PRECIPITANTS OF REVIVAL



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 Mercy Adu. You are indelible in the annals of Revealed Oracles of God.

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INTRODUCTION

There are so many people these days whose faith have been destroyed by some venomous preaching. These people once held on to sound biblical doctrine, but now the story is different. Children of God once revered God and made holiness an imperative. However some false teachers have arisen and discouraged many from pursuina holiness through negligence. Has Christianity become any better by refusing to follow in the faith of our fathers? Let those who stand at the crossroads ask of the ancient paths where the right way (Jeremiah 6:16). Many have massaged the scriptures for the sake of convenience. They have failed to draw a clear-cut distinction between that which is holy, and that which is profane. It is the duty of the preacher to cast light on profanity and to disgrace doubt in the house of God. Some have opined that since we are no longer under the law, people should not be instructed as to what to do, and what not to do in the house of God. Of course we cannot build again what has been destroyed, but to such misguided souls I have a word. Should we not exhort discipline in the house of God? Should there not be reproof, rebuke and correction in the house of God (2 Timothy 4:2)?

God is seeking for a man who will be faithful to His word, to turn away the hearts of His Children from evil. He is seeking for a man who would make the distinction clear between that which is holy and that which is profane. The justice of God demands that sin be punished. In order to avert the punishment or wrath of God, His people will have to be warned of their evil ways so they could turn from such ways. When this happens, then the wrath and judgment of God could then be averted. Therefore, to avert His judgment upon a people, He always seeks for someone who would faithfully warn His people. We see this truth in some parts of scripture. Although God intended to destroy Nineveh, nevertheless He changed His mind about His intended plan when the people turned away from their wicked ways upon the faithful preaching of Jonah.

Although a number of Bible scholars have written on the subject of Biblical revival, this book is however not intended to merely duplicate what others have written on this subject matter. The spirit of this piece is to offer a different dimension and approach to discerning the need for revival in our age. The book simply seeks to answer the question, when is it ripe for us to seek revival? The need for revival presupposes that hitherto something was living, and is now inactive and as such requires resuscitation. The style of this book is that of an activation of critical areas in our Christian lives which are vital to facilitating a God-sent revival. No one will seek for revival if in the first place s/he does not see the need for it. The book therefore demonstrates to the reader the conditions necessary for one to seek for revival both at the personal and corporate level.

The crux of this piece is to exalt Christ in the life of the believer and to put Him in His rightful place in the church. The book diagnosis that the preaching and projection of the life of Christ in the church of the living God is largely missing. Some peripheral issues have rather been exalted in the place of Christ. Christlikeness is not the main focus of most Christians in this generation. If it had been, we would have been a different breed of people, maintaining our peculiarity as God intended it to be through Christ. If we really need a revival, then we should love what Christ loves, and hate what He hates. He is to take the centre stage in our lives. Every other emphasis in the church of the living God must give way to the king of glory.

Chapter **I**

When it's ripe to seek God

In this chapter, I will strive to bring to our consciousness, the need for us to seek God. It is possible we "go to church" but we do not seek Him. What does it really mean to seek God? It is important that we know when it is really vital for us to cry out to God and to seek Him. There are some indicators which I will like to point out in subsequent paragraphs, to help us know that in seeking for a revival or restoration, seeking God is very vital. The prophet Hosea declares that there is a time set for one to seek God;

"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, Reap according to kindness. Break up your fallow ground; For it is time to seek Yahweh, Until he comes and rains righteousness on you" Hosea 10:12.

This is in consonance with the preacher's assertion that there is time for everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1). Thus, there is also a time to seek the Lord. It is time to seek the Lord when righteousness is relegated to the background and vanity pompously takes the centre stage.

A number of sins were recorded against the house of Israel by the prophet of God, giving us the picture of an evil generation. In Hosea's day, people took bribe in the place of judgement thereby perverting judgement. By trampling upon the poor, there was a need for the people of God to seek Him. It is vital noting that the justice of God demands that sin be judged. So whenever sin begins to increase in the land, then there is the indication of a looming judgment from God if nothing is done about the sins of the people. The wise men in such a generation will begin to seek to avert the judgment of God by seeking the mercies of God. This can only be achieved by preaching Christ to the people

so that they might live. Christ saved us so we will be holy and conform to His very image:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love" Ephesians 1:3-4

Therefore if we are not living according to that purpose, then it is really ripe for us to seek the Lord. I see this as timely especially in our generation. One needs no rocket scientist to inform him or her that we are living in a crooked and perverse generation. The Bible has foretold that we are living in such an age:

"that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you are seen as lights in the world" Philippians 2:15.

However, in the midst of such gross darkness, the apostle in these verses calls us to shine forth as light to the glory of our Father in heaven. Besides, there is the

need to seek God in order to avert the judgment of God upon our lives. According to scripture (see Colossians 3:6; Ephesians 5:6), the wrath of God is going to be poured upon those who gave themselves to disobedience. According Ephesians 5:14-16 we are to "...watch carefully how you walk, not as unwise, but as wise; redeeming the time, because the days are evil". It is indeed time to seek God.

To illustrate the point that God's judgment is averted when one humbles himself and seeks the face of God, Rehoboam comes to mind:

"It happened, when the kingdom of Rehoboam was established, and he was strong, that he forsook the law of Yahweh, and all Israel with him. It happened in the fifth year of king Rehoboam, that Shishak king of Egypt came up against Ierusalem, because they had trespassed against Yahweh, with twelve hundred chariots, and sixty thousand horsemen. . . . Thus says Yahweh, You have forsaken me, therefore have I also left you in the hand of Shishak. Then the princes of Israel and the king humbled themselves; and they said, Yahweh is righteous. When Yahweh saw that they humbled themselves, the word of Yahweh came to Shemaiah, saying, They have humbled themselves: I will

not destroy them; but 9 will grant them some deliverance, and my wrath shall not be poured out on Jerusalem by the hand of Shishak. Nevertheless they shall be his servants, that they may know my service, and the service of the kingdoms of the countries. So Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of Yahweh, and the treasures of the king's house: he took all away: he took away also the shields of gold which Solomon had made. King Rehoboam made in their place shields of brass, and committed them to the hands of the captains of the guard, who kept the door of the king's house. ... When he humbled himself, the wrath of Yahweh turned from him, so as not to destroy him altogether: and moreover in Judah there were good things found. So king Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem, and reigned..." 2 Chronicles 12:1-14

This scripture demonstrates the possible dangers associated with the blessings God bestows upon us. There is the lingering temptation to abandon the word of God when all is well with us. The consequences of this neglect is often linked to our powerlessness in spiritual warfare. We may claim to be waging a warfare, but the truth is that we are always defeated in our battles in the face of collisions with the temptations

Satan spews at us. We woefully fail to overcome the devil not because the power of God is not efficacious enough. Rather, because we abandon Him. Nevertheless if we decide to seek His face and turn to Him, we will continue to be victorious over the enemy since through Him we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37). To further illustrate for the purposes of clarity, God will surely give us rest from our labours when we have sought Him:

"Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of Yahweh his God: for he took away the foreign altars, and the high places, and broke down the pillars, and hewed down the Asherim, and commanded Judah to seek Yahweh, the God of their fathers, and to do the law and the commandment. Also he took away out of all the cities of Judah the high places and the sun images: and the kingdom was quiet before him. He built fortified cities in Judah; for the land was quiet, and he had no war in those years, because Yahweh had given him rest. For he said to Judah, Let us build these cities, and make about them walls, and towers, gates, and bars; the land is yet before us, because we have sought Yahweh our God; we have sought him, and he has given us rest on every side. So they built and prospered" 2 Chronicles 14:2-7

Asa's radical overthrow of idolatry in Judah and commandment for Israel to seek the Lord yielded some lasting dividends. It was evident that his actions brought about peace and prosperity to the land. We therefore learn that in seeking God, the peace of God that surpasses all understanding becomes our portion (Philippians 4:7). Moreover, we become secured by the barricades of God's love and protection.

The mystery behind God planting us on different continents, countries, cities, towns and villages is so that we will seek Him. Whatever we need to know about God is revealed in nature itself to cause us to seek him. "The God who made the world and all things in it, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, doesn't dwell in temples made with hands, neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself gives to all life and breath, and all things. He made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the surface of the earth, having determined appointed seasons, and the boundaries of their dwellings, that they should seek the Lord, if perhaps they might reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us" Acts 17:24-27. The writer tells us that by placing us in exact places in the world, God expects us to seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him so we could eventually find Him. He therefore commands all men everywhere to repent since whatever we need to know about Him has been revealed to us already. Thus, all must seek God.

Paul makes us to understand that God is not far from us. It is God who has set the boundaries upon the face of the earth. He has determined that we should have nations and kingdoms and it is He who has determined that we should live in the land of our birth. Because he determined that we be born in specific locations, He commands that we seek Him everywhere on the face of this earth. In his days, Paul cried against the people of Athens to turn from idols to the worship of God, showing that it was not only the people of Israel who were commanded to seek the face of God;

"The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked. But now he commands that all people everywhere should repent, because he has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he has ordained; of which he has given assurance to all men, in that he has raised him from the dead" Acts 17:30. The Lord per Malachi 3:1-6 reveals Himself to those who seek Him; "Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, he comes!" says Yahweh of Armies. But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like launderer's soap; and he will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi, and refine them as gold and silver; and they shall offer to Yahweh offerings in righteousness. Then the offering of Judah and Jerusalem will be pleasant to Yahweh, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years...."

God has no business with anyone who would not consciously seek Him by putting things right between them and the Lord, so that the Messiah would save His people. After fulfilling this purpose in commanding the Israelites to repent of their evil ways and to serve the Lord, Christ did show up. When the Lord visits his house, there is surely going to be some purifying, especially the house of Levi. Although the house of Levi would symbolize the leaders in the house of God, it equally refers to us believers in general going by the

fact that we are a royal priesthood. However, the scripture could largely be attributed to the leaders seeing that he further states that it is when the house of Levi is purified that the whole house of Israel would be purified. Thus, change in the agenda of God starts from leadership. When the people of Israel sought God, He sent His son Jesus Christ. When Jesus came, His main agenda was to purify His people. Scripture states that He was to save His people from their sins. When you seek the face of God, you will surely be found of Him. How will we know that we have found Him? The fire of God will be given in our lives, which comes to purge our lives. The fire of God comes to refine, and purify us so that the calling that is upon us can be fulfilled. This call is to live a holy life (Ephesians 1:3-4).

Scripture has it that "The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger, But those who seek Yahweh shall not lack any good thing" Ps 34:10. Lions continue to seek their prey until they are successful. Even in such pursuits there are times they are not able to lay hold on whatever they pursued. But for those who seek God, they will not lack any good thing. Any good thing could mean anything, but looking at the scripture in that context, if we seek God then we are made to understand that we will be

filled with God or His spirit. The Bible in Contemporary English renders it as "if we seek God we shall be full of God because the lion seeks for meat". There is something in particular that the lion seeks after, teaching us that when we seek God, we should seek that we be filled with God. The bottom line is, it is time for us to seek God since most of us are not full of God. When evil permeates every part of our society then it is time for us to seek God.

Chapter 2

<u>Restoration</u> <u>of Peculiarity</u>

Moving on, I would like to show the importance of being separate from the world by maintaining our peculiarity as individuals in the sight of God, and as a corporate body. We sometimes lose touch with God when we break certain basic principles of our covenanted relationship with Him. In this chapter, I will show how we lose our essence in the society by sacrificing our peculiarity. The peculiarity of the church should be restored. It is in this that we rediscover our potency to affect the world around us.

"This day Yahweh your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances: you shall therefore keep and do them with all your heart, and with all your soul. You have declared Yahweh this day to be your God, and that you would walk in his ways, and keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his ordinances, and listen to his voice: and Yahweh has declared you this day to be a people for his own possession, as he has promised you, and that you should keep all his commandments; and to make you high above all nations that he has made, in praise, and in name, and in honor; and that you may be a holy people to Yahweh your God, as he has spoken" Deuteronomy 26:16-19.

God's agenda here for the Israelites was to make them a peculiar people and to lift them above all the nations. Moreover, the agenda of God for His church is revealed as follows;

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself

a peculiar people, zealous of good works" Titus 2:11-14 KIV

Equally, God's agenda for us Christians is to make us a special people. Apart from God's peculiar agenda for groups. He also has one for us as individuals. It is therefore possible that God has an agenda for you which is special. A search of the scriptures reveal that God had special agendas for some specific individuals. A notable example is the prophet Samuel. He was a covenanted child, who fulfilled God's purpose for his life. However, there are times that we can reduce ourselves by our own deeds into mere persons. God told the Prophet Jeremiah that before he was formed in the womb He knew him and as such ordained him as a prophet: "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you, and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you; I have appointed you a prophet to the nations" Jeremiah 1:5. John the Baptist was also a special child. To some extent, his anointing was tied to what he ate. In the wilderness, I believe there were assorted foods from which he could choose from. But specifically his diet was locust and wild honey. Paul said; "But when it was the good pleasure of God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me through his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I didn't immediately confer with flesh and blood" Galatians 1:15-16. Paul's life was evidently different from that of the other apostles. He never compared himself to Peter and the rest of them. Although there were things some of the apostle were free to do. Paul was however restrained from doing them. These had nothing to do with sin. What could he have boasted of if he had journeyed the way of the other apostles in some respects. He was a peculiar apostle. But he was always quick to add that he was able to accomplish his feats because of the grace of God upon his life: "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. Another peculiar person worth remembering was Samson. For him, the instructions as to how he was to order his life extended to how his mother had to live her life within the period he was in her womb. God made it clear to his mother that he was a special child. He was expected to abstain from strong drink and not to visit barbers.

"Samson went to Gaza, and saw there a prostitute, and went in to her. It was told the Gazites, saying, Samson is come here. They compassed him in, and laid wait for him all night in the gate of the city, and were quiet all the night, saying, Let be until morning light, then we will kill him. Samson lay until midnight, and arose at midnight, and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron. It came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. The lords of the Philistines came up to her, and said to her, Entice him, and see in which his great strength lies, and by what means we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him: and we will each give you of us eleven hundred pieces of silver" Judges 16:1-5.

It has always puzzled me as to how Samson was able to lift the city gates and its posts single handedly. More often than not there is always the impression that Samson was likely to be a giant in view of his exploits. However, scripture (to the best of my knowledge) does not suggest that he was a giant. His strength was purely

an anointing from above. Samson was peculiar. His peculiarity was tied to certain instructions from God:

"She said to him, How can you say, I love you, when your heart is not with me? You have mocked me these three times, and have not told me in which your great strength lies. It happened, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, that his soul was vexed to death. He told her all his heart, and said to her, "No razor has ever come on my head; for I have been a Nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If I am shaved, then my strength will go from me, and I will become weak, and be like any other man" Judges 16:15-17.

Losing our peculiarity as individuals and as a church calls for a revival. When Samson shaved off his hair, he became like any other man. The church loses its sense of peculiarity when the very virtues that are supposed to maintain the fire of God in our lives are destroyed. Those things that draw and keep the power of God in our lives must be restored. For Paul, it was his infirmities that magnified the power of God in His life. In 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 he chose to glory in his infirmities. When his eyes were opened to the source of his strength; infirmities, necessities, he rather rejoiced

in them. Are we living like others? Then, there would not be any distinction between us and the rest of the world. To me it is clear that the church of God is not as peculiar as she is called to be. May God restore our strength! When Samson came to his senses, he worked at getting his hair to grow again.

Chapter 3

<u>Focusing</u> <u>on Eternity</u>

Desiring for a God sent revival calls for a redirection of our focus. The focus of a large section of God's children is not really on eternal life. Although that is the main reason for which we were saved, the meaning and essence of eternal life has been greatly ignored by so many in the preaching of the gospel. Eternal life is a person. That person is Jesus Christ. In this chapter, I will endeavour to show the importance of eternal life in the life of the believer. If we desire both corporate and personal revival, then we have to return to some of these spiritual basics.

"I tell you, keep asking, and it will be given you. Keep seeking, and you will find. Keep knocking, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. Which of you fathers, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake instead of a fish, will he?" Luke 11:9-11

In this scripture, Christ asked us to ask and we will receive, seek and we will find, and knock and the door will be opened to us. He however suggests that we should be specific in what we ask for. If we are specific in what we ask for from Him, then we will receive from Him whatever we asked for. Knocking on a specific door also guarantees that His promise of an opened door will be fulfilled. By implication, if we should seek for eternal life, we will also find it. Seeking from the point of scripture entails diligent search:

"Or what woman, if she had ten drachma coins, if she lost one drachma coin, wouldn't light a lamp, sweep the house, and seek diligently until she found it?" Luke 15:8.

Here, Jesus gave us an example of how to seek after the Kingdom of God. He likened it unto a woman who had ten pieces of silver and one got lost. In her quest to find the lost coin, the woman lighted a candle and searched diligently in the house per adventure she will be able to find it. The import of Jesus' parable is that the woman sought for her lost coin through diligence. If seeking, as the Lord makes us understand, entails diligence, then eternal life should be sought for with all diligence.

What then is eternal life one may ask? In answering such a question, it will not be out of place to start from John 3:16. According to this scripture, the purpose for which we were saved was not to make it to heaven. Heaven is only a concomitant variable in this case. The reason why we are saved is so that we will have eternal life. Eternal life is different from going to heaven. The truth is, if you have eternal life, there is no way you will miss heaven. Thus, the primary reason for which Christ came is so that you and I will have eternal life. A diligent search of the scriptures reveal that the teachings of the apostles focused on life eternal. They only saw heaven as an abode. Heaven is just a place, but eternal life is an activity in heaven. Prior to going to heaven, we need to have eternal life abiding in us here on earth.

In Titus 1:1-2 Paul reveals that eternal life is God's package for us;

"Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's chosen ones, and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, in hope of eternal life, which God, who can't lie, promised before eternal times".

Notice that from this verse, Paul said in hope of eternal life, not in hope of heaven. Personally, anyone who comes to me with a so-called revelation which does not translate into "life", into Christlikeness should keep such dead revelations to himself. Paul advised Timothy to hold on to eternal life (1 Timothy 6:12). Some people fight needless battles. The fight of faith is however a good fight. Paul made known to Timothy that the reason why he was called was for him to lay hold of eternal life. In John 17:3, eternal life was defined by Christ as;

"This is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and him whom you sent, Jesus Christ".

From this scripture, it is therefore not strange that Paul's main aim was to know Christ and the power of His resurrection. It was a "life" he sought after, which was the life of Christ. Thus, knowledge of Christ meant living as Christ did. When someone claims to know God, then the implication is that the person is walking as Christ walked on the earth. In sum, Christ is eternal life.

John also understood eternal life in the following fashion "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we saw, and our hands touched, concerning the Word of life (and the life was revealed, and we have seen, and testify, and declare to you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was revealed to us)" 1 John 1:2. Jesus declared that He is the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). Clearly, John also had the same understanding that Christ is eternal life as He himself had declared unto them. The implication of all these is that seeking Christ, automatically links you to eternal life. Christianity is not just about heaven, but about a lifestyle which will eventually lead us into heaven. The lifestyle God expects from us is the

lifestyle of Jesus Christ. In heaven it will be all about Christ.

The understanding we get whenever we take the Lord's Supper is very important. According to scripture, the Lord's supper entails us imbibing into ourselves the life of Christ:

"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" John 6:54.

This is so because life is found in the blood. With this understanding, let us always have it at the back of our mind when we come to dine with the Lord that we are imbibing into us the lifestyle of Jesus Christ. John 6:55-58 teaches us a lot in this direction:

"For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he who feeds on me, he will also live because of me. This is the bread which came down out of heaven—not as our fathers ate the manna, and died. He who eats this bread will live forever".

The account reveals that when many of the so called disciples heard this, they exclaimed that it was an had saying (vs 60) This simply tells us that all those who followed Him were not interested in eternal life. This is where we separate the true disciples from the counterfeits (John 6:61-64). Christ was not perturbed by the resolutions of such careless souls. Most people desire to go to heaven, but either wilfully or ignorantly despise the constituted means to getting there, which is eternal life. To Peter, they had nowhere to go since Christ is the only one who has the words that gives eternal life. The greatest need of the hour is preachers whose words will bring eternal life to many. Thus, when men listen to such preachers, they should be magnetised to the life of Christ. Their words should bring about an irreparable damage to worldliness in the lives of God's people. I mean they should possess the words of eternal life like Christ had (John 10:28-29). If eternal life: Christ Jesus is not our pursuit, then spiritual revival is greatly needed in our lives and in the church as a whole. This messages comes as a counter force to the over emphasis of so many preachers in the church on prosperity to the neglect of weightier issues. The weightiest matter of the gospel is Christ. For a very long time, the devil has succeeded in diverting the focus of many from Christ who is the very reason for our being. Interestingly, when Christ preached his famous message on the mount, He never equated the blessings of God with Money. Thus, Christ never gave money the pre-eminence it is enjoying today. The so called prosperity gospel must take a backstage, and Christ enthroned in His rightful place in the church. "Jesus only, Jesus ever, Jesus all in all we see. Saviour, sanctifier, healer, Baptiser, and coming king"

Chapter 4

Seeking sound Doctrine

Having touched on the need to redirect our focus on seeking after eternal life in the previous chapter, it is equally important to seek for sound doctrine. We can only be revived if we seek and maintain sound doctrine in the house of God. God has already warned us that in the last days many will not endue sound doctrine. But if we need a God sponsored revival, then we have to seek for sound doctrine with passion. By this, I mean doctrine that promotes godliness. If this is not taken serious, even if God sends a revival, it will only be short-lived. In seeking for a revival that would last for some time, sound doctrine is of essence. In this

chapter, I encourage believers to seek for the restoration of sound doctrine back into the church.

"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his Kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all patience and teaching. For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts" 2 Timothy 4:1-3

To begin with, this scripture foretells some important inescapable events at the end of the age. Paul makes it apparent that God will surely judge all of us, requiring that we give an account of what we did on earth. There is also the issue of the second coming of our Lord Jesus and the Kingdom of God. In view of these, Timothy was given the charge to preach the word. Preaching the word of God of necessity must capture these basic cardinals; Reprove, Rebuke, Exhortation with all longsuffering and Doctrine (2 Timothy 4:1-3). The prioritised areas of the word to be preached are that the word should be able to reprove us, rebuke us, and instruct us in righteousness so we will be

thoroughly furnished unto every good work;

"Every writing inspired by God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" 2 Tim 3:16-17

It is rather unfortunate to observe in our days that many do not love the aforementioned cardinals of the word of God. For that matter, the scripture is fulfilled that they will heap for themselves teachers who will teach them what they want to hear; "For the time will come when they will not listen to the sound doctrine, but, having itching ears, will heap up for themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside to fables" 2 Tim 4:3-4

In preaching the word, we have to, like Paul instructed, be instant in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:1-3). In doing so, the word must be preached with the boldness that it deserves. Paul asked the church at Ephesus to pray for him so that he would preach the word with the boldness that is required:

"on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Good News, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" Ephesians 6:19-20.

Isaiah commanded that we shout it aloud and not hold back (Isaiah 58:1-2). For Micah he was filled with power and the Spirit of the living God, together with might and justice to declare the word of God: "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. Hosea was to set the trumpet to his mouth: "Put the trumpet to your lips! Something like an eagle is over Yahweh's house, Because they have broken my covenant, And rebelled against my law" Hosea 8:1. When the apostles were beaten and threatened not to preach the gospel, they asked that God grant them great boldness to preach His word. They were not cowed by the intimidating faces and actions of the scribes and Pharisees (Acts 4:29). The basic reason for the need to preach the word with boldness is that there are forces that will vehemently opposed the preaching of the true word of God. Since most people were not attuned to sound

doctrine, it was the responsibility of Timothy to reprove them. In Psalm 141:5, David said "Let the righteous strike me, it is kindness; Let him reprove me, it is like oil on the head; don't let my head refuse it; Yet my prayer is always against evil deeds" Psalm 141:5. Rebuke according to this scripture rather brings a blessing to the one being rebuked. In spite of these, some ignorantly do not want anything to do with rebuke. Will God rebuke us just for the sake of it or there is some sought of utility value associated with it? The one who loves you is the one who will rebuke you upon seeing you go wayward. David said rebuke will be like oil upon his head, and also not break his head. Immediate rebuke or chastisement is not pleasant, but works tremendous grace in our lives in the course of time.

In Proverbs 9:8 we are made to understand some basic tendencies of fools and wisemen with regards to reproof. Whereas the fool will hate you for reproving him or her, the wise will rather love you; "Don't reprove a scoffer, lest he hate you. Reprove a wise man, and he will love you". Are we therefore wise in this regard? In the house of God, those who continue in sin are supposed to be rebuked before all, to serve as a lesson unto others (1 Tim. 5:20). This is in consonance with

openly rebuking a person which Solomon thinks is better than secret love (Proverbs 27:5). Rebuke is capable of making us sound in the faith:

"This testimony is true. For this cause, reprove them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" Titus 1:13.

Per 2 Timothy 3:16-17, "Every writing inspired by God is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction which is in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work". From this scripture, the word of God is to:

- Show or lead us to the truth (i.e., Jesus Christ)
- Expose our rebellion
- Correct our mistakes
- Train us to live godly lives or to live in a way that pleases God.

These notwithstanding, many do not want to pay heed to sound doctrine as predicted in Scripture. Sound doctrine cuts across every divide, with no exceptions. The constituents of sound doctrine are also outlined in Titus 2:1-15 as follows;

Older men are to:

- Live a life of temperance or self-control
- Live a life of dignity
- Live a life of wisdom
- Be healthy in faith
- Live a life full of love
- Live a life of endurance

Older women are to:

- Live a life of reverence
- Live as good models or examples of goodness
- Teach younger women to love their husbands and children

Younger women are to:

- Live virtuous and pure lives
- Be good keepers of the house
- Be good wives

Young men are to:

Live disciplined lives

Preachers are to:

- Show or teach their members these things by living exemplary or practical lives.
- Be incorruptible or sincere in their teaching
- Use sound words that cannot be condemned

Workers or employees are to:

- Be loyal to their employers or masters
- Be careful how they talk to their masters
- Honest and not steal from their employers or masters, so that their good character will shine and bring honour to our Lord and saviour Jesus Christ

To all of us, we are to:

- Turn our backs to godlessness or ungodliness
- Live a life free of indulgence
- Take on a God-filled life
- Live lives that honour God.

These are the things that constitute sound doctrine. If men do not follow after these teachings, reproof, and rebuke is required to knock them into position by the tool of longsuffering and doctrine. "Do this, knowing the time, that it is already time for you to awaken out of sleep, for salvation is now nearer to us than when we first believed. The night is far gone, and the day is near. Let's therefore throw off the works of darkness, and let's put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day; not in reveling and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and lustful acts, and not in strife and jealousy" Romans 13:11-13

Chapter 5

Implements of Revival

How would one know that he or she knows or is intimate with God? We get a hint from apostle John who revealed that; "This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments" 1 John 2:3. It is simple and so clear from this scripture that, anybody who knows God, keeps His commandments. In essence, the knowledge of God is not just a mental or verbal ascent, but obedience:

"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 assuredly been perfected in him..." 1 John 2:4-5.

There is something we call the perfection of the love of God. If we claim that we love God, scripture says that we should obey his commandments as a manifestation of the perfection of the love of God in our lives.

Moreover, 1 John 2:6 gives us the understanding that if we claim to know Christ or are intimate with Him, then we must walk as He did; "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".

This is a bold challenge from scripture to those who claim they are spiritual men. Such men must walk as Christ did. A life of intimacy with the Lord only ends in the realms of fantasy and delusion when it is not expressed in practically walking as He did. Maybe you might not have gotten there now, but there should be a steady growth into Christlikeness. We are to make it a point to strive to walk as Christ did. Paul counselled the believers at Corinth to follow him even as he followed Christ. Attaining to Christlikeness is the goal. When we strive towards this mark in our daily lives, I believe the

living God will grant us the strength to be able to look like Him.

Scripture is so clear with regards to those who know Him and those who have a close walk with Him like Paul. There are ways by which we can become intimate or know the Lord. In John 14:21, scripture has it that "One who has my commandments, and keeps them, that person is one who loves me. One who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will reveal myself to him". If you love the living God, Christ says His father will also love you. He continues to assure us that He will as well love you, and in that relationship reveal Himself to you and I. That means you will have the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is a revelation that translates into a walk, directly in consonance with that of Christ. If you love God, He will give you the power, and the strength to help you walk like Him. It is a blessing from above. I am not saying you will dream and have visions of Him as constituting the revelation of Christ. Rather, walking in the revelation of the living God and the revelation of Christ is to walk as He did. Anything short of this is no revelation. That is how we become people who grow in intimacy with the living God. Let us move on to know the proof that one is

a disciple or follower of Christ.

"Little children, these are the end times, and as you heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have arisen. By this we know that it is the final hour. They went out from us, but they didn't belong to us; for if they had belonged to us, they would have continued with us. But they left, that they might be revealed that none of them belong to us" 1 John 2:18-19.

What the apostle sought to convey to us here is that there were people they did ministry with, who as well preached holiness and righteous living at the beginning. However, in the course of time they began to drop out. Here, the apostle is saying that if they had been one of them, they would have also persevered to the end. Per the prescription of Christ, anybody who wants to be His disciple must first of all deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Him. In effect, the understanding Jesus sought to convey to us was, a disciple will deny himself, pick up his cross and follow Him. We cannot see Christ with our naked eyes, but we will know you follow Him if only you obey His commandments and walk as He did. Those who fall out, and do not want to live the Christlike life are not one

of us. If you want to be an instrument of revival, then you must seek to know Him and be intimate with Him.

There is therefore a warning to all of us in 2 Timothy 1:8-15: "Therefore don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but endure hardship for the Good News according to the power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before times eternal, but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the Good News. For this, I was appointed as a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this cause I suffer also these things. Yet I am not ashamed, for I know him whom I have believed. and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed to him against that day. 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. This you know, that all who are in Asia turned away from me; of whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes"

Do not be ashamed to magnify Christ in your life. But rather, identify with Him in all respects. We are expected to be partakers of the afflictions of the gospel. Paul called on Timothy to hold firmly to sound doctrine or in other words continue in sound teachings. This was important since there is the likelihood that any carelessness on his part would cause him to lose it.

Chapter 6

Value of Brokenness

We have to continue to progress in our Christian walk until we come to the point where we make ourselves of no reputation. (Philippians 2:5, 6-11). Christ made Himself of no reputation and if we have his mind, then we are also expected to do likewise. Prior to the release of power in the name of Jesus, Christ did something significant. Although He was Lord, He refused the privileges of being God just for the sake of our redemption. Christ became a servant, a man and eventually lowered Himself into the grave. In His death, He chose a disgraceful one. This mind is also supposed to be in those who seek for glory and immortality. The

crux of all these is humility. God's intent is to awaken our consciousness to this.

John reveals that;

"Don't love the world, neither the things that are in the world. If anyone loves the world, the Father's love isn't in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, isn't the Father's, but is the world's" 1 John 2:15-16.

If we are children of God, and are born of the Father then the love of the world should not be our portion. Per the above scripture, the pride of life is not of Him, as well as boasting of who we are and the things we have accomplished. All such pride and boasting come from the world. If all these things are found in us, then the love of the father is not in us. One of the things that can actually stop so many people from entering the Kingdom of God is the pride of life. Pride impedes a man's progress in the realm of the spirit. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble (James 4:6). One of the ways of knowing that someone is humble is that the grace of the living God continues to abound in that fellow's life. Christ humbled Himself even to the point of dying a disgraceful death. If Christ (though being God)

could lower Himself, then who are we? What it means is that we are to lower ourselves irrespective of the heights He makes us attain.

"Now Naaman, captain of the army of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because by him Yahweh had given victory to Syria: he was also a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. The Syrians had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maiden; and she waited on 'Naaman's wife. She said to her mistress, Would that my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! then would he recover him of his leprosy. One went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maiden who is of the land of Israel. The king of Syria said, Go now, and I will send a letter to the king of Israel. He departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of clothing. He brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come to you, behold, I have sent Naaman my servant to you, that you may recover him of his leprosy. It happened, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he tore his clothes, and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man does send to me to recover a man of his leprosy? but consider, 9 pray you, and see how he seeks a quarrel against me. It was

so, when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, that he sent to the king, saying, Why have you torn your clothes? let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel. So Naaman came with his horses and with his chariots, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha. Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Iordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again to you, and you shall be clean" 2 Kings 5:1-10

Although Naaman was a heathen, Bible states that it was God who gave him victory in his battles. When Naaman came to the prophet Elisha, the prophet did not dignify his presence by coming out to meet him. God wanted to deal with pride in the life of Naaman. That is why He had to lower this man in order to crush his horns of pride. There are people who are ever prepared to obey God's command to go on, for instance, a 100 day fast. However, it will interest you to know that these same people cannot say a simple "sorry" or "forgive me" when they offend another brother. Such people have already lost the battle to pride. There are times that some big things God wants to do in our lives require simple obedience. Humility aids us in obeying simple instructions. Naaman was

eventually cleansed upon humbling himself. There is tremendous blessing in humility as depicted in the following verses;

"if my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" 2 Chronicles 7:14

There are people who cannot overcome certain sins in their lives. For all you know, their inability to conquer sin is because there is no grace available to overcome it. Presumably, pride could be the major root, since more grace is always given to the humble. One of the ways of knowing that you have been able to overcome pride is the people you want to always associate with:

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Don't set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Don't be wise in your own conceits" Rom 12:16.

Bible says let that mind be in you which was also in Christ. Christ associated with people of low estate. Humility precipitates individual as well as corporate level revival.

Chapter 7

<u>Seeking that</u> which is Christ's

There is a limitation we have obliviously placed before us, when it comes to rejoicing. Therefore there is the need for us to break that barrier of rejoicing. One of the hindrances to much rejoicing is seeking our own. Paul in his letter to the believers at Philippi hinted that in the house of God, not all people seek the things which are Christ's:

"But I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered up when I know how you are doing. For I have no one else like-minded, who will

truly care about you. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ" Philippians 2:19-21.

Most people seek their own in the pursuit of joy not seeking that which is Christ's. What is Christ's? What are our preoccupations in the arena of prayer? Most often, we do things not because of Christ, but for ourselves. On the contrary, whatever we do should have Christ at the fulcrum of it. Let that which is Christ's be our meditation day and night. This scripture is pointing out that we should be preoccupied with the burden on the heart of Christ. If you love anyone, you will make the person's burden yours. There will always be a diligent search for the burden of the person in order to fulfil it.

At the tender age of 12, Christ was wise in His ways. He rebuked the ignorance of His parents by making them know He had to be about His father's business. This was when He was found in the temple engaging the doctors of the law in theological discourses. Although being young, he was conscious of the fact that the burden of the father ought to be shared. Christ did not come to do His own will, but that of the father who sent Him (John 6:38).

In Luke 19:9-10, the reason the son of man came was to seek and to save the lost;

"Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost".

Unfortunately, most people have faith for things which are dear to their hearts, but not things that are dear to God. We often have faith for physical things but not those which are eternal such as the souls of men. The faith that, when we preach to a person that fellow will be saved is largely lacking. This really reveals the spiritual temperature of our hearts. May God increase our faith in this direction.

"Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost! I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine

righteous people who need no repentance. Or what woman, if she had ten drachma coins, if she lost one drachma coin, wouldn't light a lamp, sweep the house, and seek diligently until she found it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost. Even so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting" Luke 15:4-10

The question we should ask ourselves based on this scripture is, do we seek to pursue a soul until that soul is saved? I think Christ and some preachers never gave up on us until we were saved. This scripture helps us know the value of a soul before God. Persistence is key here. I learnt about a man who prayed for a particular person for over two decades to be saved. Within that period the man never gave his life to Christ until after the demise of the servant of God. The story goes on to reveal that this man later became an evangelist who won many to Christ. That is the value of a soul. The person who wins souls is wise (Proverbs 11:30). Surprisingly, most Christians cannot boast of a person they have won into the kingdom. By this I am excluding invitations to church programmes. Apart from knowing the value of a soul, the scripture also points out the

appropriate time to rejoice. There are times that rejoicing must of necessity be out of the equation in the house of God. When there is sin in the church then there is no course for rejoicing (1 Corinthians 5:1-2). However, we ought to rejoice when the "ninety nine" of us are righteous, needing no repentance. A leader's joy should be that the people under him obey God and pay allegiance to Him. John said he had no greater joy than that his children walk in truth (3 John 4). Have you ever thought of the time you were holy before God? Was it not joyful? Sin robs us of such tremendous joy in living in obedience to God.

Additionally the scripture makes it clear that there is another kind of joy that supersedes that of having "ninety nine" righteous souls. That is when one soul is worn to Christ. But most of us do not know the value of a soul and for that matter we do not rejoice at the salvation of a person as opposed to us getting one material/financial breakthrough or the other. We are supposed to seek for souls with diligence. Angels never rejoice over our seemingly breakthroughs, but rather rejoice in the fact that a sinner is saved. This is a great lesson to all of us. "Won't you revive us again, That your people may rejoice in you?" Psalm 85:6

Chapter 8

<u>Hating Sin</u>

In one of the chapters, we looked at the need to seek God by following in the steps of Christ. As part of following the steps of Christ, we need to learn something very important about His life which was the hatred for sin. Isaiah 11:3 has this prophetic comment about our saviour in that "His delight will be in the fear of Yahweh. He will not judge by the sight of his eyes, Neither decide by the hearing of his ears". Fearing God predisposes one to departing from iniquity.

"You have loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows" Hebrews 1:9. This scripture clearly depicts one characteristic of Christ that distinguished Him from others right from infancy up to the time He ascended into glory. The hatred for sin. It is one thing to depart from sin and another thing to hate sin. And from His example, we gather that there is the need for us to also have perfect hatred for sin. There is the need for us to take sin serious because our Lord Himself does not take sin lightly at all.

"He took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive, and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword" 1 Sam. 15:18.

I presume we are familiar with this incident in the Bible. In condensing the facts of the story, God required a radical overthrow of the Amalekites and the other "ites". Instead of totally annihilating these enemies of God, Saul in his myopic thinking decided to spare the King of the Amalekites. Over here, the general of God's army failed to grasp the basic tactics of warfare, which is to destroy first and foremost the strongman (Matthew 12:29). This disobedience displeased the Lord so much

so that, He could not hold His peace but to speak out. He revealed to the prophet Samuel that He had regretted making Saul a King over His people. The judgment of God had already been released over his head. However, the good news was that God found His prophet who would execute his commands to the letter. From the following verse, we are told that the prophet shredded King Agag into pieces in obedience to the word of God:

"Then said Samuel, Bring you here to me Agag the king of the Amalekites. Agag came to him cheerfully. Agag said, Surely the bitterness of death is past. Samuel said, As your sword has made women childless, so shall your mother be childless among women. Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before Yahweh in Gilgal" 1 Sam 15:32-33

It appears in scripture that the prophetic ministry did not entertain sin at all. Unlike so many who pamper sin for sordid gain, these prophets were ruthless against sin. An interesting event happened in the days of King Ahab with Prophet Elijah at the centre of "controversy" (1 Kings 18:40). When the heavens were shut over Israel for over three years, God finally split the heavens for a downpour. This was however precipitated by the

obedience of the prophet of God. After Elijah had repaired the broken altars of God, fire finally came down to cause Israel's knees to bend at the majestic feet of the one who is faithful and true. Interestingly, Elijah did not end there, but rather commanded that all the prophets of Baal be rounded up and brought to the brook Kishon. There the prophet of God slew them with none escaping the edge of his sword. After this unforgettable episode, the prophet then commanded Ahab to accelerate faster since there was the sound of an abundance of rain. The prophet executed the judgement of God in the land of Israel in a radical fashion that provoked the rains. The worship of Baal turned the hearts of God's children away from Him. The prophets of Baal, as signposts, diverted the course of the children of God which necessitated that Elijah contests them. This singular act of the prophet hints that God does not take sin lightly at all. Therefore if anyone by his sin of commission causes others to defiantly disobey the commands of God, then that person must be deleted from the face of the earth. The devastating effect of sin is that the heavens are shut over a person's life. Sin severs our relationship with the Lord so much so that, we cannot even hear Him when He speaks. Sin like thick wax blocks the waves of truth

from entering a person's life. This is why people will not listen to the authentic voices of God. We are spiritually atrophied because of sin, which is manifest in spiritual weakness and defeat. Dealing drastically with sin therefore opens the heavens over our lives.

In line with these scenarios, the account and conduct of Jehu adds more weight to the need to deal with sin drastically:

"When he was departed there, he lighted on Jehonadah the son of Rechab coming to meet him; and he greeted him, and said to him, Is your heart right, as my heart is with your heart? Jehonadah answered, It is. If it he, give me your hand. He gave him his hand; and he took him up to him into the chariot. He said, Come with me, and see my zeal for Yahweh. So they made him ride in his chariot. When he came to Samaria, he struck all who remained to Ahab in Samaria, until he had destroyed him, according to the word of Yahweh, which he spoke to Elijah. Jehu gathered all the people together, and said to them, Ahab served Baal a little; but Jehu will serve him much. Now therefore call to me all the prophets of Baal, all his worshippers, and all his priests; let none be wanting: for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal; whoever shall be

wanting, he shall not live. But Jehu did it in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal. Jehu said, Sanctify a solemn assembly for Baal. They proclaimed it. Jehu sent through all Israel: and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that didn't come. They came into the house of Baal; and the house of Baal was filled from one end to another. He said to him who was over the vestry, Bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal. He brought them forth vestments. Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal; and he said to the worshippers of Baal, Search, and look that there be here with you none of the servants of Yahweh, but the worshippers of Baal only. They went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had appointed him eighty men outside, and said, If any of the men whom 9 bring into your hands escape, he who lets him go, his life shall be for the life of him. It happened, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, that Jehu said to the guard and to the captains, Go in, and kill them; let none come forth. They struck them with the edge of the sword; and the guard and the captains cast them out, and went to the city of the house of Baal. They brought forth the pillars that were in the house of Baal, and burned them. They broke down the pillar of Baal, and broke down the house of Baal, and

made it a latrine, to this day. Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel. However from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, with which he made Israel to sin, Jehu didn't depart from after them, to wit, the golden calves that were in Bethel, and that were in Dan. Yahweh said to Jehu, Because you have done well in executing that which is right in my eyes, and have done to the house of Ahab according to all that was in my heart, your sons of the fourth generation shall sit on the throne of Israel"

2 Kings 10:15-30

Jehu was anointed King in Israel in a dramatic fashion to execute the judgment of God as declared by the prophet Elijah. Jehu, driven by the zeal of the most high told Jehonadad the son of Rechab to come and see the zeal of God in him. By zeal, Jehu slew all those who were associated with Ahab. The special group left to be executed was the prophets of Baal. Through trickery, Jehu was able to sift the prophets and worshippers of Baal from the rest of Israel. Jehu by this act, ended the worship of Baal at that time in Israel. Due to his obedience in executing the commands of God, God swore that Jehu will not lack a man to sit on the throne of Israel up to the fourth generation.

Such is the reward for faithfulness and dealing with sin ruthlessly. The lesson therefore is that we are not to take sin lightly in our lives. Christ came to die for our sins so that we will no longer live in sin. The grace of God has been revealed to us, to help us dominate sin (Titus 2:11). Therefore there is the need for us to hate sin like Christ did. There is the need for us to fear God as evidenced in hating evil (Proverbs 8:13).

"But there also arose false prophets among the people, as among you also there will be false teachers, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. Many will follow their immoral ways, and as a result, the way of the truth will be maligned. In covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words: whose sentence now from of old doesn't linger, and their destruction will not slumber. For if God didn't spare angels when they sinned, but cast them down to Tartarus , and committed them to pits of darkness, to be reserved to judgment; and didn't spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah with seven others, a preacher of righteousness, when he brought a flood on the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them to destruction, having made them an example to those who would live

ungodly; and delivered righteous Lot, who was very distressed by the lustful life of the wicked (for that righteous man dwelling among them, was tormented in his righteous soul from day to day with seeing and hearing lawless deeds): the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment" 2 Peter 2:1-9.

From this scripture, we are made aware that Noah was a preacher of righteousness in his days. That which befell the people of those days are to serve as examples to those afterwards who will decide to live ungodly lives. Lot on the other hand vexed his righteous soul as he continually beheld the sinful deeds of Sodom and Gomorrah. Although Lot lived in Sodom and Gomorrah, he was vexed in his spirit because of the sins of the people. Are you vexed in your spirit when you hear for instance that another country has legalized homosexuality? Brethren, there is the need to arise and confront sin in the church as well as the community in which we find ourselves. Such are the people God uses in bringing about a revival.

Chapter 9

Worthy candidates of Revival

"For you yourselves know, brothers, our visit to you wasn't in vain, but having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as you know, at Philippi, we grew bold in our God to tell you the Good News of God in much conflict. For our exhortation is not of error, nor of uncleanness, nor in deception. But even as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the Good News, so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who tests our hearts. For neither were we at any time found using words of flattery, as you know, nor a cloak of covetousness (God is witness), nor seeking glory from men (neither from you nor from

others], when we might have claimed authority as apostles of Christ" 1 Thessalonians 2:1-6

The qualification of candidates worthy to preach the gospel are clearly spelt out in this preceding scripture. Faithful preachers of the gospel have the honor of Christ and not men to be the sole motivation for their preaching. If God searches the heart of a man and such a motive is not his contemplation, then He cannot entrust him with the true gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The worthy candidates of revival are those who can say like Paul in Philippians 3:8 that for the sake of the gospel, they have lost so and so. Interestingly, Paul never talks about the physical benefits he got from preaching the gospel, but rather the things he suffered for His sake. That is not to say that Paul never got some financial blessings in the course of his ministry. The import of all these is that, that was not his focus.

There were times some of the apostles had to reject financial provisions from the gentiles (3 John 3). Certainly, these men were not covetous. He told the believers at Ephesus that, when he preached among

them, he never coveted anyone's goods (Acts 20:23). By implication, there is the tendency that as a preacher, one would be covetous. Paul and the other apostles dignified the ministry to the shame of so many of us today who continually betray our Lord because of covetousness.

A careful search of the scriptures reveal that the prophets of old were never given to covetousness. Elisha knew when to, and when not to accept financial gifts from people (2 Kings 5:16). His servant Gehazi, however, did not have such discernment. What his master rejected, he accepted. He had failed to deal with covetousness in his life. This led him to betray his master Elisha and the core values of their prophetic mandate. In the end he was white washed with leprosy. Before Christ came into the limelight. He had to overcome the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. By showing Him the glories of this world, the devil intended to use the tool of covetousness to cause Him to bow to him. Thanks be to God, He was able to overcome all these temptations. In like manner, I am also of the conviction that for God to qualify one for the gospel, the person will have to overcome covetousness in his or her life. From Jesus's

example covetousness can cause you to betray our Lord Jesus Christ. Some, for the glories of this earth have seized to fix their gaze on things above. The gospel is to be entrusted into the hands of those who do not handle the word of God with deceit (2 Cor 4:2). Paul charged Timothy to preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season (2 Timothy 4:2). He simply meant that the young man should be faithful with the word of God, whether the times were favourable or not. In concluding this chapter, I leave you with this assurance that God never forsakes the faithful. Remember when Daniel was thrown into the lion's den. the lions could not devour him. The testimony concerning Daniel was that he was a man that continually served God. In Babylon, he and his friends were faithful to the laws of God. They never bent their knee to the systems of their day. May God help us, and make us worthy candidates of revival.

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 second 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 gift (but costly) 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 (and not by sprinkling) 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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OTHER TITLES

A MESSAGE TO THOSE AT THE CROSSROADS

WAXING STRONG IN SPIRIT

BROKEN VESSELS

BREAD BAKED IN HELL

AWAKE, AND CHRIST WILL GIVE YOU LIGHT

THE CRY OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

MAKING YOUR CALLING AND ELECTION SURE

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DEMYSTIFYING PARABLES AND SACRIFICE

THE REALM OF DIVINITY, CONTRADICTING THE

WORLD

THE PARADOX OF MATURITY THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER