

BREAD

baked in

HELL



FEIKOAB PARIMAH

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

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Dedicated to

Professor (Brother) Zacharias Tanee Fomum of blessed memory, for his contribution to Christianity in his generation and beyond.

Introduction

A. W. Tozer once said "The old cross slew men; the new cross entertains them. The old cross condemned; the new cross amuses. The old cross destroyed confidence in the flesh; the new cross encourages it."

In modern day life, bread is consumed by most of us. It's however interesting to know yeast is one of the major ingredients used in baking the bread we eat. I am not suggesting, it is a sin or wrong to eat bread with yeast. Yeast or leaven makes bread to bloat beyond proportion. Bread with yeast when viewed from afar may appear big, but you need more of it in order to be satisfied.

Little compromises in the church of God will eventually lead to the corruption and destruction of the faith of man. God in the Old Testament commanded the Israelites to destroy all their enemies because He knew if any of them was left alive, they will propagate and corrupt the culture of the Israelites, and at the end of the day cause them to depart from their true God.

"Avoid a sugared gospel as you would shun sugar of lead. Seek the gospel which rips up and tears and cuts and wounds and hacks and even kills, for that is the gospel that makes alive again. And when you have found it, give good heed to it. Let it enter into your inmost being.

As the rain soaks into the ground, so pray the Lord to let his gospel soak into your soul."These were (are) the words of Charles H. Spurgeon.

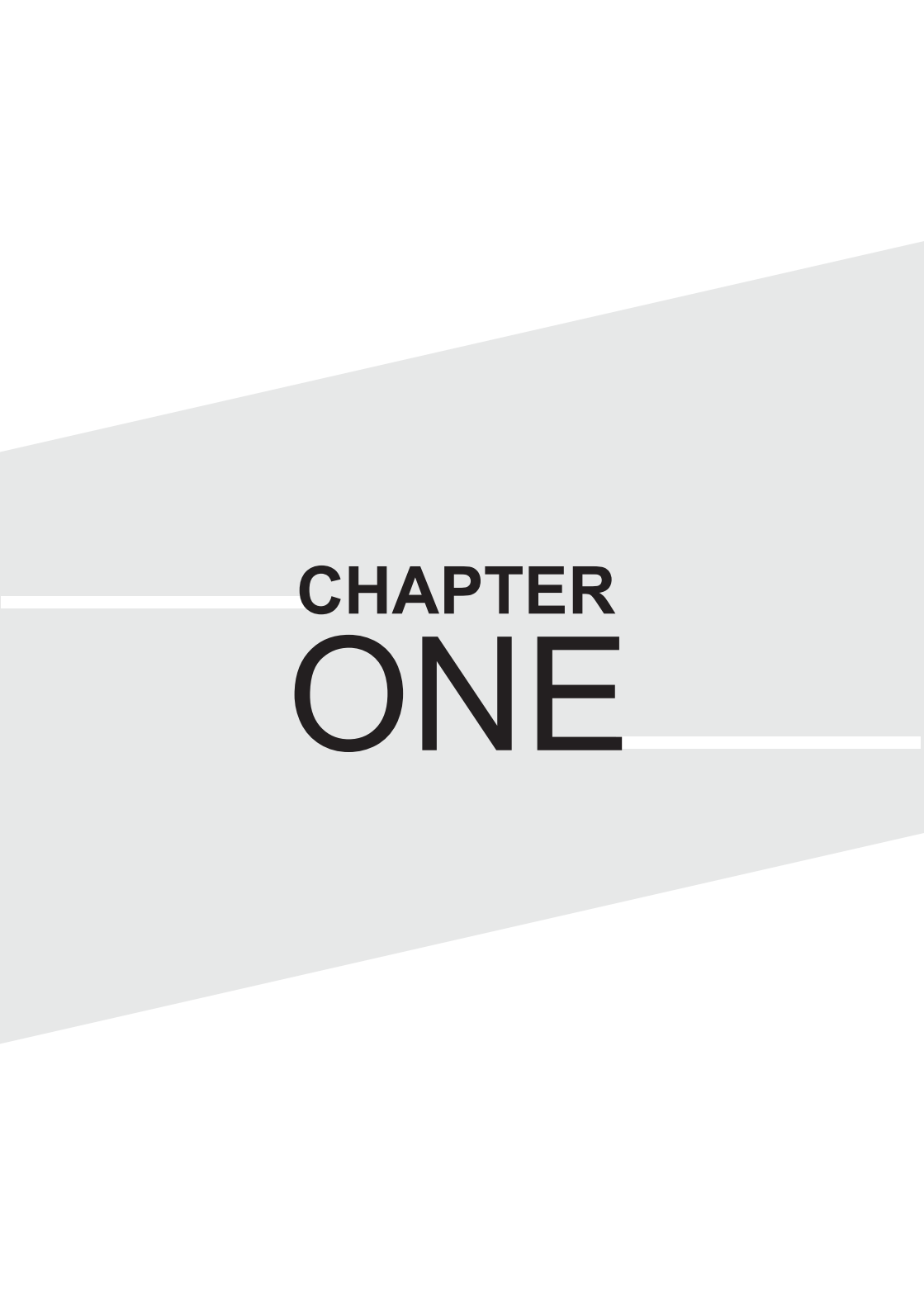
This book (fourth in the *spiritual awakening series*) is being written, to caution sincere believers about the state of many assemblies with matters relating to teachings which are not wholesome for our souls as pilgrims on this earth. Also, the author brings to light the benefits of suffering for Christ.

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CHAPTER ONE

LEAVENED BREAD

"Seven days shall you eat unleavened bread; even the first day you shall put away yeast out of your houses, for whoever eats leavened bread from the first day until the seventh day, that soul shall be cut off from Israel." Exodus 12:15

God instituted the Passover day to remind the Israelites of their hasty deliverance from Egypt when they did not have time to wait for their dough to ferment. He warned the Israelites that, within a stipulated time if one ate leavened bread (bread with yeast), he or she was to be cut off from Israel. This warning however carries grave Spiritual consequences for us New Testament believers. Our warning only takes a different form from the Passover the Israelites celebrated. In this Passover they were commanded not to eat bread which contained yeast (leaven). Remember, it was celebrated to remind the Israelites of God's deliverance. Since we as Christians have been delivered from darkness into the marvelous light of our Lord and Savior Jesus, let's hear the warning our Savior had for us His disciples;

"How is it that you don't perceive that I didn't speak to you concerning bread? But beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." Then they understood that

he didn't tell them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees."
Matthew 16:11-12

"Meanwhile, when a multitude of many thousands had gathered together, so much so that they trampled on each other, he began to tell his disciples first of all, "Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy." Luke 12:1

Before I proceed, let's recognize, leaven (yeast) symbolically is used In the Bible to denote sin or corruption. In Matthew 16:11-12, Jesus was warning His disciples about the doctrine of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. We are however not going into the teachings of these two Jewish sects, but to establish the reason why Jesus warned us of false doctrine. It's not uncommon these days in the church in Ghana and other nations like the United States to hear false doctrines preached from pulpits. One of the false doctrines from hell is, Christians in general are not supposed to suffer in this world, since God has taken us back to Eden after our conversion. Now let's know there will be instances when God will give us things to enjoy, but it's not all smooth on the earth for true believers. Paul knew this truth when he said;

"Not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings,

knowing that suffering works perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope: and hope doesn't disappoint us, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."
Romans 5:3-5

Why have we slept and allowed the 'theology' of hell and Babylon' to rob us of such vital truths such as suffering for the sake of Christ. The Pharisees and Sadducees in their days missed the messiah simply because they expected the messiah to come in a particular way. They expected Him to come as a physical reigning king instead of a lamb and a man of sorrows to be acquainted with grief, who would eventually be slain. Jesus is indeed our reigning king, but they misplaced His first coming with His second coming. In the same way, some preachers have brought the millennial reign of Christ before it's time. I will not go into the millennial reign, but let's learn from the following scripture;

"Not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body." Romans 8:23

Paul is saying here that, there is a coming redemption of our frail flesh. In other words it's not going to be all that

smooth for the true believer. Satan has succeeded in robbing some of us, the benefits of suffering as a righteous man. When Jesus was about to die on the cross for the redemption of mankind, Peter rebuked Him of His intended action, but Jesus discerned the 'theology' of Satan' in Peter's voice.

There are a lot of scriptures which talk about the suffering of true believers;

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him." Romans 8:17

Why do some want the glorification minus the suffering? As for Paul, he even wanted to be identified with the sufferings of Jesus Christ as revealed in the scriptures below;

"that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death;" Philippians 3:10

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of God." Acts 14:22

To enter into the kingdom of God, the believer must pass

through many afflictions. God however delivers us;

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12

A believer may not necessarily go round seeking to be persecuted, but by merely living the word, will suffer for his faith. Persecution is inevitable for the believer no matter the form it takes.

*"Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection."
Hebrews 11:35*

From the above scripture, they could have been delivered if they had asked for it, but they had knowledge of a better resurrection, so they chose to suffer.

Jesus told Peter in the garden when He was arrested, of the possibility to ask His father to send legions of angels to fight for Him. However, He knew great profit awaited those who believed in Him if He died. Furthermore, He Himself was also going to be glorified. Therefore brethren, let's be careful of the false teaching that a Christian must not suffer and so on.

Please note, a person can suffer for his own foolishness and negligence and not for righteousness sake. Some

are also caused by Satan.

So, when Jesus was speaking to His disciples in *Matthew 16: 11-12*. He was warning them of false doctrines which could damage their faith.

In the second scripture in *Luke 12:1*, Jesus turned to His disciples first, and warned them of the leaven (yeast) of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. In most 'churches', hypocrisy has eaten into the fiber of Christians to the extent that, there is always a justification for whatever wrong goes on. They may have the following as their slogan in a bid to always escape responsibility, 'Christianity is only a matter of the heart'. It's however interesting to note piety starts from the heart and shows in the outward. Jesus said;

"For there is no good tree that brings forth rotten fruit; nor again a rotten tree that brings forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people don't gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks. Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things

which I say?" Luke 6:43-46

It's clear from Jesus that, one cannot be manifesting something and try to deny, there is a direct correlation between what he or she is manifesting and the inner state of his or her heart. As far as God is concerned, what fills the heart will simply overflow in due time. Clean the inward part of the cup and the outside shall be clean also. An example is ladies who wear the attire of harlots both at home and in church gatherings;

"Behold, there a woman met him with the attire of a prostitute, and with crafty intent." Proverbs 7:10

Surprisingly some backslidden Christians do not see anything wrong with such dressing. Please let it be known, God is interested in the purity of our spirit, soul and body;

"Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." 2 Corinthians 7:1

"In the same way, that women also adorn themselves in decent clothing, with modesty and propriety; not just with braided hair, gold, pearls, or expensive clothing;" 1 Timothy 2:9

God had to sow a coat to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve.

God had to show the specifications for the garment of the priests through Moses.

Angels are properly clothed.

Let's now take a look at the teaching of the apostle Paul on leaven;

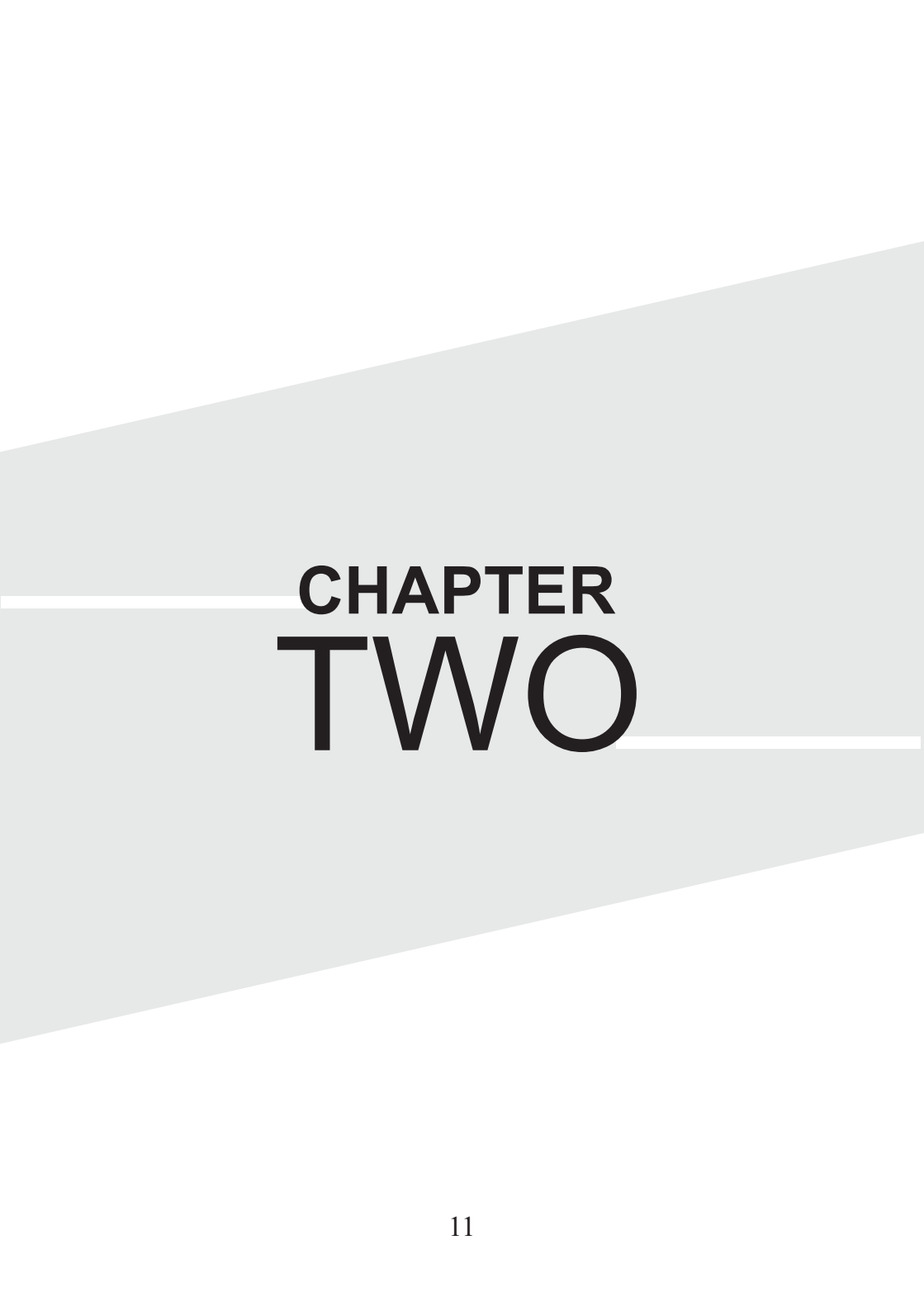
"Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole lump? Purge out the old yeast, that you may be a new lump, even as you are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed in our place. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old yeast, neither with the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

Paul in this scripture is cautioning us of little compromises in the church of God which will eventually lead to the corruption and destruction of the faith of man. God in the Old Testament commanded the Israelites to destroy all their enemies because He knew if any of them was left alive, they will propagate and corrupt the Israelite culture and at the end of the day cause them to depart from their true God. *When false doctrine in their early stages are*

not detected and evicted from the church of God, it will end up destroying our true faith. The enemy within a believer (sin) if not properly checked and dealt with, will eventually spell the doom of the believer and lead him or her to hell. Paul had the following prophetic warning for all true believers who worship God in truth out of the heart of sincerity;

"For I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Men will arise from among your own selves, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore watch, remembering that for a period of three years I didn't cease to admonish everyone night and day with tears." Acts 20:29-31

The subsequent chapters in this book will seek to bring to light some of the false teachings, as the good Lord speaks to our hearts and gives us more understanding of His word. I will also endeavor to touch on the need and benefits of suffering for the sake of Christ.



CHAPTER TWO

WHY GOD PERMITS SOME MINISTRIES

I very much know and agree, there are different ministries with their distinct callings. However, we must understand these ministries or callings are for the following;

"...for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a full grown man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error..." Ephesians 4:11-16

I am sure most of us are familiar with the above scripture, which relates to the body of Christ with Him as the head. In summary, I can state emphatically that the various ministries and callings are supposed to drive us towards one great goal which is Christlikeness. Therefore Paul cautioned us in verse 14 "that we may no longer be children, tossed back and forth and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error"

In essence Paul is saying that, it is only children who move from one place to another in search of some kind of 'new ministry' or 'word'. We are not supposed to be carried away with every wind of doctrine in the name of "that is the man's ministry, he is called to make people endowed materially" and so forth. By this, I am not trying to say our Father is not able to bless His people with substance. It will be absurd for me to suggest God is wicked and does not want His children to make progress in their field of endeavor. However, let's beware these preachers do not make us friends of the world and enemies of God in the long run. Paul cautioned us in the following scripture in relation to the subject matter in question;

"If anyone teaches a different doctrine, and doesn't consent to sound words, the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is conceited, knowing nothing, but obsessed with arguments, disputes, and word battles, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, constant friction of people of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. Withdraw yourself from such." (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

Please consider the teachings we hear from some ministries and ask yourself the following questions:

- *Do they consent to wholesome words?*
- *Do they match with the words of Jesus Christ as it relates to money and others?*
- *Are their doctrines (which are) according to godliness?*
- *Do their teachings make you feel content with whatever God supplies you with? If the answer is in the negative, then it will do us much good if we heed Paul's advice, 'withdraw yourself from such'.*

I will now share with you from the Old to the New Testament as to why we have some ministries or how some ministries are birthed;

"If there arise in the midst of you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and he give you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or the wonder come to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, Let us go after other gods, which you have not known, and let us serve them; you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams for Yahweh your God proves you, to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul." Deuteronomy 13:1-3

The points to note from the above scripture are:

- *The prophet will arise among the children of God.*
- *He (the prophet) gives a sign or wonder, and it comes to pass.*
- *He later says you should go after other gods, which you do not know, and to serve them.*
- *Do not listen to that prophet?*
- *Why? Because the Lord your God is proving His people to know whether they love Him with all their heart and with all their soul.*

In the church today, both in Ghana and abroad some ministers will preach 90% truth and 10% will be in line with Paul's caution to the Corinthian church in the following scripture;

"For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different "good news", which you did not accept, you put up with that well enough."
2 Corinthians 11:4

The 10% could be another Jesus, another spirit, or another gospel (good news). So it's possible to say 'the man speaks truth or wisdom', but the little **'leaven'**

carries enough venom to do the damage. From the scripture in Deuteronomy, we saw God was trying to prove His people's loyalty. Could it be in our days too, God wants to know if we love Him with all our heart and with all our soul? Will you love God whether He gives you money in your wallet or not? Please, let's be like the three Hebrew friends, (Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego), who said,

"... we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be [so], our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods, nor worship the golden image which you have set up." Daniel 3:16-18

These Hebrew friends knew God could provide deliverance, but if God chose otherwise, they were not ready to bow to the 'theology of Babylon' and its standards.

Let's now move on to look at some other scriptures which reveal why some ministries are in existence;

"Then came certain of the elders of Israel to me, and sat before me. The word of Yahweh came to me, saying, Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face: should I be inquired of at all by them?

Therefore speak to them, and tell them, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Every man of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I Yahweh will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in their own heart, because they are all estranged from me through their idols. Therefore tell the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord Yahweh: Return you, and turn yourselves from your idols; and turn away your faces from all your abominations. For every one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers who sojourn in Israel, who separates himself from me, and takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet to inquire for himself of me; I Yahweh will answer him by myself; and I will set my face against that man, and will make him an astonishment, for a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am Yahweh. If the prophet be deceived and speak a word, I, Yahweh, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand on him, and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel. They shall bear their iniquity: the iniquity of the prophet shall be even as the iniquity of him who seeks [to him];" Ezekiel 14:1-10

The above passage is a bit lengthy, but let's look at the main points in the scripture as follows:

- *Some elders of Israel came to Ezekiel the prophet to seek the counsel of God.*
- *Within the core of their hearts, there was a particular line of message they wanted to hear (the idol in their heart).*
- *God will answer and give them a message through the prophet (not Ezekiel) according to what they want to hear (idol in the heart). Thus, the prophet shall be deceived by God Himself.*
- *God will later bring the same punishment on the prophet and the inquirer.*

Let's look at another scenario in the following scripture:

"But Jehoshaphat said, isn't there here a prophet of Yahweh besides, that we may inquire of him? The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, there is yet one man by whom we may inquire of Yahweh, Micaiah the son of Imlah: but I hate him; for he does not prophesy good concerning me, but evil. Jehoshaphat said, "Don't let the king say so. Then the king of Israel called an officer, and said, get quickly Micaiah the son of Imlah. Now the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah

were sitting each on his throne, arrayed in their robes, in an open place at the entrance of the gate of Samaria; and all the prophets were prophesying before them. Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron, and said, Thus says Yahweh, With these shall you push the Syrians, until they be consumed. All the prophets prophesied so, saying, Go up to Ramoth Gilead, and prosper; for Yahweh will deliver it into the hand of the king. The messenger who went to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, See now, the words of the prophets [declare] good to the king with one mouth: please let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak you good. Micaiah said, As Yahweh lives, what Yahweh says to me, that will I speak. When he was come to the king, the king said to him, Micaiah, shall we go to Ramoth Gilead to battle, or shall we forbear? He answered him, Go up and prosper; and Yahweh will deliver it into the hand of the king. The king said to him, how many times shall I adjure you that you speak to me nothing but the truth in the name of Yahweh? He said, I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd: and Yahweh said, these have no master; let them return every man to his house in peace. The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, Didn't I tell you that he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil? [Micaiah] said, "Therefore hear the word of

Yahweh: I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, and all the army of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left. Yahweh said, 'Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?' One said on this manner; and another said on that manner. There came forth a spirit, and stood before Yahweh, and said, 'I will entice him. 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. Now therefore, behold, Yahweh has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these your prophets; and Yahweh has spoken evil concerning you. Then Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah came near, and struck Micaiah on the cheek, and said, which way went the Spirit of Yahweh from me to speak to you? Micaiah said, Behold, you shall see on that day, when you shall go into an inner chamber to hide yourself. The king of Israel said, Take Micaiah, and carry him back to Amon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, Thus says the king, Put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction and with water of affliction, until I come in peace. Micaiah said, if you return at all in peace, Yahweh has not spoken by me. He said, Hear, you peoples, all of you."
1 kings 22:7-28

So the true prophet of the Lord, Micaiah the son of Imlah paid the price of truth which landed him a jail sentence. Just like our previous scripture in Ezekiel 14:1-10, the prophets of Ahab, including the 'chief' prophet Zedekiah were deceived. You should gather that, even the messenger who was sent to call Micaiah entreated him to prophesy good to favor Ahab's course, just like the other prophets did. Paul had this to say concerning our age;

"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 Timothy 4:3-4

"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." 2 Timothy 4:1-2

We are to stick to sound doctrine, which entails preaching the word and being instant in season and out of season. That is, whether there is economic shake up or not, preaching which draws us towards godliness should be upheld. There must be some reproving in the house, some rebuke when needed and exhortation with all long suffering and doctrine. For;

"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 Timothy 3:16

CHAPTER THREE

FLATTERY, A MAJOR TOOL OF THE ANTICHRIST.

"Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries; but the people who know their God shall be strong, and do [exploits]." Daniel 11:32

The second part of this scripture is often quoted by most believers, ignoring the first which is very important in detecting the major tool of the antichrist. The scripture read refers to the dealings of the antichrist with physical Israel. However, we can learn vital truths from it, to guard ourselves against the tool of the antichrist.

The devil is using so many preachers to advance his course on earth. Instead of preachers becoming forerunners of our Lord Jesus Christ, they have rather allowed the devil to convert them into his forerunners. At this point I would like to state from the scriptures that, any preacher or teacher who uses flattery as a preaching tool is a mouth piece of the antichrist, whether he knows it or not.

A lot of preachers cleverly employ smooth words in their messages.

These preachers use smooth words just to please the

masses, in order not to hurt their pride. From the above scripture it's clear without a shadow of doubt that, those who deal wickedly against the statutes and commands of God will eventually be corrupted by the antichrist through flattery. The flattery serves as a leaven in man's life which will result in apostasy or perdition (falling from the common faith).

Till the church of God realizes that, true Biblical revival starts with deep rooted repentance, then all the trumpeting of revival will only be a mirage. But I thank God He is raising some believers to take the bull by the horn.

Our early fathers, by the grace of God preached the word without employing the tool of flattery and its ramifications in a bid to win souls. God's ways are certainly not our ways. Of note were Paul and Peter.

PAUL

"For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? For if I were still pleasing men, I wouldn't be a servant of Christ." Galatians 1:10

We certainly cannot claim to be servants of Christ while all our toil is directed towards the pleasing of man, and not the One who called us to be stewards of His manifold grace.

"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 2:4-6

We are to endeavor to sharpen our discerning senses in order to draw distinctions between the voices we hear. The following scripture gives us vital lessons to learn from;

"Following Paul and us, she cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation! She was doing this for many days. But Paul, becoming greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I charge you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" It came out that very hour." Acts 16:17-18

Here is an important truth we can learn from the apostle Paul. Even though what the girl was saying carried some element of truth, the spirit behind it was flattery. Paul had the spiritual insight to detect the enemy's voice. I hope by now you have started to picture the church scene these days. Brethren, all true preachers already have the powerful booster in the person of the Holy Spirit in their

spirit man to energize them to preach the true gospel of our dear Lord and savior Jesus Christ without fear or favor.

"When I came to you, brothers, I didn't come with excellence of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. My speech and my preaching were not in persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith wouldn't stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

"Having therefore such a hope, we use great boldness of speech," 2 Corinthians 3:12

PETER

"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables, when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty." 2 Peter 1:16

"You therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware, lest being carried away with the error of the wicked, you fall from your own steadfastness." 2 Peter 3:17

These fathers knew God as written in the second part of the scripture "...but the people who know their God shall be strong, and do [exploits]" Daniel 11:32b. The first part of the scripture, "Such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he pervert by flatteries;" Daniel 11:32a are pictured in the following verses of scripture in the New Testament;

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

"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 Timothy 4:3-4

"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation

slumbereth not" 2 Peter 2:2-3 KJV

May God deliver us from wolves who come in sheep clothes.

ANOTHER JESUS

"... For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or if you receive a different spirit, which you did not receive, or a different "good news", which you did not accept, you put up with that well enough." 2 Corinthians 11:4

Please note from the above that, Paul wanted to present the believers in his days to Christ as chaste virgins. Also he did not want the believers to be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. Furthermore, he wanted them to beware of another Jesus apart from our savior Jesus Christ of Nazareth which could be preached. One could receive a different spirit other than the one we know, who is the Holy Spirit, and another gospel (good news). Everyone who calls himself a believer is called to walk or follow the steps of Jesus Christ. However, one cannot follow Him if he does not know how He lived His life. To know how Jesus lived His life, we must take a microscopic look at His teachings, since He taught what He lived as in line with Acts 1:1-2. One can only detect a counterfeit when he is used to or knows the original. Let's look at a few scriptures which

talked about Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you." John 13:14-15

Jesus Christ taught that, He did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many. He showed His disciples the way of greatness in the sight of God, which is servanthood. The apostle Paul had an understanding of this scripture when he wrote to the Thessalonians;

"Even so, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not the Good News of God only, but also our own souls, because you had become very dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Believers who want to follow the steps of Jesus like Paul did, are to sacrifice their desires in order to serve others. They labor to put others priorities above theirs. Also, they seek the glory and approval of God rather than that of man.

"I command these things to you, that you may love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own. But because you are not of

the world, since I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you." John 15:17-19

Jesus Christ made it clear to His disciples that, the world would hate them. This would be a result of the offensive nature of their message to the world and its systems. As a matter of truth, it would be in direct opposition to the world. Already, men hated Jesus since His preaching offended those who were worldly. Paul had this to tell the Thessalonians;

"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 2:4-6

It's clear Christ never sought the glory or approval of men and neither did the apostles. To Paul, the mark of a servant of Christ is to please Him and Him alone. At this point, may I ask whose servant you are? Jesus or man? As for the chief rulers, this is how their picture looked like (they were described);

"for they loved men's praise more than God's praise."
John 12:43

*"Beware of the scribes, who like to walk in long robes,
and love greetings in the marketplaces, the best seats in
the synagogues, and the best places at feasts;"*
Luke 20:46

Brethren these are just to help us know the true Jesus in the Bible to enable us identify the counterfeit and to evict it from the church. I trust the good Lord will continue to enlighten us through His word on the attributes of the Jesus Christ the apostles preached.

ANOTHER SPIRIT

Just as there is "another Jesus", there is also another spirit. I want us to know the original spirit (Holy Spirit) whom Paul and the other apostles talked about. By so doing we will be able to unmask the monster (another spirit) in the church purporting to be the Holy Spirit but in reality is a counterfeit. One of the attributes of the Holy Spirit can be seen in the book of Acts. In it, Jesus commanded His disciples to tarry for the Holy Spirit;

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has
come upon you. You will be witnesses to me in
Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the
uttermost parts of the earth." Acts 1:8*

When the Holy Spirit comes upon a person, the fellow is endued with power which converts him or her into a

witness for Jesus Christ. The believer with the Holy Spirit may not mount a crusade platform or even gather a crowd to preach to, but will in one way or the other talk to others about the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. John the beloved apostle admonished us to try the spirits whether they be of God, when he said;

"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. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and every spirit who doesn't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God, and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of whom you have heard that it comes. Now it is in the world already." 1 John 4:1-3

Brethren we are to try the spirits whether they are from God. Any spirit which does not testify of Jesus, but exhorts itself is the asset of the antichrist. Believers who have the Holy Spirit will always feel the promptings of the Spirit to draw close to the word of God and to prayer so that, the word of God will become flesh in their lives. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who indwells the believer to help him or her overpower sin;

"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. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
1 John 1:6-8

The truth is, as we journey towards Christlikeness by the enabling power of the Spirit of truth, we may fall into one sin or the other. But by the grace and mercy of God, He points them out to us by revelation and conviction. The revelation may either be direct or through another believer. It's however clear, when the Spirit of truth dwells in a believer, he or she will not craft, conceive or practice sin. The Holy Spirit as His name connotes, leads one towards righteousness. There is something holy even about the manifestation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. John again had this to say with regards to the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer;

"Whoever remains in him doesn't sin. Whoever sins hasn't seen him, neither knows him. Little children, let no one lead you astray. He who does righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. To this end the Son of God was revealed, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whoever is born of God doesn't commit sin, because his seed remains in him; and

he can't sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are revealed, and the children of the devil. Whoever doesn't do righteousness is not of God, neither is he who doesn't love his brother." 1 John 3:6-10

ANOTHER GOSPEL

It is unfortunate to note that, much of the gospel being preached in our age and dispensation is merely stories or historical facts and never parallels with Paul's definition of the gospel;

"Now I declare to you, brothers, the Good News which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand, For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,"
1 Corinthians 15:1, 3-4

First of all, we must identify with Christ's death. Just as Jesus Christ was crucified on the cross, so must our old man be crucified and put to death. Peter had this to say in this regard;

"who his own self bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness; by whose stripes you were healed." 1 Peter 2:24

Secondly, the gospel preached must contain the ingredient of burial with Christ;

"Or don't you know that all we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life." Romans 6:3-4

Paul again reechoed this truth to the church at Colossae:

"having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead." Colossians 2:12

By water baptism, we identify with Christ when His body lay dead and buried in the grave. Paul also explained how we identify with Christ's resurrection:

"We were buried therefore with him through baptism to death, that just like Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection; . . .

Thus consider yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 6:4-5, 11

John the Baptist preached;

- Repentance.
- Baptism.
- And directed the people to Christ, who was to baptize them with the Holy Spirit and fire.

Peter the apostle preached;

"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

- Repentance.
- Water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.
- And receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit was the central focus of his message.

All the above servants' and Jesus' messages contained the three pillars of the gospel. Thus, death, burial and resurrection. The question which arises is, does the modern day preacher hammer home these three points of the gospel? If not, then another gospel is being preached. Our book titled, '*the cry of Apostles and Prophets*' explains the meaning of the gospel.



CHAPTER FOUR

MERCHANDISE IN CHURCH

Jesus warned His disciples, (whom we are), ahead of time of wolves who appear in sheep clothes. They look harmless and friendly, but when subjected to critical spiritual scrutiny, they will be found venomous. Peter informs us that, just as there were false prophets, there will also be false teachers among us. And they will introduce destructive teachings into the church;

*"And many shall follow their pernicious ways;
By reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken
of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned
words make merchandise of you; whose judgment now
of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation
slumbereth not" 2 Peter 2:2-3 KJV*

Let's start by analyzing the underlined portions of these two verses. You will notice a lot of people actually patronize the services of these false teachers;

*"But the Spirit says expressly that in later times some
will fall away from the faith, paying attention to
seducing spirits and doctrines of demons,"
1 Timothy 4:1*

Suffer me to say, any revelation which only appeals to emotions and seeks to excite hearers and does not draw

one towards Christlikeness or is not in line with the doctrine of Christ and the apostles, is heresy. We are in the days Paul talked about in 2 Timothy 4:3-4. Peter however said, because of these false teachers, the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. It's however not uncommon to hear men blaspheme the name of our God because of the money conscious and extravagant life styles of many preachers in our days. Paul discerned the thoughts of these teachers and preachers when he said;

*"constant friction of people of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. Withdraw yourself from such. But godliness with contentment is great gain."
1Timothy 6:5-6*


The words of the apostle may seem harsh, but it is the blunt truth. Rather, godliness with contentment is great gain. His advice to those sitting under such teachers is, withdraw from them. One of the reasons why these preachers or teachers teach false doctrine is because of covetousness. To satisfy their greed, they will preach messages which appeal to only the flesh or emotions of their hearers. The apostles were not interested in material gain and so would not sacrifice the truth because of covetousness;

"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 2:5-6

But to these prophets, they are in the Lord's work to profit from the children of God and have thus, gone the way of Balaam the prophet;

"forsaking the right way, they went astray, having followed the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of wrong-doing;" 2 Peter 2:15

Peter later called the attitude of the prophet Balaam madness in the next verse of the above scripture.



CHAPTER FIVE

ALL THESE THINGS SHALL BE ADDED

A scripture most 'wolves' in Christendom have not spared is;

*"But seek first God's Kingdom, and his righteousness;
and all these things will be given to you as well."
Matthew 6:33*

Instead of **"all these things"** as you can see from above, most Christians and 'wolves' render it as **"all other things"**. It is the will of our Daddy in heaven to meet the **needs** of His people and their wants if He so chooses. We will look at so many scriptures which prove that it's the father's will to meet our **needs**. For us to get a clear understanding of the scripture above, let's take a look at the preceding verse:

"Therefore, I tell you, don't be anxious for your life: what you will eat, or what you will drink; nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food, and the body more than clothing? See the birds of the sky, that they don't sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you of much more value than they? Which of you, by being anxious, can add one moment to his lifespan? Why are you anxious about clothing?"

*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They don't toil, neither do they spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not dressed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today exists, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, won't he much more clothe you, you of little faith? Therefore don't be anxious, saying, 'What will we eat?', 'What will we drink?' or, 'With what will we be clothed?' For the Gentiles seek after all these things, for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."
Matthew 6:25-32*

Jesus in these verses never condoned laziness, but was establishing the fact that the energy of the Gentiles was channeled towards the acquisition of these things. Rather, believers are to work for the kingdom of God. By this I mean no matter the work you are engaged in, you are to bear in mind that you are doing it for the sake of the kingdom of God. God assures the believer that He will meet all the basic necessities of his or her life. However, it should be known, God does bless some of His people abundantly for this same purpose (to establish His kingdom or covenant). Before we can claim the last phrase of the scripture **“all these things”** shall be added unto you (us), we should first obey the preceding conditions;

Seek ye first the kingdom of God
And the righteousness of God

Peter wanted to know what he would gain after he had
abandoned **all** to follow Christ Jesus;

*"Then Peter answered, "Behold, we have left everything, and followed you. What then will we have?" Jesus said to them, "Most certainly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive one hundred times, and will inherit eternal life."
Matthew 19:27-29*

*"Peter began to tell him, "Behold, we have left all, and have followed you." Jesus said, "Most certainly I tell you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or land, for my sake, and for the sake of the Good News, but he will receive one hundred times more now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life."
Mark 10:28-30*

Now let us study these two passages of scripture carefully. A careful study will reveal that, the passage in Mark is a bit more elaborated than the one in Matthew. The following points can be noted from (in addition to) the scripture in Matthew;

- Peter asked the question on behalf of all disciples who had left all to follow Jesus. Jesus makes it clear that , anyone who has forsaken house, brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for **His sake** will;
- Receive a hundred fold
- Inherit eternal life
- Let us also note the points from Mark;
- Peter asked the question on behalf of all those who had left all to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus said any man who has left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for His sake and the Gospel will;
- Receive a hundred fold now in this time, houses, brethren, sisters , mothers , children and lands
- Face Persecutions
- In the world to come eternal life.

It's interesting most of those who claim this scripture for their life have ***not left anything in order to follow Jesus***. Peter asked the question because he had the legitimate right to do so, since he had forsaken ***all*** to follow Jesus. Since Jesus promised that all who had left any of the things mentioned will receive a hundred fold in this time, let's look at the manifestation of this scripture at least in the life of Peter and Paul. You will realize after the day of Pentecost scripture does not actually tell us the possessions of Peter but their circumstances are described in the following scriptures;

"All who believed were together, and had all things in common. They sold their possessions and goods, and distributed them to all, according as anyone had need."
Acts 2:44-45

"For neither was there among them any who lacked, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet, and distribution was made to each, according as anyone had need."
Acts 4:34-35

These two scriptural verses give us a clue as to the fact that, all God promised His disciples came to pass. In New Testament life, the possessions of believers could be shared by all brethren. If an apostle visited any church, at

least there was a house of a believer he could lodge in till his assignment there was over. *Please let's ask ourselves from the passage in Mark, how a person can get for example mothers and fathers?* Is it not brethren in the church who are old enough to offer fatherly and motherly advice and care ? When it comes to houses and lands you will notice in the life of Paul the word of God was fulfilled;

"When she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and stay." So she persuaded us." Acts 16:15

Lydia asked Paul to lodge in her house. From the preceding verses we notice she was a well to do woman. It is important at this point for me to highlight that, when the apostles received the proceeds of the possessions of the early believers, they did not just amass wealth to themselves. The following scripture proves this point;

"But Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!" Acts 3:6.

They rather redistributed them to all the believers to meet everyone's **needs**. Nevertheless, its also possible they had no money on them at the time.

This is consistent with scripture in that, whatever the possessions God endows us with, we are only stewards who need to meet our own needs and that of our family and the rest to be used in meeting the needs of other believers first, and then unbelievers. Thus to say, it's the will of God to meet the **needs** of all members in the church. Some should not be living in unreasonable luxury while others whom Christ purchased with His blood should be suffering from the lack of the basic necessities of life. There is no way a true disciple of Christ can live in unreasonable luxury. Jim Wallis, leader of the sojourners community in Washington, in *Call to Conversion* (Lion, 1981) writes: "the scriptures are stunning in their clarity on this issue. Wealth is seen, at best, as a great spiritual danger and, most often as an absolute hindrance to trust in God. The rich are continually held responsible for the sufferings of the poor, while God is portrayed as the deliverer of the oppressed. The God of the Bible has taken sides on this matter and has emphatically chosen the side of the poor.

Sharing with the poor is not regarded as an option but as the normal consequences of faith in God". Paul assured the believers in Philippi;

"My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19

He however had the following advice or command for those who are wealthy in the church;

"Charge those who are rich in this present world that they not be haughty, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on the living God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life."
1Timothy 6:17-19

Even after we have sought first the kingdom of God, let's bear in mind, God only guarantees our **needs and not our wants**. If He chooses to give us in abundance, then it's a bonus to also meet the **needs** of other brethren. John Young in his book *Our God is still too small* says "many Christians are worse off as a result of their faith and glad to be so, for they know that 'their' money and possessions are not theirs in an absolute sense. They are for sharing. So they do not ask, 'How much of my money should I give to God's work?' but: 'How much of God's money of which I am Steward shall I spend on myself?'. Let's reason with Young as in, 'The more wealthy we are, the more dependent we are on the labours of others, and on having access to an unfair proportion of the good things in this world.



CHAPTER SIX

A STILL SMALL VOICE

God may cause something to happen, but He Himself may not be in it. Most people are so used to activity, when even the Lord is speaking they cannot discern His voice. There are times the Lord will be around, but Satan finds a way of deceiving many (that) He is absent. A very important truth I will like to share with you is found in the scripture below;

"He said, Go forth, and stand on the mountain before Yahweh. Behold, Yahweh passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains, and broke in pieces the rocks before Yahweh; but Yahweh was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but Yahweh was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but Yahweh was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice. It was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entrance of the cave. Behold, there came a voice to him, and said, what are you doing here, Elijah?"
1 Kings 19:11-13

From the above scripture, we realize God just passed by, and the following resulted;

- A great and strong wind rent the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks.
- After that, there was an earthquake,
- Then fire came down.

It's surprising the Lord caused these to happen, but He was not in it. After these activities, the Lord spoke to Elijah in *a still small voice*. Whatever the content of the message, I do not have an idea, but it appears it did not gladden his heart. Its however unfortunate how men easily believe when there is *shouting, jumping around* and *'fallings'* in places of Christian gathering, then God is in it. Brothers, there is a great probability that God will cause there to be *'falling'* here and there because we believe things of that nature. He may however not be in it. Let's ask ourselves why the same people who claim to always fall under the anointing never see a change in their Christian walk (*I am not talking of material possession*). There is one thing clear in scripture with regards to the anointing when it comes upon a fellow;

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that his burden shall be taken away from off thy shoulder, and his yoke from off thy neck, and the yoke shall be destroyed because of the anointing" Isaiah 10:27 KJV

Thus, it's evident when a person comes under the

anointing, the yoke (whatever it is) shall be destroyed. Jesus Christ (the anointed one, who is also the anointing) came to destroy the works of Satan, which is sin. Our greatest need in this hour is not just anointing for the things of this sinking world, (which Paul called rubbish or garbage), but the anointing which breaks the yoke of sin and addiction in many lives.

How sad it is when believers ignore the promptings of the Holy Spirit in their everyday endeavors, but are always searching for one shaking here or the other. In our time a man's level of impact is not judged by how many people he has led in the way of righteousness and holiness, but by how people fall when he touches them. More often one will understand the Holy Spirit cautions us against sin, but we sometimes ignore Him, thereby grieving Him.

Satan has always taken advantage of the ignorance of some believers in leading them to believe that when they go through trials and tribulations, the Lord is absent from them. This is a big lie from the pit of hell. God rather makes it very strong from scripture that when we are going through tough times He is always with us. He may be silent, or speak softly, but surely He is around. Scripture can attest to this;

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they will not overflow you.*

When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned, and flame will not scorch you." Isaiah 43:2

Even when the three Hebrew friends were thrown into the furnace, Jesus was there with them. It's important for us to note that, throughout their trials, He was with them. This also happened in the life of Daniel. In our main scripture in 1 Kings 19:11-13, I believe Elijah had fled because of the threat of Jezebel, but God assured him He was still with him. He by His own divine providence had even preserved about 7,000 people who had not bowed to Baal. God in this episode taught Elijah that it is not only through physical (tangible) manifestation that He can be found. He can cause tangible manifestations to happen, but He may not be in it. He may most at times be found in a still small voice. With all our 'falling' let's heed and obey the voice of God. David had this to say;

"Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me." Psalm 23:4

The next time Satan wants to bring unbelief through his deceit, let's always remember whether we feel God or not, He is always in and around us. If God is aware of our sin, then He is perfectly aware of whatever we go through. For He is just and perfect and nothing can be hidden from His sight.



CHAPTER SEVEN

RUNNING IN VAIN

It will be disappointing for one to run a race and after he finishes, (with a hope of receiving a price), he is rather told he is disqualified.

Disqualification of an athlete to the best of my knowledge happens in either of these two ways. In the first place, a person can be disqualified before the start of the race if he does not meet the right criteria for that particular race. Additionally, a person can also be disqualified while in the race if he does not run according to the rules of the sport. It is however important for us to know that, actual disqualification does not take place after the sport, but before and within the race. If one is disqualified from the race before he starts running, and still decides to run, he does so in vain. And if another also within a race runs against the rules and regulations, he is automatically disqualified. Even though he may finish the race, he will also be running in vain.

The problem is this, many run the Christian race without knowing they were disqualified even before they started running, or even within the race. What I am about to share will touch on those who were not qualified in the first place and those who are being disqualified because

they are not running according to the rules. Let me just touch on the first group a little and later zero in on the latter.

The first group who are disqualified even before they think they are running the Christian race or doing God's work, are those without the spirit of Christ;

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if it is so that the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if any man doesn't have the Spirit of Christ, he is not his." Rom 8:9

It's clear from the above scripture, no matter one's accomplishment, if he does not have the spirit of Christ dwelling in him, he is already disqualified. As a matter of truth, he is none of Christ's. If this particular scripture concerns you, please I beseech you by the mercies of God to cry out to God in prayer for the Holy Spirit to indwell you before it's too late.

The second group who are disqualified within the race and are not aware are pictured below;

"Many will tell me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?' Then I will tell them, 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.'" Matthew 7:22-23

The yardstick for God's approval to us men is not

different from the credentials some presented to Christ as their qualification and justification into the kingdom of God. Just look at the credentials they presented to God;

- **We *prophesied* in thy name**
- **Cast out devils in thy name**
- **Did *many wonderful works***

I am not suggesting God cannot use a true believer to do those things mentioned above. The truth is, merely doing them does not gain us approval from God, even though it may be the sign of God's approval. Jesus said, He never knew these people since they worked iniquity. Paul, knowing it's possible for one to run in vain said;

"Do all things without murmurings and disputes, 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, holding up the word of life; that I may have something to boast in the day of Christ, that I didn't run in vain nor labor in vain."
Philippians 2:14-16

He knew, for him not to have run in vain, he had to present the believers entrusted into his hands blameless and harmless. Paul knew this from the command of Jesus;

"You didn't choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatever you will ask of the Father in my name, he may give it to you." John 15:16

To Paul, his fruit (be it character or souls won), had to remain in the faith. Please remember in **Matthew 7:22-23**, those who were disqualified were workers of iniquity. So for one to be qualified, the fellow has to be blameless and harmless. He later had this to say about his own life;

"I have fought the good fight. I have finished the course. I have kept the faith. From now on, there is stored up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give to me on that day; and not to me only, but also to all those who have loved his appearing." 2 Timothy 4:7-8

Paul perfectly knew he had run according to the rules and had thus finished his assignment. Are we fighting a good fight or just beating the air? He then had the following advice for us;

"....No soldier on duty entangles himself in the affairs of life, that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier. Also, if anyone competes in athletics, he isn't crowned unless he has competed by the rules." 2 Timothy 2:2-5

"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



CHAPTER EIGHT

HALF BAKED CHRISTIANITY

"Ephraim, he mixes himself among the nations. Ephraim is a pancake not turned over. Strangers have devoured his strength, and he doesn't realize it. Indeed, gray hairs are here and there on him, and he doesn't realize it." Hosea 7:8-9

It's evident from the above, God called Ephraim to a separate and consecrated life, but he rather chose to mix himself among 'the people'. When one becomes a believer he must of necessity make up his or her mind to totally forsake the world and its pleasures or affections in order to embrace the kingdom of God fully. Thus, you must lose the world in order to gain Jesus. We cannot have both just as a person cannot walk on two different paths at a time, or look up and down at the same time.

The word of God through Hosea concerning Ephraim was, he was not totally devoted to God. A question we could ask is, why was it so? He had mixed himself with strangers. These strangers practiced systems or life styles which were not in consonance with the commandments of God which he had received. As he got defiled or contaminated with these, the result was his inability to fully practice or obey the whole

commandments of God. Due to these strange life styles, Ephraim could not discern his state.

Believers in this age and hour are called to a life of separation from the world, to a committed life to God. One need of the hour is to be radically opposed to the systems of the world. Even though we are in the world it should however be laid bare, we are not of the world. John the apostle said;

"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." 1John2:15-16

It's crystal clear we believers are not supposed to love the world and its three major constituents. For anyone who loves the world is an enemy of God. Brethren, lets beware of these wolves who come in sheep's clothing and only talk about material prosperity to make us enemies of God and unaware of His truth. No wonder Leonard Ravenhill said the following with regards to these preachers "My heart is burdened and burning. God's house is polluted. The sinners scoff and say of the rich preachers, "Their creed is greed and their god is gold." We need a baptism of holy zeal to get us back to holy indignation that the money grabbers are back in the

temple, and that God's heart is hurting". It is written;

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world: your faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" 1John 5:4-5

The first Adam failed in the Garden of Eden when Satan tempted him with the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. Glory be to God the last Adam in the person of Jesus Christ overcame these temptations in Luke 4:1-13. We are called to "...earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" Jude 3 KJV. This faith is the one which subdues these lusts. It does not claim and marry the world. The world entering the church, (and yes, has already entered) is devouring the strength of the church just as in the days of Ephraim. Let's be on guard folks and evict the world out of the church without apology.

CHAPTER NINE

THE TEST OF CHRISTIANITY.

The test of one's faith or Christian walk is not only in times of abundance but mostly in trying moments, which is best described by the word 'fire'.

"that the proof of your faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes even though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" 1 Peter 1:7

This tells us Christianity is not all that smooth down here on earth. The Christian should bear in mind there will surely come a day his faith in Jesus Christ will be tested not by enjoyment but by tribulations and afflictions. The Psalmist said "many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all" (though he was referring to Christ). Afflictions actually await the righteous man, but only God remains as his deliverer. It's about time we arm our minds with this truth in so far as we have decided to follow Christ. A man once said that, Jesus proved a person could be in the will of God, be greatly loved by God, and still suffer unjustly. Those who hold any contrary view and promote such brand of shallow theology have not reflected much on the Cross;

"but he will receive one hundred times more now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land, with persecutions; and in the age to come eternal life." Mark 10:30

A time came in the life of the three Hebrew friends in Babylon, to stand for what they professed to believe. They spent some moment in **fire**, but scripture tells us they were not alone in it;

"He answered, Look I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the aspect of the fourth is like a son of the gods." Daniel 3:25

Even though they were thrown into the fiery furnace for their unwavering belief, Jesus never forsook them but rather abode with them in the **fire** without it harming them. Brethren whatever trials you feel you are going through, I make it known to you that Jesus knows and so the trials may not consume you.

You will notice I used the word '**may**', supposing there is a probability one can be consumed by the troubles and storms of life. Whether or not a man will stand the test of **fire** is dependent on the type of theology he has built his life upon. Paul, knowing the sort of stuff he was made of, boldly declared;

*"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Could oppression, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Even as it is written, "For your sake we are killed all day long. We were accounted as sheep for the slaughter No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."
Romans 8:35-39*

Paul had the boldness to make such a declaration because of what he had built his life upon. He knew he could only overcome all these through Jesus, and the love of God. Leaning on our own understanding and strategies in this world will never and can never deliver us from the storms of life, but faith in Christ Jesus alone. There is a coming shaking as stated by the apostle Paul in the scripture below;

"This phrase, "Yet once more," signifies the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Therefore, receiving a Kingdom that can't be shaken, let us have grace, through which we serve God

acceptably, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire" Hebrew 12:27-29

Anything which is not founded on true faith in Jesus Christ will surely come crashing down. A time when God Himself will test the faith of men is coming, for He Himself is a consuming **fire**. The work of all preachers and those who claim to serve God will surely be tried by **fire**. Every shoddy work done for God will be revealed through this formula one day;

"... But if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay, or stubble; each man's work will be revealed. For the Day will declare it, because it is revealed in fire; and the fire itself will test what sort of work each man's work is..."
1 Corinthians 3:11-15

The ways by which one will come out of the **fire** are, either all his works stand the test or is consumed by **fire**. The quality of a man's work is dependent on the sort of materials he uses in building it. If we build our faith on false doctrines, then one day our hope will come crashing down by **fire**. Rather, we are to build our faith on the following scripture:

"Everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, and does them, I will show you who he is like. He is like a

man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock. When a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it was founded on the rock," Luke 6:47-48

There is a difference between falling down in the face of adversities, and not being shaken by the same. When our faith is built on the rock, we will not shake when we are faced with problems and challenges, not to talk of even falling. The Psalmist said;

"Those who trust in Yahweh are as Mount Zion, which can't be moved, but remains forever." Psalm 125:1

It has been made known, during World War II that, when enemy armies invaded North Africa, the missionaries fled; and there was great worry over the churches left behind. However when the war ended and the missionaries returned, they discovered strong, blossoming churches. The sufferings of war sanitized the church and helped strengthen the faith of the true believers. At least I believe great lessons can be drawn from such a testimony.

CHAPTER TEN

A MESSAGE TO MEN WHO INSULT GOD

It's often said, "fools proclaim themselves into obscurity and the wise forgets himself into immortality"(Anonymous). Thus, it's best for one to *humble himself than to be humbled by God*. I know this chapter is set forth to *cause true believers to glorify God*. According to the grace of God given me,

I will like to make these emphatic statements;

- Every true revelation of God gives a sense of longing for more of God and to be more like Jesus Christ (hope we are aware of the life and conduct of Jesus Christ). Dr. A. W. Tozer in an essay in his book titled, *Nearness Is Likeness* Said, "The more we are Like God, the nearer we are to God".
- Any man who claims to have more of the revelation of Christ must be more like Him in word and in deed (thus, he must live a sacrificial life)
- Any man, who claims especially to understand and have insight into the writings of the Apostle Paul, must also possess the life and heart of this dear Apostle of God.

- Any man who claims to have more revelations of the kingdom of God must also have a longing to depart (unless for the benefit of the saints if he is with us) from this world by word and deed, for he is to live as a pilgrim. I mean he must not be comfortable with the flashy and deceptive things of this earth. If he is closer to God or Jesus Christ, then he must of a truth be far away from the world.

I believe these statements are enough to humble most of us for now. It's *an insult to the power and grace of God* for some '**carriers of revelation knowledge**' to suggest by their messages that the power and grace of God is not efficacious enough to help one radically depart from the world and its lusts thereof. It's important for us to appreciate that, what really caused the fall of man was his yielding to the temptation of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, of which so many people are falling prey to these days. What is even alarming is the rate at which some professing believers are engaging in a rat race for the world and all that is in it because of 'spiritual pollution' from pulpits in some seeker friendly churches. These, never want to hurt any one's pride nor challenge lives for a change.

Permit me to make it clear, it was and still is the intent and will of God to make His own different and peculiar

from the world in word and in deed by the power of his word;

"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." Exodus 19:5-6

"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that you may proclaim the excellence of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light:" 1 Peter 2:9

But it is rather unfortunate to observe in the church in most nations, with Ghana which is my nativity (as a case study), that there is no clear line between many professing believers and those of the world. To reveal the corruption in many, you will recognize all their revelations of God's word is quantified in monetary terms and every insight they claim to have rather draws men farther away from the life of Christ into the world. If indeed their messages are true revelations and not inspirations from seducing spirits, why are so many professing believers yielding their members as instruments of unrighteousness? At this juncture let's look at some questions below:

Question One

Are all who profess to be servants of God really serving Him or the vain elements of this earth? Let's search the scriptures;

"Thus consider yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore don't let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Neither present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God." Romans 6:11-13

"Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the bondservant of sin. A bondservant doesn't live in the house forever. A son remains forever therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:34

It's bare, anyone who yields his members to sin and instruments of unrighteousness is the servant of the same. If one is therefore the servant of sin, there is however hope for him to come out of it since he is **not a son to sin** as in line with John 8:35.

Question Two

Are all who profess to love God really doing so if they still love the world and the things there in?

"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. The world is passing away with its lusts, but he who does God's will remains forever." 1 John 2:15-17

Certainly, we cannot claim to love God when we are still under the yoke of these lusts. Anyway, the wise hearted will learn from the above (that) all these things we are craving for will soon pass away, for they are vanities and a grasp for the wind. Work hard for the sake of the kingdom and love for God, whether you are engaged in the public or private sector. When we arm our mind with this mentality, it will help us overcome the world and all its constituents. Scriptures rather encourages us to pursue these;

"...But you, man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness." 1 Timothy 6:10-11

"...Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness...Flee from youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Timothy 2:19-22

Question Three

Does mere jumping around, shouting, screaming, dancing and living any how without godly reverence really reflect the grace of God?

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world;..." Titus 2:11-15

The true grace of God makes the distinction between practicing believers, professing believers and the people of the world. Jesus said;

"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

"Again, therefore, Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life." John 8:12

In the light of these scriptures, I believe the hour has come for you and I to wake up to the call of our savior, to preach and teach the people of God what the power and grace of God is capable of doing in their lives. *The power and grace of God does not only raise cripples and open*

the eyes of the blind, but is primarily available to break the yoke of sin and all forms of unrighteousness in order for us to mirror the life of our savior Jesus Christ, and to do His good pleasure. The good pleasure of God in the scripture below is to set us apart from this world in all forms and ways;

"...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, holding up the word of life;..."
Philippians 2: 12-16

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THIS IS THE TRUE GRACE OF GOD

One of the words mostly abused in the church of God is *grace*. A careful study of the scriptures reveal that, there is the *true grace* and also *false grace*;

"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 5:12

The question therefore is, what is the true grace of God? Before we go into this let me state that, the works of man can never earn him salvation or redemption from sin. Salvation can only be found in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross which was engineered by God Himself;

"for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;" Romans 3:23-24

It's therefore important for us to note, before one can benefit from this grace he must with his will reject the world in order to embrace this free gift. There is no way one can have both the world and the grace of God. The dividing line between Christians and people of other

religions is the grace of God which separates us from the world. Since man could not please God in his quest to live a righteous life, God brought grace to help man live a life pleasing in His sight. Therefore grace came not as a license to sin, but to empower us to live a righteous and victorious life;

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to the intent that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we would live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world..."
Titus 2:11-15

This is the work of the grace of God in the life of the believer. It's ludicrous to observe in our generation the abuse and misrepresentation of the grace of God. This was not different in the days of Paul;

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? May it never be! We who died to sin, how could we live in it any longer?" Romans 6:1-2

It's in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation that God provides His grace beyond human understanding to help us live a life pleasing to Him, as we shine as light and make a difference in word and in deed. Christians are not set free from sin so as to live anyhow, for scripture declares;

"Jesus answered them, "Most certainly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is the bondservant of sin. A bondservant doesn't live in the house forever. A son remains forever. If therefore the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:34-36

"Thus consider yourselves also to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore don't let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. Neither present your members to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God. For sin will not have dominion over you. For you are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be! . . . even so now present your members as servants to righteousness for sanctification." Romans 6:11-19

What the grace of God is all about is definitely enshrined in the scriptures above, even when aligned with the original intent of God for us below;

"Grace to you. . . 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 1:2-7

Wow! How rich the grace of God is. Having delved into these let's look at the line of action taken by those who believe in the true grace of God;

"...be sober and set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ as children of obedience, not conforming yourselves according to your former lusts as in your ignorance, but just as he who called you is holy, you yourselves also be holy in all of your behavior; because it is written, "You shall be holy; for I am holy..." 1 Peter 1:13-17

To those of us who believe a clear line cannot be drawn between the Christian and the unbeliever regarding matters bordering on purity of the spirit, soul and body, let's step out with faith in this scripture;

"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

Let's remember, brethren, that there is judgment because man has his free will and therefore can obey the word of God or act otherwise. The Christian faith is not a mere profession but a living one. Good works never earn the grace of God, but the grace of God, out of necessity, leads to deeds of righteousness, holiness and good works.

CHAPTER TWELVE

WOLVES IN SHEEP CLOTHES

Jesus warned His disciples of people He called wolves as did Paul the Apostle;

"For I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock," Acts 20:29

The words of wolves may not seem to harm you in the short run, but will kill you like poison in the long run. They may be telling you one thing but in the inner parts of their hearts they mean something quite different. They may appear to be loving, but deep down within their hearts they are pushing you to chase the world so you can make more money to give to them to carry out their ambitious projects.

If you are very observant you will recognize, for most of them immediately the money comes to them, they care only about gratifying their own fleshly desires but not the ministry they claim to be leading. They lambast and condemn many, implying they are not in right standing with God that is why they are not rich. Nevertheless, they fail to let them understand it's the consultation fees, tithe and donations they make to them which made them rich.

For you to know if they really love you, why not use Jesus Christ's criteria of a good shepherd to judge;

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

From the above scripture Christ makes us to appreciate that it's only a good shepherd who will lay down his life for the sheep. In times of trouble when you go to them for help, do they help you out (when your problem demands a physical solution) or they just pray hypocritic prayers over you? It's the good shepherd who will deny himself for you in the face of difficulty. Check out these scenarios;

- When a father and his son are crossing a river, does the child carry the father or it's rather the father who carries the child to cross the river?
- When the food in the house is insufficient, does the good mother give it to the child first or she eats and gives the remaining (if any) to the child?

Please judge for yourselves. A good shepherd therefore lays down his life for the sheep;

"Even so, affectionately longing for you, we were well pleased to impart to you, not the Good News of God only, but also our own souls, because you had become very dear to us." 1 Thessalonians 2:8

In the above scripture, due to the depth of love the apostle Paul and his team had for the believers at Thessalonica, they worked with their hands so they could also meet the financial needs of other believers. Surprisingly, many preachers never want to emulate the example of these apostles.

Whenever they are confronted with this issue, they begin to quote scriptures which prove it's their right to take money. But I always wonder if they just feel comfortable at this level of ministry. It's simply clear, they have not made up their mind to mature and to humble themselves.

Christ, our perfect example never insisted on His rights as the Son of God, but for our sakes chose to deny Himself of comfort. This is what Paul and some of the apostles understood and gave out even their souls. Some may object with this scripture;

"Then Peter answered, "Behold, we have left everything, and followed you. What then will we have?... Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, will receive one hundred times, and will inherit eternal life." Matthew 19:27, 29

Let's cast our minds back and look at the life of Peter and the others in the book of acts. When people sold their

lands and brought the proceeds and laid them at their feet, did they amass wealth or rather distributed the proceeds to meet other people's need? It therefore stands to reason that, they might only accept financial tokens just to meet their basic needs and that of the ministry but not to live in unreasonable luxury as we can see in the life of Peter and John;

"But Peter said, 'Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, get up and walk!'" Acts 3:6

They, I am sure and you will bear witness, obeyed all the commandments of the Lord. If they did not, they wouldn't have been able to teach others. From the scripture above, they obeyed the teaching of Christ to store up their treasures in heaven as in line with Matthew 6:20-21.

You cannot be storing up treasures here on earth in the name of prosperity and still claim you are a disciple of Christ. In these critical times when men have a lot of needs to be met (even in your own assembly), how can we as true disciples still feel comfortable to live in unreasonable luxury? Why should your dog's food be even richer than the food of many of your fellow brethren you fellowship with? Due to the lifestyle of some rich people in His days, Christ pronounced certain woes upon them;

"But woe to you who are rich! For you have received your consolation. Woe to you, you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Luke 6:24-25

One will realise, all that these 'no suffering' preachers are doing is to cause him or her who laughs now, weep in the end? Know this of certain that, every true disciple of God will not be happy with the state of affairs in Christendom and in the world, looking at the skyrocketing nature of sin.

He will therefore commit his all to the fighting of falsehood and thus will not be given to a life of comfort. Remember;

*"Those who sow in tears will reap in joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed for sowing, will certainly come again with joy, carrying his sheaves."
Psalms 126:5-6*

The period now is a time of sowing which is not pleasant at all, but in the end we shall receive a reward from God which is everlasting. Though after giving to the Lord and His work, He even continues to bless you abundantly, it's not a licence to live anyhow but to rather continue to commit those resources to the kingdom work. We as believers should always bear in mind, we are only stewards who will one day give an account of how we

used the resources God made available to us;

"So let a man think of us as Christ's servants, and stewards of God's mysteries. Here, moreover, it is required of stewards, that they be found faithful."
1 Corinthians 4:1-2

In the same teachings of Christ in the scripture we quoted earlier, He pronounced woe on people who all men will speak well of. These days you will realise, it's this same 'no suffering' preachers who 'go to bed' with corrupt politicians and fraudulent businessmen. These are not good shepherds but rather wolves in sheep clothing. They certainly are not setting a good example for the young ones to follow. Let's finally look at the Lord's description of a good shepherd;

"Yahweh is my shepherd: I shall lack nothing He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He guides me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup runs over. Surely goodness and loving kindness shall follow me all the days of my

life, and I will dwell in Yahweh's house forever."
Psalms 23

From the above scripture, a good shepherd makes sure the needs of members in the church are met. He feeds the flock with fresh messages from God and not mere emotionalism and carnality.

He concentrates on restoring souls by reconciling them back to God through the preaching of righteousness.

He is always identified with the flock in their trying times and never ceases to rebuke and correct them when they err. They also make the flock to understand the comfort which is in rebuke.

The major instruments of a good shepherd are the rod and the staff. Even when God ceases to chastise and to rebuke a people, it simply means they are bastards;

"But if you are without discipline, of which all have been made partakers, then are you illegitimate, and not children." Hebrews 12:8

He tells the flock to pray for their enemies instead of wishing their death in order to live a trouble-free life. He teaches the flock the necessity of God's redemption and glory being revealed in the face of adversity.

He fills the flock with the consciousness that they need to

be filled with the Holy Spirit (always) by keeping their garments pure.

"Let your garments be always white, and don't let your head lack oil." Ecclesiastes 9:8

"Don't be drunken with wine, in which is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit," Ephesians 5:18

He tells the flock to do good always and to have mercy on others and not to be self-centred using himself as an example.

He works towards being in the presence of God always by living a righteous life, being at peace with God and experiencing the joy of the Holy Spirit(which is what the kingdom of God is). If the message of the 'no suffering' preacher is contrary to this psalm, then he is not a good shepherd but a wolf in sheep clothing.



CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PERILOUS TIMES SHALL COME

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

For the purpose of our study, I will elaborate on some of the sins enumerated above. Paul told Timothy that with all the information he had, he should bear in mind, in the last days, there were going to be difficult times. Brother, don't let anyone deceive you that better and comfortable days lie ahead for humanity. There is however hope for those who trust in the Lord. Even when there comes a time men begin to say peace, peace (which everyone is hoping for), then suddenly there will be disaster as in line with 1 Thessalonians 5:3;

"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."

Christ Himself in His end-time prophecy to His disciples never pampered them by speaking smooth words to them. He warned them, there was going to be trouble all over and even that was just going to be the beginning of sorrows as depicted in the scripture below;

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places. There will be famines and troubles. These things are the beginning of birth pains." Mark 13:8.

The disciples were not going to be immune or exempted from the troubles which were going to hit the world in their days as well as ours. Never think for example, if it's not going to rain in your country, your house will however be exempted (though God is capable of working a miracle in such situations, in most cases however He chooses not to, for His own reasons). In times of famine and others, God however has a system of delivering His people by using other believers to help those who will be in need. In the days of the apostles in Acts 11:28, Agabus prophesied about a worldwide famine which indeed came to pass.

It will however interest you to know, there were poor saints in Jerusalem and so Paul had to raise some funds from other churches in order to help the poor saints there.. Even the church in Smyrna was a poor and

persecuted church and yet they loved and obeyed God. During perilous times men's faith shall be tested of what sought of material it's made of according to 1 Corinthians 3:13-15. Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe shares the thought that God is not going to replace suffering with glory; rather He will transform suffering into glory. He says "Jesus used the illustration of a woman giving birth (John 16:20-22). The same baby that gave her pain also gave her joy. The pain was transformed into joy by the birth of the baby. The thorn in the flesh that gave Paul difficulty also gave him power and glory. The cross that gave Jesus shame and pain also brought power and glory".

It's lack of sound doctrine which destroys the true faith of the children of God. From our main scripture, you realize Paul said men were going to be lovers of themselves. False gospel only makes people to love themselves but not to be sacrificial givers.

He goes on further to say they will be covetous. The false gospel makes men lovers of the world such that they amass wealth. Thus making us chase the world, as in abusing it. Henry David Thoreau, the naturalist of the 1800s reminds us that, a man is wealthy in proportion to the number of things he can afford to do without. Christ warned His disciples about covetousness;

"He said to them, "Beware! Keep yourselves from covetousness, for a man's life doesn't consist of the abundance of the things which he possesses." Luke 12:15

Even in the Old Testament it was this same covetousness (which God warned Israel off), which led to the destruction of some of them including some of their kings.

There will be many people who will be boastful about the things they possess and even their achievements in life. Many go to church to share 'big testimonies' about what God has done for them. They claim God has prospered them whereas they used their own means to get them (God can however bless abundantly). Some before they got their contracts had to bribe officers in charge, lie, defraud other people etc. but come to give testimonies.

He also added that, men will be unthankful as they will not be grateful for what God has blessed them with. They do not see the need to even glorify and thank God when their high expectations are not being met. They are always chasing after more riches. This gospel of 'no suffering' has pushed so many into the desire of becoming rich which has led them into so many troubles as depicted in the scripture below;

"But those who are determined to be rich fall into a temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful lusts, such as drown men in ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some have been led astray from the faith in their greed, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." 1 Timothy 6:9-10

Its been said that, riches are a trap; they lead to bondage, not freedom. Instead of giving satisfaction, they create additional lusts (desires) which must be satisfied. Instead of providing help and health, an excess of material things hurts and wounds. Even Solomon in his days in Ecclesiastes 5:10 said, those who love silver shall never be satisfied with it, as well as those who love abundance;

"He who loves silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he who loves abundance, with increase: this also is vanity."

I guess there are so many people who have not yet seen this scripture or perhaps they are just willingly ignorant of it. The gospel of 'no suffering' has taken Holiness out of so many churches because its primarily materialistic. These days men as predicted by the apostle Paul despise those who are good. They rather feel

comfortable to honour false prophets. When false prophets and teachers ask people to 'sow a seed' they willingly obey just because of the quick gains they anticipate. When the godly pastor therefore asks them to give towards some other noble cause, they feel reluctant to do so. If a man is a preacher of righteousness, they never want to listen to him but rather choose to listen to false teachers and prophets who will speak what they want to hear.

Men in this end-time are also lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God. They love to party and enjoy things that will amuse them. They have now transported this lifestyle into the church by loving a lot of drumming and dancing to the detriment of listening and obeying the commands of God. They also love messages which excite them and so they are being given to stories. Dr. Donald Coggan once advised preachers that, "It is their task to feed the sheep - not to entertain the goats. ";

"and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside to fables." 2 Timothy 4:4

And lastly the gospel of 'no suffering' will lead to man having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof. What does it mean? Christ told the Sadducees who wanted to tempt Him that, they err simply because they do not know the scriptures nor the power thereof;

"Jesus answered them, "Isn't this because you are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God?" Mark 12:24

I am using this scripture in principle but not in context. The power embedded in the scriptures is what is capable of redeeming a man if only he knows the truth of it. As Christ said, it's only the truth which we know which can set (make) us free. Since many do not know the scriptures they err simply because they are still babes;

"For everyone who lives on milk is not experienced in the word of righteousness, for he is a baby." Hebrews 5:13

We are made to understand from the above scripture that, those who do not live righteous lives are simply taking milk (thus, not being skilled in the word of righteousness). It's only those who take meat who are able to discern what is good from the bad. Most people do not recognise the power of God attracts suffering for the sake of Christ in the life of the believer as in line with 2 Timothy 1:8;

"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,"

Hence from the scripture above you realize, by fulfilling God's assignment for your life in the preaching of the gospel to get men delivered from hell, the whole hell will rise up against you. The devil has no time to waste on people who make men love this world. If you become a preacher of righteousness and holiness it's likely to make you unpopular in this world and you will receive all kinds of attacks be it verbal or not. Luke 6:26 is a caution to all believers in this age;

"Woe, when men speak well of you, for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets."

Christianity is warfare and we are soldiers who are supposed to be engaged in this warfare. The problem arises when you rise up to this call. Conversely, in so far as you decide not to fight, then Satan knows he has already captured you, and needs not bother you again. For someone to tell you, you are not supposed to suffer for Christ's sake is to tell you to resign from being a soldier of the cross and consequently a legitimate child of God. Military life as you know is never a life of comfort at all as one is supposed to endure hardness;

"You therefore must endure hardship, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 2:3

Paul wrote this to advice Timothy not to forget or miss his focus on the type of call he had received from God. He was not supposed to mingle with civilian matters. Civilian matters in this regard are about the things of the world as it carries the potential of stealing our focus. We are in the world, but not of the world according to John 15:19.

We all know when you visit any nation, the military are normally separated from the rest of the people though they may be in the midst of the people. They have a special place of abode with their buildings, uniforms, training etc. different from anyone else. Even six months of combat training takes cowardice away from the heart of most soldiers. In the same way, when a Christian enlists in the army of God, he will be made as a matter of necessity to pass through some tough training which he is supposed to endure if only he is a good soldier as we have learned from the scriptures. Your language, manner of appearance and taste will change after you endure hardness.



CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE BLESSEDNESS IN SUFFERING FOR CHRIST

In this chapter, I will endeavour to bring to the knowledge of those who love truth, the inevitability of suffering for Christ as a true disciple and the consequent blessings. Paul warned the early believers that, there was coming a time men who were wolves but decorated in sheep clothing were going to sneak into the church and make havoc of her;

"For I know that after my departure, vicious wolves will enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Men will arise from among your own selves, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them."
Acts 20:29-30

To Timothy a young preacher, he advised to stick to sound doctrine and be careful of what he taught others since it had the potential of leading him to either heaven or hell first, as well as those who hear him;

"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

So when these modern day false prophets and teachers bring in damnable teachings, they have first of all been deceived and then automatically 'infest' their followers with such teachings with damning consequences. It is been said by an old man that, false doctrine inevitably leads to false living, and false living then encourages false doctrine. The apostate must "adjust" God's Word or change his way of life, and he since is not about to change his lifestyle, he secretly defiles people and makes it easier for them to sin. It is possible to go to a church fellowship and be defiled. Brother, if you find yourself under a man who only tells you smooth things and never challenges you to live in holiness, please run away from such for your dear life and search for true believers to fellowship with. It may not matter their number, for do not be deceived by the crowd. Even the disciples of Christ asked Him a very important question touching on the salvation of their souls. He answered and gave us a clue as to those who will make it to heaven as well as those who will be disappointed in the end;

*"One said to him, "Lord, are they few who are saved?"
He said to them, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door,
for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in, and will not be
able. When once the master of the house has risen up,
and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside,
and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to*

us!' then he will answer and tell you, 'I don't know you or where you come from. Then you will begin to say, 'We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. 'He will say, 'I tell you, I don't know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity.' " Luke 13:23-27

The reason why most of the Jews especially the Scribes and the Pharisees could not identify Christ is (as) their long awaited messiah was because they could not understand and interpret well, the scriptures, which related to Him. In the same way many men and women these days will miss the Lord, seeing they do not search the scriptures well with an open heart. Christ told the scribes and Pharisees to go and search the scriptures since they testified of Him as in line with John 5:39. Already through the prophet Jeremiah, God had given them a clue as to how they could find Him;

"You shall seek me, and find me, when you shall search for me with all your heart." Jeremiah 29:13

We are also being admonished to study to show ourselves approved unto God and to rightly divide the word of truth. When the scriptures are not rightly divided, we can commit 'spiritual suicide' with it by way of journeying in error. Paul therefore told Timothy to;

"Give diligence to present yourself approved by God, a workman who doesn't need to be ashamed, properly handling the Word of Truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

The scribes and Pharisees failed to rightly divide the scriptures and subsequently missed the first coming of the messiah. In the same way many are teaching error simply because they fail to rightly divide the word of truth or are willingly ignorant of the fact that the day of the Lord draws near and so believers should be prepared for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The scribes and the Pharisees missed the messiah who they claim they were waiting for, by mistaking the second coming of Jesus Christ for His first coming. According to the scriptures the messiah's first coming was going to be the manifestation of a suffering servant;

"He was despised, and rejected by men; a man of suffering, and acquainted with disease; and as one from whom men hide their face he was despised; and we didn't respect him." Isaiah 53:3

His second coming is given to be glorious, as He is going to come as a reigning king, to bring both political and spiritual redemption (order). Both the Hebrew scriptures (Isaiah 11:4) and the views of His disciples in the New Testament testifies of this. These blind teachers were rather waiting for Him to bring about political redemption

since they were under oppression from the 'super power at the time'. So when Jesus came and did not look attractive (He did not have any 'political party' to overthrow the existing government), they did not see Him as their messiah. This is clearly because they understood not the scriptures which related to the first coming of the messiah. You realise therefore that, when Jesus Christ asked His disciples people's perception about Him, they said, "some say you are a prophet", "others say you are Elijah" and so on. However, He asked them who they thought He was, to which Peter answered rightly as in line with Matthew 16:16 "Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.". The question others will ask is, though John the Baptist was made manifest, why couldn't the disciples identify him as the Elijah to come? To us it's easy to identify John the Baptist as the Elijah Scriptures prophesied of, since we have the Bible. Jesus therefore told His disciples that Elijah had already come in the person of John the Baptist and they did whatever they wanted with him;

"His disciples asked him, saying, "Then why do the scribes say that Elijah must come first? Jesus answered them, "Elijah indeed comes first, and will restore all things, but I tell you that Elijah has come already, and they didn't recognize him, but did to him whatever they

wanted to. Even so the Son of Man will also suffer by them." Matthew 17:10-12

Please bear in mind that it was even after Christ's resurrection that he opened their understanding into the scriptures which spoke of Him. So until He resurrected, the disciples did not even have the fullest understanding of who they were walking with as Luke 24:44 reveals. It therefore necessitated that Christ open their eyes;

"Then he opened their minds, that they might understand the Scriptures." Luke 24:45

So after Christ's ascension and the day of Pentecost, the disciples then had the fullest understanding of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. Most of the scribes knew Elijah must first come before Christ comes. They, knowing the manner of life and ministry of the Elijah who had been before, couldn't take John to be the Elijah who was supposed to come (presumably because he was not doing miracles). At best John the Baptist fit into the position of a prophet but not the expected Elijah.

In the same way Jesus could only fit as a prophet because of His messages (and Elijah because of His mighty deeds) and not the messiah. He was not beautiful to behold as a reigning king who could overthrow the political government at the time. We can therefore

deduce from these that because of the lack of understanding and rightly dividing of the scriptures by the scribes and the Pharisees, they were not able to identify the King of kings and the Lord of lords. In their mind, I believe they would be asking themselves how a mighty king could be born in a manger, be a carpenter and suffer persecution?

The case of many these days is not different, since they do not rightly divide the word of truth nor understand the scriptures. According to their thinking, they ask themselves why should they, the sons of the King of kings and Lord of lords be suffering (which is however relative) or not be enjoying affluence knowing their father owns everything in this world? Bob Sheffler, (founder of Grassroots Leadership Development, USA) makes an interesting observation that, many view themselves to be suffering simply because they have very high expectations in life. He is of the opinion, if men lower their expectations, what they see to be suffering could be seen as blessings. Ever since he is being involved in grassroots leadership development in most developing countries for about three decades, he has observed that people living on their basic needs in rural areas are generally happy people. Thus, our assessment of life is based on our level of expectation. This is evident in the fact that there are people who have their needs met but

still complain about how life has not dealt well with them. True satisfaction therefore does not really come from the abundance of the things that we possess. Those who hold a contrary view to this, site the following scripture to back their taught;

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that you through his poverty might become rich."
2Corinthians 8:9

They however forget that, there are so many scriptures which calls us to emulate our master, and therefore in this context the apostle Paul was not giving us a trump card to go round chasing earthly riches to our own peril but to imitate our dear Lord by living selfless lives. If we say we are following the footsteps of Christ, then why don't we learn of Him as the following scriptures instruct us to;

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls." Matthew 11:29,

"Brothers, be imitators together of me, and note those who walk this way, even as you have us for an example."
Philippians 3:17

Obedience to these scriptures will help us lead a humble life like our saviour for the sake of others. This should be the mentality of every true Christian after the Lord has made him or her rich in this world's goods. There is however the possibility that Christ can make us rich materially (True Biblical prosperity) though it may not be a rule for every believer.

If we therefore understand 2 Corinthians 8:9 to mean, Christ came purposely to make us rich materially and to live an unreasonable luxurious life, then we are saying Christ contradicted Himself in so many ways when we take into account His teachings on the dangers of possessing earthly possessions and His teachings in the parables about the kingdom of God. I am not down playing the fact that money may be necessary in playing any role in the propagation of the gospel (though without it the gospel will still be preached).

God knows how to provide the funds to support the preaching of the gospel. We are therefore not supposed to go round chasing after riches in the name of trying to support God's work, or else the deceitfulness of riches will choke the word of God in us. If God wants us to support His work financially, He will help us get it without our own schemes and worldly wisdom. This is not to say Christians must be lazy, but on the contrary, to work hard

and fix their hope in the provision of God. We are therefore not supposed to make money an idol, but to be good stewards of it as the good Lord in His own wisdom chooses to bless us with it. It's therefore clear, God is more than able to prosper any of His children in this world's goods to keep the 'cycle of sacrifice' going. Why then is it that when it gets to our turn to fulfil God's will in sacrifice we fail to give out and to lay down our lives as our saviour taught us;

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, just like I have loved you; that you also love one another." John 13:34,

"By this we know love, because he laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers."
1John 3:16

When we study the scriptures very well we appreciate, the disciples of Jesus were known as followers simply because they emulated Him. With all God had blessed them with, they used them for the common good of all but never lived self-centred lives. Paul even in his missionary journeys practiced selflessness as a true disciple or follower of Christ. He understood what he himself wrote about concerning Christ becoming poor so that we might become rich. He was teaching the disciples of Corinth to emulate Christ by also doing acts of free giving for the

benefit of others. After teaching this truth he makes it clear, we must follow his example in sacrificial living;

"I beg you therefore, be imitators of me. Because of this I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways which are in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every assembly." 1 Corinthians 4:16-17

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

Even in his letter to the believers in Thessalonica he said they did not just preach the gospel to them, but also bestowed their goods to them as in line with 1 Thessalonians 2:8. Others would like to site the instances where he said God gives us everything to enjoy and so we should live in opulence to prove we have been financially prospered by God. This we see, is not consistent with his teachings as he goes further in the same passage to instruct those who are rich to be ready to distribute their wealth;

"Charge those who are rich in this present world that they not be haughty, nor have their hope set on the uncertainty of riches, but on the living God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, that they be ready to

distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life."
1 Timothy 6:17-19

Just like Christ taught His disciples, we should also give our goods (those we do not need) to others in order for us to have treasures in heaven. If we are able to part with those we also need, then it will be a plus in our accounts in heaven. For the surest way of having treasures in heaven is by giving out our goods as in line with the following scripture;

"Don't lay up treasures for yourselves on the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume, and where thieves don't break through and steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."
Matthew 6:19-21.

It's therefore clear according to the teachings of Christ and Paul that, we came into this world with nothing and with nothing shall we return home. So when we have the opportunity let us give or else if we die those goods we amass to ourselves will not follow us to the world beyond. In checking the example Christ and His disciples left us, we are not in any certain terms as true disciples of Christ

to live without sacrificial giving. Please let's bear in mind God does not just look at the act of giving, but the state and motivation for our giving as the scriptures below attests;

"Jesus sat down opposite the treasury, and saw how the multitude cast money into the treasury. Many who were rich cast in much. A poor widow came, and she cast in two small brass coins, He called his disciples to himself, and said to them, "Most certainly I tell you, this poor widow gave more than all those who are giving into the treasury, for they all gave out of their abundance, but she, out of her poverty, gave all that she had to live on." Mark 12:41-44

"The king said to Araunah, No; but I will most certainly buy it of you at a price. Neither will I offer burnt offerings to Yahweh my God which cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver." 2 Samuel 24:24

The view of many asserts that a believer should not sacrifice for the sake of Christ in this age. The kingdom of God as we have been made aware is about righteousness, peace (in the midst of financial difficulty etc.) as well as peace with God and joy in the Holy Spirit as the scripture below (in principle) depicts;

*"for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking,
but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."*

Romans 14:17

Jesus in His days preached against materialism and amassing of wealth or riches. He always placed the soul of man above every other thing (material) but never taught we should balance the material with the spiritual. To Him the soul is first and other things secondary;

"He called the multitude to himself with his disciples, and said to them, "Whoever wants to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it; and whoever will lose his life for my sake and the sake of the Good News will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what will a man give in exchange for his life?" Mark 8:34-37

Those who want to live comfortably in this life which Christ warned against, twist the scriptures in order to sell their doctrine of materialism thereby using Jesus to get what they want but not to love Him for who He is. The pathway to knowing the truth or rightly dividing the word of God is by approaching the word of God without prejudices and to pay heed to the command of God in both the Old and New Testaments;

"you shall not listen to the words of that prophet, or to that dreamer of dreams: for Yahweh your God proves you, to know whether you love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul."
Deuteronomy 13:3

"Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" Matthew 22:37

Earlier, I endeavored to bring to light the reason why the scribes and Pharisees missed the first coming of Christ by taking the second coming for the first and the error of the "No suffering" preachers who have also taken the millennial reign of Christ to be for now, thereby following the steps of the Pharisees (which will make them not get ready for the second coming of Christ). Consequently, I am going to show that suffering (no matter the form it takes) for the sake of Christ is an inevitable case for every true believer. In addition, I will also show why God has in His own wisdom designed it to be so, starting from the messiah Himself.

According to prophecy as earlier revealed, Christ's first coming was going to be that of a suffering servant. In God's own wisdom, it was this suffering and final crucifixion of Christ which was going to bring about our redemption as other prophets like Moses prophesied it to

be. Jesus continued to assure His disciples that, so far as they were His followers (which meant they are to follow His footsteps), they were also going to suffer the same way He did, for a servant is not above his master as in line with John 15:20;

"Remember the word that I said to you: 'A servant is not greater than his lord.' If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they kept my word, they will keep yours also."

Permit me to say at this point that, we are to know the subject matter in question is part of the salvation package. This is contrary to the believe that Christ suffered for us and therefore we are not supposed to suffer persecutions (which comes in different forms). Dr. J. H. Jowett has said, "Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing." If there is to be any blessing, there must be some "bleeding." It has been said of a missionary who was at a religious festival in Brazil that upon moving from booth to booth, examining the wares, he saw a sign above one booth "Cheap Crosses." He thought to himself, "That's what many Christians are looking for these days - cheap crosses. My Lord's cross was not cheap. Why should mine be?";

"But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and

children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." Mark 10:30 KJV

I wonder why so many want their needs met by God but rather want to deliberately escape persecution as is being consistent with the gospel. There are however different levels of persecutions and trials. The persecution or afflictions one individual will suffer may be different from the other. When we take Paul for example we realise he suffered more than the other Apostles. The Apostles in general were appointed unto the following;

"For, I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last of all, like men sentenced to death. For we are made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You have honour, but we have dishonour. Even to this present hour we hunger, thirst, are naked, are beaten, and have no certain dwelling place. We toil, working with our own hands. When people curse us, we bless. Being persecuted, we endure. Being defamed, we entreat. We are made as the filth of the world, the dirt wiped off by all, even until now." 1 Corinthians 4:9-13

"but in everything commending ourselves, as servants of God, in great endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses, in beatings, in imprisonments, in riots, in

labours, in watchings, in fastings; in pureness, in knowledge, in patience, in kindness, in the Holy Spirit, in sincere love, in the word of truth, in the power of God; by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by glory and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold, we live; as punished, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."
2 Corinthians 6:4-10

Paul however testifies that he suffered more than the other Apostles;

"Are they servants of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I am more so; in labours more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths often. Five times from the Jews I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods. Once I was stoned. Three times I suffered shipwreck, I have been a night and a day in the deep. I have been in travels often, perils of rivers, perils of robbers, perils from my countrymen, perils from the Gentiles, perils in the city, perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea, perils among false brothers; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often,

and in cold and nakedness Besides those things that are outside, there is that which presses on me daily, anxiety for all the assemblies." 2 Corinthians 11:23-28

His level of suffering was in fulfilment of his call after he encountered the Lord on the road to Damascus;

"But rise up, and enter into the city, and you will be told what you must do. But the Lord said to him, "Go your way, for he is my chosen vessel to bear my name before the nations and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake." Acts 9:6, 15-16

From the example of Paul, one can also see persecution to be in context. I will also add that, it's possible for us to avoid certain suffering and persecution. We can see this in the life of Jesus as He prayed to the father thrice in the garden of Gethsemane;

"Then he said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here, and watch with me. He went forward a little, fell on his face, and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass away from me; nevertheless, not what I desire, but what you desire. He came to the disciples, and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, "What, couldn't you watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray, that you don't

enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Again, a second time he went away, and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cup can't pass away from me unless I drink it, your desire be done. He came again and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. He left them again, went away, and prayed a third time, saying the same words."
Matthew 26:38-44

From the above prayer of Jesus Christ, we can infer that if there is the possibility of escaping any persecution we can opt for it. On the other hand, if it's the will of God for us to suffer then so be it. Christ even told the disciples that when they go to a place and they are being persecuted they should flee from there and go elsewhere;

"But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next, for most certainly I tell you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man has come." Matthew 10:23

We equally notice in the early church when the disciples were being persecuted by the Pharisees, they fled from Jerusalem leaving only the Apostles since it was the will of God for them to be there;

"Saul was consenting to his death. A great persecution

arose against the assembly which was in Jerusalem in that day. They were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except for the apostles." Acts 8:1

The Apostles in the earlier chapters prayed for boldness to continue to preach the gospel in the face of adversity;

"Now, Lord, look at their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your word with all boldness, while you stretch out your hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of your holy Servant Jesus. When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were gathered together. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness." Acts 4:29-31

An important point worth taking note of is, suffering is not forever as suggested in the following scripture;

"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." 1 Peter 5:10

Even Paul also got to the point where he said no one should trouble him again as he bore the marks of Christ;

"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

This was evident in his later ministry as no one forbade him to preach and teach the word of God as revealed in the scripture below;

"Paul stayed two whole years in his own rented house, and received all who were coming to him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, without hindrance." Acts 28:30-31

Nevertheless Christ told His disciples before His departure from the earth that, so far as men hated him, so will they be hated by men and persecuted for His sake. He however assured them, He was with them and so they should be of good cheer in so far as he had overcome, they will also overcome. It was meant to make them understand that, suffering persecutions and tribulations was part of salvation and whenever they passed through them, He was with them. It's only the devil who will deceive you that when you are being persecuted for righteousness sake then God has deserted you. We are rather supposed to be joyous for suffering for His sake;

"... Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets."
Luke 6:22-23 KJV

These were all fulfilled in their lives just as Christ had promised them (to which they rejoiced). Dr. Warren W. Wiersbe has said "Mature people know that life includes some "postponed pleasures." We pay a price today in order to have enjoyments in the future. The piano student may not enjoy practicing scales by the hour, but he looks forward to the pleasure of playing beautiful music one day. The athlete may not enjoy exercising and practicing His skills, but he looks forward to winning the game by doing his best. Christians have something even better: our very sufferings will one day be transformed into glory, and we will be "glad also with exceeding joy".

I wonder if in the sight of Christ there are some set of rules or commands for the early believers and another set for us (end-time pilgrims).. If Christ knows of only one set of rules for His disciples and we claim to be part of the number, then just as we claim the other promises such as miracles and the like, so should we also embrace suffering for the sake of Christ. Unless we declare plainly that, we are not His disciples thereby being ashamed of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Peter in his teaching makes it

clear, suffering persecution should not be strange to us as believers for its supposed to be part of the normal life of a true believer.

"Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified." 1 Peter 4:12-14 KJV

No wonder when Stephen was being stoned by the Jewish mob, he did not curse them but rather in that state interceded for them. Notice from Acts 7:55-56 it's even in the state of suffering that Christ revealed Himself to him (Stephen). Paul in his teachings made it plain, it was going to be through much tribulations or sufferings that they were going to enter into the kingdom of God (by extension we are included);

"Confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that through many afflictions we must enter into the Kingdom of God." Acts 14:22

Even he at the onset of his call knew, suffering was going to be part of his assignment as earlier stated. For Christ

had told him according to Acts 9:15-17 that he was going to suffer for His sake. We have already observed, Paul's suffering was beyond what the other believers or apostles suffered, in fulfilment of prophecy.

Some always try to hide behind the fact that Paul's case was exclusive. As true as this assumption is, it does not still negate the truth of all true believers suffering in one way or the other for their faith in Jesus Christ. At this point does it not strike us, that there is a seemingly direct correlation between ones suffering (or sacrifice) for the sake of the gospel and the quantum of revelation he or She possesses of Christ? No wonder Paul had abundance of revelation from the Lord. The suffering of Paul was not an indication of God deserting him, but was rather a ladder to aid him know Christ the more. So in the later part of his ministry, he told Timothy he was appointed as an apostle, preacher and teacher of the gentiles and because of that, he suffers persecution;

"For this, I was appointed as a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles. For this cause I also suffer 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." 2 Timothy 1:11-12

Just as Christ told His disciples to rejoice when they are being persecuted for His sake, Paul also understood it as one who was a partaker of the ministry and was always ever ready to suffer for Him. He was not just content with the suffering he had but even longed for the one which was at the same level with Christ;

"that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed to his death;" Philippians 3:10

According to human reasoning, suffering in general is not a good thing. May I at this point make it plain that, the apostles taught we are not supposed to suffer as evil doers or fraudsters but to suffer for the sake of the gospel (this is where the distinction is). It therefore presupposes, one may suffer for either wrong doing or for righteousness sake. The latter glorifies God and makes known His power and peace in the life of the believer;

*"For let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil doer, or a meddler in other men's matters. But if one of you suffers for being a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this matter."
1 Peter 4:15-16*

If these apostles found joy for suffering for the sake of Christ which may be contrary to human logic, then there must be a reason why suffering for the sake of Christ is

good. Let's go into the scriptures to find out why Christ made suffering to be part of the salvation package.

To begin with, let me establish the point that there are certain acts of God which are purely based on his sovereignty and thus, if it's not made clear, we leave it as it is. Paul in his letter to the church in Rome underscores this fact when he made known to us that, God can make certain vessels just to prove His nature and power without any man questioning His authority;

"What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much patience vessels of wrath made for destruction," Romans 9:22

From the above Scripture he makes it clear, certain vessels are appointed to the wrath of God. This I say because scriptures testify of it, but not to stir up theological debate. However, we are made to understand that, true disciples of God are not appointed unto wrath;

"And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead-- Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come." 1 Thessalonians 1:10

"For God didn't appoint us to wrath, but to the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ" 1 Thessalonians 5:9

The distinction therefore must be made between the wrath of God and suffering persecution or tribulation. The latter is what the true disciple is appointed unto as is consistent with scriptures and the former is for the disobedient.

So when you check the scriptures you will find out, that whenever God sent His people into captivity for them to be afflicted, in the end that same nation into which they were sent captives received the wrath of God. A perfect example is when God prophesied to Abraham, his descendants will go into captivity but in the end will be delivered as in line with Genesis 15:13;

"He said to Abram, "Know for sure that your seed will live as foreigners in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them. They will afflict them four hundred years."

This was fulfilled when the children of Israel were led captive in Egypt. In the end when He sent deliverance for His people, He also sent His wrath on the Egyptians. God in His own wisdom uses the affliction of His people as a basis in unleashing His wrath upon the disobedient or those who persecute His people. This is why the church at Rome was advised not to avenge herself but to give room for the wrath of God;

"Don't seek revenge yourselves, beloved, but give place to God's wrath. For it is written, "Vengeance belongs to me; I will repay, says the Lord." Romans 12:19

There is going to be the day, God will use the suffering of His people as a basis to avenge them of whatever they suffered at the hands of the disobedient and wicked. An interesting development John the beloved saw in connection with this truth was when those who had been slain for their testimony and for the word of God were crying for God to avenge them of their enemies;

"When he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those who had been killed for the Word of God, and for the testimony of the Lamb which they had. They cried with a loud voice, saying, "How long, Master, the holy and true, until you judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the earth? A long white robe was given to each of them. They were told that they should rest yet for a while, until their fellow servants and their brothers, who would also be killed even as they were, should complete their course." Revelation 6:9-11

Notice from this account, God makes them to understand there are some of their brethren who must die the same way they did before His wrath will come upon the sons of men. God has purposed that, through trials and persecutions He will reveal much of His glory and purify

the saints. Looking at even the example of the Israelites, God showed them His mighty power in the midst of their captivity in Egypt. You will find out through scripture, God always made reference to this episode to the Israelites to teach them of His wondrous ways. It was through the suffering and final crucifixion of Christ that the glory of God was revealed;

*"Jesus answered them, "The time has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Most certainly I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone. But if it dies, it bears much fruit."
John 12:23-24*

In the midst of the stoning of Stephen, God rather gave him a revelation of Himself (Jesus Christ) standing at the right hand of God which hitherto, no man was privileged to see. In the same way it was through the persecution of the early church that the gospel spread faster, more miracles and wondrous works of God were displayed (for persecution normally pushes the disciples of God out of their comfort zones into duty) as evidenced in Acts 8:1.

The fruit of Paul's sufferings should be an encouragement to all who are suffering for Christ's sake and those who will, in the future. Through his sufferings most of the revelations penned down in the epistles were made possible and handed over to you and I. Paul in his

writings points it out to us that suffering proves the righteous judgement of the Lord and thus makes us part of the kingdom of God. To the church in Rome he indicated that, if we suffer with Christ (as in not being ashamed of the gospel), then we shall also be glorified with Him;

"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified with him." Romans 8:17

Why then do people want to be identified with Him as the glorified Lord, and not as the suffering one? Please know that, the suffering is what comes before the glorification. When the power of the gospel is truly at work in our lives, then automatically afflictions and persecutions come our way. This is what Paul meant in;

"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,"
2 Timothy 1:8

If we are really truthful to ourselves, we will attest to the fact that whenever we went through one suffering or the other, our faith was ignited causing us to pray and cry to God putting our trust in Him. Some learned how to pray aggressively because of what they had suffered before.

Why then allow Satan to deceive us of the uselessness of suffering as a believer (not for our sins)? Do you know that living in this end-time is very difficult and they that will like to be truthful as the scriptures say will suffer?

"Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution." 2 Timothy 3:12

Never let any man deceive you and take away what our fathers have set as examples for us. If at the time you even have your basic needs met, you are not grateful, don't think when you have abundance you will be faithful with it. There were only two churches in Asia Christ had nothing against. One was the church in Philadelphia which had a little strength but was faithful to God;

"To the angel of the assembly in Philadelphia write: 'He who is holy, he who is true, he who has the key of David, he who opens and no one can shut, and who shuts and no one opens, says these things: I know your works (behold, I have set before you an open door, which no one can shut), that you have a little power, and kept my word, and didn't deny my name.'"
Revelation 3:7-8

The other was Smyrna:

"The first and the last, who was dead, and has come to life says these things: I know your works, oppression,

and your poverty (but you are rich), and the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Don't be afraid of the things which you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested; and you will have oppression for ten days. Be faithful to death, and I will give you the crown of life." Revelation 2:8-10

The later was a poor church in terms of material gains but pleased the Lord in the face of tribulation. I often hear some preachers say that, when you live good (in abundance) that is when you can please God, but a good student of the scriptures knows this is not the case. Smyrna though was poor, remained faithful to God. Christ even promised them, there were more tribulations ahead and as such they were expected to remain resolute unto the end. The church which rather thought they were okay with material possessions (the Laodicean church), received a shocking rebuke from the Lord about their spiritual stand.

Go round these days and you will see what these "no suffering" preachers have done to the faith of many. Let me state a few of what they do to the faith of people;

- They cause you to use Jesus to get what you want and not to love and embrace Him.

- Faith without works kind of Christianity (instead of obeying and waiting patiently for the promises of God, they rather cause you to claim promises without total obedience).
- They plant greed into many lives instead of sacrificial living.
- They stir your faith for material gains but not for souls and holy living.
- They cause you to be self centered.

Let me however state that being poor or rich does not automatically qualify you for heaven. One's material poverty does not disqualify him or her before God. Neither does one's material riches qualify him or her to be in right standing with the Lord, but godliness with contentment is **great gain**. The rich should distribute to the needy starting from our household of faith and the poor should fix their gaze on the righteous Lord who is the author and finisher of our faith. Suffering for the sake of Christ indeed is inevitable to the soul which desires to live in total obedience to God.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THE LATTER RAIN

Many people will only believe a lie in this end-time if they do not accept the truth as the apostles knew it and thus practice it accordingly. If a man really knows God and fears Him, there is no way he will neglect the essentials of the kingdom of God which is righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit to the preaching of material gains (meat and drink). According to the scriptures, such are only enemies of the cross;

"Brothers, be imitators together of me, and note those who walk this way, even as you have us for an example. For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ,"
Philippians 3:17-18

We are, as the apostle Paul puts it in Colossians 3:1-2, supposed to meditate on the things that are above which is of kingdom value but not on worldly lust;

"If then you were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are on the earth."

Since the times in which we live are dangerous, there is a

call for the children of God to be very watchful so that, the enemy does not steal our attention from the weightier things of the word of God to the less essentials. Using Christ's advice to the Pharisees in Matthew 23:23 as an example;

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faith. But you ought to have done these, and not to have left the other undone."

Scriptures makes us to understand, if men continue to shut their ears to truth, God will give them up and they will believe a lie from the devil;

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

So many people have therefore been made to believe a lie simply because they do not love truth. Through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 5:13), the Lord made Israel to know, because His people lacked knowledge they had

gone into captivity and their honourable men were famished. The situation is not different from our days as so many people are in captivity because of lack of knowledge. Interestingly the same people who go for deliverance or anointing services are the same people who continue to fall into sin and are always delivered of demons, instead of devoting their lives to knowing God for themselves, which will save them the need for deliverance from demons always.

The (b) part of the Isaiah 5:13 says, because of the lack of knowledge, those who are supposed to be honourable men are famished. The message of the prophet Hosea is not at all different from that of Isaiah, only that in his prophecy God hinted that those who lacked knowledge will be rejected from being His priest;

"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I will also reject you, that you may be no priest to me. Because you have forgotten your God's law, I will also forget your children." Hosea 4:6

It's clear from the prophecy, if one lacks knowledge, God will reject him or her from being His priest. If we decide to be truthful in this end-time, we will find it difficult but God will see us through and you will be a partaker of the peace and joy of the Holy Spirit in the midst of troubles

and hardships. Just as Christ overcame through suffering and the glory of God was revealed, so the apostles also showed forth the power and the glory of God by the things they suffered.

I believe it's the desire of God that the last group of His people will also manifest His glory to the amazement of the enemy by the things they will suffer. I have already established elsewhere that, it's through suffering for Christ's sake that a lot of people experience certain depths and glory of God. In this period of Christian dormancy, persecution is likely to be a tool which will trigger the much awaited revival in some communities around the world. It will push many out of their comfort zones into the battle field of Christ. As they do the real job of their saviour, more attacks will come from the pit of hell. Do not be deceived that, when you are anointed Satan cannot harm your body. Nevertheless the Lord is capable of preserving our spirit, soul and body until his appearing. Christ encouraged His disciples that, they should not be afraid of those who can kill the flesh but cannot destroy the soul;

*"Don't be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."
Matthew 10:28*

The persecutions and the tribulations believers suffer, go a long way to prove the redemptive power of God. How can we know God is able to redeem His people when they do not pass through afflictions? It has been said that the Eastern goldsmith kept the metal in the furnace until he could see His face reflected in it. So our Lord keeps us in the furnace of suffering until we reflect the glory and beauty of Jesus Christ. The psalmist had this to say concerning Christ;

"Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but Yahweh delivers him out of them all." Psalm 34:19

As a principle, we can deduce that being righteous does not exonerate you from suffering but rather invites a lot of suffering for righteousness sake and not for evil doing as is in line with what is being talked about in the other chapters. Even in heaven, there is a song those who were redeemed will be singing;

"After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes, peoples, and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands. They cried with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation be to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" All the angels were standing around the throne, the

elders, and the four living creatures; and they fell on their faces before his throne, and worshiped God, saying, "Amen! Blessing, glory, wisdom, thanksgiving, honour, power, and might, be to our God forever and ever! Amen." One of the elders answered, saying to me, "These who are arrayed in white robes, who are they, and from where did they come?" I told him, "My lord, you know." He said to me, "These are those who came out of the great tribulation. They washed their robes, and made them white in the Lamb's blood. Therefore they are before the throne of God, they serve him day and night in his temple. He who sits on the throne will spread his tent over them. They will never be hungry, neither thirsty anymore; neither will the sun beat on them, nor any heat;" Revelation 7:9-16

Never let anyone deceive you that you should not suffer for the sake of Christ. For the wisdom of God is in it. You will lose something very precious if you decide to be ashamed of the gospel.

"If we endure, we will also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us." 2 Tim 2:12

The next book in this series is "Awake, and Christ will give you light. God bless you for reading our books. 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 that, 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 that 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
GOLDEN DISTINCTIONS OF END-TIME SAINTS
IMPORTANT SIGN POSTS FOR BELIEVERS
THE REALM OF DIVINITY, CONTRADICTING THE WORLD
THE PARADOX OF MATURITY
DEMYSTIFYING PARABLES AND SACRIFICE

Little 'heaven' carries enough venom to do damage to the souls men. I would like to state that, any preacher or teacher who uses flattery as a preaching tool is a mouth piece of the antichrist, whether he knows it or not. A lot of preachers cleverly employ rhymes in their messages. Truth may however rhyme, but not all rhyming is truth. Believers in this age and hour are called to a life of separation from the world to a committed life to God. One need of the hour is to be radically opposed to the systems of 'Babylon' and its theology –This is the premise for the book.



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