

EndTime

Army

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Dedicated to the LORD of Hosts
Who dwells between the Cherubims

*Special recognition to Seun Fiyinfoluwa Olarewaju, whose
superb artistic imagination produced the cover of this
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Preface

Throughout the history of God's dealing with humanity every time the people of God fail to obey his commandment and walk according to His counsel, darkness covers the land. The people are carried away in captivity, assaulted, tormented, ravaged, and put in bondage by the enemy. It's then they remember the Lord God their Rock, the people cry unto God in their bondage and pain and God raises a deliverer to set them free from their oppressors. Usually a concerned individual or group of individuals set themselves apart to cry unto the Lord for deliverance on behalf of the rest of the people. In every generation there is always a remnant, *a seed that shall serve him*.

No matter how bad the situations, no matter how dark the darkness covering the land, God, through His sovereign power and majesty will always raise a Samuel. No matter how miserably subjugated His people are and how strong their oppressors are, God will always raise up a Barak, and a Gideon.

Though Samuel was but a young lad, he stepped forward to reverse the scarcity and the famine of the true word of the Lord in the land (I Sam Ch. 3). At the time Samuel came on the scene there were no open visions in the land, the older ministries represented in Eli had dim eyes and their visions were blurred. They had lost their bearing, and the vision was diluted. The light in the temple was severely dimmed. The house of the Lord that ought to have been the place of prayers had been turned into a den of robbers, turned into profiteer's marketplace for buying and selling where money was the only language that was understood. But God raised "*the little child Samuel*" to restore hope and dignity to the house. God is surely, without a single doubt in our minds, raising a Samuel today to rescue the church from the apostasy that has taken over the house of God in these last days. The interesting thing about Samuel

was that he was young; he was only a child. He was so green that he could not pick out God's voice when he heard God calling him. What God is looking for, in this day and hour, is not sophistication but sincerity; not elaborate settings but a holy atmosphere of prayer; not religious aristocracy but humility and simplicity.

In the hour of defeat, oppression and of perplexity God raised the Gideon army to bring deliverance to His people in captivity. In the same manner, in this hour, God Almighty, the God of Abraham and of Isaac (Gen 31:42) is raising up a mighty army to bring deliverance and restoration to His people. It is indeed a mighty army aptly described by Joel in his *prophetic restoration message*.

"They shall run like mighty men; they shall climb the wall like men of war; and they shall march every one on his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: Neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every one in his path: and when they fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded. They shall run to and fro in the city; they shall run upon the wall, they shall climb up upon the houses; they shall enter in at the windows like a thief.

*The earth shall quake before them; the heavens shall tremble: the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining: **And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word** (Joel 2:7-11).*

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Chapter 1

Blow the Trumpet in Zion

Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain: let all the inhabitants of the land tremble: for the day of the LORD cometh, for it is nigh at hand (Joel 2:1)

These days, and in many different ways, the Holy Ghost is speaking to the Church about His plan and purpose for our time. Our hearts must be full of expectation as we hear these marvelous words. It is the trumpet of God sounding in our ears telling us that the time has come for the glory cloud that leads the Israel of God, the Church, to move to next level. The trumpet is sounding because her hour of deliverance and total restoration has come. God is bestowing His mercy upon her, *for the time to have favor on her is come.*

As it was with Israel when they marched in to take the land of their possession, today, the Holy Ghost is speaking to us to get up, put on the whole armor of God for the time has come to move in and take the land. The trumpet is sounding for the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ to move from this present realm to the next level. It is a

trumpet call to alert God's end-time army not to be distracted by the enticement of this corrupt world and to admonish every distracted soldier to cast off the works of darkness and put back on the armor of light, for the night is far spent and the day is at hand. Put on the armor of light, dear soldier, *"for no man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier. And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully."*

The trumpet is reverberating and the alarm is sounding louder than ever, it is time for war! It is time to march in as men of war to take the land. Onward, Christian soldiers, your commander is ahead.

The Blowing of the Trumpets

The Lord Jehovah told Moses, *"Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations"* Num 10:2,8.

God instructed Moses in the passage of Scriptures above to make two trumpets. He explained clearly to Moses what the purpose of the trumpets was, when to blow them, and who was to operate them. These trumpets, according to God, were to be blown for calling the assembly together and for journeying from camp to camp in the wilderness on their way to Canaan.

"And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves to thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

The first purpose for the blowing of the trumpet in the passage above was for the calling of the assembly. The Lord God said, when the priests blew the trumpet "ALL" the assembly, that is the entire twelve tribes of Israel should gather at the door of the tabernacle.

The Holy Spirit is saying that as we hear the trumpet call this end time, the whole house of Israel must gather at the Door. Ours is not a physical gathering as theirs was, but a spiritual gathering. Ours is not a physical door as theirs was, but a spiritual Door. They gathered at the east gate of the Tabernacle of the Congregation while we are to gather unto Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. Our gathering speaks of a *“unity in the spirit”* which will precede the unprecedented outpouring of the anointing this world has ever seen. As David the prophet said in Psalm 133 that when the brethren dwell in the realm of unity in the spirit, God commands His anointing and blessing upon them. He likened this to the priesthood anointing on Aaron’s head, an anointing of maturity, *(that flowed to his beard)* and an anointing on the whole body *(that flowed down to the skirts of his garment)*. When the Church hears the sound of the trumpet and takes heed to it by gathering at the Door of the tabernacle of the congregation, the same anointing on the head of our High Priest will flow down to the whole body.

Notice that the whole assembly is to gather. Not just the tribe of Judah, nor is it restricted to Ephraim or the Levites, but ALL the assembly. This is not just for a denominational group or a non-denominational fellowship, or just for a special tribe or nation, or restricted to the natural Jewish race, but it is a call to His Body *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.*

Secondly, the trumpet call is not to gather the assembly to a man. The gathering is not to Moses, not to a prophet or to an apostle, but to the Door of the Tabernacle of Witness. This end-time, it cannot be over-emphasized that the gathering is unto HIM, the LORD JESUS and not any man. It is immaturity and carnality that make us in the Body to worship men, saying “I am of Paul” or “I am of Apollos.” Neither Paul nor Apollos died for us. The gathering shall be unto HIM, our SHILOH. As the Patriarch Jacob in the Book of Genesis prophetically declared over his son saying: *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be*

(Gen 49:10). Yes, Christ is our Shiloh and our gathering is and shall always be unto Him alone.

The first purpose of the trumpets is to gather "*all people*" including the Catholics, Protestants, Evangelicals, Pentecostals, non-Denominationalists, all people that call upon His Name, to come out of their little sectarian tents and come to meet God at the Door to hear the voice of the Lord. There is only one Door to the tabernacle of the congregation. There is only one Lord, one Savior, one Commander-In-Chief, one Master, one Eternal Father, one High Priest, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Jesus Christ. As the trumpet sounds, the whole assembly is to gather and be as one at the Door to hear the voice of the Lord.

Who was authorized to blow the trumpets? Not just anyone. Moses could not just choose any of his favorite persons or even his son to blow the trumpet. He couldn't even blow them himself. As honorable as Judah was, no one from his tribe, not even the most honorable prince of his family, was chosen by God to lay hold of those silver horns and blow them. It was by divine appointment. Who chose the blowers of the trumpets? Yes, it was the Lord God Himself, not Moses, not Aaron. For He said, "*And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance forever throughout your generations.*"

The trumpets were to be blown by the priests. They were blown by a company of priests (not one priest). We are not told that Aaron himself ever blew the trumpet, for this ministry was reserved for his mature sons. The plan of God this end-time, will be carried out, not by an individual celebrated minister, but by the anointed sons of our High Priest. These ones will not be chosen by man but by the Lord God Almighty Himself. He is building an army, an overcomer's company, a kingdom of priests, and a "*generation of them that seek Him*". You and I are important to God as individuals, but in this move, it is the company of well-equipped soldiers that will go across Jordan and take the land.

In this end-time, God is once again gathering His people together unto the Door through His anointed ones, calling us to lay aside all that is of man, all that which separates the Body, and to come to the Door of the tabernacle of the congregation. He is calling us to leave our sectarian and territorial spirits behind and gather at the Door with His brethren so that He might pour on us that *“precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard that went down to the skirts of his garments.”*

“Oh, that He might pour on the body, this hour, that precious anointing that is upon the Head, even that same anointing upon our High Priest not after the order of Aaron but after the order of an endless life.”

Dear saint of the Most High, can you hear the sound of the Trumpet? Can you hear what the Holy Ghost is saying to us, for I know you have ears to hear and the eye of understanding to perceive the things of God. The Lord God is gathering His assembly unto the Door that He might lead us to the next level. As we gather at the Door of the tabernacle of the congregation, we must prepare and sanctify ourselves for this great move of the Almighty God in His Church. We must listen carefully to our Commander-In-Chief, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He directs us and leads us onwards into battle. We must be attentive and hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church. Yes, we must listen to HIM who *“holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass and hath the sharp sword with two edges.”*

We must proceed according to the divine order which He has laid down. We must not create our own order because of modern civilization. It is imperative on us that we proceed exactly as laid down by the Spirit and follow God *“after the due order.”*

For the natural Israel, the day of blowing the Trumpets also gathered the assembly to the Feast of the Lord, the first of which is the Feast of Passover. This feast is threefold in nature. It includes, the Passover night itself when the Passover Lamb was slain, the

feast of Unleavened Bread for the following seven days after the Passover night, and the waving of the Sheaf on the first day of the following week. Passover was fulfilled when on the cross *“our Passover Lamb was sacrificed for us”*. And when He ascended, many graves were opened and many of the patriarch that slept arose, and He presented them as a *“wave offering”* of the firstfruits unto God.

For us in the New Creation, this sound of the trumpet is for the *“day of preparation”* for the Feast of the Lord. And in the day of preparation, as with the natural Israel, we must put away all leaven so we may be ready to partake in the Feasts of the Lord. We must purge ourselves of the leaven of hypocrisy, of deceit, of covetousness and of malice. As the apostle said: *“Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”* Leaven is like yeast used in baking, which if left, will spread its influence quickly through the whole lump. Leaven speaks of a corrupting influence, like malice, uncleanness, covetousness, love of money, love of position, pride of life; which may start off as a negligible influence in an assembly, but its corrupting influence spreads like a wild fire on a hot summer day. The army of God must purge herself of all leaven as we prepare for the Feast of the Ingathering, the final harvest of the Almighty God here on His earth.

Chapter 2

Thy People Shall Be Willing

Who is there among you of all his people? His God be with him and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in Jerusalem (Ezra 1:3).

Every time God is about to do a new thing in the midst of his people he always selects people who are of a willing heart.

God is not about to force anyone to serve in the great work of restoration that is going on in the Church. God is stirring the hearts of the people so that He will have a people that are willing to serve Him, willing to do His will not out of compulsion but out of their own volition. The call is going out; the Lord God is blowing the trumpet in Zion, He is sounding the alarm in His holy mountain. And *“let all those who are willing to move on with him step out.”* There is a deep realization in our hearts that we have compassed this mountain long enough, it is time to move forward, it is time to rebuild the broken walls of the House of the Lord.

This great work of restoration that is coming upon the Church is not something we can join or work ourselves into. It is not a denomination; it is not a work that is built around one man. It is

God Himself working in the midst of His own people; it is the tabernacle of God coming down to dwell among men. God is the Architect and the One stirring the hearts of His people; He is the Engineer that is building the house. It is not by might nor by power but by the Spirit of the Lord alone. It is a work within not without, it is in the heart and the heart must be willing.

The call went out in Ezra chapter one to those who are willing to join in the building of the House of the Lord in Jerusalem that was broken down and trampled under foot by Nebuchadnezzar. Not all responded. In the 4th verse we are told of those who chose to remain. They were to give their offering but they were not willing to join the great work of restoring the temple that was broken down. There are many in our day who will give all kinds of excuses not to move on with the Lord in these last days, but those whose hearts have been stirred by the Lord will surrender and they will be willing to move on with the Lord.

The LORD shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth (Ps 1105:2-3).

His people will be willing in the day of restoration, says the prophet in the book of Psalms; in the day when the House will be rebuilt, His people will volunteer. A spirit of willingness will come upon the Church. It is going to blow across the Church like a mighty wind. Men and women in the Church will break their fallow grounds willingly without any compulsion; they will sow to themselves in righteousness because it is time to seek the Lord, *till He come and rain righteousness upon us* (Hosea 10:12). We will not sow among thorns anymore as God awakens our hearts to serve and worship Him in spirit and in truth, but we will break our fallow grounds in sincerity and in true repentance. It is going to be a genuine work, it is not going to be fake or a make believe kind of thing. God in His mercy will pour water upon the dry land.

*“Now in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, **the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia**, that he made a proclamation throughout all the kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of earth; and he **hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem**, which is in Judah” (Ezra 1:1-2).*

In rebuilding the temple, the first thing God did was cause a stirring in the heart of Cyrus king of Persia. The Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus. It was the Lord that initiated the stirring in the heart of Cyrus because the time was ripe to do so according to God’s timing. When the time comes for the fulfillment of prophecy, God will stir up the hearts of the people. As in the days of Cyrus, God is causing a stirring in the hearts of the people today. There is a general uneasiness in the hearts of God’s people; there is a discomfort in the hearts of many sincere people in the Church. People are hungry for more of God; many are not satisfied with their walk with God. There is a deep and unspoken need to touch God anew and experience His power afresh in the hearts of many of God’s people in the Church today. All this is happening in spite of all the arduous religious activities taking place in the Church today.

*“Then rose up the chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and all the priests, and the Levites, **with all them whose spirit God had raised**, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem” (Ezra 1: 5).*

Notice that it is only those whose spirit God had raised that went ahead to join the work of rebuilding the temple. They stood up willingly not minding the cost because their hearts had been touched by the Almighty God. God can touch our hearts too as we let Him to do so. His eyes is going to and fro all the earth seeking for men whose hearts are perfect towards Him that He might show His power on their behalf. The chief of the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests are all the people rose up, they took a step, they rose up, and they surrendered all to the Lord. We too can rise today from our situation of defeat; we can rise above our

situation of despondency and receive help from the Lord God Almighty. He is able to set us free from traditions of men in the Church that has kept us bound all these years. We will know the truth and the truth will make us free.

“Also Cyrus the king brought forth the vessels of the house of the Lord, which Nebuchadnezzar had brought forth out of Jerusalem, and had put them in the house of his gods..... And this is the number of them: thirty chargers of gold, a thousand chargers of silver, nine and twenty knives” Ezra 1 v7, 9.

Cyrus the king did something of great spiritual import as he gathered all those who would be involved in rebuilding the temple. He searched and brought out, by the spirit of the Lord, all the vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had taken with him to Babylon before the temple was destroyed. This action initiated by Cyrus has prophetic undertones for our time. As the Almighty God prepares to rebuild the broken tabernacle, as He restores to the Church the wasted years, and brings back the lost glory of the house, He will also restore all the precious truths of the Church that has been eroded. The old landmarks that have been buried under the rubble of modern day civilization will be revealed afresh. The standards that have been lowered in the Church as a result of the invasion of Babylon will be restored. The precious truths of the church that has been diluted with our traditions will come alive once again. This represents the import of the action of Cyrus the King in bringing back the precious vessels of the house of the Lord taken away by Nebuchadnezzar.

As the work progressed and the people began to move forward in the re-building of the broken down temple, they had one problem: everybody came again to his own city. *“Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, **everyone unto his city**”* (Ezra 2 :1), *“So the priests, and Levites, and some of the people, and the singers, and the porters, and the Nethinim, **dwelt in their cities, and all Israel in their***

cities" (Ezra 2:70). Meaningful progress in the construction work of the temple could not be made as long as the people dwelt in their own cities. They had to come out and join hands together for a greater glory; they had to see the vision of a greater house, a house greater than their individual houses. It is not about our own individual cities.

Even though the people had responded to the clarion call to come out and join in the rebuilding of the temple they were still divided, they were still living in their own cities. We are at the threshold of one of the greatest moves of God that the world has ever seen but the Church of the Lord is bitterly divided. We are separated by mundane things, we are divided by our individual personal agenda and interests, we are living in our own cities as it were. The denominational spirit in the Church today is not of God. Paul may be given the grace to plant, Apollos may be called upon to water that which was planted, but the One who gives life to the seed, the One who owns the planting, the Lord of the harvest, is Jehovah God Himself. At best Paul and Apollos were merely instruments in the hands of the Lord of the harvest. Today, men are busy building empires around themselves in the name of building ministries, the empires are owned by them, the entire kingdom revolves around them. Today, almost everyone is zealous in building their own personal city; each man is seeking his own, no one wants to step out and build the House of the Lord that is broken down. But God is doing a new work in these last days, he is raising up men and women who will step out of their cities in this hour.

The Lord of Host is raising up an army of willing men and women who will arise in the power of His might and bring restoration to the House of God. He is preparing and raising up warriors who will willingly offer themselves for the deliverance of the House of God as in the days of old. These warriors will be the repairers of the old path and the restorer of the highway for the people of God to walk in. For the Scripture aptly describes the situation of the Church in these hour saying: *"The highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways"* or as the Young's Literal

Translation renders it: *“The ways have ceased, And those going in the paths go in crooked ways”*. But the Lord of the Armies is raising up a Gideon and a Barak company who will deliver the people of God from the enemy and cause them to walk boldly on the highway of God and no longer in crooked paths. How appropriate is the song of Deborah for this hour:

“Praise ye the LORD for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves.

Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even I, will sing unto the LORD; I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel. LORD, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the LORD, even that Sinai from before the LORD God of Israel.

In the days of Shamgar the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through byways.

The inhabitants of the villages ceased, they ceased in Israel, until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel. They chose new gods; then was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?

My heart is toward the governors of Israel, that offered themselves willingly among the people. Bless ye the LORD. Speak, ye that ride on white asses, ye that sit in judgment, and walk by the way. They that are delivered from the noise of archers in the places of drawing water, there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the LORD, even the righteous acts toward the inhabitants of his villages in Israel: then shall the people of the LORD go down to the gates.

Awake, awake, Deborah: awake, awake, utter a song: arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam” (Jdg 5:2-12).

Chapter 3

God's Triumphant Army

And the LORD shall utter his voice before his army: for his camp is very great: for he is strong that executeth his word: for the day of the LORD is great and very terrible (Joel 2:11).

Gideon was a young fellow who stepped out at an extremely precarious time in Israel. Again, *the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord: and the Lord delivered them into the hands of Midian seven years (Judges 6:1)*. It was so bad that the children of Israel had to hide in dens and caves to escape the oppression of the Midianites and the Amalekites. Israel was in bondage and greatly impoverished because of the Midianites. Then in seventh verse, *"It came to pass, when the children of Israel cried to the Lord because of the Midianites, that the Lord heard them...."* He sent them a Gideon. Again he was a very young man; he had no special training of any sort, he too was green. Gideon was not a complex individual, he had no sophistication of any sort but he had a burdened heart. He was burdened by the plight of his people; he was concerned that something had gone wrong and he felt there could be a change. He had serious agitations in his heart as to why things should get this bad for the people of God. He had read in the books how God miraculously delivered the nation of Israel from Egypt, and all that the Lord had done in Israel. But he could not reconcile what he read in the scriptures with what he was experiencing. Hear his reply to the angel that appeared to him:

And Gideon said unto him, oh my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? Where are all the miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt? But now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites (Judges 6 :13).

Gideon struggled with agitations and questions in his heart. He felt forsaken by God, he was not sure he was the right person for the job and he needed to be convinced further that God had actually spoken to him. He felt he did not have the right kind of background. The list was endless, but the Lord was sure that Gideon was the right person for the job – the angel of the Lord described him as the mighty man of valor but Gideon saw himself differently, *“Wherewith shall I save Israel? Behold my family is poor in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house”* (verse 15). God was looking at something very different in Gideon. God saw his heart, not his physical setting. He was looking at Gideon’s zeal and the burning compassion in his heart, not his sophistication. That was what qualified Gideon for the job. Not his background or how polished or eloquent he was.

Today, God is in the process of raising the Gideon of our time who will make a difference in the lives of His people. The people are in bondage to the enemy; the Church is divided and fragmented along doctrinal lines. We have majored on the minor and minored as it were on the major. We are just like the Church in Sardis, we have a name that we are alive but we are indeed dead spiritually; and like the Church in Laodicea, we are indeed rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing with respect to physical things but we are poor, blind and miserable in the things of the spirit. We pride ourselves in the great number of souls that attend our meetings and our Churches while in actual fact *“The vine is dried up, and the fig tree languisheth; the pomegranate tree, the palm tree also, and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field, are withered: **because joy is withered away from the sons of men**”* (Joel 1:12).

But God is raising up a Gideon Army that will bring restoration to the Israel of God.

Maybe like Gideon, you are not satisfied with the goings on in your Church or fellowship, somehow there is a deep yearning in your heart for more than what's being offered. There is a crowd around you, there is a lot of Christian activity going on all around you. You try to get involved as much as possible but somehow there is that deep part of you that still yearns for something it cannot seem to place a finger on but you know there is a hollow deep inside. There is a deep hunger inside that cannot be satisfied by mere Church activity. You know inside of you in spite of all that is going on, that the Church is not where it ought to be. You can see the glaring inconsistencies daily, your heart is agitated like the Gideon of the Bible, you know that something must happen. God must visit the Church once more, the glory must return and Ichabod must be removed from her doorpost. Deep inside your heart you are not satisfied with your walk with God; you know your fellowship with God can be better. I wonder whether you have feelings like the ones just described above; if you do, you might just be the Gideon that will make all the difference in our day.

Gideon took up the challenge

Like Gideon, you may be looking down on yourself, thinking that you do not have what it takes, but I want you to know that God is doing a new thing. He is raising up an end-time army, and He is doing a deep work in all those who are seeking Him with all their heart. God can transform your weakness into a great strength; your liabilities can become your greatest asset as you open up your life to God without reservation.

The first thing that marked Gideon out was that he never tried to pretend or to impress God. He came to God just as he was, with his fears, his doubts, his weaknesses and God accepted him as he was. We live in a day of great pretenses. Most Church people today are almost always wearing a facade. Most of them are not real. They are what I call *plastic personalities*. But God is looking for men and women who will come to him just as they are. We must come to

Him with a willing heart, a sincere heart. The scripture says that a contrite and a broken spirit God will not despise but God will resist the proud. We must own up, we must open up, if we are to be considered for enlistment by God in His end-time army.

The second thing Gideon did was that he took up the challenge to destroy the idol behind his father's house. It was God that pointed his attention to the idol behind his father's house (Judges 6:25-26). He had lived in that house from childhood, he grew up in that compound but somehow the idols behind his father's house never caught his attention. But when the time came for God to use Gideon his attention was suddenly drawn to those idols. The instructions that God gave to him were very clear. God told him to throw down the altar of Baal and build a new altar unto the Lord God of Israel. Beloved, as God begins to arrest His servants in these last days, He will open their eyes to see certain things in their lives and ministries that must be thrown down. It will begin with the strange altars behind the houses of His servants.

The altar of Baal behind Gideon's father's house can mean different things to different people. Whatever this might mean in your life, the time for it to be thrown down has come. God Almighty will give you the grace to bring those things down. They must be thrown down so as not to hinder your move in this new day of God's power. As we humbly come before God and open up our lives to Him, He will show us the "*altar of Baal*" in our backyards that must go. Gideon had to settle the problem within before he stepped out to settle the problem without. So also must we all deal with every besetting sin in our lives, every unholy desire, every seed of pride etc., before stepping out.

When Gideon took up the challenge to destroy the altar of Baal, he knew it was a risky business. His life could go for it but he knew he had to do it because he was already assured of God's presence.

He did the job at night. It doesn't really matter before whom, or the location where you face the reality of the failures in your life, the most important thing is that you must face those realities; you

must, like Jacob, face the reality at some point. Jacob ran from pillar to post for many years. He tried to use wisdom to buy over his brother Esau but it would not work. He labored and worked very hard in ministry and even succeeded but still he needed to face the real issue, he needed to be transformed. He needed to open up to his brother; he needed to stand alone with God, emptied of all things he had so that he could receive the touch of his life that eventually changed his name from Jacob to Israel. For most of us, we need that second touch. We need a second touch so our vision can be sharper; we need a second touch so our lives can yield more fruits.

Gideon did not face the challenge alone

The other thing Gideon did that is worthy of mention when he was about to face the challenge of bringing down the altar of Baal can be found in verse 27. *“Then Gideon took ten men of his servants, and did as the Lord had said unto him...”* (Judges 6 :27). Gideon did not go alone; he shared the burden in his heart with some very close people around him. They were ten in number, and the numeral ten signifies trial and testing. The **ten** commandments given to Moses was the source of the greatest trial for him. Daniel said *“prove thy servants, I beseech thee, **ten days** ; and let them give us pulse to eat, and water to drink* (Daniel 1:12), and in the Book of Revelation we read: *“and ye shall have tribulation **ten days**: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life’* Rev 2:10). It was indeed a time of very serious trial for Gideon, but he faced his trial with the support of his close servants. He had people around him with whom he was in covenant relationship. These were friends who would not betray him in the midst of the greatest challenge of his life. These ten men who went with him in the middle of the night to carry out the assignment God had given to them were trusted friends. Can we find such trusted friends in the house today? Have you been deeply wounded in the ministry by a friend you trusted or have you been betrayed by someone you thought was close to you? God is able to heal those wounds. As we serve the Lord

faithfully, He will bring around us trusted men who will stand with us in the day when we fight terrible oppositions.

God brought ten faithful men around Gideon in his deepest moment of challenge; God brought 300 men around David during one of the toughest periods of his life. The men stood with David to the very last, they kept faith with David. There was mutual commitment between David and the 300 men. It was not a master-servant relationship, it was a covenant relationship. David's 300 men risked their lives by breaking through the ranks of the enemy to fetch drinking water for their leader David. He knew that this was unparalleled commitment and devotion coming from his men so, instead of drinking, David poured out the water unto the Lord. This is what I call reciprocal commitment. David was irrevocably committed to his men just as his men were to him. I believe God is raising up bands of believers across the globe that will be irrevocably committed to one another in true fellowship and prayers. Not men competing with one another but men complementing one another. Men who truly provide spiritual cover for one another. God is raising an army that is strong and set in battle array, they shall run like mighty men; *they shall climb walls like men of war; and they shall march everyone in his ways, and they shall not break their ranks: neither shall one thrust another; they shall walk every man in his path; and when they shall fall upon the sword, they shall not be wounded* (Joel 2 : 7-8).

God defended Gideon

If we obey God, and do his bidding no matter what, God will defend us. He will fight for us. The name of the God of Jacob will defend us and he will send us help from out of his sanctuary. The men of the city arose early in the morning, "*...and they said to one another, who hath done this thing? ...and the men of the city said bring out Gideon that he may die*" (Judges 6:28-30). They wanted Gideon dead or alive but God stood with him. Gideon's father who had no idea why

Gideon had done what he did also stood by Gideon defending his son. *“And Joash (Gideon’s father) said unto all that stood against him, will you plead for Baal? Will you save him? He that will plead for him let him be put to death whilst it is yet morning: if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar.”* When a man’s way pleases the Lord He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

If we stand in the place of prayer and obedience long enough, all those who fight us because they do not understand why we have taken the position we have taken, will eventually come round to understand. We do not need to fight back when the whole city rises against us because we seek to do the will of Him who sent us. He who sent us will fight for us, He will defend us, and He will make them understand in His own way and in His own time. Sometimes, attacks on our person by fellow believers can be very painful just because they are not seeing what we are seeing, and we may be tempted to fight back. God will fight for us; the name of the God of Jacob will defend us. We must never fight back and we must let God do the fighting for us. The battle is His; all we need do is stand still and behold the salvation of the Lord. Just as God protected Gideon from the hands of an angry mob, He will protect us at all time as long as we stand in the place of obedience and prayers.

Gideon’s army

Suddenly the people got their confidence back; they came out from their caves and dens where they had been hiding for fear of the Midianites. A spark of light was ignited in the midst of the darkness by Gideon. The people finally found a leader that restored a measure of confidence to them. They came out in large numbers as volunteers for once to join Gideon’s army. Many of them did not quite understand what joining Gideon’s army was all about but they came out all the same. They came out in large numbers basking in the euphoria of a new move, a new found freedom, a

new message, a new leader. What happened with the large numbers that turned out in Gideon's day is pretty much like the euphoria, and the large numbers that are turning up in our churches and in our meetings today. It is all about the fun of a new day, a new kind of worship. It's all about the excitement. And we thank God for the excitement and all the fun and all the large numbers turning out today but we need more than just excitement to deal with the enemy in these last days. We need men and women who, rooted and grounded in Him, will not turn back in the day of battle out of fear.

Gideon had 32,000 men who volunteered to join his army. What an impressive response on the part of the people given their background. The response was good but it was a mixed crowd, and it could never serve God's purpose. Today, we thank God for the crowd but we must understand that it is not about crowds, it was never about crowds, and it will never be about crowds. The emphasis today is on the numbers but we must learn that it is not about numbers. David made the mistake of his life when he allowed the devil to move him to number Israel (1 Chronicles 21:1). He wanted to number Israel for selfish reasons; he wanted to boost his personal ego by the numbers. In all of the dealings of God with Israel, numbers was never the issue, but David made it an issue and paid dearly for it. Church leaders today have given up depth for expansion, commitment for numbers, and focus for spread. The result is a mixed multitude that is going around in circles rather than moving forward.

While Gideon was busy mobilizing the people God was busy demobilizing them. *"And the Lord said to Gideon, the people that are with thee are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me. Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, Whosoever is **fearful** and **afraid**, let him return and depart early from mount Gilead, And there returned of the people twenty and two thousand; and there remained ten thousand"* (Judges 7:2-3). Some of our mega Churches along with their mega

leaders may need to consider demobilizing in order to move forward. This may not sound politically correct going by the mood of today's Church but the truth must be told. Our emphasis must change if we must move on with God in these last days.

Fear drove the people back

It is worthy of note that twenty two thousand people went back because they were fearful and afraid. Fear is our biggest enemy and we must deal with it. Fear has torment, fear is of the devil. Three quarters of all those in the house of God today are bound by one form of fear or the other. The enemy is using fear to cripple our lives; we are not able to move forward in the things of God because of fear, we are unable to declare our stand for Jesus on account of fear. The hearts of many are failing them because of fear.

The big economies of the world are now shaky; world peace is seriously being threatened by terrorism and the war on terror is far from being won. Iran is threatening to go ahead with its nuclear program, the Middle East is still a source of serious concern. There is palpable fear all around the world. Individual nations of the world are battling with severe internal problems that the leaders are finding very difficult to deal with.

As declared by the scriptures we are living in perilous times but we must declare that we have not been given the spirit of bondage again unto fear. *"But when you shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Nations shall rise against nations, and kingdom against kingdom: And great earthquakes shall be in diverse places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven... And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death, and ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, **But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls"** (Luke 21:9-11, 16-19).*

God can set you free from your fears. In whatever form fear may be manifesting in your life, God is able to deliver you completely from the spirit of fear. Is it fear of death, fear of the unknown, fears about what may happen to your family or your business? God is able to set you free from fear. *“For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind”* (2Timothy 1:7).

The last trial

“And the Lord said to Gideon, the people are yet too many; bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there: and it shall be, that of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go.

So he brought down the people unto the water: and the Lord said unto Gideon, Every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shall thou set by himself; likewise every one that boweth down upon his knees to drink.

And the numbers of them that lappeth, putting their hand to their mouth, were three hundred men: but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water.

And the Lord said to Gideon, By the three hundred men that lappeth will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand...” (Judges 7 : 4-7).

There are a number of lessons we must learn from this last test given to Gideon’s men. The medium of the test was water. Why water? Water speaks of the word of God. *“That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of **water by the word**”* (Ephesians 5 v26). Psalm 105:19 has this to say about Joseph, *“Until the time that his word came: the word of the Lord tried him.”* Joseph had a dream and that dream was the word of the Lord to him. That dream marked the beginning of the long trial that he had to put up with, but he held on to the word of the Lord not minding the trials, and God vindicated him at the end. Persecution will always arise

on account of the word. *The sower soweth the word... but when they have heard the word, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their heart. And these likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: **afterward, when persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.*** (Mark 4 vs14-17). Every word, every vision, every dream, every counsel given to us by God will be tried by the devil, but we must hold fast to the word knowing fully well in our hearts that faithful is He that has promised, He will surely bring His word to pass in our lives.

There are many faithful brothers and sisters who have become weary because the words of the Lord appear not to be coming true in their lives. It looks like the night will never end; it looks like we have had more than our own fair share of troubles. Like Gideon we ask over and over again, "If God be for us why are we having all these troubles?" Our expectations may appear to be cut off, and our hopes delayed; and this has made our soul tired and wearied. I have news for you. The Lord is about to turn again your captivity. As the streams in the south, you cannot afford to give up now, your salvation is nearer now than when you first believed. *"They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"* (Psalm 126: 5-6). All we need is patience. We must patiently hold on to the promise – *knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience, but let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing* (James 1:2-4). After you have done the will of God you need to be patient so that you might obtain the promise.

Our Commitment must be total

The second major lesson emanating from the last test of Gideon's army is the separation. There was a separation between those who lapped the water putting their hands to their mouth (three

hundred) and those who bowed down upon their knees to drink water. There must be something very important to God in the mode of separation used here. Those who lapped water putting their hands to their mouth and those who bowed down on their knees to drink. Looking at these two postures from a natural standpoint, those who bowed down on their knees to drink are more likely to be disadvantaged in case of a sudden attack by the enemy as opposed to those who lapped the water putting their hands to the mouth.

The implication of kneeling and bowing down before drinking was that they were totally and completely absorbed and taken over by their thirst. They were helpless in this situation. A man on his knees is totally subdued. These men were subdued by their thirst, they were subdued by their appetite, and for this reason they lost out. The message here is that our priority in life can separate us from entering into the fullness of God's purpose for our lives. But wait a minute, one can argue that satisfying our thirst is a legitimate thing. What can be wrong in our satisfying our thirst like these soldiers attempted to do. But this is exactly where the dividing line rests. The real issue is, in satisfying our legitimate desires, how do we go about it? Are we obsessed by our own desires, our family, and our properties? Are we being controlled by the things of this world? Are our jobs more important to us than Christ? Are we putting our families before the Lord? The God we are serving is a jealous God. We shall have no other gods beside him. If we must move into the fullness of God's plan in these last days, our commitment to Him must be total. We must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and then all other things will be added to us.

When our Hearts are overwhelmed

The Lord said unto Gideon in Judges 7:9 *"Arise; get the down unto the host; for I have delivered it into thine hand."* The battle for the soul of Israel is about to begin, preparation has been made, the

soldiers going into battle have been selected, the instruction from the Lord is clear – I have delivered the enemy into your hand.

God encouraged Gideon one more time. There were still some elements of fear in Gideon's heart – *“But if thou fear to go down, go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host: and thou shalt hear what they say; and afterward shall thine hand be strengthened to go down unto the host...”* (Judges 1:10-11). Despite all the preparations that Gideon and his 300 men had already gone through, they still had some hidden fears, and God saw those fears. It isn't that Gideon did not believe the word of the Lord that He would deliver the enemy into their hands but the sheer number of the enemy compared to the paltry 300 men with him was intimidating to Gideon – *“And the Midianites and the Amalekites and all the children of the east lay along in the valley like grasshoppers for multitude: and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seaside for multitude”* (Judges 7 :12).

The vastness of the enemy and the enormity of the problem that we are sometimes faced with can be intimidating. What can 300 men do in the face of multitudes and multitudes of enemy soldiers? It was necessary for God to reassure Gideon again by causing him to eavesdrop on the conversation of the enemy about a dream that one of them had. Both the dream and the interpretation of the dream re-echoed Gideon's victory over the enemy. Sometimes with all the best intentions, our hearts become overwhelmed by the intensity and magnitude of the problems and situations that we face. There are problems in life that are daunting, there are situations that we face that are bewildering, and sometimes we wonder within ourselves whether God can really deliver us. In one of those tough situations David cried unto the Lord, *“From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I”* (Psalm 61: 2). When we go through such experiences, God is nearby to encourage us. He sees our heart, he is touched with the feelings of our infirmity, and he understands that we need encouragement. He sends the Holy Spirit to comfort us at such times. He comforts us in our afflictions

and in turn we are able to comfort others in their afflictions. At such times we need to look at the Rock that is higher than us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. Arise soldier of Christ, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, put on the whole armor of God and quench all the fiery darts of the enemy!

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the solemn watchword hear;
If while ye sleep He suffers, away with shame and fear;
Where'er ye meet with evil, within you or without,
Charge for the God of battles, and put the foe to rout.*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day.
Ye that are brave now serve Him against unnumbered foes;
Let courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in His strength alone;
The arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your own.
Put on the Gospel armor, each piece put on with prayer;
Where duty calls or danger, be never wanting there.*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, each soldier to his post,
Close up the broken column, and shout through all the host:
Make good the loss so heavy, in those that still remain,
And prove to all around you that death itself is gain.*

*Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be long;
This day the noise of battle, the next the victor's song.
To those who vanquish evil a crown of life shall be;
They with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.*

- *George Duffield, Jr., 1858*

Chapter 4

Enemy's Strategy

Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices (2Co 2:11).

The last encampment of the children of Israel, just before they entered into the land of promise, was at the plains of Moab where Moses was buried by God. Moses, the servant of God, presented to the whole congregation the Law of God a second time. He then handed over to Joshua, the commander-in-chief of army of Israel, who is a type of the true Commander-In-Chief of the God's Armed Forces, the Ancient of Days, the Lord Jesus Himself. After miraculously crossing Jordan under Joshua, they camped at Gilgal where God commanded that the '*new generation*' destined to inherit the land of promise were to be circumcised. This, He said, was necessary so that He might put a distinction between the '*clean and the unclean*' and between the '*holy and the unholy*'. They were circumcised and they kept the feast of Passover and the feast of Unleavened Bread (Josh 5:10-11). As you know, Israel is a type of the Church and everything that happened to them is a foreshadow of what the Church of Jesus Christ is passing through. So, let's go on...

At this time, after they crossed to the other side of Jordan, the fear of them consumed the inhabitants of the land after hearing what the God of Israel had done in Egypt, His acts at the Red Sea and His wonders in drying up the waters of the Jordan. The Bible says, concerning the inhabitants of the land, that *“their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel.”* In Numbers Chapter 22, we read: *“And the children of Israel set forward, and pitched in the plains of Moab on this side Jordan by Jericho. And Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. And Moab was sore afraid of the people, because they were many: and Moab was distressed because of the children of Israel.”*

Yes! this is the heritage of the Church of Jesus Christ. The enemies tremble, and the kingdom of darkness is in great distress because of the Israel of God. However the king of Moab, knowing he is no match for Israel, just like Satan knows he cannot match the army of God, devised a slimy, sneaky strategy to attack Israel. He sent for Balaam, a prophet of God, enticing him with gifts and with promises of ‘promotion’. He sent his honorable messengers to tell Balaam that he would promote Balaam unto very great honor if he would use his prophetic anointing to curse the people of God. He sent certain honorable princes of Moab to Balaam with rewards of divination saying:

“Behold, there is a people come out from Egypt: behold, they cover the face of the earth, and they abide over against me: Come now therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people; for they are too mighty for me: peradventure I shall prevail, that we may smite them, and that I may drive them out of the land.”

This is very true. We are the people that came ‘out of Egypt’ and are of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation and we cover the earth. Yes, the devil knows we are too mighty for him. The prince of this world and his army know this for a fact that we are

'overcomers' and so will seek every slimy way to gain an advantage over us.

Balaam was a prophet of God, one with abundant revelations from God, *The man who saw the visions of the Almighty, falling into a trance but having his eyes open*" (Num 24:4). The Bible tells us that God came to Balaam and told him: *"Thou shall not go with them; thou shall not curse the people for they are blessed."*

Dear blessed Saint of God, did you hear that? *"Surely there is no enchantment against you, neither is there any divination against Israel."* No one, not even a prophet, can put a curse on you because you are blessed. No enchantment, no divination, no incantation, no curse, *"no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn"* (Is 54:17). *"Blessed is he that blessed thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee,"* saith the Lord (Num 24:9).

Although Balaam knew that *God is not a man that He should lie, neither the son of man that He should repent*, and though God told him not to go with the princes of Moab, he still desired to go, and thus went back to inquire from God to see if He would change His mind. So *"God gave him over to a reprobate mind,"* and allowed him to go, and even the dumb ass rebuked the foolishness of the prophet.

Dear Saint of the Most High, what desperately concerns us in this message is what Balaam taught Balaak the king of Moab. Balaam went to Moab with the servants of Balaak and attempted to curse Israel. When Balaam finally discovered that Israel could not be cursed, he gave Balaak the secret that would cause Israel to fall and he received his reward of unrighteousness. He taught the Moabites to entice the children of Israel, to cause them to commit fornication, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and hence Israel became defiled.

Let us, Saints of God, pay careful attention to this message, for all God's dealings with the natural Israel are *"types and ensamples, written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are*

come.” (I Cor 10:11). Balaam being a prophet of God knew the secret of Israel, and being a man that loved the reward of unrighteousness, sold out the people of God to the enemy for the wages of iniquity, thus casting a stumbling block before the people of God.

Jude, the brother of James, wrote saying: *“Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah (Jude vs. 11). “The error of Balaam is the error of using the anointing of God for personal profit. It is using the gifts of God for promotion and personal honor. That was the enticement from Balaak, the king of Moab, and that enticement is louder today than ever before. That same prince of Moab, the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience has his messengers all around seeking to entice the prophets of God with silver and gold and worldly desires. Don’t you see the danger? When ‘ministers’ scramble and cheat for position, stab one another for honor and for gain, and ‘men of God’ greedily pursue after the same error of Balaam. When sermons are sold for money, specialized prayers for a price, and big clergy titles are worth their weight in gold. Are we not in for trouble? This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. “But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith.”*

The doctrine of Balaam

Here in the plains of Moab as we prepare the end-time army, under Yeshua, to take the land of our inheritance and for the final harvest and the Feast of Ingathering that will follow the latter rain, we must rid ourselves of every appearance of the doctrines of Balaam. Our enemy knows he’s no match for our strength therefore he employs his wicked subtlety to gain advantage over us. In the

revelation of Jesus Christ that He gave to John to deliver to us, the letter to the Angel of the Church in Pergamos reads:

I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate (Rev 2: 13).

Without doubt this message is for the Church of this generation. We are in no doubt living where Satan's seat is with all the sodomy, Satan worship, materialism, and opposition to the gospel that abound around us. No doubt many have stood and are still standing faithful, but the Lord says that we have among us them that are influenced by the spirit of Balaam and walk in the ways of the son of Beor.

The way of Balaam is simply this: He used his spiritual gifts to obtain personal gain, promotion and honor. He was so overtaken by the spirit of greed and covetousness that he sold the people of God for his personal gain. The Balaamic spirit influences ministers (prophets) to seek for self gain and personal honor under the cover of ministry. It makes ministers to greedily seek for self promotion at any cost, whether by destroying other ministers, maligning other ministries or by selling the brethren. The ways of Balaam seeks to expose the weakness of the body of Christ so our enemy can take advantage of us. The Lord Jesus is absolutely against this wicked and corrupt spirit and He will fight it with the sword of His mouth and so should we. Apostle Peter wrote:

"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and

are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Beor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness; But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error" (2 Peter 2:14 – 18).

This message from apostle Peter seems to be very harsh. This is to show us the gravity of this doctrine. Jude did not use a lighter language either. He said in the eleventh verse of his epistle *"Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Korah. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever" (Jud 1:11-13).* The harshness of the condemnation of the doctrine of Balaam is commensurate with its corrupting influence. This is because once it has gotten its hold on a prophet of God, it can easily spread like yeast to many others. It is as the apostle Paul warns that *"a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"*. Saints of God, we must purge ourselves of this old leaven that we may be a new lump.

Beloved, it is time for total consecration to the service of our King, time for setting ourselves apart for the Most Holy.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face..." (Ps 24: 3 – 6).

He has called us *“out of Egypt”* that we might serve Him on this holy mountain. He made us His Royal Priesthood, His Sanctified Nation, His Perculiar People; *“That we should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”*

My brethren the night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore, beloved, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light.

Chapter 5

The Battle Rages

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (Eph 6:10-17).

We must never forget at any time, even when we are overwhelmed by the enormity of the warfare, that the battle is the Lord's. It is not by our power nor by our might but by His Spirit. Victory, therefore, is sure. Let us always be

cognizant of the fact that the weapons of warfare are mighty through God, not through us, to the pulling down of strongholds. And as we remind ourselves of these facts, we'll be encouraged and strengthened to take the battle to the gates of the enemy.

"And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof, that he worshipped, and returned into the host of Israel, and said, Arise; for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian. And he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and put a trumpet in every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and lamps within the pitchers" (Judges 7:15-16).

First, it is very significant that Gideon divided the men into three companies. Three stands for completeness, it stands for fullness – God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost; Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; Outer Court, Holy Place, and the Holiest of All. God's army shall manifest prophetically in three companies in these last days, meaning that they will be complete in HIM. No devil will succeed in accusing them. The fact that they are in three companies means that God in His own way will raise men and women in these last days that will stand perfect and complete in all the will of God (Col 4:12). *For in Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and we are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power (Col 2 v 9-10).*

The second point to note was that Gideon put a trumpet in the hands of each of the three hundred men with him. A trumpet represents a message. God will give each of us a message of our own. God's end time army will have a trumpet in their mouths and in their hands, they will have a message borne out of personal revelation, and not a message received from man, or taught them by man. God's servant in these last days will be original, they will not do it because others are doing it, or because it is the in thing to do. They will do it because God said to do it. Many servants of the Lord today have abandoned the fountain of life and they have gone ahead to hew for themselves cisterns that cannot hold water. Second-hand revelation will not do, we have to go out to get the oil

from the source and not try to take from the virgins who took out time to have extra oil in their vessels.

The third point here is that Gideon gave them a pitcher each containing lamps within. The pitcher represents the flesh which must be broken so that the lamp can shine. Our flesh represents the veil that must be torn so that we can enter into the holiest of all, into the one hundred fold realm of ministry. The altar of incense which is the last piece of furniture in the holy place in the tabernacle represents the death to self message. This is the place where we must die to self. It is the place where the grain of corn must fall to the ground and die. This is the point where many servants of God get to and fail to proceed, but by his grace God Almighty will raise men and women in these last days that will go beyond the veil of the flesh into the holiest of all. They will truly be crucified to the world and the world to them. They must decrease so that Christ may increase. It is not about us any more, it is about HIM.

We must lay down our gifts, our ministry, our Churches, our past, our present, our successes, our failures on the altar. We must labor to be found in HIM, not having our own righteousness, our own ministry. We must be ready like Paul *to suffer the loss of all things and count them but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord* (Philippians 3:8-9). It is in giving them up that we actually keep them.

So many ministers today will do everything to hold on to their congregation, they will hold on to the men and women under them and even threaten them with a curse if they dare to leave. But God's work is not our personal property, it is not a family business, it is not about us, it is all about JESUS.

Spiritual Warfare

For though we walk (live) in the flesh, we are not carrying on our warfare according to the flesh and using mere human weapons. For the weapons of our warfare are not physical but are mighty before God to the overthrow and destruction of strongholds, in as much as

we refute arguments and theories and reasonings and every proud and lofty thing that sets itself up against the (true) knowledge of God; and we lead every thought and purpose away captive into the obedience of Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One. (2 Cor. 10:3 – 5)

We are not to carry on as mere men of the flesh. We are not just flesh and blood and so should not fight using worldly weapons. This passage reveals that the weapons of our warfare are supernatural, and mighty through God. With these weapons we pull down strongholds. We pull down Satan and his principalities and powers. In addition to these enemies we cast down and refute arguments, theories (scientific, philosophical, ideological, and religious), sense-knowledge reasonings and every high and lofty thing that goes contrary to God and His revealed knowledge. This includes the believer's reasonings, common sense, and opinions of his senses and every philosophy that contradicts the revealed knowledge of God.. This indeed is one strong enemy we have to deal with.

When we get to know the divine Spirit by the revelation of Jesus Christ we come to realize that an open door is before us to enter into the divine realm of omnipotence. We no longer walk by the sight of our eyes, the hearing of our ears, the feelings of our fleshly mind, and by the suggestions of natural men or our own fleshly imaginations, but by the living word of God. We then arrive at the stage where we constantly censure and combat every thought that is contrary to the word of God. We have arrived at the realm where we subdue sense-knowledge and bring it to the obedience of divine revelation. This is spiritual warfare.

Most of us are not aware of the fact that our life as believers is a life of warfare. And those of us that are informed, are not well-informed about the fact that spiritual warfare is not limited to fighting against demon power in other people's life, in government, in our offices, in deliverance, but also in the arena of our souls. Infact, the soul is the battle ground. The enemy sows lies there, makes false suggestions, plants fear and uncleanness, but it is our

duty to subdue all these by the word of God, to the obedience of Christ.

It is also our duty to cast down sense-knowledge arguments, arising from our own reasoning faculties which have been highly developed. You know, we have spent years training our minds to think, to arrive at logical conclusions, to hypothesize, theorize and prove or disprove things. We have spent years training our human intellect to the detriment of the human spirit. If we are not careful, our highly educated mind might take our spirits captive and prevent us from walking in the Spirit thereby precluding victory in the battle that is raging.

Of course, we still live in this world and are subject to the suggestions of the devil, suggestions of carnal men around us, and our loud five senses, but we must learn to walk by every word that comes out of the mouth of God. We must no longer walk by the leading of the five senses, but be led by the Spirit of God. We must cast down sense knowledge whenever it goes contrary to the knowledge of God.

When revelation knowledge says, *"The Lord is the strength of my life."* I have to cast down the voice of the senses even if every nerve of my body is shouting weakness. *"Himself took my infirmities and bare my sickness,.. who his own self bare my sins on his body on the tree, that I, being dead to sins should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes I was healed.."* That's what revelation knowledge is saying in my spirit. But I hear another voice, the loud voice of my senses, shouting "the pains are still there! I can still feel them! I can still see the swellings! I can still hear the abnormal heart beat! What should I do? Which voice should I believe? I must take sides with the word of God. I must cast down the imaginations of sense-knowledge. I must crown revelation knowledge and give it the right of way.

Of course it is not easy to ignore the voices of the flesh. It is difficult to ignore the pains, the signs and the evidences which sense-knowledge present before us, but if we are to line up with the word

of God, we must refuse the voice of the flesh. We must take faith as sufficient evidence and reject the evidence being presented before us by our feelings. We must cast down sense-knowledge evidence when they go contrary to the word of God. We are not denying the presence of those contrary feelings but we are lining-up with the word of God and affirming that what God has said is true. We are taking our evidence from the word, taking our evidence from faith and not from sense-knowledge, for faith is the substance. Faith is the evidence.

Chapter 6

Count It All Joy

James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations: Greetings.

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance.

Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything (James 1:1-4 NIV).

Wow! What a startling statement from Apostle James? He hit the nail on the head. In a blunt and somehow aggressive manner, James deals with our common reaction to trials. We all usually think of trials and tests as terrible when we are going through them, but the apostle tells us to take a closer and more thoughtful view, and admonishes us to count them as joy. Like Paul and Silas, at the midnight hour in a Roman jail with feet fastened in stocks, sang praises unto God, we should joyfully give praise in our trials and testings.

It seems to me that James is trying to pass a sure message to us in his choice of words, for he did not say to count it all joy *'if'* you fall, but *'when'* you fall into various trials. By using this word he seems to be admonishing us to get ready for it so we can overcome when

the time comes. The result of such trials will work in us what the refiner's fire does for gold. The trial of our faith which is much more precious than gold, will produce patience, toughness, endurance, steadfastness, unwavering constancy, and spiritual fortitude in us. When we let *patience do her complete work*, it will make us become more mature, proven and tried, ready for the Master's use.

Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him (James 1:12-18 NIV).

"Are they Hebrews? So am I, Are they Israelites? So am I, Are they seeds of Abraham? So am I, Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as a fool) I am more: in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In Journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by my own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fasting often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches" (2 Corinthians 11 verses 22-28).

In what looks like a catalogue of woes, Paul describes how difficult and painful his walk with God has been. He describes with graphic details his experiences in different settings; he portrays the different shades of his trials as he walked with his Master in the ministry. The trials came to him in different colors and in different shades. He suffered everything from the mildest of pain to the most severe of them all. He knew what it meant to be in the deep in the night as well as in the day. Day and night in the deep speaks of the different degrees or intensity of our trials, yet the same God is behind it all.

The question that would be agitating our minds is why God would want to expose his servants to such extreme situations and pain such as the one that Paul just described above. Could a man with a call from God actually go through such situations? If Paul had God's call and backing why should so much pain and disappointment trail his path? He was out in the cold, hungry and naked many times. As an adult he was flogged with cane five times, and beaten with rods three times, imprisoned a number of times, and came close to his death as a result of pain and suffering many times. This is inhuman, especially as he did nothing to warrant such treatment. You may want to ask where God was when Paul his servant was made to suffer to such an extent.

Apart from all the suffering Paul was filled with compassion and care for all the Churches on a daily basis. He became all things to all men that he might by all means save some. Surely this is the way of death, but it is also the way of life. The grain of the corn must fall to the ground and die otherwise it will remain alone. There is a pattern here that we must understand. Paul himself described this pattern when he said, "*Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long suffering, **for a pattern** to them which should believe on him to life everlasting*" (1Timothy 1 vs16). The suffering that Paul experienced was allowed by God, in fact God intended it to be a pattern to all those who should believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

The trial of our faith is necessary because God will only use tested hands. God is putting His people to test; He is raising a generation that will do His will in these last days. We might be in heaviness through manifold temptations, it is to the effect that *the trial of our faith is much more precious in the sight of God than of gold that perisheth, though we be tried with fire, it is to the end that we be found unto the praise and honour and glory at the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ* (1Peter 1 v 6-7).

Let's reconsider what James said in our opening text. "*My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall in to divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.*" This statement was

also corroborated in the book of Romans Chapter 5 verse 3: *“Knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience and experience hope: and hope maketh not ashamed.”* Patience is the tool that will make us perfect wanting nothing, and it is through the experiences that God allows our way that we learn patience. We learn obedience through our experiences, and we learn worship and submission through the things that we pass through. Many of us are like *“Moab who has been at ease from his youth, and have settled on our lees, and we have not been emptied from vessel unto vessel, neither have we gone into captivity before, therefore our taste has remained the same, and our scent is not changed”* (Jeremiah 48 vs 11-12).

Those who have knowledge about how the finest of wines are brewed will understand that for wine to come to its purest state it must be poured from vessel unto vessel. Our lives cannot bring out the best if we chose to remain in our comfort zones where nothing shakes us. If the sweet smelling savor of Christ must be manifested in our lives, the boat of our lives must be rocked at some point. We must be turned, we must be poured from vessel unto vessel, and sometimes if necessary we must be prepared to go into captivity, so that we can re-emerge from captivity with greater strength. Joseph in the scriptures needed to experience the trauma of being sold out by his own brothers, he needed to know how it felt like to be sent to jail for an offence he never committed, he needed, after all was said and done, to have a heart large enough to forgive the very brothers who sold him out to the enemy. This kind of experience does not come cheap, it is tough and painful but that is the way to the throne. At last Joseph sat on the throne to rule. *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne* (Rev. 3 : 21).

For us to become great tools in the hands of the Almighty that will affect our generations in ways that are unprecedented we must be tested, we must be tried. The ease in our lives must be unsettled a little bit; the boat we are traveling in must be rocked a little bit. We must be poured as it were from vessel on to vessel, and this

process can be painful and unsettling. When you have to pour a liquid substance from vessel on to vessel, some quantity might waste, the process might look messy but that is necessary if the substance must be made pure. This is the only path to greatness, we must be poured literally from vessel to vessel, and our lives will be rocked by trials and temptations so that the best in us can come out.

David it was, that said when I am distressed it is then that my vessel is enlarged, in my distress oh Lord thou has enlarged my vessel *"Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness; thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer"* (Psalm 4:1). We will never know any meaningful enlargement in our lives until we have learnt to know what it means to experience distress. This does not sound like the gospel message we are hearing in our different Churches today. Nobody is talking about pain and difficult times anymore in the Church today, nobody is talking about the afflictions of the righteous, nobody is talking about us entering the Kingdom through many tribulations. It is all about prosperity and all good things of life. That's all we hear from our pulpits today. Any Christian who is going through some difficult times is tagged faithless. No wonder we have jelly-like Christians all around us, Christians who have no spine, because they have never been tried, and whose commitment levels are very low. This is the result of the materialistic, easy believism gospel that we preach today in our Churches.

Most Christians today are what you might call 'plastic' Christians. Plastic may look good on the outside but wait until a little heat is applied and it immediately begins to melt. It cannot survive heat and pressure. Apply a little pressure on plastic and watch it crack immediately. This is the kind of Christians that we find in the Church today. The teachings on faith and prosperity have been overstretched, with the result that we have lost the essence of the old time religion. We have thrown away the old landmarks in the name of modernization and prosperity. The way of the cross is being ridiculed and cheapened by the mixed multitude that we find

in the Church today. The precious is mixed with the vile, gold-plated mistaken for the gold.

God by his Spirit is raising, in these last days, a Church out of a Church, a nation out of a nation, a generation who will be tested and tried, and a people who will travail and bring forth. *For as soon as Zion travailed she bought forth.* The sun-clothed woman having the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars described in Revelation chapter 12 is the Church in travail, a Church in much pain, a Church that will give birth to the man-child. There is going to be a bringing forth, but not without a travailing, for it is in the midst of this distress that we shall experience true enlargement.

Beaten gold

“And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, speak unto Aaron and say unto him, when thou lightest the lamps, the seven lamps shall give light over and against the candlestick. And Aaron did so; he lighted the lamps thereof over against the candlestick, as the Lord commanded Moses. And this work of the candlestick was of beaten gold, unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the candlestick” (Numbers 8 vs 3-4).

This same instruction can be found in the book of Exodus when the Almighty was giving very clear instructions to Moses on the building of the tabernacle and the need for Moses to build according to the pattern shown to him on the mount. *“And thou shalt make a candlestick of pure gold: **of beaten work** shall the candlestick be made: his shaft, and his branches, his bowls, his knobs, and his flowers, shall be of the same.*

The golden candlestick is second to the table of shewbread in the holy place. The holy place is the second compartment of the tabernacle; the entire tabernacle contains seven pieces of furniture from the outer court to the holy of holies. Each of these pieces of

furniture represents specific dealings of God in the life of the Church. In the tabernacle is found the due order for the Church and the divine pattern for ministry is encapsulated in the prophetic significance of the tabernacle containing the outer court, holy place and the holy of holies. The spiritual import of the candlestick and all its shaft, branches, and bowls being made of beaten gold is very profound for us today. It outlines God's pattern for dealing with those who will bear the vessel of ministry, those who will make a difference in the ministry and the service of the Almighty God.

The golden candlestick represents a ministry that is in total submission to the Holy Spirit. As oil flows through the branches of the candlestick seven of them in number, the flames in each of the branches burns, effectively and effortlessly to provide light in the Holy Spirit. This will result in the outflow of a true and genuine ministry to the people. In order to achieve this level of ministry, the candlestick and all its branches must be made of beaten gold. This means that the vessels that will walk in total submission to the Holy Spirit must be tried; they must be made of beaten gold. Beaten gold is gold that is specially prepared with severe pressure applied on it to ensure that it is absolutely pure. God will raise men in these last days that have stayed in the place of pressure without breaking. The treasure in this earthen vessel must be released that the *excellency of power may be of God, and not of us*. We shall see God raise men and women in the Church in these last days, who, though troubled on every side, yet will not be distressed, perplexed by situations all around but they will not be in despair; they will be persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. They will be men and women always *bearing about in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in their body* (2Cor. 4 : 7-10).

The Harness of God

"He hath hedged my way so that I cannot pass, and he hath set darkness in my path" (Job 19 : 8). "He hath hedged me about so that I

cannot get out; he hath made my chains heavy, also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer" (Lamentations 3: 7 - 8).

Job appears to be saying here that God has blocked his way such that he is stranded in darkness and cannot pass. There seem to be no way, we are fenced in, hedged in by God. We know without a shred of doubt that there are many children of God who might be reading this book and may be going through very difficult times which they themselves may have no explanation for. It seems as if God has forsaken you, things have continued to happen around you as if God does not care. You appear helpless in the face of challenges; the enemy appears to be gaining the upper hand. Your prayers seem to go unanswered, and the heavens above you have become like brass, impenetrable, impervious and insurmountable. You cry out in pain yet it looks like there is no one around to lend a helping hand. It is indeed midnight for you.

There is someone reading this book who might know other brethren or they themselves might be dealing with the pain and trauma of a terminal illness. The doctors have given their verdict, and they seem to be helpless in the face of the ravaging illness. The cold hands of death seem so close, and the situation seems utterly hopeless. Where is the God of the Acts of Apostles? Where is the God of Elijah? they seem to be asking. There are yet others who might be dealing with strange, difficult and very traumatic experiences in their lives and they wonder why God allowed such pain to come their ways. They feel rejected, they feel abandoned, it is like their world is caving in and no one seem to care.

There are men and women who are bleeding profusely in the house as a result of very deep inner wounds. Sometimes such wounds can be a direct result of their own mistakes or a wrong decision, but at other times the wounds may be due to no fault of theirs. They try very hard to cover up by getting involved in Church activities but the truth is that help is needed. This hemorrhage in the house has to stop. We must look up to God for healing; He alone can heal us no matter how long we may have been bleeding, and no matter the reason for our bleeding. That

woman with the issue of blood bled for many years, she tried everything, went from Church to Church, from pillar to post. She felt neglected by all. *“And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse”* (Mark 5:25-26). But one day the Master stepped in, and all her woes disappeared.

Whatever pain the enemy may be inflicting on your life there is a limit. There is a time when the trial will be over; there is a time when God will turn your captivity around. That time for you, is **now**. No matter how long a night can be (and I know there can be some very long nights) it will surely come to an end, the day will break at some point, the sun will shine again *“...weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning”* (Psalm 30:5) *“When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream.... They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him”* (Psalm 126 1:5-6) *“While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease”* (Gen 8: 22).

The Lord knows about our pain, He knows the source of the bleeding in our hearts, and He is able to turn our captivity. Like He did to Job He will turn our captivity. He will save us, He will heal us, and He will step in and change our situation. He will show up in the midst of our fire. He did not prevent Shadrach, Messach, and Abednego from being thrown into the fire, but he showed up in the midst of the fire. He will show up in the midst of your fire as well. Sometimes it may be necessary for us to go through the fire so that all the chaff in our lives is burnt but He will never leave us to be destroyed by the fire. He did not prevent Daniel from being thrown in to the lion’s den but He stepped in and shut the mouth of the lion.

Divine Delays

Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha... Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick..... When he heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two more days still in the place where he was (John 11: 1,3,6).

Lazarus was a very close friend of Jesus, and one would expect that as soon as the news of his illness was told to Jesus, he would round up whatever he was doing so as to go and see his friend that was very ill. But that was not to be. Instead Jesus stayed two more days in the place where he was as if nothing had happened. On face value, one could accuse Jesus of not caring for his friend at his hour of need, but it was all for a purpose, it was divinely arranged that Jesus should delay in getting to Lazarus.

When Jesus finally responded by going to see his friend it was already too late by human reckoning. Lazarus was already dead and buried for four days. *"Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already"* (John 11:17). Martha was the first to go out to meet Jesus on His arrival, and she could not help but voice her disappointment that the Master had arrived late *"Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou had been here, my brother Lazarus would not have died"* (John 11:21). Mary was so disappointed that she did not even have enough strength to come out to meet Jesus. The two sisters could not understand why Jesus delayed in coming, they believed if Jesus had met their brother on the sick bed He could have raised him up, but they forgot that Jesus is Lord of both the dead and the living; they forgot that He is the resurrection and the life.

Like Mary and Martha, we all experience disappointments in our lives, our expectations sometimes may appear to have been dashed. Sometimes it looks like it is taking too long and the Lord does not seem to be answering our prayers. We have waited so long yet our victory does not seem to be in sight. It looks like the Lord is staying back three more days. Those three days when the

Lord refused to show up was like eternity to Mary and Martha. I know of many who have waited on the Lord for one breakthrough or the other, and the years have rolled by and it seems as if the Lord has forgotten them. *“Hope deferred maketh the heart sick; but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life”* (Proverbs 13:12).

Sometime our heart is weary because our expectations have not been met, our desires have not come, but God has a purpose for every delay. At the end Mary and Martha rejoiced because Lazarus even though three days in the grave came back to life to the glory of God. God is never late. It may look to us as though He is late but He is working by a time that is different from our time. Time is in His hands. In His time he makes all things beautiful *“He hath made everything beautiful in his time...”* (Eccl. 3 v 11). *“Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord, Behold the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receives the early and latter rain... Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy* (James 5:7, 11). *“For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise”* (Heb 10 : 36).

All Things Work Together For Good

David made one of the biggest mistakes of his life when he allowed Satan to provoke him to number Israel. *“And Satan stood up against Israel, and he provoked David to number Israel”* (1Chron. 21:1). One of David’s trusted generals named Joab counseled David against this move but David would not listen. *“And Joab answered, The Lord make his people an hundred times so many more as they be: but, my lord the king, are they not all my lord’s servants? Why then doth my lord require this thing? Why will he be a cause of trespass to Israel? Nevertheless the king’s word prevailed against Joab...”* 1Chron 21:3-4).

David insisted on counting Israel thereby incurring the wrath of the Almighty God – the Lord sent pestilence upon Israel as a result

of the disobedience of David. It was probably the worst in all of the years of David's reign. Several thousands died, there was weeping in the land, the sorrow in all of Israel was palpable. The air was thick with sorrow and David himself was lost in sorrow and pain. *"And David said unto God, is it not I it is that have sinned and done evil indeed; but as for these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, O Lord my God, be on me, and on my father's house; but not on thy people, that they should be plagued"* (1Chron. 21:17).

It was in the midst of David's pain and anguish that something very remarkable happened to him and to all of Israel. In the midst of the darkest hour for Israel and for David as a king, the angel of the Lord appeared to David and instructed him to go up, and set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. David obeyed the Lord and went up to Ornan and requested from him that the place of the threshing floor be given to him, so that he David, might build an altar there unto the Lord. Out of respect for the king, Ornan was willing to give the threshing floor free of charge to David the king especially because he knew that this was a period of national emergency. There was a need to raise an altar in the threshing floor of Ornan, so that the plague that is devastating the land would be stopped. But David insisted that he would pay full price for the threshing floor. *"And king David said to Ornan, Nay; I will verily buy it for the **full price**: for I will not take that which is thine for the Lord, nor offer burnt offerings without cost"* (1Chron. 21: 24).

David paid the full price for the threshing floor of Ornan. He took responsibility for his misdeeds, he kept nothing back, and he opened up to God fully, preferring to fall in to the hands of God rather than the hands of man. He did not try to justify himself and he did not try to shift the blame on others. He took full responsibility, he paid the full price. Like David, we must be willing to pay the full price God's dealings in our lives may be severe and very demanding but we must go the whole hog, we must pay the full price, we must confront the issues and not try to dodge them.

There are many of us who are behaving like Jacob; we do not want to face the issues in our lives. Jacob, for many years tried to avoid the issues, he ran from pillar to post in a bid to avoid confronting the issues. But he had to face the 'gut' issue at some point. He faced the issues alone with God, he wrestled with the angel of God overnight. God changed his identity when he decided to face the real issue. Are you willing to pay the full price?

Another very important point in this story was that David located the threshing floor of Ornan in the midst of his pain. David's attention was turned to the threshing floor of Ornan almost at his breaking point. His eyes became clear to spot the threshing floor after the tears; sometimes we need the tears so that we can see clearly. The skies only become clear after the rains. The heaviness in our lives will clear if only we are willing to pour out our hearts to God in deep, sincere soul searching and tears.

It is interesting to know that the threshing floor of Ornan became the place where the temple of Solomon was cited. *"Then the Solomon began to build the house of the Lord at Jerusalem in mount Moriah, where the Lord appeared unto David his father, in the place that David had prepared in the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite"* (2Chronicles 3:1). Solomon means peace and is a type of God's rest and peace.

When everything else looks topsy-turvy, when the clouds over us looks dark and heavy, when it looks like we are at the darkest hour of the night; it is just then that we need look well and listen well. We might just be able to spot our own threshing floor of Ornan, we might be able to spot that tiny scarlet thread that will bring back hope. Though you may walk through the valley of the shadows of death, you will fear no evil, for His rod and staff will comfort you. Let me say this to you, *"Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: **but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee"*** (Isaiah 60:1-2).

Chapter 7

Overcomer's Song

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints (Rev 15:2-3).

In the earlier chapters of the Book of Revelation, there is a common admonition in the messages sent to each of the seven churches to “hear what the Spirit says to the churches”. Following this admonition is a promise; a special promise to *him that overcometh*.

The implication of this is that the company of those who overcome would not include everyone to whom the message was addressed. And so to the Church of Ephesus His admonition and promise is: *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7)*. Of course everyone has an ear, but the implication of this message is that not

everyone who has an ear would hear. It is only to him who has an ear to hear. This is reemphasized in His rebuke to the lukewarm Church:

As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcome and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches (Rev 3:20-22).

His promise is to that individual in the Church who would hear His voice as He knocks, and would not only hear but would also open the door and invite Him in. It is a personal relationship. It is to that individual who hears His voice and opens the door that He will come in to him or her and have fellowship. It is not to a denomination, or to an end-time assembly, or to a tongue-talking company; but it is to him that overcometh that He will grant to sit upon His throne.

We cannot overemphasize that each of us are responsible for fighting the good fight for ourselves and overcoming. You are responsible for living a godly life. You are responsible for dedicating and giving your life and substance to God in this life. Your pastor cannot do it for you, neither can you for him. Each of us must stand before Christ and receive an accurate performance evaluation of our lives. No one will stand there to speak for you on what you have done or given to God. You are responsible for your every action both good and evil. So it behooves you to make sure that whatever you do is right in God's eyes, and when you give your life and substance it is for the right cause. It is your responsibility and not of another.

Therefore the admonition is addressed to the members of the Churches on an individual basis. It is *to him that hath an ear* to hear. It is singular and not to a group. So is the promise that followed. It is addressed to *him that overcometh*. It must be

understood that there are no '*groups*' when it comes to entering into the fullness of God. No one will receive any of the promised inheritance through participating in a group or even leading it. You could be part of a Church, prayer group, a revival ministry, a Bible study group, or any kind of corporate body with the vision of the Kingdom of God, not a single one of you will enter into the fullness of God through or *as a group*. All groups or congregations of saints are typified by the seven Churches to whom the Alpha and Omega sent the admonitions, corrections, and warnings through the Apostle John. Not the corporate body, these seven churches, but only "*him that overcometh*" will receive the promise!

To each overcomer there is a promise of significant spiritual reality in the Kingdom of God. Those who will hear His word, hearken and obey, and then contend for it until they overcome, will attain to this higher reality of the Kingdom. The promises are not to those who *hear* alone, or those to those who *believe* His words, or to those who *talk about* it, or even to those who *try to* overcome; but the promises are *to him that overcometh*.

What does it mean to overcome? It means 'victory'. It is not a fancy word but one related to warfare and fighting of some sort. It means to subdue, conquer, vanquish, or prevail over an adversary. An overcomer is one who stands tall in God even though they live down here on earth. Though the pressures and problems and perplexities of life should crowd in upon them; though adversity, calamity, sorrow, tragedy, and great trouble should surround them, none of these weights can hold them down. They are overcomers, they must come over; and like the eagles they soar above the storms.

No adversity can overcome, frustrate, or perplex these victorious ones who dwell in union with the One who has overcome the world. Though all hell should break loose against them, it shall not prevail; though every foe should conspire together against them, their scheming shall come to nought. They are overcomers and they know and live in the reality of the fact that God is the strength of their lives.

To be declared an overcomer, however, one must have overcome something or an adversary. In the opening passage, the Apostle saw a multitude who had fought and gotten victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass singing the victor's song. Yes it's true. There is a promise *to him that overcometh*, and there is an *overcomer's song*.

"Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world," was the Lord's declaration in His hour of victory over death and the grave. *"And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it"* (Col 2:15). He is the first and Chief Overcomer, the example and the Lord of all overcomers. He then turned around and commissioned us to march into the world like courageous warriors, to continue in His steps.

In the message quoted in the passage above and directed to the lukewarm Church of Laodicea the Lord presents another promise *to the overcomer*. *"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in his throne (Rev 3:21)*. *"Even as I also overcame"* clearly reminds us that our Lord Jesus Himself passed through greater conflict, and became the Chief Overcomer, and has become the pattern for us. We see Him overcome the Tempter in the wilderness, who several times, using subtlety, tried to lure Him into testing God. The Lord Jesus overcame in these conflicts, in complete contrast to the first man, through submission to God's word and by lashing back at the enemy with the Sword of the Spirit. He overcame by the word with total efficiency because His obedience was complete. This is in agreement with what the Spirit is teaching us through the Apostle on spiritual warfare in his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians:

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; (2 Cor. 10:4 – 5)

And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled (I Cor 10:4-6).

Here was He in the wilderness after fasting for forty days and forty nights and was really hungry. The Tempter wanting to take advantage of the situation, suggested that He do what God had not told Him to do. But Christ would have none of that. His choice is that of obedience, blessed, perfect obedience. He fought back with the words, *"It is written: Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."* He prevailed over every alluring influence of the world and the flesh. He fought the good fight and overcame. *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Heb 5:7-9).

He overcame the evil one because His heart was completely set on obeying the voice of the Father and nothing else. He resisted and rebuked the Devil saying, *"Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve."* The Lord's heart was filled with His worship and service, and there was no room within His heart for the world's glory, or what Satan could present to Him. Therefore He overcame the world and all the powers therein and He clearly declared this saying *"...the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me"* (Joh 14:30).

Satan has many tactics. If he cannot seduce the Christian and prevail over him by the alluring influences of the world, he will try making the believer's life a living hell by bringing persecution upon him though the subtle, seductive weapons which are often more effective. But the Lord, our pattern Overcomer, who has gone through it all, has spoken to us about this beforehand. We are therefore not ignorant of the enemy's devices. In one of His closing words with His disciples in John 16: 33, the Lord said: *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have*

overcome the world.” And to the Church in Smyrna He said, “Behold, the devil shall cast some of you. into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days:” (there is no limit to his power) “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life” (Rev. 2: 10).

The plan and the desire of God’s heart is to raise up overcomers after the same pattern. This is the purpose for the grain of wheat sown in the earth. It is aimed at producing a multitude of fruit after the same kind. But these must also go through the conflicts and travails on their way to maturity *until Christ is formed in them*. We have been born of God so the overcomer’s genes is already in us. No wonder the Apostle by the Holy Ghost proclaimed in the fifth chapter of the 1st Epistle of John states that, *“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”* (I John 5:4-5).

Our heavenly Father is working out a great purpose in His children in this hour. He is taking His own at the present time through training school to learn lessons for eternity. God has a mission for them in His wonderful universe and He is preparing His sons and daughters to do it. The main purpose that is uppermost in the mind of the Father in this hour is the growth and coming to maturity of His chosen ones. Therefore, it is essential that all who are members of this Christ body should press toward spiritual maturity. There is no other purpose under heaven that is equal to this grand purpose of the Father God.

Each step in the process of overcoming brings us closer to the authority and power of Christ’s throne. We now see a new generation of Israel’s pilgrims walking these steps to glory! They are the firstfruits, the pilgrims of the new order of the Kingdom of God. They are nearing the highest step, and will soon make their grand entrance into the full stature of Christ. Each promise to the overcomer reveals a definite and powerful step in the realization of Christ’s nature in our lives. All who have been apprehended by the Father unto this course are diligently walking up that ascending

pathway. They are daily applying themselves to this walk. By the strength and power of the Christ within, they are walking upward one step at a time.

The message to the seven Churches speaks to us of different realms of growth which the Lord's chosen ones must pass through on their way to the throne of God and the realm of overcomers. These are *seven stages* of growing out of one realm into another, out of one state of being into another state of being. We also see seven promises to the overcomers representing seven steps leading ultimately to the throne of God.

The first promise is, *"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God"* (Rev. 2:7). It begins with partaking in the tree of life and proceeds to protection and preservation from the second death; for He said in the second promise *He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death*. In the third promise the blessed overcomer becomes a partaker of the *hidden manna and receives a new name*.

The fourth promise is to the overcomer in the Church of Thyatira, to whom is given *power to rule over the nations*. The fifth promise is to the overcomer in the dead Church of Sardis. The overcomer in this Church realm is *clothed in white raiment, his name is preserved in the Book of Life* and the Lord confesses his name before the Father and the angels. And to the overcomer in the Church of brotherly love, Philadelphia, the sixth promise of a *crown and of becoming a pillar in temple of God* is given. The Lord declares this saying: *"Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches"* (Rev 3:11-13).

And the *final* promise brings the overcomer to the throne of God side-by-side with the Lord. *“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in His throne”* (Rev. 3:21). Thus the ascent is from the tree of life to the throne of God. The first realm as we learn from the promises, is the Life of God given to us at the Tree of Life. All other subsequent promises are for transformation and growth in the upward path toward the throne. We must start at the Tree of Life for none of these are attainable until we have the life of God in us. Also, we cannot reach the throne of God until we have passed through all these intermediate realms in succession.

Let's return to 15th Chapter of the Book of Revelation quoted in the beginning of this chapter. John, the Apostle, in the Revelation or the Unveiling of Jesus Christ, was caught up into heaven and before the throne of God he saw a multitude. These ones, the Scripture tells us, were standing on the sea of glass singing the song of victory unto the Almighty God. Who were they? And what kind of songs were they singing? The Bible proceeds to tell us that these are overcomers who had won victory over the enemy and now they stand before God singing the overcomer's song. Listen to John tell it:

And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

*And they sing the **song of Moses** the servant of God, and **THE song of the LAMB**, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy:*

for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest (Rev. 15: 1-4).

These ones whose songs are heard in Heaven are those great ones who are victorious over the beast and his image. We are told they are singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. There are **two songs in Scriptures given by Moses**, and these are about forty years apart. The first one was immediately after crossing the Red Sea and the other was just before he died (Deut 31:16-22). The first is the Triumphal Song of Moses (Ex.15) which speaks of God's great deliverance of His people. The second is the Farewell Song of Moses (Deu.32) which speaks of God's greatness and faithfulness.

The first song is in commemoration of the deliverance of the people from Egypt and from the attack of Pharaoh at the Red Sea. Although many deliverance events had occurred since then, this one remains the model to which centuries of believers have looked. This song of deliverance is akin to that sung by those who had gotten the victory over the beast and over his image.

It was a great day of victory when God brought them out of Egypt and parted the Red Sea before them bringing them to the other side on dry ground. What a time of victory. They had seen the host of Egyptian army chasing them as they crossed the Red Sea. They had heard Moses say: *"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will shew to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever, The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace"* (Exo 14:14). They also saw Moses lifting up his hand and the Red Sea returning upon the Egyptian army with their chariots who all perished in the mighty sea. No wonder they did not hesitate to sing the victory song with Moses.

Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.

"Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exo 15:1,2,11-12).

The Song of the Lamb is mentioned three times in the Book of Revelation. Both the Song of Moses and the Song of the Lamb are modeled after the same outline: They focus on God and on what He has done throughout the ages to reveal himself as the Faithful Deliverer of His people.

And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth (Rev 5:9-10).

And they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth (Rev 14:3).

And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest (Rev 15:3-4).

It is important to note that all these songs, whether the songs of Moses in Exodus or Deuteronomy, or the song of the Lamb in the Book of Revelation, speak of God's victory, deliverance, salvation, and faithfulness. "*The song of the Lamb*" ascribes praise to Christ as our Redeemer who has *redeemed us to God by His blood out of every*

kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests.

These songs though called the overcomer's song here are clearly addressed to the Lord God whose *right hand and His Holy hands* has gotten Him the victory. He is the saving strength of the overcomers who prevail over the adversary not in their power but by the Blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony. The Lord is their strength and salvation as Moses sang: *"The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him. The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name. Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?"* (Exodus 15:2,3,11-2).

Just as Moses and the Israelites praised God for his marvelous acts in bringing them out of Egypt, in the same way the multitude on the sea of glass joyfully praise Him and worship the Lamb for their redemption and victory. The Lamb in the midst of the throne is the reason for their worship and praise for John said: *I saw in the middle of the throne a Lamb standing, as though it had been slain* (Rev.5:6).

The Lamb, in the middle of the Throne, is the reason for the songs of the greatest choir ever imagined, all the angels and the saints, numbering *ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands*; singing a new song with a loud voice saying, *"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever"(Rev 5:13).

