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The background of the entire image is a dramatic illustration. It depicts a man with a beard and curly hair, wearing a red robe, shown from the chest up. He is holding a large, unrolled scroll with both hands. His mouth is wide open in a shout or cry, and his eyes are looking upwards. The scroll is a light cream color with dark, illegible markings. The background behind him is a vibrant, swirling sky with shades of blue, green, and orange, suggesting a storm or a divine presence. The overall mood is one of intense spiritual fervor or prophetic declaration.

THE CRY OF APOSTLES AND PROPHETS

FEIKOAB PARIMAH

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the cry of
APOSTLES &
PROPHETS

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

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Contact the author via: feikoabparimah@yahoo.com

To Bro. **Zac Poonen** of *Christian Fellowship
Church, India.*

INTRODUCTION

Men are to be challenged in this end-time to radically forsake the world and its pleasures as scripture enjoins us to. A life of laxity and entertainment-Christianity is never in consonance with what the gospel of our Lord is all about. Some key words you will come across in the pages of this book are '*mourning*', '*weeping*', '*eating & drinking*' and above all the assignment of a 'voice' will be clearly defined.

It has been said that, the true Christian is one who becomes a sacrifice in order to call attention to the truth that Christ is the only true sacrifice. In succeeding pages, I will among others pursue the following order;

Show why the gospel is preached to the poor or humble, those who qualify to be comforted by the Lord when all is being said and done, why we should hate a life of ease etc. Enjoy reading.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME

"The Spirit of the Lord Yahweh is on me; because Yahweh has anointed me to preach good news to the humble; he has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening [of the prison] to those who are bound" Isaiah 61:1

Many people have given their opinion as to what the above scripture really stands for. This was the scripture which concerned the ministry of Jesus Christ. The first assignment He was to undertake was to preach the gospel to the **meek** (KJV). The root word translated as meek is '**anav**' which means to be depressed (figuratively) in the mind.

The manifestation of this prophecy was recorded in the book of Luke. Jesus stood in the synagogue of the Jews and the book of the prophet Isaiah

was given to Him. He opened to the portion that concerned His mission on earth and started to read;

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed" Luke 4:18

From the above scripture we will notice Christ replaced the word meek (humble) in Isaiah with poor. The root word for poor in this scripture is **'ptochos'** which means a beggar (pauper).

This should give us a hint that He was explaining the meek in the prophecy of Isaiah (which looked a bit ambiguous). The question then is, why was Christ sent to preach the gospel to the poor? Again, what does it mean to be poor (meek)? I will therefore endeavor to explain the meaning of the poor (from the original text) and how it relates to meekness as well as why Christ was sent to this group of people.

In the *Spiritual Writings of Kierkegaard (provocations)*, compiled and edited by Charles E. Moore) he was of the view that the original gospel in the New Testament is (was), “preached for “the poor,” and it is preached by the poor who, if they in other respects were not suffering, would eventually suffer by proclaiming the gospel; since suffering is inseparable from following Christ, from telling the truth.” Interestingly he goes on to amplify his thought in that, “When preaching the gospel became a livelihood, even a lush livelihood, then the gospel became good news for the rich and for the mighty. For how else was the preacher to acquire and secure rank and dignity unless Christianity secured the best for all? Christianity thus ceased to be glad tidings for those who suffer, a message of hope that transfigures suffering into joy, but a guarantee for the enjoyment of life intensified and secured by the hope of eternity.”

What this implies is, “The gospel no longer benefits the poor essentially. In fact, Christianity has now even become a downright injustice to

those who suffer (although we are not always conscious of this, and certainly unwilling to admit to it). Today the gospel is preached to the rich, the powerful, who have discovered it to be advantageous. We are right back again to the very state original Christianity wanted to oppose! The rich and powerful not only get to keep everything, but their success becomes the mark of their piety, the sign of their relationship to God. And this prompts the old atrocity again namely, the idea that the unfortunate, the poor are to blame for their condition; that it is because they are not pious enough, are not true Christians, that they are poor, whereas the rich have not only pleasure but piety as well. This is supposed to be Christianity. Compare it with the New Testament, and you will see that this is as far from that as possible.”

One important truth we must take note is, Christ [though He is (was) rich], **became poor** so that we through His poverty might become rich. He is indeed the friend of the poor (whether figuratively or literally). Christ, throughout the gospels never

praised the rich, but always pronounced woe on them (that is, those who amass wealth here on earth). Most of the rich people in Christ's days oppressed the poor in order to make their wealth. This practice was what God hated, as there was no justice for the poor.

In our days, the situation is not different from what pertained in Israel. God's throne is built on the foundation of righteousness and justice (Psalm 89:14). Therefore it necessitated Christ institute the justice of God by being an advocate for the poor. His manifestation therefore was to give a sigh of relief for those who were poor. Justice demanded that those who were rich (mostly through dubious means) give back their riches to the people they had cheated. For example whenever goods and services are being taxed, the rich always pass it on to the consumer. It's unfair to give both the rich and the poor a level playing field. Rich consumers have a way of absorbing cost to in turn pass it on to the poor. At the end of the day it is the poor who always suffer. The reason there is poverty in so many countries is simply because of the greed of the rich. The rich

amass wealth while their fellow brothers and sisters suffer need. This is evil in the sight of God and those people need to repent. If it is in ones power to help alleviate poverty and he overlooks it, God will not leave such a fellow unpunished.

It is not uncommon to observe in Africa how politicians spend profligately and still go to Europe cup in hand for grants and loans. If Africa for example could cut down corruption and prodigality, there wouldn't be any need for us to go to Europe for assistance. We cannot hold only the politician to ransom, but must also lash at many so called religious men who live in opulence after soliciting for funds to be used in serving the poor communities in Africa.

I personally see it to be absurd for an individual to own aircrafts while people from his village or town (not to even talk of the nation as a whole) are languishing in poverty. There are some people in Africa who can single handedly alleviate the poverty of the people in the villages and towns they come from. No one can carry the image of God and feel comfortable to be indifferent to the

plight of the poor.

Apart from most of the rich who get their wealth through unrighteous means, there is also the group who get theirs through God's approved channel of honesty and sincerity. God however expects them to also give to the under privileged and destitute since that is one of the reasons why God blessed them.

In God's own wisdom, He has designed that man does not need a lot to survive. You can bear witness that whenever one even over eats, it is very hard for him or her to engage in spiritual activities. A little of the things we possess are just enough to take care of us and to keep us healthy. The cause of some people's illnesses is because of excesses in diet among others. God wanted to teach us these truths right from the wilderness by the way He led the Israelites. Scripture makes us understand that God fed them with manna, clothed them with raiment and sandals (which did not grow old) just to teach them this basic truth of life.

He did not make them live in excesses but gave them what they needed per time. This is the same reason Christ taught His disciples to pray for their daily needs. Living on our needs and not our wants is able to keep us humble in order not to forget God. This places us in the position to always depend on God thereby putting our faith in Him. If we hoard, there is the **temptation to trust** in our possessions.

I have always heard some argue that we have poor people who are very proud while there are some of the rich who are humble. I refuse the temptation to dispute this fact. Nevertheless, God knows all these and has still deemed it fit to instruct us in the direction of the subject matter under discussion. Let us however know, pride is also a spirit. All things being equal, the poor materially and spiritually are disposed to seeing their need for God. In *The Way of Perfection* by St. Teresa of Avila, she even gets to the level of saying that, “the Lord has enabled me to realize in some small degree what blessings are to be found in holy poverty. Those of them who practise it will also realize this, though

perhaps not as clearly as I do; for, although I had professed poverty, I was not only without poverty of spirit, but my spirit was devoid of all restraint. Poverty is good and contains within itself all the good things in the world. It is a great domain -- I mean that he who cares nothing for the good things of the world has dominion over them all. What do kings and lords matter to me if I have no desire to possess their money, or to please them, if by so doing I should cause the least displeasure to God? And what do their honours mean to me if I have realized that the chief honour of a poor man consists in his being truly poor?"

She also came to the understanding that, "honour and money nearly always go together, and that he who desires honour never hates money, while he who hates money cares little for honour. Understand this clearly, for I think this concern about honour always implies some slight regard for endowments or money: seldom or never is a poor man honoured by the world; however worthy of honour he may be, he is apt rather to be despised by it. With true poverty there goes a different kind of honour to which nobody can take

objection. I mean that, if poverty is embraced for God's sake alone, no one has to be pleased save God. It is certain that a man who has no need of anyone has many friends: in my own experience I have found this to be very true."

Whenever we feel there is a need in our lives which must be met, we will always put our trust in God and be content with what we have;.

"Be free from the love of money, content with such things as you have, for he has said, "I will in no way leave you, neither will I in any way forsake you." Hebrew 13:5

Our journey on this earth also entails a 'wilderness' experience before our entry into 'Jordan'. Even in our Jordan we still need to fight for our inheritance in the Lord, which in a nutshell are spiritual blessings. All the great people in the scriptures at a time had their wilderness experience. This was meant to teach them to be humble. There is a time appointed by God when we will leave this earth and enjoy with Him in Heaven. It is however important for us to note,

there are some of His children He will bless abundantly on this earth (not by their own might) in order to establish His covenant (in our case help push the gospel with their finances). Before He does so, He mostly takes the individual through the wilderness experience so that when He endows him or her with wealth, he would have first been accustomed to the humble life by living on his needs. He will consequently not amass wealth but rather distribute it for the benefit of others through the support of the gospel. When one does not amass wealth, he is able to deliver himself from worldly lusts which war against the soul;

*"Beloved, I beg you as foreigners and pilgrims,
to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war
against the soul" 1Peter 2:11*

According to the Scripture above, worldly lust wages war (not just fight) against our soul. This suggests, when one wishes to always fulfill the desires of the flesh, there is the tendency the fellow may not enter into the kingdom of God. When we cast our minds back to the wilderness,

we will realize the Israelites did not want to live on only the manna God provided for them, but were craving for the delicious things in Egypt where they came from. They therefore worried God to supply them with what they wanted, which eventually led to the destruction of most of them in the wilderness;

"So they ate, and were well filled. He gave them their own desire. They didn't turn from their cravings. Their food was yet in their mouths, when the anger of God went up against them, killed some of the fattest of them, and struck down the young men of Israel."
Psalms 78:29-31

"but gave in to craving in the desert, and tested God in the wasteland. He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul."
Psalms 106:14-15

Just as most of the Israelites were not able to enter the Promised Land because they lusted, in the same way so many professing believers will not gain access into heaven simply because they

are busy fulfilling the desires of their flesh by lusting after the world. Paul the Apostle advised that, because of the times in which we live, we should not abuse ourselves with the things of the world (KJV). Excesses (which in the sight of God, is actually feeding on other people's needs) normally turn into a curse in people's lives;

"And those who use the world, as not using it to the fullest. For the mode of this world passes away." 1 Corinthians 7:31

From the life of Paul one would realize he never abused the world. Therefore he could say to the church in Galatia that he was crucified to it;

"But far be it from me to boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Galatians 6:14

This was true in his life since when he went to Ephesus, he never coveted any ones silver, gold or clothing;

*"I coveted no one's silver, or gold, or clothing.
You yourselves know that these hands served
my necessities, and those who were with me."
Acts 20:33-34*

So in order for him to enter heaven, he never paid heed to the desires of his flesh. That is why he kept his body under subjection so that after he had preached the gospel he will be allowed entry into heaven. Paul wanted to convey to us that we should subdue the flesh while on earth, as it carries the potential of making us love the world [and become enemies of God (Philippians 3:18-19)];

"But I beat my body and bring it into submission, lest by any means, after I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected." 1 Corinthians 9:27

Dick Iverson in his book *Maintaining Balance* buttresses the subject matter in question with the following tone, thus, "the Bible teaches that the way to live is to die", and thus any attempt to minimize the cost of discipleship needs to be

rejected. He further states that “the flesh rebels against the concepts of selflessness, sacrifice for others, and laying down one's life. Words like “repentance, tribulation, afflictions and suffering” are not a part of many people's vocabulary. If there is a way to reason around the cross and clothe our self-centeredness in a spiritual sounding phrase then we can keep our carnal nature and our form of religion. We can keep our conscience placated.”

In effect Paul became poor (**made himself**) so he could obey the gospel. The advice he gives us is that we should follow his example just like he told the church in Corinth in the scriptures below;

"I beg you therefore, be imitators of me."
1 Corinthians 4:16

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

Therefore **becoming humble is a choice**, as God does not force anyone to obey Him. To help us understand the subject matter in question, let

me first of all establish what the gospel is all about. From the book of revelation, we gather that this is what the gospel is about;

"I saw an angel flying in mid heaven, having an eternal Good News to proclaim to those who dwell on the earth, and to every nation, tribe, language, and people. He said with a loud voice, "Fear the Lord, and give him glory; for the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and the springs of waters" Revelation 14:6-7

From this overview, you will realize the main component of the gospel is to fear God and obey him or else we stand the danger of the judgment of God. This in a sense is what Solomon also wanted to convey to us all in the following scripture;

"This is the end of the matter. All has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with every hidden thing, whether it

is good, or whether it is evil" Ecclesiastes 12:13-

14

Now, looking at Solomon we realize he was a man who really amassed wealth and satisfied his lusts. In the end it led him into the world and caused him to worship other gods. What we are to learn from his experience is, craving for the things of the world and amassing of wealth leads us into idolatry, and you and I know from the scriptures that idolaters have no part in the kingdom of God;

"Or don't you know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don't be deceived. Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexuals," 1 Corinthians 6:9

"Neither be idolaters, as some of them were. As it is written, "The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play." 1 Corinthians 10:7

The conclusion of his life therefore tells us of the need to fear God. This is because when we have the fear of God in us we will not chase after the world nor amass wealth to ourselves. You and I

know, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10) and it is this wisdom which is able to lead us into salvation as Paul told Timothy;

"From infancy, you have known the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith, which is in Christ Jesus." 2 Timothy 3:15

With the above understanding, let us first and foremost try to define what the fear of God really is, as found in the scripture below;

"The fear of Yahweh is to hate evil. I hate pride, arrogance, the evil way, and the perverse mouth." Proverbs 8:13

From the definition above we will notice, if we really fear God then we will hate pride and arrogance. What then constitutes pride in the sight of God? When we know what pride is in the sight of God, then we will really understand why the gospel is preached to the poor (meek or humble). Before I continue, let me first of all remind us that anybody who is a friend of the

world is an enemy of God;

"You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God." James 4:4

If one loves the world, how can he or she obey the gospel of Jesus Christ? This is one of the reasons I believe Jesus demanded that before His disciples follow Him, they had to part company with the world by giving their wealth to the poor;

"But seek God's Kingdom, and all these things will be added to you. Don't be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Sell that which you have, and give gifts to the needy. Make for yourselves purses which don't grow old, a treasure in the heavens that doesn't fail, where no thief approaches, neither moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning." Luke 12:31-35

The wisdom behind this was, they will learn to totally depend on Him for their needs. Also, they were not supposed to store their treasures here on earth. If they stored their treasures on earth, Their hearts would have been fixed on this earth and not heaven.

So to help them fix their eyes on Christ who is above, they needed to give out their wealth in order for them to have treasures in heaven. Storing our treasures in heaven consequently directs our hearts there. Paul advised the church of Colossae to fix their affections on things above;

"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. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, our life, is revealed, then you will also be revealed with him in glory" Colossians 3:1-4

When we choose to amass wealth here on earth, our hearts will be here on earth. If our hearts are here on earth because we have our treasures

here, then we will become the enemies of the cross (as we will be serving our belly and not God). This means, anyone who is worldly minded is set at variance with God. The reason being, the worldly person is full of the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life. These are the Bonafide property of Satan. Remember these were the things he tempted Jesus with, but failed. All these lusts for the things of the world are pride in the sight of God as revealed in the following Scripture;

"You ask, and don't receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it for your pleasures. You adulterers and adulteresses, don't you know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain, "The Spirit who lives in us yearns jealously"? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Be subject therefore to God. But resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God,

and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament, mourn, and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he will exalt you." .
James 4:3-10

So in order to obtain the grace of God, you have to humble yourself. How then can you humble yourself in this instance? By not amassing the things of this earth for the purpose of self-gratification but rather, be a distributor to meet the needs of others whom you know are in need of the basic necessities of life. By this action, you become truly rich in the sight of God;

"He spoke a parable to them, saying, "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. He reasoned within himself, saying, 'What will I do, because I don't have room to store my crops? He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain

and my goods. I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, "You foolish one, tonight your soul is required of you. The things which you have prepared--whose will they be? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God. He said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, don't be anxious for your life, what you will eat, nor yet for your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body is more than clothing." Luke 12:16-23

The writer of James therefore did not spare the rich at all in his letter. If one amasses wealth to himself, it simply means he is not living in obedience to God and for that matter does not really have faith. You and I know without faith it's impossible to please God;

"Without faith it is impossible to be well pleasing to him, for he who comes to God must believe that he exists, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him." Hebrews 11:6

If you are not living in obedience, how can you enter heaven? There is no way one can be rich in faith (true riches) when he still amasses wealth to himself. **This was taught by Christ Himself** during His days on earth, and is still applicable in our days. This is why scripture makes us to understand that God has **chosen** the poor of this world to be rich in faith;

"Listen, my beloved brothers. Didn't God choose those who are poor in this world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the Kingdom which he promised to those who love him?" James 2:5

*"For many are called, but few chosen."
Matthew 22:14*

When one wants to be among the chosen, he or she must be ready to lose the world in order to gain Christ. Paul gives us a formula for knowing Christ through the following scripture;

"However, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ. Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, that I may gain Christ" Philippians 3:7-8

The reason Christ does not joke with the poor is, automatically they are not amassing this world's goods and as such are not directly against God. This is one of the reasons why Jesus is always identified with the poor. That is not to say He hates the rich, as He made salvation available to all.

Few of the people God has used (and is using) for the advancement of the gospel are from noble backgrounds. Mostly it's those from **humble backgrounds** that are used of God. This point is backed by the statement of Paul as revealed in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29;

"For you see your calling, brothers, that not many are wise according to the flesh, not many

mighty, and not many noble; but God chose the foolish things of the world that he might put to shame those who are wise. God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and God chose the lowly things of the world, and the things that are despised, and the things that are not, that he might bring to nothing the things that are: that no flesh should boast before God."

Though some of the Apostles were from rich backgrounds, they were however made to live humble lives. Notable examples are Peter & Andrews and James & John. The Greek word for poor '**ptochos**' in Luke 4:18 below, is the same Greek word being used in Luke 7:22 and Luke 14:13;

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim release to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind, to deliver those who are crushed," Luke 4:18

"Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard: that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them." Luke 7:22

"But when you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame, or the blind" Luke 14:13

So the writer of James **defended** the brother in **humble circumstances** (the poor) and said that God will exhort the person who is of low degree;

"But let the brother in humble circumstances glory in his high position and the rich, in that he is made humble, because like the flower in the grass, he will pass away." James 1:9-10

In the scripture above, the Greek word for humble circumstances is '**tapeinos**' which means to be depressed (figuratively) or humiliated. Christ therefore become poor (humiliated in circumstances or disposition) so that we might become rich (He chose to). This choice He made

in becoming poor was viewed by God to be humility;

"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." 2 Corinthians 8:9

"But emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." Philippians 2:7

From the above scriptures, we are also called to follow the steps of our Lord Jesus Christ. The principle (not by compulsion) is, if we have become rich (though in this **context** it does not necessarily mean material riches) through his poverty (2 Corinthians 8:9), Paul wanted to stir believers to live sacrificial lives. This is why the Apostles **made** themselves poor and charged that we also follow their example. This is the journey to Christlikeness. We only fear God when we are opposed to the world. Let us go on to look at the definition of the gospel according to Paul;

"Now I declare to you, brothers, the Good News which I preached to you, which also you received, in which you also stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold firmly the word which I preached to you--unless you believed in vain. 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 15:1-4

According to Paul's definition, the gospel entails the death, burial and the resurrection of Christ. The death of Christ symbolizes that we should be crucified to the world in order not to satisfy our lusts;

"He died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who for their sakes died and rose again." 2 Corinthians 5:15

The burial and resurrection of Christ can be likened to the baptism of water in our lives. This

symbolizes that we are identified with the suffering and life of Christ;

"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; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin." Romans 6:4-6

"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

All this teaches us that if we call ourselves the Disciples of Christ, we should also walk like Him;

"This is how we know that we know him: if we keep his commandments One who says, "I know him," and doesn't keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth isn't in

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

The coming of Jesus Christ according to prophecy was to lay His life down for the poor so that He could be identified with them. We are also supposed to lay down our lives for the needy if only we claim we are seated with Him and also found in Him.

CHAPTER TWO

THE VENGEANCE OF OUR GOD

"to proclaim the year of Yahweh's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;" Isaiah 61:2

The above scripture gives us a clue as to why God will visit man with vengeance. The vengeance of God is there to comfort those who 'mourn'. That means, there is surely going to be some 'mourning' here on earth by people who trust in God. This is why Christ pronounced blessing on those who 'weep' and 'mourn' now;

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." Matthew 5:4

If we really understand what our 'mourning' and 'weeping' now is to God, we will not be sad when we are being persecuted for righteousness sake. We will rather understand Christ's command to us

to rejoice when we are being persecuted for His sake;

"Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did the same thing to the prophets." Luke 6:23

We are not to murmur and complain whiles we are here on earth. Instead of learning the lessons God was teaching them (i.e. The Israelites), they rather chose to murmur against God. Even after so many years, the Israelites who obeyed the ordinances of God by 'mourning' began to murmur and to complain that God was not acting in their favor on time. They therefore taught it was vain in serving God.

In the same way, we believers often feel God is not dealing well with us. After we have done His will and expect some blessings, we rather get persecuted. These sometimes tempt us to murmur and complain against God. We are however supposed to bear in mind that there is the vengeance of God coming upon all those who

treat us badly. This, in the wisdom of God is designed to comfort us. Thus why Paul said we should not avenge ourselves but rather give room for vengeance;

"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

He also advised the Philippian church not to do things murmuring. So far as we are in tune with God on this earth, we are supposed to feel the same way God feels. It grieves God when people are not walking in truth. If we love God, it will grieve us and we will also be in heaviness (KJV). In the days of Ezra the scribe, when Israel had forsaken the law of God, he was in heaviness for the backslidden state of the Jews at the time;

"At the evening offering I arose up from my humiliation, even with my garment and my robe torn; and I fell on my knees, and spread out my hands to Yahweh my God;" Ezra 9:5

Paul was also in continual sorrow and heaviness (KJV) just because his fellow countrymen did not obey the gospel;

"That I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart." Romans 9:2

There is no way one can claim to love God and souls in this end-time and not be in heaviness for the state of others. Apart from others, we through manifold temptations and trials are very likely to be in heaviness of the Spirit. The writer of first Peter found it necessary to write to the believers in Asia, Galatia and others, to encourage them and to assure them that there is coming a time the heaviness will be lifted from them;

"Wherein you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been put to grief in various trials, 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 1:6-7

The message of the gospel therefore contained the ingredient of vengeance on those who do not obey. Paul taught this truth just as the writer of the gospel according to Luke;

"For these are days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled."
Luke 21:22

Paul wrote to the Christians in Thessalonica to encourage them that there is coming a day when God will release His wrath on all those who did not obey the totality of the gospel;

"This is an obvious sign of the righteous judgment of God, to the end that you may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which you also suffer. Since it is a righteous thing with God to repay affliction to those who afflict you, and to give relief to you that are afflicted with us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, giving vengeance to those who don't know God, and to those who don't obey

the Good News of our Lord Jesus,"
2Thessalonians 1:5-8

The point is this, God will surely avenge His children of their enemies. If the judgment of God is starting from His house, then what is the fate of the sinner? Let's learn He is also a consuming fire.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STRANGE CHILDREN

"They are unfaithful to Yahweh; for they have borne illegitimate children. Now the new moon will devour them with their fields." Hosea 5:7

This scripture can be likened to so many believers these days. Idolatry has so much engulfed many that they are unable to please the Lord. It's unfortunate in our generation, most professing believers find it very difficult to even obey the basics of the Christian faith. Paul in Hebrews was instructing his hearers to leave the elementary teachings and move on to perfection;

"Therefore leaving the doctrine of the first principles of Christ, let us press on to perfection--not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works, of faith toward God, of the teaching of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of

resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Hebrews 6:1-2

It is rather pathetic many do not have firm grips of these doctrines enumerated above. If one is able to cope with some of them, he or she is seen as extraordinary. This ought not to be at all. In studying carefully Paul's letters to the Corinthian church, you will gather that a larger part of his audience were carnal;

"Brothers, I couldn't speak to you as to spiritual, but as to fleshly, as to babies in Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:1

The letter of first John was basically written to reiterate what they had heard from the beginning;

"That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we saw, and our hands touched, concerning the Word of life (and the life was revealed, and we have seen, and testify, and declare to you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was revealed to us); that which we have seen

and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us. Yes, and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ. And we write these things to you, that our joy may be fulfilled. This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and don't tell the truth." 1 John 1:1-6

This tells us, what he was talking about were just the fundamentals of Christianity. Unfortunately these fundamentals look like a thing for matured believers to many of us. Our generation is a strange one indeed (as most of what we label to be Christian is nowhere near Christianity). Most of the things the writer of first Peter addresses were actually to babes. These are rather hard for most of us to obey.

God made Hosea to marry a woman of harlotry so he could speak to Israel. Out of the marriage came some issues. The union with a strange woman brought about strange children;

"When Yahweh spoke at the first by Hosea, Yahweh said to Hosea, "Go, take for yourself a wife of prostitution and children of unfaithfulness; for the land commits great adultery, forsaking Yahweh." So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bore him a son." Hosea 1:2-3

When the church begins to engage in spiritual idolatry and harlotry all she produces are strange children. Don't let the following chapters be strange to you, as that is how true Christianity is.

CHAPTER FOUR

THOSE AT EASE IN ZION

"Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who are secure on the mountain of Samaria, the notable men of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel come!"
Amos 6:1

From the above scripture, laxity and entertainment-Christianity should be completely forsaken. The end-time is never a time for jokes and 'storytelling' in the house of God. W.B Dunkum once said that, "A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing." Men are supposed to be challenged to radically forsake the world and its pleasures and to turn to God. Right from the time of Jesus' stay on earth, He made it very clear, from the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of heaven suffers violence and is only the violent who possess it;

"From the days of John the Baptizer until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12

There is no violent person who 'parties' around. In the words of Phillips Brooks, "Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be better men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your strength, pray for strength equal to your tasks." Paul makes us to recognize that our mission is a combat one and thus we should not entangle ourselves with the affairs of this life;

"No soldier on duty entangles himself in the affairs of life, that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier." 2 Timothy 2:4

This should sound an alarm to every person who is at ease in the house of God to sit up and to come to terms with the true Christianity which was handed over to the early believers. To them, they were supposed to be 'mourning' and 'weeping'. Unfortunately for us, backsliders are teaching us to be 'eating' and 'drinking' especially at this very crucial hour when Jesus can come at any time. Remember, the servant who said in his heart that

his Lord delays in coming started 'partying' and missed the coming of his Lord;

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

No wonder gluttony is a sin against God. God has designed that a little food is ok to sustain the body. Whenever we take food in excess or even to the full, we tend to get drunk and fall into deep sleep. Have you realized, whenever you are on a fast, it's normally difficult to sleep? It's because Christ wants us to be watching thus why He says we will have to fast;

"Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." Matthew 9:15

The first Adam disobeyed God (through eating) thereby allowing sin into the world. When the second Adam (Jesus) came into the scene, he overcame the world by fasting and not feasting. Fasting helps us to control the desires of the flesh or the pleasures of the world. Also it helps us to be humble;

"But as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I afflicted my soul with fasting. My prayer returned into my own bosom." Psalm 35:13

So when we want to be humble before the Lord, we must not fulfill the desires of the flesh. Those who do not chase after the world are those who are truly humble before God. We are therefore not to be materialistic (thus 'eating and drinking') as it enables us to fall in love with the world. Worldly pleasure incurs the displeasure of God. Please remember in the days of Noah, there was a direct correlation between eating and drinking and the corruption that prevailed. When God was warning the people through Noah, they were supposed to

mourn in repentance rather than give themselves to pleasure. They made mockery of the message of God by their behavior, as Christ gave warning concerning the end time;

"For as in those days which were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they didn't know until the flood came, and took them all away, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. Matthew 24:38-39

Jesus told His disciples that those who weep and mourn **now** are rather blessed;

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." Luke 6:21

And those who rather laugh **now** are going to weep in the end;

"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 6:25

God purposed that the wilderness experience was supposed to humble the Jews. This was to help them carry His nature and learn to depend on Him. One question which should run through our mind is, why is it that before the descendants of Abraham (Israelites) came, He prophesied they were going to suffer affliction in Egypt? Let's take note, they did not go into affliction because of their sins, rather God wanted to use that experience to purge them. This is the same tool Christ uses to purify His church. Why did God choose to use this formula for Israel or His church? So that when they are afflicted, they will seek Him early before it's too late?

The end-time as we have it, is supposed to be a deep soul searching time so we can make amends and seek God early. It's interesting to note, almost all men of God in the Bible were given to 'mourning' during their days on earth (giving the spiritual condition of God's people). It was through this 'mourning' experience that Christ was revealed to them. This is because 'mourning' is a sign of true repentance.

When the people of Israel were sent into captivity in Babylon, it took Daniel to understand the time for them to come out of captivity was up. He therefore gave himself to fasting and mourning in repentance for the deeds of their fathers and themselves;

"In the first year of his reign I, Daniel, understood by the books the number of the years about which the word of Yahweh came to Jeremiah the prophet, for the accomplishing of the desolations of Jerusalem, even seventy years. I set my face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and petitions, with fasting and sackcloth and ashes." Daniel 9:2-3

It took Daniel's prayer for the children of Israel to gain favor in the eyes of the heathen kings. Later we gather from the prophecies of Zechariah that the prayers of Daniel were answered.

After many years, the Jews nearly faced extinction from the face of the earth when Haman devised a diabolic plan to kill the Jews simply because Mordecai refused to pay homage to him.

It took fasting and 'mourning' to deliver the Israelites. Esther was told by Mordecai not to live in comfort but to arise and plead for the cause of the Jews. This made her to proclaim a fast for the Jews;

"For if you remain silent now, then relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place, but you and your father's house will perish. Who knows if you haven't come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" Then Esther asked them to answer Mordecai Go, gather together all the Jews who are present in Shushan, and fast for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day. I and my maidens will also fast the same way. Then I will go in to the king, which is against the law; and if I perish, I perish." Esther 4:14-16

You and I know what happened afterwards, even to the point that the heathen wanted to be identified with Israel;

"In every province, and in every city, wherever the king's commandment and his decree came,

the Jews had gladness, joy, a feast, and a good day. Many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen on them." Esther 8:17

Once again, in a 'mourning' mood (by fasting, praying and weeping), God granted Nehemiah favor in the sight of the king and allowed him to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the broken walls;

"It happened, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days; and I fasted and prayed before the God of heaven," Nehemiah 1:4

Joel in his prophecy commanded the priest to weep and mourn between the porch and the altar. In a time when God had sent destruction and famine into the land, the people of Israel were to come out of their comfort zones;

"Blow the trumpet in Zion! Sanctify a fast. Call a solemn assembly. Gather the people. Sanctify the assembly. Assemble the elders. Gather the children, and those who suck the

breasts. Let the bridegroom go forth from his room, and the bride out of her chamber. Let the priests, the ministers of Yahweh, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, "Spare your people, Yahweh, and don't give your heritage to reproach, that the nations should rule over them. Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?' Then Yahweh was jealous for his land, And had pity on his people." Joel 2:15-18

The people of Nineveh were spared the wrath of God simply because they repented by fasting and mourning. Jonah preached repentance to them without working any miracle, but yet the people repented totally;

"The people of Nineveh believed God; and they proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. The news reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and took off his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He made a proclamation and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and

his nobles, saying, "Let neither man nor animal, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed, nor drink water; but let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and animal, and let them cry mightily to God. Yes, let them turn everyone from his evil way, and from the violence that is in his hands." Jonah 3:5-8

Before God will bring a revival upon a nation, He expects them to humble themselves, to pray and to forsake their ways;

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

In the Gospels there are two very important personalities who had the chance of seeing the messiah before they passed on. Interestingly they served God wholeheartedly and gave themselves to mourning. They were Simeon and Anna;

"Behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon. This man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him... There was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, and she had been a widow for about eighty-four years), who didn't depart from the temple, worshipping with fastings and petitions night and day." Luke 2:25, 36-37

They had the privilege of seeing the consolation of Israel simply because they were devout personalities who waited for the salvation of God. They did not give themselves to feasting and the like.

When Jesus was about to be crucified on the cross, some individuals began to weep for Him, but He rather asked them to weep for themselves and their children;

"But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem don't weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Luke 23:28

If there is nothing at stake, will Christ ask them to weep for themselves? If not, then there wouldn't be the need for the wiping away of tears from our eyes when we get to heaven;

"For the Lamb who is in the midst of the throne shepherds them, and leads them to springs of waters of life. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes." Revelation 7:17

*"He will wipe away from them every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; neither will there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more. The first things have passed away."
Revelation 21:4*

For this word to come to pass, there must be 'weeping and mourning', rather than eating and drinking (materialism).

CHAPTER FIVE

THE VIOLENT TAKES IT BY FORCE

"From the days of John the Baptizer until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force." Matthew 11:12

In the above scripture, Christ was trying to paint the picture of the battle His disciples are engaged in. Certainly the devil will not watch one leave his camp without fighting to win that soul back. It is therefore important for all who want to enter into the kingdom of God to arm themselves, as there is a battle to be fought. If there is a battle to be fought, then it stands to reason that Christianity is not child's play. This is why Paul had to admonish Timothy not to entangle himself with the affairs of this world. He was supposed to stay focused and to fight to the end, as revealed in the scripture below;

"You therefore must endure hardship, as a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No soldier on duty entangles himself in the affairs of life, that he may please him who enrolled him as a soldier."
2 Timothy 2:3-4

When we understand we are in a battle field, then we will know how to really order our lives. How can someone be engaged in battle and allow his or her mind to wonder about? If one is not focused, there is a huge probability that, he or she will lose the battle. Our life style and priorities in this life speaks volumes of us, as to whether we are really engaging in the battle for the kingdom or not?

The state of Israel normally called for a message from God. Interestingly God always made sure the life style of the prophets went along with the message they were supposed to deliver. If they chose to live the way they liked, then they would have defeated the purpose of the message they were sent to deliver.

A case in question was Elisha and his servant Gehazi. Scripture tells us of how Elisha was

called into the ministry. Before he started to follow Elijah, he forsook his carrier and all he had as stated in the scripture below;

"So he departed there, and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was plowing, with twelve yoke [of oxen] before him, and he with the twelfth; and Elijah passed over to him, and cast his mantle on him. He left the oxen, and ran after Elijah, and said, Let me, I pray you, kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you. He said to him, Go back again; for what have I done to you. . . ?" 1 Kings 19:19-21

From this scripture, we understand he used the implements on the farm as fuel to prepare the bullock for distribution. He did this so that there wouldn't be any occasion for him to return to his profession. We are informed he followed Elijah throughout until finally the mantle of Elijah fell on him. His mantle was also supposed to be delivered to Gehazi but he was not worthy. Instead of receiving the mantle of his master at the end of his ministry, he rather received a curse from him. Let us carefully look at Gehazi's case in

the following scripture;

"Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall come again to you, and you shall be clean. . . . But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master has spared this Naaman the Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: as Yahweh lives, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him. O Gehazi followed after Naaman. . . . But he went in, and stood before his master. Elisha said to him, whence come you, Gehazi? He said, your servant went nowhere. He said to him, didn't my heart go with you, when the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and olive groves and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and male servants and female servants? The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave to you, and to your seed forever. He went out from his presence a leper [as white] as snow."
2 Kings 5:10, 15-27

In the first place, Elisha wanted to deal with the pride of Naaman (that is why he did not even come out to see him). It took his servants to inject some sense into him to make him humble. According to the scripture, Elisha refused to take anything from Naaman for some reason which was later known. It is however important for us to note that in Elisha's ministry, he did receive items from people. Now from the appearance of things, the items Naaman brought were just for extravagance and not to meet a present need of the prophet and his servant Gehazi. So in order to get the items back, Gehazi had to lie to Naaman that, his master had received some visitors (sons of the prophets) and as such needed them. When you look at the verse before Elisha cursed Gehazi, you will realize Elisha mentioned many things apart from the two items Gehazi took from Naaman. The point here is this, according to the prophetic time of Israel, they were not supposed to live at ease, but to be in a state of waiting on God. So Gehazi's action was an attempt to defeat the purpose of their calling.

No wonder when Christ was sending out His disciples, He only touched on them receiving those things that were needed for their survival. There was nothing luxurious he asked them to receive as could be note from the scripture below;

"Remain in that same house, eating and drinking the things they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Don't go from house to house. Into whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat the things that are set before you." Luke 10:7-8

The early disciples hearkened unto the voice of God as demanded of them;

"He has shown you, O man, what is good. What does Yahweh require of you, but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?" Micah 6:8

God asked Isaiah to **cry** aloud in the hearing of Israel and to declare their sin. Israel was only engaging in religion without substance. They could fast and mourn in sackcloth and still the heavens were closed to them. They could draw

near to God as if they were really in love with Him.
The following scripture attests to this fact;

"Cry aloud, don't spare, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and declare to my people their disobedience, and to the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways: as a nation that did righteousness, and didn't forsake the ordinance of their God, they ask of me righteous judgments; they delight to draw near to God. Why have we fasted, [say they], and you don't see? [Why] have we afflicted our soul, and you take no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast you find [your own] pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, you fast for strife and contention, and to strike with the fist of wickedness: you don't fast this day so as to make your voice to be heard on high. Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a rush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? will you call this a fast, and an acceptable day to Yahweh? Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo

the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Isn't it to deal your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor who are cast out to your house? when you see the naked, that you cover him; and that you not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then shall your light break forth as the morning, and your healing shall spring forth speedily; and your righteousness shall go before you; the glory of Yahweh shall be your rear guard Then shall you call, and Yahweh will answer; you shall cry, and he will say, Here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the putting forth of the finger, and speaking wickedly; and if you draw out your soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul: then shall your light rise in darkness, and your obscurity be as the noonday; and Yahweh will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in dry places, and make strong your bones; and you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters don't fail." Isaiah 58:1-11

From the above scripture, the sin Israel was committing was that, they were neglecting the poor by not meeting their needs. He rather wanted them to be advocates for the voiceless and the down trodden. One of the significance of fasting was to cause them to also feel the hunger the poor folks were going through.

If a man will fast and know how hunger is, he will be identified with the poor in order to meet their needs. In fasting we become humble and in effect know the substance of it. Therefore God wanted to draw the attention of Israel to the substance of their fast.

These days, almost every assembly engages in long fasts, but the true blessings they are supposed to derive from it are mostly not seen. This is because they neglect the substance of it, which is to help the poor and needy even in their assemblies. God rather wants His people to part with whatever they are amassing here on earth. This is one of the reasons why Christ said, the time was coming when His disciples will fast (Matthew 9:15). So in the New Testament church

the disciples practiced fasting and never neglected obeying the substance of it.

As often as we fast, we identify ourselves with the suffering of others and as such should be inclined to do good to the poor out of love. It is only by doing this that our lights are able to shine. Remember Christ told His disciples to sell what they have and give to the poor and then their lights will be burning;

"Sell that which you have, and give gifts to the needy. Make for yourselves purses which don't grow old, a treasure in the heavens that doesn't fail, where no thief approaches, neither moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning." Luke 12:33-35

Do you realize more souls were added to the church daily in the book of Acts simply because of their lifestyle of giving and fellowship as the following scripture reveals. Someone has said that "Vision is spelled m-o-n-e-y." therefore with this statement as an antecedent, I can say that for us to be able to fulfill our God given mandate, we

must win the battle of the “love of money” in our hearts;

"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. Day by day, continuing steadfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they took their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. The Lord added to the assembly day by day those who were being saved."
Acts 2:44-47

From the scripture in Isaiah, God said if they were able to attend to the needs of the poor and the oppressed, then even their health will be affected positively. It could be said that many these days have poor health simply because of their eating habits. Most people have hypertension and other heart related diseases just because of their eating habits. People have now become plump such that they have to take drugs in order to reduce their weight (apart from genetic factors). If they could

think about some hungry soul somewhere, they wouldn't have faced all these health problems.

Over 2000 years ago, the apostles started to trumpet the second coming of the Lord. As a matter of truth, the preaching of the second coming of Christ is part of the gospel and as such needs to be preached with all our strength and might. It is the proof that Christ rose up from the dead. Our hope therefore as believers is, there is coming a resurrection for us. Thus why Paul had to make it clear, the evidence of the authenticity of our faith is that Christ rose from the dead;

"...If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith also is in vain. Yes, we are found false witnesses of God, because we testified about God that he raised up Christ, whom he didn't raise up, if it is so that the dead are not raised. For if the dead aren't raised, neither has Christ been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is vain; you are still in your sins. Then they also who are fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If we have only

hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable... Why do we also stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If I fought with animals at Ephesus for human purposes, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, then let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die"
1 Corinthians 15:12-19, 29-32

Paul therefore advocates in the scripture above that we can only be prepared for the second coming of Christ if we don't engage in chasing material gains. This is consistent with the charge Christ gave His disciples in the book of Luke;

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

Watching for the second coming of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ necessitates that we don't lose our focus in the battle we are engaged in for the kingdom. Drunken persons from the above scripture cannot discern the coming of the Lord. For this reason, Christ's second coming will take them unawares. Those who are able to discern the times in which we live will take the following message of Christ very seriously;

"Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh." Luke 6:21

The 'weeping and mourning' is **now**. It should not be postponed till another date. The truth is, a man will have to experience 'weeping' and 'laughter' in his life. The two do not come together. 'Weeping' will either come first and 'laughing' second or vice versa. The choice is left to the individual as to whether to obey the true gospel of Christ and 'weep and mourn' now or disobey and follow another gospel by laughing now and in the end weep and gnash his or her teeth.

The writer of James therefore advised the rich of the world to 'weep' now, so they will escape the judgment of God. They are to do so by distributing their wealth to the poor and needy (as most of them became rich by cheating the poor). This is not in any way to justify cheating and later giving out as gift, but in the spirit of true repentance. It is therefore just that, they give back what belongs to the poor so that they will become meek in order to benefit from the gospel. This is one of the reasons why Christ came.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RESURRECTION POWER.

"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

From the above scripture, Paul wanted two things from God. First he wanted to know more about the sufferings of Christ and the resurrection. This is so because he had already been preaching about them to the Gentiles. The second was, he wanted to walk more and more in the revelation of the sufferings of Christ and His resurrection. Thus, going beyond the rhetoric of knowing, but also experiencing it. The resurrection of Christ is the evidence of our faith or else we are still dead in our sins just like the people of other religions.

It is not enough for us to know Christ arose from the dead, but to come to the knowledge of the significance of His resurrection in our lives. When we know the significance of the resurrection of Christ, we will appreciate Christianity more than most of us do now.

Christ resurrected so that we who are identified with Him should no longer walk in our former lusts in the flesh but walk in newness of life;

"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. For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we will also be part of his resurrection; knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be in bondage to sin." Romans 6:3-6

The problem of most professing believers is, they are completely oblivious of the power of the resurrection of Christ which is able to help them live victorious Christian lives. It is this resurrection power which is able to make one a new creature, as old things are passed away. If we should ask professing believers whether old things have really passed away in their lives or not, you will be surprised at the kind of answers you will receive (as many are still walking in their former lusts in the flesh).

If one does not live in newness of life by virtue of the resurrection power of the Lord, then that fellow is just claiming to be Christian and not in the real sense of the word. The following scripture is often quoted to professing Christians, without really telling them what it means;

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who don't walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit." Romans 8:1

From the above scripture it is clear, when one walks in the flesh, he or she will be condemned. Conversely, if he or she walks in the spirit, there is no condemnation for him or her. I believe people should not just be made excited by the 'word', but should be told the truth underlining those scriptures often quoted to them.

The resurrection power is there to help us not to walk in the flesh but to walk in the Spirit. How can we claim to know the resurrection power of Christ whiles we are still under the yoke of fleshly lusts? These days, men are being made to pursue the world by way of preaching materialism to them.

The Spirit of God is to help us subdue the desires of the flesh and not to fulfill them. If we fulfill the desires of the flesh, then we are not really walking in the resurrection power of the Lord. We are supposed to triumph over dead works as well as the lusts of the flesh by the same power which raised Christ from the dead. According to the scripture above, if we decide to walk in the flesh, we will die (separated from God). On the other hand, if we decide to mortify the deeds of the flesh

by way of walking in the spirit, then we will live.

Our Lord rose from the dead and this is why we have the hope that a day is coming in which those who will be alive at the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus will be caught up to meet Him in the air. Since the resurrection power is part of the gospel, the early disciples always exhorted believers to be ready for the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. If the preaching of the second coming of Christ is missing in our messages especially in this end-time, then we are not really preaching the total gospel.

It was the power of Christ's resurrection which made Paul to continuously warn his hearers. The resurrection power also stands for the gifts been given to the church in order for us to be perfected or come to the full stature of Christ;

"Therefore he says, "When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Now this, "He ascended," what is it but that he also first descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is the one who

also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things. He gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ; 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." Ephesians 4:8-13

It's these gifts which help the church to prove the resurrection power of our Lord and Savior Jesus. These help the world to experience the supernatural power of God. This shows forth the glory of God as in when the dead are even raised back to life. Scripture makes us to understand creation is earnestly waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. The truth however is, we cannot manifest as sons of God when we are not identified with Christ's sufferings (as well as being victorious over dead works).

When we are able to walk in newness of life in the light of the word of God, then we will be able to

manifest as sons of God. Sons of God are supposed to liberate creation but not to be subject to creation. It hurts God to see His children being driven by heresies in pursuance of vain things of this world. God designed right from the beginning that we should subdue the earth. If worldly things are therefore determining our messages, are we really subduing the earth?

We are supposed to teach doctrine which is according to Godliness (following after the Spirit) for the Scriptures make us to know, as many as are led by the Spirit, they are the sons of God. According to the resurrection power, Paul declares our citizenship is in heaven;

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from where we also wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will change the body of our humiliation to be conformed to the body of his glory, according to the working by which he is able even to subject all things to himself."
Philippians 3:20-21

From scriptures, we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places (that is if we are identified with his suffering and resurrection). If we claim to be seated with Christ in the heavenly places, Paul therefore instructs us to set our mind on things above and not on things beneath;

"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." Colossians 3:1-2

When our minds are therefore set on things above, then we will always make it a point to store up our treasures there. This will help us to continuously set our affections in heaven (as our heart will be there). Also, when our minds are set on things above, the meditations of our heart will be acceptable in the sight of God. Paul advised the Philippian church to meditate upon certain things;

"Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honorable, whatever

things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think about these things. The things which you learned, received, heard, and saw in me: do these things, and the God of peace will be with you." Philippians 4:8-9

I believe it will do us much good if we also learn from the above scripture as strangers and pilgrims on this earth. If we meditate on these things, do you think we will be so preoccupied with trying to amass wealth on this earth? Our only reason to work hard to get money will be to help us meet our needs and that of our family in fulfillment of scripture, as well as help other disadvantaged believers and unbelievers.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE END OF THE MATURED

"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" Ephesians 4:12-13

It is the will of God that all believers mature to the fullness of the stature of Jesus Christ. To get to this point, there is the need for a progressive growth in the knowledge of Christ;

"Grace to you and peace be multiplied in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, seeing that his divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and virtue; by which he has

granted to us his precious and exceedingly great promises; that through these you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust. Yes, and for this very cause adding on your part all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence; and in moral excellence, knowledge; and in knowledge, self-control; and in self-control patience; and in patience godliness; and in godliness brotherly affection; and in brotherly affection, love. For if these things are yours and abound, they make you to be not idle nor unfruitful to the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 1:2-8

Scripture makes us realize, knowledge of Christ is not just about head knowledge, but practically living the life of Christ;

"He who says he remains in him ought himself also to walk just like he walked." 1 John 2:6

Christ made us to understand He is the way, the truth and the life. If we really believe He is the way, then why is it that we don't want to take the

route He took when He came to this earth? The Christ denied Himself worldly pleasures, took up His cross and was finally nailed onto it. This way is a way of no return which ends in reproach. Why is it that so many of us don't want to take the way and manner of Christ's life here on this earth? It is about time we become truthful to ourselves and embrace the life of the cross or else we will be disappointed in the end. Jesus made it clear, if anyone wants to follow Him, he or she should make the following scripture practicable in his or her life;

*"Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."
Matthew 16:24*

Denying one's self (hating yourself) and taking up your cross in order to follow Christ daily is the foundation of Christianity. In simple terms sacrifice is the bedrock of our faith. Why is it that so many of us do not have this word (sacrifice) in our vocabulary? Christianity is not meant for us to live in our comfort zone. If we are, then it is clear

we are not sacrificing at all.

How can we say we are giving out our best when it is just out of our abundance? When we give out of our abundance, we will not feel the pinch. However, it is when we feel the pinch that we are really sacrificing. God never designed that we should wait to give only in our abundance. Rather, we are supposed to give no matter what.

The reason most people cannot sacrifice is because they have not totally given themselves to the Lord. If one is not totally surrendered to the Lord then it will be very difficult for such a person to enter heaven.

There **shouldn't be lack** in the church. God has designed that the basic needs of His children be met. In His own wisdom, He always makes sure He gives some in the church in abundance in order for them to also meet the needs of others especially in the church. Whenever people do not get their needs met, it **is** mostly because some people are disobedient to the voice of God. No matter how small we think what we have is, if only

we will share, God will definitely multiply it and we will see His glory. When we recognize the value of sacrifice and the fact that it is mandatory for every believer, then we will understand why our godly fathers said you cannot be a Christian and amass wealth. Growing into Christlikeness therefore is to progress in giving to the point of even offering your soul for the benefit of others like Paul and the other Apostles did;

"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

Some will say, that was the Apostles but we are exempted. Let us however bear in mind we are also supposed to follow them just as they also followed Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1).

If we obey the totality of the gospel, we will become like Christ. If we become like Christ, it will mean that no matter our social standing, we will come down (humble ourselves) like Christ did in

order to be exalted;

"Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, didn't consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, yes, the death of the cross. Therefore God also highly exalted him, and gave to him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, those on earth, and those under the earth,"
Philippians 2:5-10

CHAPTER EIGHT

WHO IS A VOICE?

A lot of men these days claim to be a **'voice'** in Christendom. Does this their claim really match the biblical definition of who a voice is? Do their messages constitute **the cry** Scriptures talk about? I will endeavor to bring to our knowledge (in this chapter and beyond) who a **'voice'** is, and what constitutes **the cry**. I believe this will help us all to identify imposters who have deceived some children of God for so long a time. Let us look at the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the **'voice'** and **the cry** in the scripture below;

*"Comfort, comfort my people," says your God.
Speak comfortably to Jerusalem; and call out
to her that her warfare is accomplished, that
her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received
of Yahweh's hand double for all her sins. The
voice of one who calls out, "Prepare the way of*

Yahweh in the wilderness! Make a level highway in the desert for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The uneven shall be made level, and the rough places a plain. The glory of Yahweh shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of Yahweh has spoken it. The voice of one saying, "Cry!" One said, "What shall I cry?" "All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because Yahweh's breath blows on it. Surely the people are like grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:1-8

The root word for cry in the above scripture is **'qara'** meaning to call out to. In this prophecy, we are made to understand the life and message of the voice who was to cry. Please bear in mind God always demanded His servants live the message they preached, as earlier stated in connection with Elisha. It is therefore not possible for a true servant of God to preach a message and live otherwise. At least we know of this in the

ministry of Christ and Ezra the priest and scribe;

*"The first book I wrote, Theophilus, concerned
all that Jesus began both to do and to teach,"
Acts 1:1*

*"For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of
Yahweh, and to do it, and to teach in Israel
statutes and ordinances." Ezra 7:10*

The voice of God arises in the midst of a perverse generation and gross spiritual darkness. The reason is, man will have to be called back to order so he can experience the glory of God. We realize from Isaiah's prophecy that the voice was supposed to make the crooked paths straight, level every mountain and to raise the valleys. All these were to precede the glorious appearing of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ (that is, His first coming). In the same way there must be a voice in these dark times to call the people of God back to order before the second coming of Jesus Christ. From the look of things, the present church (vast majority) does not seem to be ready at all for her savior. This is why there is an urgent need for a

voice (though it could be used in the plural sense) to prepare the way for the second coming of Jesus. It is this great expectation of the people of God which many have capitalized on to claim the title of being a voice in our generation.

Scriptures make it plain that this prophecy perfectly fit into the life and ministry of John the Baptist. He was the Elijah other prophets prophesied about (to be the forerunner of Jesus Christ). He was said to come in the Spirit of Elijah.

Elijah came into the scene when Israel was given to idolatry. He came to call backslidden Israel to the worship of their one and only true God who is Yahweh. Though he received strict opposition, yet he was able to call the people of God back to order. He did this by repairing the broken alters of God, after which the fire of God fell from heaven. Israel was thus convinced the God of their fathers had visited them. Elijah then obeyed the law of God by slaying the prophets of Baal;

"It happened at the time of the offering of the [evening] offering, that Elijah the prophet

came near, and said, Yahweh, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel, and that I am your servant, and that I have done all these things at your word Hear me, Yahweh, hear me, that this people may know that you, Yahweh, are God, and [that] you have turned their heart back again. Then the fire of Yahweh fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces: and they said, Yahweh, he is God; Yahweh, he is God. and Elijah said to them, Take the prophets of Baal; don't let one of them escape. They took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there." 1 Kings 18:36-40

Remember also that Elijah was a man who did not live in superfluity (though relative in every generation). Even his clothes were not that comfortable to put on. This was to symbolize that Israel ought to be mourning over their backslidden nature. In the same way, when John

the Baptist surfaced, his clothe was not also comfortable to put on. Right from his early years he started to live in the deserts and even had his food to be locust and wild honey;

"John was clothed with camel's hair and a leather belt around his waist. He ate locusts and wild honey." Mark 1:6

His assignment was to **'cry'** and not to **'laugh'**. If he **was** to be in the state of **'mourning'**, then surely he could not live a life of coziness. It is rather unfortunate to hear people call themselves a 'voice' while all their life is lived in extravagance. Does our current state call for a cry (weeping) or for laughter? Jesus even pronounced woe on those who laugh now (Luke 6:25).

In the above scripture, the Greek word for full is **'empiplemi'** which means to satisfy (literally or figuratively) and that for laugh is **'gelao'** which is the same laugh been interpreted in the scripture respectively. However, that for weep is **'klaio'** (to sob).

John's message centered on the need for backslidden Israel to repent of their evil ways. This was to position them to receive their savior (who is the glory of God). Men who claim to be a 'voice' are to call a spade a spade and to preach repentance to our generation. John the Baptist is at least our first yard stick in knowing who a voice is.

In going back to the prophecy of Isaiah we learn the voice was asked to **cry**. The **cry** was to alert men that all the things of this present world are vain. The **cry** was also to bring to the knowledge of man that his days on this earth are very short and so he is to live for God. Living for God is what will make us endure forever. The preacher knew this truth and thus why in his concluding sentences in the book of Ecclesiastes, he had this to say;

*"and the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it. Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher. All is vanity!"
Ecclesiastes 12:7-8*

The root word for vanity in the above scripture is **'hebel'** which means emptiness. The voice therefore was to call men to fear God and to be made aware of the impending judgment of God upon the disobedient. There is a very interesting event which took place in heaven. John the beloved in the book of revelation **heard a voice speak**, and turned to **see the voice**. From the scripture below we understand Jesus Christ is **the voice John saw**;

*"I turned to see the voice that spoke with me.
Having turned, I saw seven golden
lampstands." Revelation 1:12*

Jesus Christ in His days on earth lived in a certain manner and called us to the same life. We learned earlier on that a voice was to "cry" and not to "laugh". It will interest you to note that the prophecy of Isaiah concerning Christ was that of someone who was identified with sorrows;

*"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

He really had no royalty written on his face, though He is(was) the king of kings. Right from his birth we saw Him appear in a manger. Can you ever imagine the whole savior of the world being born in a manger? But that was the wisdom of God.

Interestingly it was not only John who was a 'voice'. After Christ's ascension, His disciples also became a 'voice' in their generation to call the children of God back to their Lord. On the day of Pentecost, Peter warned the people present to save themselves from the untoward generation in which they lived. How could they? Except by first of all repenting from their wicked ways and getting identified with Christ's burial by baptism so they could receive the gift of 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*

After this incident in the book of Acts, Peter did not cease to be a 'voice'. He continued to cry. **"The voice of one saying, "Cry!"** One said, **"What shall I cry?"**

"All flesh is like grass, and all its glory is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, because Yahweh's breath blows on it. Surely the people are like grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:6-8

This cry was not different from the message Peter preached. He continued to bring to the knowledge of men that all the things in the world are vain and therefore men ought to obey the Gospel;

"having been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God, which lives and remains forever. For, "All flesh is like grass, and all of man's glory like the flower in the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls but the Lord's word endures forever." This is the word of Good News which was preached to you." 1 Peter 1:23-25

It wasn't only Peter who was a voice but the writer of the book of James. He in his message to the Jews warned the rich not to trust in their riches for they will fade with them;

"But let the brother in humble circumstances glory in his high position; and the rich, in that he is made humble, because like the flower in the grass, he will pass away. For the sun arises with the scorching wind, and withers the grass, and the flower in it falls, and the beauty of its appearance perishes. So also will the rich man fade away in his pursuits." James 1:9-11.

It is only those who obey the word of God by living in the light of it who will abide forever.

The writer of 1 John taught that we should not love the world neither the things therein. He teaches us that if we depend on these things which will one day be consumed by the power of God, then the love of God is not in us. His call therefore was, every disciple of Christ should radically detach him or herself from the things of the world (though we use some of the world's goods for our needs

let us not abuse it). It is only those who do the will of God who will abide forever;

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

We can not continue to talk about a voice without mentioning Paul. He also taught that the rich should not trust in uncertain riches, but to distribute their wealth to the needy in order to have treasures in heaven;

*"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*

Also, he taught that we should be content with the basic necessities of life. A lifestyle he led, which

made him qualified to instruct others as;

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we certainly can't carry anything out. But having food and clothing, we will be content with that. 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." 1 Timothy 6:6-9

Looking at the life of these servants of God and their messages, does it seem they lived in flamboyance? It is clear all these servants had their lives to be in line with who a voice is, and what the cry should be.

CHAPTER NINE

A VOICE LIVES ON NEEDS

Anyone who claims to be a voice must by the very nature of his calling and election live on only his needs and not wants. There is no one who ever followed Jesus as a disciple who was not required to forsake (renounce) all his worldly riches. The basic requirement needed by everyone who wants to follow Jesus (becoming His disciple) is this;

"So therefore whoever of you who doesn't renounce all that he has, he can't be my disciple." Luke 14:33

Christ had a deeper reason why he required that one forsakes wealth in order to follow Him. He makes it clear there is no way one can serve God and mammon. One will have to either love God and hate mammon or vice versa. The principle is

therefore clear that, no one can serve two masters;

"No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You aren't able to serve God and mammon"
Luke 16:13

Those who try to do so are really rebelling against God, since it is a direct challenge to disprove Christ. Christ requires that when we receive this world's goods, we use it to benefit the needy. If we obey this command of constant giving in order to follow Christ, then how can we amass wealth on this earth? It therefore stands to reason, this is why Christ is always identified with the lowly. There is nowhere in scripture where Christ tried to always identify Himself with the rich. Christ pronounced woe on the rich and to those who laugh now, when He taught His disciples;

"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. Woe, when men speak well of you, for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets." Luke 6:24-26

This means He did not expect His disciples to amass wealth to themselves but to give liberally. If they obeyed Him, then they will be poor in this world's goods but rich toward God;

"But God said to him, 'You foolish one, tonight your soul is required of you. The things which you have prepared--whose will they be? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'" Luke 12:20-21

No one will ever be entrusted with the true riches of God if he or she is unfaithful with unrighteous mammon. God always tries to test man to see if they will be willing to obey His word by giving them wealth. The reason why He gives His children wealth is not just for self gratification, but rather to be distributed to meet the needs of others. When a man is able to pass this test, then God entrusts true riches into his hands. The true

riches is the knowledge of God and His Christ (This is eternal life). Let us look at the test for the rich young ruler (this may not be required of all who come to Christ initially);

"Behold, one came to him and said, "Good teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?... The young man said to him, "All these things I have observed from my youth. What do I still lack? Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me. But when the young man heard the saying, he went away sad, for he was one who had great possessions." Matthew 19:16, 20-22

Therefore there is no one who will gain access into heaven if he is not faithful with unrighteous mammon. Paul gives us the clear picture of this truth of losing all so that we can gain Christ. God never wants to share us with anything, not even money, therefore we should beware;

"Yes most certainly, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ

Jesus, my Lord, for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and count them nothing but refuse, that I may gain Christ" Philippians 3:8

Paul therefore said he counted all things that were gain to him as loss for the surpassing knowledge which is in Christ;

"However, what things were gain to me, these have I counted loss for Christ." Philippians 3:7

All these goes to buttress the prophecy of Jeremiah to the house of Israel. Jeremiah told Israel they will only find God if they seek Him with all their heart;

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

I am yet to find a man who chooses to amass wealth on this earth and still loves God with all his heart. If we store our treasures here on earth, our hearts will surely be here according to the following scripture;

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Luke 12:34

This accounts for the reason why many preachers cannot even preach about the second coming of Christ and our gathering together unto Him. They claim they are a 'voice' but the numerous self-centered projects they undertake really speak volumes of where their heart is. This is why Paul calls them the enemies of the cross. Instead of storing treasures in heaven so that their heart will be focused there (Colossians 3:1-2), they rather amass wealth here on earth and thus they are earthly minded;

"For many walk, of whom I told you often, and now tell you even weeping, as the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is the belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who think about earthly things"
Philippians 3:18-19

In the previous chapter you remember some servants of God were qualified to be a voice. When you look at the life and ministry of those

servants of God, you will notice they did not entangle themselves with excessive physical projects (thus, physical projects were not their major focus). By this I am implying that physical structures are needed in certain circumstances. We are to construct such with eternity's values in view.

Jesus wanted to teach us a great truth and thus gave the following scenario as that which will pertain to the coming judgment;

"But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. Before him all the nations will be gathered, and he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will tell those on his right hand, 'Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took

me in naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me. Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you? The King will answer them, 'Most certainly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers you did it to me. Then he will say also to those on the left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels for I was hungry, and you didn't give me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink was a stranger, and you didn't take me in; naked, and you didn't clothe me; sick, and in prison, and you didn't visit me. Then they will also answer, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and didn't help you? Then he will answer them, saying, 'Most certainly I tell you, inasmuch as you didn't do it

*to one of the least of these, you didn't do it to me.
These will go away into eternal punishment,
but the righteous into eternal life."
Matthew 25:31-46*

From the above, you will realize Christ called some group of people His brethren. Who are those He calls His brothers? The true disciples or servants of Christ are very likely to be in need some times. This is contrary to a modern day popular theology which suggests a true believer cannot suffer need. Christ promised to meet the needs of His disciples;

"Don't seek what you will eat or what you will drink; neither be anxious For the nations of the world seek after all of these things, but your Father knows that you need these things. But seek God's Kingdom, and all these things will be added to you don't be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom." Luke 12:29-32

How does He meet their needs when there is none? I believe He does this through the agency of men who avail themselves to be used as

channels of blessing. Nevertheless, before He assured them of meeting their needs, He instructed them to give what they have as alms;

"Sell that which you have, and give gifts to the needy. Make for yourselves purses which don't grow old, a treasure in the heavens that doesn't fail, where no thief approaches, neither moth destroys." Luke 12:33

The true disciples of Christ are His brethren because He lives in them. This is why He said if any one accepts His disciples then they have accepted Him (the reverse is also true);

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

Therefore a service to them is an indirect service to Christ Himself. If we choose to overlook the needs of such disciples, then in essence we have chosen to deny Christ. When we talk about true disciples, they are all who keep His sayings.

Paul made it abundantly clear that they the apostles of Christ were appointed for 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." 1 Corinthians 4:9

As servants they were also supposed to have the following as their credentials;

"We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You have honor, but we have dishonor. 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 4:10-13

The Greek word for fools in the above scripture is '**moros**' which means stupid or dull. This suggests the level of obedience of the Apostles made them look stupid in the eyes of men (though

the wisdom of God is revealed in that kind of lifestyle). This way of life does not really follow human logic. Paul in his letter to the church in Colossae made them aware, they should not allow anyone to spoil them through vain philosophy and deceit (Colossians 2:8).

From these analysis, Why then are self-acclaimed voices of our age busy amassing wealth here on earth. Scripture indicates that John was a burning and a shining light (John 5:35). Christ also immediately after telling His disciples to forsake the world, told them they should let their lights be burning (Luke 12:35). We are also not left out as our lights are supposed to be shining as followers of Christ and His Apostles.

CHAPTER TEN

A 'DRUNKEN' PERSON IS NOT A 'VOICE'.

The beginning of the book of Psalms is very interesting. The Psalmist makes a very profound statement which I will like us to delve into. The statement is this;

"Blessed is the man who doesn't walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers" Psalm 1:1

The root word for **scoffers** in the scripture above is '**luwts**' which means to make mouths at. From the above scripture, we ask ourselves who these scoffers (scornful) are? Scripture supplies us with the definition of who a scoffer (a scorner) or a **mock**er is. Solomon makes us to understand in the book of proverbs that wine is a mocker;

*"Wine is a mocker, and beer is a brawler.
Whoever is led astray by them is not wise."
Proverbs 20:1*

In the scripture above the root word for **mock**er is also **'luwts'**. Therefore a scorner (scoffer as in Psalm 1:1) or a mocker can be said to be the person that is filled with **'wine'**. Christ in His last teachings to the disciples told them about the manner of behavior of a particular servant in the end-time;

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

The Greek word for drink in the scripture above is **'pino'** which means to imbibe (literally or figuratively). The word eat suggests that the scripture above combines both the literal and figurative. You will realize from the above

scripture, the servant will begin to say in his heart (not the mouth) that His Lord delays in His coming. It is this condition of the servant's heart which will cause him to forget about watching and to join other men to eat and 'drink' and get 'drunken'.

The question then is, what is the meaning of 'eating' and 'drinking' as well as getting 'drunken'? The simple answer according to scripture is, the servant will no longer preach the kingdom of God.

"for the Kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit." Romans 14:17,

The root word for eating in the scripture is **'brosis'** which is viewed as (abstractly) eating (literally or figuratively).

"If I fought with animals at Ephesus for human purposes, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, then "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." 1 Corinthians 15:32

The Greek word for drink in Luke 12:45-46 is the same been used in the above scripture. However the root word for **eat** in the above scripture is '**phago**' which means to eat (literally or figuratively). The right interpretation of the scripture therefore should be seen in the figurative sense.

So from the definition above, that servant in question will be preaching materialism (which is the false prosperity doctrine). The line between true prosperity and false prosperity is that, true prosperity leads to sharing and false prosperity leads to stockpiling. The servant will no longer call people to righteous living and dependence on God (for His supply) in these perilous times. He will rather cause them to derive their 'joy' from entertainment and not the Holy Spirit. According to the definition of who a mocker is, we can categorize this servant who is now eating and drinking and getting drunk to be one.

The Apostles therefore continued to warn the disciples about these mockers. Jude made it clear that there were going to be mockers who will be

walking according to their own **lusts** in this end-time;

"They said to you that "In the last time there will be mockers, walking after their own ungodly lusts." Jude 1:18

The Greek word for mockers in the above scripture is '**empaiktes**' which means a derider. We discern, it is their ungodly lust (materialism) which will cause them to preach false doctrine.

Let us quickly cast our minds back to what happened in the days of the Israelites in the wilderness. Scriptures make us to understand that when Moses went to the mountain to receive the commandments from the Lord, he delayed in his coming and the people got impatient and demanded for gods;

"When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron, and said to him, "Come, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't

know what has become of him. Aaron said to them, "Take off the golden rings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them to me. All the people took off the golden rings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron. He received what they handed him, and fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made it a molten calf; and they said, "These are your gods, Israel, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt. When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation, and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh. They rose up early on the next day, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Exodus 32:1-6

From the scripture we realize it is out of their impatience that they decided, Aaron should make gods for them to worship. Does it strike your mind that the servant Christ was talking about was not patient? Aaron however made gods for them, after which they ate and drunk and rose up to

play. In the same way the servant Christ was talking about was not also patient for the return of his master and for this reason started to also eat and to get himself drunken. The result of this act of drunkenness is Christian entertainment and earthly mindedness. No wonder Jude in his epistle also warned the believers about these mockers or scorers;

*"These are murmurers and complainers, walking after their lusts (and their mouth speaks proud things), showing respect of persons to gain advantage. But you, beloved, remember the words which have been spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ."
Jude 1:16-17*

You gather that these mockers in their bid to get material gain will teach their congregants what they want to hear. This is why Peter informed us that they will make merchandise (KJV) out of people;

"But false prophets also arose among the people, as false teachers will also be among you,

who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master who bought them, bringing on themselves swift destruction. Many will follow their immoral ways, and as a result, the way of the truth will be maligned. In covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words: whose sentence now from of old doesn't linger, and their destruction will not slumber."

2 Peter 2:1-3

People who go to such people are those who have idols in their hearts just like the Israelites in the days of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 14:3-10). They also fall within the category of people Paul and Micah talked about in the following scriptures respectively;

"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

"If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood lies: "I will prophesy to you of wine and of strong drink;" he would be the prophet of this people."
Micah 2:11

All such people and the preachers themselves are under the curse and judgment of God. There is no way anyone living right with God will find him or herself among the congregation of such mockers or scorers. Jeremiah said he could not sit with the mockers (KJV) simply because the hand of God was upon him;

"I didn't sit in the assembly of those who make merry, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of your hand; for you have filled me with indignation."
Jeremiah 15:17

Such a man is indeed blessed by the Lord. It is a blessing for an individual not to find him or herself in such congregations. If you do, you are under the curse of God. The situation in our time is not different at all from that which pertained in the days of Isaiah. These days, most of the men in leadership in the church can be said to be

drunken. This is because they have erred from the faith in not preaching the kingdom of God any longer. They have been given unto materialism and that is why they preach false prosperity. When you check Galatians 5:20 you grasp that such doctrines are works of the flesh. They have therefore erred from the faith just like the rulers of Jerusalem;

"They also reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink. The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink. They are swallowed up by wine. They stagger with strong drink. They err in vision. They stumble in judgment. For all tables are completely full of filthy vomit and filthiness. Whom will he teach knowledge? To whom will he explain the message? Those who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts? For it is precept on precept, precept on precept; line on line, line on line; here a little, there a little. But he will speak to this nation with stammering lips and in another language; to whom he said, "This is the resting place. Give rest to weary;" and "This is the refreshing;" yet they would not hear. Therefore the word of

*Yahweh will be to them precept on precept,
precept on precept; line on line, line on line; here
a little, there a little; that they may go, fall
backward, be broken, be snared, and be taken.
Therefore hear the word of Yahweh, you
scoffers, that rule this people in Jerusalem:"*
Isaiah 28:7-14

From the Scripture above we understand why people in so many assemblies continue to be babes. This accounts for why there are so many fallings in many meetings. Oblivious to them, they rather think is a show of power not knowing it is a testimony against them. These mockers are not 'weeping' but rather 'laughing'. Remember a 'voice' is supposed to 'cry'. If one is therefore 'eating' and 'drinking' then how can he 'cry'? Please let us ask ourselves why Paul had to cry for years just to pass his message across to the church in Ephesus? He knew the warning Christ gave to the disciples in Luke 6:25.

This is the reason why the Apostles could not live in indulgence. From Jesus' picture of the servant, he (the servant) started to beat and bully the

maidens and the servants. This simply means they abuse their power in the gospel. Thus why Paul was careful not to do so;

*"What then is my reward? That, when I preach the Good News, I may present the Good News of Christ without charge, so as not to abuse my authority in the Good News."
1 Corinthians 9:18*

The Greek word for abuse in the scripture above is '**katachraomai**' which means to overuse or misuse.

People normally tend to be at the mercy of such mockers when they begin to manifest some power. Faithful servants of Christ wouldn't like to take advantage of people when they are used as instruments in ministering to such people. Jeremiah in the book of laments made it clear that drunkards would be naked;

"Rejoice and be glad, daughter of Edom, that dwell in the land of Uz: The cup shall pass through to you also; you shall be drunken, and

shall make yourself naked."

Lamentations 4:21

Clearly this is made manifest in our days. When you look at these assembly of mockers they lay **too much** emphasis on physical structures, indirectly telling men that Christ is not coming soon (that is not to say we should not plan, but we should be careful not to send wrong signals to sinners). This was the same attitude of the church of Laodicea. Jeremiah said the drunkards will be naked and that is how Christ saw this church;

"Because you say, 'I am rich, and have gotten riches, and have need of nothing;' and don't know that you are the wretched one, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" Revelation 3:17

Men these days forget the warning of Isaiah not to join field to field and so on;

"Woe to those who join house to house, who lay field to field, until there is no room, and you are made to dwell alone in the midst of the land" Isaiah 5:8

If we always store and not give and always love to expand and to continue to embark on more and more physical projects to the detriment of souls, then we are living in sin;

"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. He spoke a parable to them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly. He reasoned within himself, saying, 'What will I do, because I don't have room to store my crops? He said, 'This is what I will do. I will pull down my barns, and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. I will tell my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said to him, 'You foolish one, tonight your soul is required of you. The things which you have prepared--whose will they be?"
Luke 12:15-20

The question we are to ask ourselves is, why is it that the Nazarites were asked not to take wine or

strong drink? Why was Samson's mother asked not to even take wine? Why was John the Baptist (a voice) not supposed to take wine or strong drink? The answer is, so they could know the Lord and not err in the knowledge of Him;

"They also reel with wine, and stagger with strong drink. The priest and the prophet reel with strong drink. They are swallowed up by wine. They stagger with strong drink. They err in vision. They stumble in judgment."
Isaiah 28:7

Due to the times we find ourselves, we are supposed to be watching and waiting for the second coming of our Lord. Paul therefore cautioned that we be filled with the Holy Spirit always;

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

In order for us not to preach materialism, we need to be full of the Holy Spirit so that we can preach the kingdom of God (righteousness, peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

PLEASE CHECK YOUR DIET

In the previous chapter, we looked at the verse one of Psalm one. Let us now move on to the verse two.

"but his delight is in Yahweh's law. On his law he meditates day and night." Psalm 1:2

The above scripture brings to light the tremendous benefit derived from meditating upon the word of God day and night. In times when people are famished because of the lack of true revelation from God, one can only survive and be assured of a constant supply of the revelation of God, if he remains in the word. There is indeed the need for a constant touch with the Word;

"You are already pruned clean because of the word which I have spoken to you. Remain in

me, and I in you. As the branch can't bear fruit by itself, unless it remains in the vine, so neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:3-5

Most men have been cut off from the vine and that is why they are unable to grow into Christlikeness. A lot of things are calling for the attention of many men such that they cannot even study the word of God. The best they can do is to read it to appease their conscience.

Remember in the previous chapters there is no way one can gain the knowledge of Christ if he decides to combine the word with the pursuit of the world. You have to lose one in order to gain the other. How does one meditate on the word of God day and night if the word of God is not his or her object of love? This is to teach us that we need to love God whole heartedly. In this chapter I will strive to bring to the fore, the need for the word to be part of our lives so that we will live

victorious lives and be a 'voice' in our generation.

There are some key men in the scriptures that God gave a command concerning His word. Let us start from Joshua. After Moses died and the leadership mantle fell on Joshua, God gave him the following charge;

"This book of the law shall not depart out of your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then you shall make your way prosperous, and then you shall have good success." Joshua 1:8

The root word for prosperous is **'tsalach'** which means to push forward. Whereas that for good success is **'sakal'**, which means to be circumspect and hence intelligent.

I believe the psalmist learned the value of meditating on the word day and night from the records of Joshua. We know very well that the blessing attached to this came to pass in the life of Joshua. Many people these days view this

prosperity to be money. This in my opinion is an unfortunate way of viewing this word contextually. In the life of Joshua you realize God gave him victory in his battles. Doesn't victory in battles constitute prosperity according to the root word? Let us bear in mind that he was not given to covetousness. There came a time he had to kill Achan and his family because they were covetous. In the end he declared he and his house would serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).

From the options Joshua gave the Israelites, it is impossible to choose both. You either choose life or death. Choosing life is the word and death is the world. God wanted to teach the Israelites this truth and thus why He started to give them manner in the wilderness. God in His own wisdom wanted to cause even honey to come out of the rock for them in due time, but they through their lust followed the counsels of their own heart;

"I am Yahweh, your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. But my people didn't listen to my voice. Israel desired none of me. So

I let them go after the stubbornness of their hearts, that they might walk in their own counsels. Oh that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways would soon subdue their enemies, and turn my hand against their adversaries. The haters of Yahweh would cringe before him, and their punishment would last forever. But he would have also fed them with the finest of the wheat. I will satisfy you with honey out of the rock,"
Psalms 81:10-16

Jesus made an insightful statement to the devil when he came to tempt Him;

"Jesus answered him, saying, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.'" Luke 4:4

Jeremiah however said he found the word of God and did eat it, bringing about rejoicing inside him (Jeremiah 15:16). In the era of spiritual darkness, when one really seeks after God with all his heart he will surely find him;

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

When it came to the turn of Ezekiel, God caused him to eat a roll which contained the message he was to preach to the people of Israel;

*"He said to me, Son of man, eat that which you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel. So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat the scroll. He said to me, Son of man, cause your belly to eat, and fill your bowels with this scroll that I give you. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness."
Ezekiel 3:1-3*

From the scripture you will notice God asked him to fill his bowels with it. This is because, the message had to be digested. That is, the message he was going to deliver had to be part of his life. He was therefore supposed to be a sign unto Israel.

Also, according to the book of revelations, John the beloved was given a small book which he ate.

The book he ate was the message he was going to deliver to nations and kings;

"I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth. When I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. They told me, "You must prophesy again over many peoples, nations, languages, and kings." Revelation 10:10-11

However in our days we have the word of God to be Jesus Christ. He in His days said that anyone who wanted to be His disciple had to eat His flesh and drink His blood;

"He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me, and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father; so he who feeds on me, he will also live because of me." John 6:56-57

What Christ meant by this is, we have to let His word dwell richly in us such that it becomes our nature. We are to be part of a body which is not corrupted. His blood also meant we live the way He did. We can therefore reason from the

scripture that if any one does not possess His very nature, he cannot claim to be His disciple not to even talk of becoming a voice. How do we really take the sayings of Jesus Christ? Do we exercise them in our lives or we just have a head knowledge of it. Remember the word became flesh and dwelt amongst us;

"The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, such glory as of the one and only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth." John 1:14

The word of God must also become flesh in our lives if only we call ourselves His followers. Job is said to be a man who even esteemed the word of God more than his necessary food;

"I haven't gone back from the commandment of his lips. I have treasured up the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job 23:12

Can the above scripture be our testimony? The way we eat and digest the food we eat, is that the same way we do with the word of God? If we don't

abide in the word and the word in us, then it wouldn't be long and God will cut us off from the vine. The reason why God does not joke with this 'cutting off' business in John 15:1-2 is that, the whole vine needs to be uniform. In Israel when even someone corrupted the whole group, by his sin, he was normally killed as in the case of Achan.

Prophets who also caused Israel to err from the commandments of God were also killed. This is why when Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel he had to line up all of them and slaughter them single handedly (as a form of purging the nation from further corruption);

"And Elijah said to them, Take the prophets of Baal; don't let one of them escape. They took them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and killed them there."
1 Kings 18:40

When it got to the turn of Jehu, he also did likewise by deceiving the prophets of Baal as in line with 2 Kings 10:18-28. This is because God

does not want His people to be corrupted by bad nuts. The spiritual principle is that, when the root is holy, the branches and the fruits too must be holy. A tree is known by its fruits. Therefore if someone is bearing bad fruit and still claims to be part of the body of Christ, then he is implying that his roots are also bad. You and I know our God is holy and thus why we must also be holy;

"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 1:15-16

This therefore explains why if the roots and the vine is holy then we the branch must also be holy;

"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit." Matthew 12:33

"If the first fruit is holy, so is the lump. If the root is holy, so are the branches."
Romans 11:16

It is in the light of these scriptures and imposters in Christendom who claim to be a 'voice', that these are being written so that the children of God will not contaminate themselves with their messages and lifestyle. The cry is that men should turn back to God and radically forsake the world. Elijah said to the Israelites that if Yahweh is God, then they should follow Him. But if Baal, then they should follow Baal;

"Elijah came near to all the people, and said, "How long will you waver between the two sides? If Yahweh is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him." The people answered him not a word." 1Kings 18:21,

He built an alter exclusively for God as revealed in the scripture below;

"With the stones he built an altar in the name of Yahweh; and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed." 1Kings 18:32

And then the fire of Yahweh fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, stones and the dust;

"Then the fire of Yahweh fell, and consumed the burnt offering, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that was in the trench. When all the people saw it, they fell on their faces; and they said, 'Yahweh, he is God; Yahweh, he is God.'"
1 Kings 18:38-39.

One cannot serve two masters. Let us make the right choice now, for today is the day of salvation as tomorrow may be too late. I pray God gives us understanding to serve Him acceptably by obeying the gospel in totality. Amen

