should know we are to obey Him whether we understand Him or not.

There are certain things that young believers need to obey without necessarily understanding fully what they are being instructed to obey. This I believe is one of the reasons why scripture enjoins us to obey those who have the rule over us in the faith. God in His own wisdom has decided to work in man and through man,

and it must be understood as such. Those men God puts over us are supposed to be matured enough to see what the young believer cannot see. It will therefore be in the best interest of the young believer to obey those who have been set over them by the Lord whether the instructions they receive from them are fully understood or not. This however places a huge responsibility on leaders to mature and constantly be in tune with God in order to be able to know the will of God per time to also instruct others. Even in the natural sense, a baby does not know what food is good for him or her, but the adult is the one who chooses the kind of food the baby is supposed to eat. The baby without knowing the nutritional components of what he or she is eating, eats it all the same. Therefore it is always the responsibility of the adult to know what is good for the baby to provide it for the growth of the baby.

Likewise our leaders are to know what is good for us per time and to provide it for our spiritual nourishment;

"The Lord said, "Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the right times? Blessed is that servant whom his lord will find doing so when he comes. Truly I tell you, that he will set him

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over all that he has. 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. That servant, who knew his lord's will, and didn't prepare, nor do what he wanted, will be beaten with many stripes, but he who didn't know, and did things worthy of stripes, will be beaten with few stripes. To whoever much is given, of him will much be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him more will be asked." Luke 12:42-48

We can learn from scripture that, the church in Thessalonica was one of Paul's favorite if not the most favorite. This is known through the two letters Paul wrote to them.

"Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, to the assembly of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. We always give thanks to God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith and

labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father."
1 Thessalonians 1:1-3

What a way to introduce a letter. In this introduction we are left without a shadow of doubt about the level of faith and obedience of the Thessalonians. Their faith and love was so commendable, they were even an example to the Macedonians; "You became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit so that you became an example to all who believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. For from you the word of the Lord has been declared, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out; so that we need not to say anything." 1 Thessalonians 1: 6-8.

We get to know the Macedonians and their level of faith and love in 2 Corinthians 8:1-5. Whether the Macedonians learned this character from the Thessalonians or not, I believe the Thessalonians were giants in the faith and worth emulating seeing they received the word in much affliction;

"You became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit" 1 Thessalonians 1:6

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Thessalonians upon hearing Paul readily obeyed him in spite of their circumstances. Paul testified that the word worked effectually in them;

"For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of the message of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you who believe." 1 Thessalonians 2:13

In spite of Paul's commendations, he still commanded them to increase and abound in love towards one another; "and the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we also do toward you" 1 Thessalonians 3:12. For we are commanded to be perfect as our God is perfect;

"Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48

In Paul's second letter to them, the test of their level of obedience to the commands of the Apostle was that, their faith grew exceedingly as well as their charity toward one another;

"We are bound to always give thanks to God for you, brothers, even as it is appropriate, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of each and every one of you towards one another abounds"
2 Thessalonians 1:3

Paul after studying the level of obedience of the Thessalonians had confidence in the Lord concerning them that, they will live in obedience to all that they commanded them;

"We have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you both do and will do the things we command."
2 Thessalonians 3:4

This church did not doubt the identity of Paul as an apostle of God. They did not take Paul and his team's words to be from man, but from God; "For this cause we also thank God without ceasing, that, when you received from us the word of the message of God, you accepted it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the word of God, which also works in you who believe." 1 Thessalonians 2:13. This was a major secret to the growth in grace of this church. In an era whereby men even doubt whether everything in the Bible is inspired by God or not, we will do well if we take all that is written

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in it hook, line and sinker. Whether we understand everything in it or not, the call is to simply obey every instruction given, relying on the grace of God as He works in us and through us.

CHAPTER 6

OBEDIENCE TO MAN OBEDIENCE TO GOD

In this chapter we will look at how God views obedience to man as being obedience to Him. There are times some individuals say it's only God they obey, whereas disobedience to God's constituted authority is in fact disobedience to Him. The point has already been made that, God in His own wisdom has decided to work in man, through him and with him. We can therefore infer that, when we obey a man in whom God is working to do His will, then obedience to such a man is in actual fact obedience to God. Even when it comes to the secular world, we are supposed to obey our masters and those in government (1 Peter 2:13). Obeying man

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is as spiritual as obeying a direct command from God.

Obedience is one of the keys to redeeming the times and making the most out of it. Whenever we live in disobedience our spiritual advancement is normally impeded. The actual time we have to spend at any level in our spiritual life is prolonged when we live in disobedience. This is one of the reasons why most people are not where they ought to be.

Some still continue to be spiritual babes because they do not have a ready mind to know and obey the word of God. Israel spent more time in the wilderness in circles because they were disobedient to the commands of God. They should have arrived in the Promised Land way before the time they finally did. So in redeeming the times, we cannot afford to continue to live in disobedience. We mature faster when we obey every instruction God gives us.

In the following scripture we are asked to believe in the Lord and it will bring about our establishment and in His prophets and we shall prosper;

Obedience to man obedience to God

"They rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, Judah, and you inhabitants of Jerusalem: believe in Yahweh your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall you prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20

Let us note from the above scripture that, we are to believe first in God and then in **His** prophets. Remember in the previous chapters we looked at the type of prophets we have. God's prophets are those who speak what God wants us to hear but not what we want to hear. So in effect when we listen and obey them, we are obeying God. In our days we are supposed to take what the prophets and the apostles wrote down in the Bible very serious and to obey. It is by doing so that the life of Christ will be activated in our lives for all to see (2 Peter 3:1-2, 2 Peter 1:16-21). In a period of relativity, we are called to pay heed to the above scriptures and to obey the godly men in our times who correctly interpret these words unto us. In our times the men we are to obey are those who will not tell us what we want to hear but what God knows we need. Jesus told the disciples that whosoever receives them receives Him;

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"He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me." Matthew 10:40

Those sent by God are representatives of God. As such instructions from them are deemed to be instructions from God. How can we know in our times that a man is sent from God? One can be known to be sent from God as already indicated, when he operates within the confines of God's revealed will for us in the scriptures. This is why Paul told Timothy to guard what had being entrusted into his hands;

*"Hold the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed to you, guard through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us."
2 Timothy 1:13-14*

And as the writer of Jude puts it, "..... Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" Jude 3. This presupposes that **the faith** has already being defined in the scriptures. We will be save in our interpretation of scripture if we match what we read with the life style of those who wrote it. The life of the apostles gives us a hint as to what they meant by what they wrote.

Obedience to man obedience to God

Paul in his letter to the Corinthians said some wanted to know whether Christ was speaking in him (2 Corinthians 13:3). We should have no doubts as to the authenticity of what Paul wrote, as he makes us to understand that the life he was living was of Christ (Galatians 2:20). No wonder he could confidently tell the Corinthians to be imitators of him as he was of Christ;

"Be imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ."
1 Corinthians 11:1

In a way, what he said may not be clearly understood by us now because we have the whole scriptures at our disposal. The background of the Corinthians was largely pagan without prior knowledge of the Old Testament (though some of the believers there were Jews). Therefore Paul's message was more meaningful since he allowed Christ to live through him. In other words if one followed the example of Paul, he would have been following Christ indirectly. This places a huge responsibility on us as believers and most importantly our leaders to live out a practical Christian life in order for others to emulate.

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Imagine you go to a place to preach the gospel and there is a huge language barrier, before the people of the place would have understanding of the gospel, they will first depend on your practical way of life before they can really learn to read the entire scriptures for themselves. By this I am not implying that our human lives should be the yard stick of God's total will, but to underscore the importance for us to live out Scripture in order for unbelievers to see our good deeds and glorify our father which is in heaven (Matthew 5:16).

JOSHUA'S OBEDIENCE AND COMMAND

God asked Joshua to obey all the commands of Moses in the laws;

"Only be strong and very courageous, to observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded you. Don't turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may have good success wherever you go." Joshua 1:7

The question we asked is, why God did not say, 'obey the commandments I gave to Moses' or 'obey my commandments in the laws'? This simply tells us that God chooses to work through man to convey His will to men.

Obedience to man obedience to God

Later in Joshua 1:16-18, Joshua also commanded the officers and the people. We learn from the scripture that, the people gave a response to obey the commands Joshua gives them.; “They answered Joshua, saying, All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. According as we listened to Moses in all things, so will we listen to you: only Yahweh your God be with you, as he was with Moses. Whoever he be who shall rebel against your commandment, and shall not listen to your words in all that you command him, he shall be put to death: only be strong and of good courage.”

ELISHA'S COMMAND

In Elisha's ministry, he delegated some of his prophetic duties to one of the sons of the prophets. Elijah was originally supposed to anoint Jehu (1 Kings 19:16) but he decided to delegate it to Elisha who in turn delegated it to one of the prophets;

"Elisha the prophet called one of the sons of the prophets, and said to him, Gird up your waist, and take this vial of oil in your hand, and go to Ramoth Gilead. When you come there, look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi, and go in, and

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make him arise up from among his brothers, and carry him to an inner chamber. Then take the vial of oil, and pour it on his head, and say, Thus says Yahweh, I have anointed you king over Israel. Then open the door, and flee, and don't wait. So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth Gilead." 2 Kings 9:1-4

From the above scripture we learn that the young prophet was to carry out the prophetic assignment as if he was the one who had received the direction right from God. He went and did exactly as he was told, in obedience to the commands of Elisha. In effect the obedience of the young prophet was obedience to God as God honored the words of the prophet;

"He arose, and went into the house; and he poured the oil on his head, and said to him, Thus says Yahweh, the God of Israel, I have anointed you king over the people of Yahweh, even over Israel." 2 Kings 9:6

Again there was a time Elisha gave a command to Joash to shoot some arrows;

"Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness of which he died: and Joash the king of Israel came down to him, and wept over him, and said, My father, my father,

Obedience to man obedience to God

the chariots of Israel and the horsemen of it! Elisha said to him, Take bow and arrows; and he took to him bow and arrows. He said to the king of Israel, Put your hand on the bow; and he put his hand [on it]. Elisha laid his hands on the king's hands. He said, Open the window eastward; and he opened it. Then Elisha said, Shoot; and he shot. He said, Yahweh's arrow of victory, even the arrow of victory over Syria; for you shall strike the Syrians in Aphek, until you have consumed them. He said, Take the arrows; and he took them. He said to the king of Israel, Smite on the ground; and he struck thrice, and stayed. The man of God was angry with him, and said, You should have struck five or six times: then had you struck Syria until you had consumed it, whereas now you shall strike Syria but thrice." 2 Kings 13:14-19

We notice from the scripture that, Elisha did not say "thus saith the Lord". He only gave a simple command to Joash to shoot (without telling him the number of times he was to do it). Joash shot thrice and stopped without hearing the command to stop. Now Elisha was furious because he did not obey his command to shoot continuously. At first sight, wouldn't it sound like Elisha was being too harsh on Joash? Just because Elisha did not quote God in his command to Joash, does not

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mean he was not speaking the mind of God. This teaches us that, we should sometimes be careful to discern the voice of God through his servants and to obey accordingly. Failure to discern the voice of God is certainly not an excuse.

Another example to help us understand this fact is the scenario of “a certain man of the sons of the prophets” who gave a command unto his neighbor **in the word of the Lord**(KJV);

"A certain man of the sons of the prophets said to his fellow by the word of Yahweh, Please strike me. The man refused to strike him. Then said he to him, Because you have not obeyed the voice of Yahweh, behold, as soon as you are departed from me, a lion shall kill you. As soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and killed him. Then he found another man, and said, Please strike me. The man struck him, smiting and wounding him." 1 Kings 20:35-37

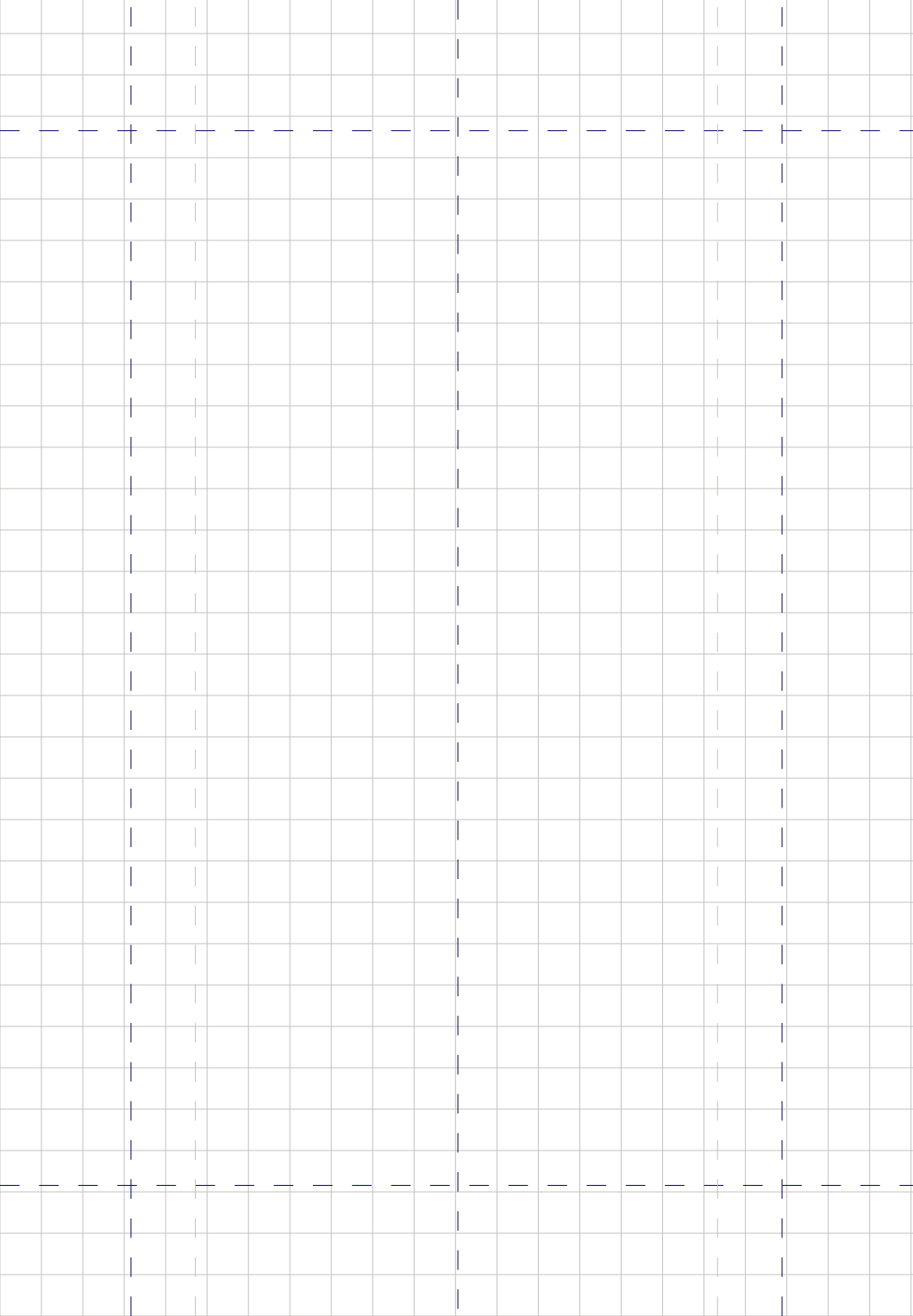
According to this scenario, the son of the prophet did not quote “Thus saith the Lord” but scripture tells us he was speaking in the word of the Lord (KJV). The command he gave was to be obeyed whether it made sense or not. Failure on the part of the first person

Obedience to man obedience to God

called for the punishment of God upon him. However the second man obeyed and as a result was free. We are therefore expected from these examples to discern the voice of God from his servants and to obey whether those commands are pre-fixed with “thus saith the Lord” or not.

PAUL'S COMMAND

In Paul's letters we are being made to know the relationship which existed between him and two of his associates namely Timothy and Titus. We learn from Titus 1:4-5, Paul delegated his apostolic authority to Titus to ordain elders in the church at Crete. Though Titus did not receive a clear cut command (directly) from God, his obedience to the command of Paul was binding. God indeed does work through human agency and as such obedience to man in some circumstance is obedience to God.



CHAPTER 7

TREASURE GOD'S WORD

"Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to Yahweh's law..." Psalm 119

From this Psalm we can learn a lot of truth regarding the word of God. The following are some of the things we learn from it;

- We are to keep God's precepts **diligently**.
- When men rise against us and even speak evil against us, we should rather turn to the Lord and meditate upon His word. Thus, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:2)

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- We are to observe the word of the Lord **with our whole heart**.
- Our hearts should be more inclined towards obeying God's word by His grace and not covetousness.
- We are to keep company with men and women who fear God (keep His commands).
- It is in God's faithfulness that He afflicts us (afflictions are not bad as some want us to believe). God permits these in the life of His children as forms of trying our faith so that patience can be produced in us (James 1:3)
- We are to meditate upon the word all day just as Joshua was commanded (Joshua 1:8) when this takes place in our hearts and minds, most of the sins committed in thought will be avoided, as well as other sins.
- We will also become wiser than our enemies by not paying evil with evil but rather paying evil with good.
- The word of God will give us wisdom by becoming a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. By becoming a **light unto our path**, it means we possess

Treasure God's word

- the wisdom to know our destination and the way to that destination. Also, as a **lamp unto our feet** the word of God helps us take the right steps towards our destination.
- We are to love the commandments of God far above material gains. For material gains can never be compared with the true riches of God (Luke 12:21).
- We are to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit in us, as the word works effectually in us to bring about illumination and understanding by panting after God like David (Psalm 42:1).
- When we allow God to order our steps in His word, sin will not have dominion over us since we will not be servants to it (John 8:34, Romans 6:14).
- We are to love His word to the extent that tears will continue to run down our cheeks because men do not fear and obey God. Jeremiah in Jeremiah 13:17 and Paul in Acts 20:19-31 understood Psalm 119.
- The zeal of the Lord should consume us when we see that men do not fear God.

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Scripture makes us understand, we are to treasure the word of God (KJV), contrary to the life of unregenerate men who despise the word of God;

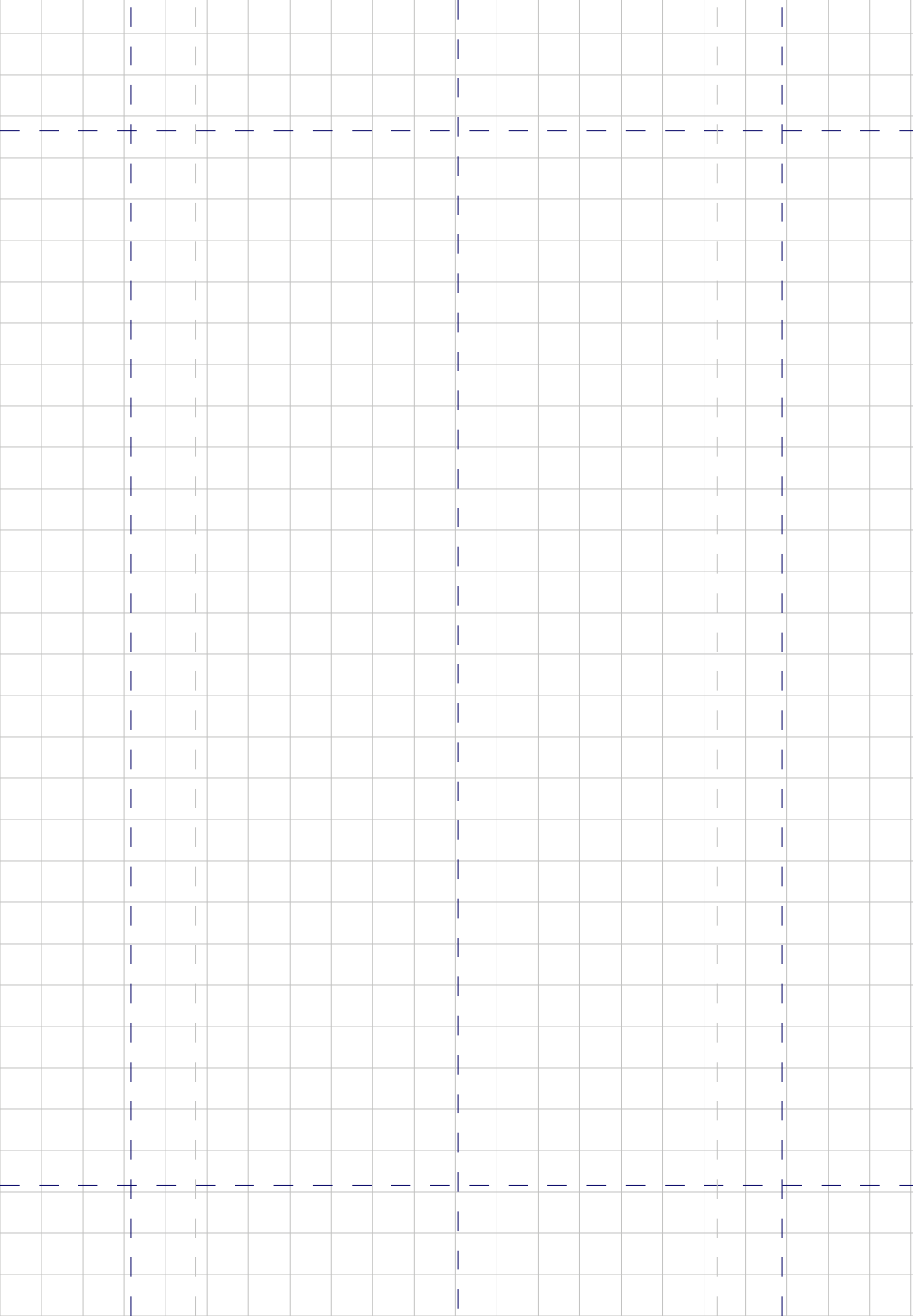
"For you who believe therefore is the honor, but for those who are disobedient, 'The stone which the builders rejected, has become the chief cornerstone, and, 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense.'"

"For they stumble at the word, being disobedient, to which also they were appointed." 1Pet. 2:7-8

God wanted the Israelites in the wilderness as well as everywhere they go, to obey all of His ordinances; "and he said, 'If you will diligently listen to the voice of Yahweh your God, and will do that which is right in his eyes, and will pay attention to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you, which I have put on the Egyptians; for I am Yahweh who heals you.'" Exodus 15:26. This was intended to make them a peculiar people upon obedience to God; "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.'" These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel. Moses came

and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him. All the people answered together, and said, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do." Moses reported the words of the people to Yahweh. Yahweh said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever." Moses told the words of the people to Yahweh. Yahweh said to Moses, "Go to the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments, and be ready against the third day; for on the third day Yahweh will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai." Exodus 19:5-11.

Most of us normally quote 1 Peter 2:19 without really wanting to live in obedience to God. The world will not see this peculiarity if we do not live in total obedience to God's word. If we accept the word of God in His entirety, then we set the seal that God is true; "He who has received His witness has set His seal to this, that God is true." John 3:33. Men may not believe the divine inspiration of the Bible, but we His children are to obey all that is instructed therein. Let's however consider the thought of Warren W. Wiersbe that "the word of God is true but not every statement is true". Thus rightly dividing the truth is key.



CHAPTER 8

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The second coming of Christ is a very important aspect of the gospel as it relates to the resurrection. Christ according to the scriptures is coming for those who are eagerly waiting for Him. This is not an issue of wishing for His return but a conscious and enthusiastic longing for His glorious appearing;

"Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment so Christ also, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are eagerly waiting for him for salvation." Hebrews 9:27-28

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"Searching for who or what kind of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, pointed to, when he predicted the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that would follow them." 1Peter 1:11-22

The above scriptures say it all. When we are eagerly waiting for the return of the Lord it will affect the way we live our lives. Surprisingly most of us believers do not seem to be ready for His coming. We are so much engrossed in the pursuance of material things such that we no longer have eternity in view. When we live as those with eternity as their main focus, though we use the things in the world (material) we will not engage in excesses ("and those who use the world, as not using it to the fullest. For the mode of this world passes away." 1 Corinthians 7:31).

The level of our consciousness and enthusiasm for Christ's second return is directly proportional to our level of love for the Lord(demonstrated in evangelism and discipleship) thereby hastening His return. When one has a loved one and gets the knowledge that his or her loved one will be coming over, there will certainly be serious preparations that will go on awaiting the arrival of the loved one. The house will be put in order and personal cleanness such as bathing and putting on of

The second coming of Christ

nice apparel will be observed. Likewise when we are waiting for the Lord we will put the house of God in order, win souls and prepare them for the Lord. The leaders will also be careful about what is being taught in the house of God. They are to preach and teach the whole counsel of God, as that is the sure way to sanitize the house of God. Individuals regardless of their position are to purify themselves in anticipation for the return of Christ;

"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it is not yet revealed what we will be. But we know that, when he is revealed, we will be like him; for we will see him just as he is. Everyone who has this hope set on him purifies himself, even as he is pure." 1John 3:2-3

So in waiting for the return of Christ, we do not sit and fold our arms, but rather we are supposed to work towards that end. This working as already hinted, entails living a holy life and evangelizing the lost by the wisdom of God. Scripture makes us know, blessed are those who are pure in heart for they will see God (Matthew 5:8). Those who are pure in heart are those who will be able to look up to Jesus always for their source of strength in these perilous times and they will see Him when they look for Him (Hebrews 9:28). As we

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wait for the Lord we are being admonished to follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see God; “Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man will see the Lord,” Hebrews 12:14, for blessed are the peace makers for they are the children of God (Matthew 5:9).

CHAPTER 9

THAT WHICH WILL REMAIN

*"looking carefully lest there be any man who falls
short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness
springing up trouble you, and many be defiled by it"*
Hebrew 12:15

From the above scripture, we are to ensure, we do not lose the grace of God. The grace of God keeps us in the will of God in our Christian journey. Many problems arise in the church when members are not filled with grace. When we have grace, we will be able to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear;

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"Therefore, receiving a Kingdom that can't be shaken, let us have grace, through which we serve God acceptably, with reverence and awe," Hebrews 12:28

This presupposes, there is no way one can please God outside His grace. If we try to do it with our human effort they will as well amount to filthy rags before God. If our own works could save us, there wouldn't have been the need for Christ to die. The only thing in the end which will endure is that which is born of the Spirit of God and not human endeavor. The grace of God which is the product of God's love and Spirit is what will see us through in this end-time. Human efforts have limits and will certainly fail one day. The grace of God however is limitless and can take us all the way as we cooperate with the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Scriptures make us know, Jesus was full of grace and truth;

"Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. John testified about him. He cried out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He

That which will remain

who comes after me has surpassed me, for he was before me. From his fullness we all received grace upon grace." John 1:13-16

Not only was he full of grace and truth, but He made grace available to us who believe, to qualify us for more grace. The writer of first Peter makes us know, God is the one who possesses **all grace** and the fact that there is **true grace**;

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time casting all your worries on him, because he cares for you. Be sober and self-controlled. Be watchful. Your adversary the devil, walks around like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Withstand him steadfast in your faith, knowing that your brothers who are in the world are undergoing the same sufferings. But may the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. To him be the glory and the power forever and ever. Amen. Through Silvanus, our faithful brother, as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand." 1 Peter 5:6-12

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This implies that there is **false grace**. Paul makes us aware, the true grace of God reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. The grace of God works righteousness and holiness in us and directs us into eternal life;

"that as sin reigned in death, even so grace might reign through righteousness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Romans 5:21

This grace multiplies or abounds through the knowledge of God and Christ; "Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord seeing that his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue" 2 Peter 1:2-3. For that matter, if we want to grow in grace, we should endeavor to know God more and more as well as Christ. Knowing God more and more is by studying the scriptures and meditating upon it so that He can reveal Himself to us.

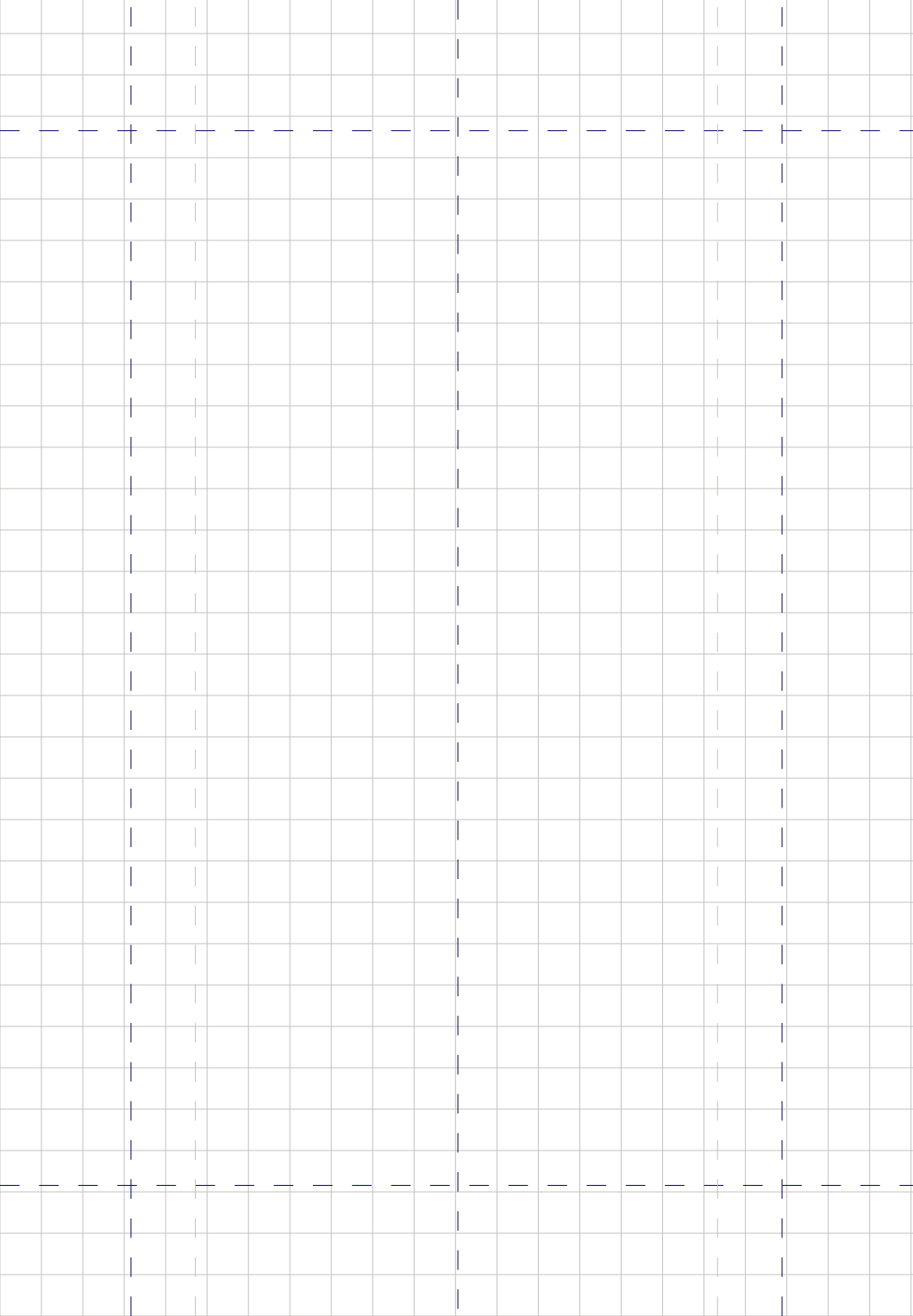
We are commanded in Ephesians 5:1-2 to imitate God as well as learn of Christ just as children imitate their earthly parents. As we search through the pages of scripture let us take note of the life style of Christ and let

That which will remain

it teach us to do likewise; "But you did not learn Christ that way" Ephesians 4:20-24. True knowledge of Christ is actually the demonstration of the life of Christ in our lives;

"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. But whoever keeps his word, God's love has most certainly been perfected in him. This is how we know that we are in him: he who says he remains in him ought himself also to walk just like he walked" 1 John 2:3-6

As a consequence, the word of God must be made concrete for men to see and glorify God. Hallelujah to the Lamb of God, whom we love, worship and adore.



CHAPTER 10

WALK IN THE LIGHT

Scripture makes it abundantly clear that we were once darkness (not just in darkness), but now are light; “For you were **once darkness**, but **are now light** in the Lord. Walk as children of light for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth proving what is well pleasing to the Lord.” Ephesians 5:8-10. Christ Himself even told His disciples, they were the light of the world. Thus, they were to mirror the nature of their father on earth. Since the mortal man cannot see God (who is a spirit), our lives are supposed to be such that men can know and serve God when they look at us. Hence Jesus said;

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"Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Matthew 5:16

This is why scripture makes us recognize in Hebrews 1:3 that Jesus Christ is the express image of the invisible God as He was God made flesh according to 1 Timothy 3:16. Since the father is invisible, He came to reveal the father to us. Therefore the father can only be known and seen in the light of the son. Jesus Himself also declared that, so far as He was in the world He was (is) the light of the world (John 8:12). The father sent Him to give light to man (John 1:4-9). He later told the disciples that as the father had sent Him, so was He sending them (John 20:21). Isn't it wonderful to know, Christ has made it possible for us to be partakers of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4). He can therefore be seen by the world through our lives as He now lives in us by His Spirit.

If we are light, then let us walk as such and not share fellowship with the unfruitful works of the kingdom of darkness. Rather we are to expose them; "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather even reprove them." Ephesians 5:11. Walking in the light means having fellowship with the father and

with the son;

"That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us. Yes, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you, that our joy may be fulfilled. This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and don't tell the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin." 1 John 1:3-7

This knowledge of sharing in fellowship with the father and the son as well as other true believers is what makes our joy full. There is an ongoing purification of our lives by the blood of Jesus if we continue in this kind of fellowship. Clearly, we cannot claim to be sharing fellowship with the father and the son and still walk in darkness. This will only amount to self-deception.

At this point let me make it known that the light of God (or Christ) is the *true light* as in line with the scripture below;

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"The true light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world." John 1:9

The above scripture presupposes that, there can be a false light. Satan and his cohorts have masqueraded themselves as angels of light and ministers of righteousness with the main goal of deceiving the sons of men. In Isaiah 50:11 scripture gives us the knowledge that some men are able to kindle their own fire and walk in their own light; "Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who gird yourselves about with firebrands; walk you in the flame of your fire, and among the brands that you have kindled. This shall you have of my hand; you shall lie down in sorrow." These two sources are false. The only true light is the light of God.

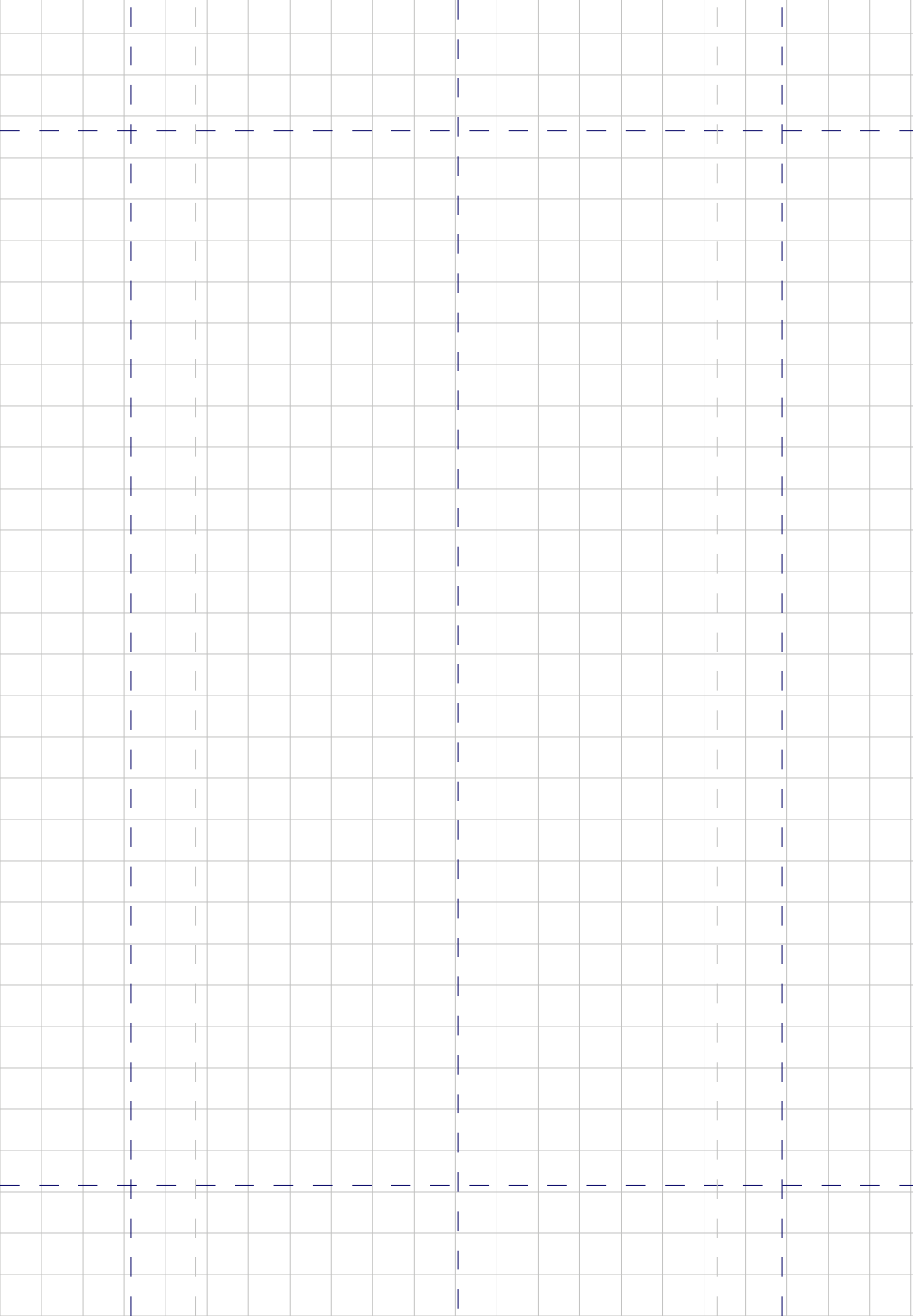
Most problems will be solved in the house of God between brethren if all of us walk in the Spirit or in the light. Unity in the body of Christ is only achieved by us all endeavoring to walk in the light. Walking in darkness or the flesh only leads to confusion and causes men to sin. Conversely, a walk in the light or in the Spirit guarantees good virtues such as those spelt out in Galatians 5:22-25.

Walk in the light

At the end of the age when Christ shall return, it is only those of us walking in the light who will not be caught unaware. To those who walk in the dark, He will come as a thief in the night. We are therefore supposed to walk in the light watching and being sober;

"For you yourselves know well that the day of the Lord comes like a thief in the night. For when they are saying, 'Peace and safety,' then sudden destruction will come on them, like birth pains on a pregnant woman; and they will in no way escape. But you, brothers, aren't in darkness, that the day should overtake you like a thief. You are all children of light, and children of the day. We don't belong to the night, nor to darkness, so then let's not sleep, as the rest do, but let's watch and be sober." 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6

Amen.



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 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 beware of people who preach Another Gospel, Another Jesus and Another Spirit as in line with 2 Corinthians 11:1-4.

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CHRISTIAN MODESTY

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