



Lampstand Letters

That we may walk in the light
Isaiah 2:5; Luke 8:16

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“Write therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later” Rev. 1:19

In this edition: **THE MINISTRY OF THE TEACHER**

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1.0 THE MINISTRY OF THE TEACHER

The ministry of the teacher is one of the five (5) ministry offices (see Ephesians 4:11). The basic responsibility of a teacher is to espouse and teach doctrine, instructions, principles and regulation of God. The word “doctrine” is from the word doctor (Latin = docere which means to teach, or a learned man). In the New King James Version, the word doctrine is rendered teaching in the margin of new testament verses (see Matt. 16:12, Acts 2:42). In other versions (e.g. GNB and NIV) the word doctrine is translated teaching (see Matt 7:28, 16:12, John 18:19, Acts 2:42, 5:28). I Tim. 1:3 talks of teaching doctrine while Rev. 2:4 talks of the doctrine (or teaching) of Balaam. There is nothing like a “new” doctrine (see Eccl. 1:9). Every biblical doctrine is a truth already embedded in the scriptures. It is by the stirring of the spirit that the truth is espoused and made relevant to times and dispensations. There is nothing new under the heavens.

Depending on calling, grace and anointing, a teacher may just be a teaching priest (2 Chronicles... 15: 3, Malachi 2:7), a pastor, teacher (Eph. 4:11) or a prophetic teacher (Acts 13:1). A teacher may also be a writing (scribal) teacher like Ezra (Neh. 8: 1-9, Ps. 119) or itinerant preaching teacher like Barnabas and Paul (Acts 11:22-26, 12:25). The Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul operated all these diversities.

A teacher must necessarily be an intercessor. He must have a regular place by the Lampstand, studying and understanding the scriptures by the illumination of the Holy Spirit. He should be able to receive illumination and inspiration and pass on the revelation to the audience, so that they may run with it. Thus a teacher must be an intercessor, and at least a praying watching Christian. But not every intercessor is a teacher. Because Teachers espouse doctrines in the name and the authority of the Lord, Teachers will be judged severely for every false or misleading doctrine James 3:1. Thus every teacher must operate within the limit of his/her calling. As Jeremiah counsels, “The prophet who has a dream, let him tell a dream. He, who has a word, let him speak my word faithfully. What the chaff to the wheat? Says the Lord (Jer. 23:28).

Pastor-Teachers normally have a local congregation they minister to, for a time or for all times. Prophetic teachers may also have a local calling but their calling is usually to the wider body of Christ (Acts 13). Scribal (writing) Teachers normally have a ministry that is wider and cosmopolitan, not just to a local congregation (e.g. Colossians 4:16, 1 Thess.5:27).

Teachers cannot operate in isolation of other ministry offices and gifts in the body. They only contribute their quota within the context of the body. Their teaching and doctrines must be judged and approved by other ministry offices; Apostles, Prophets, Pastors and Evangelists; as well elders. Amen.

By the Lampstand. 13th Feb. 2001.

2.0 THE WISEMAN AND THE TEACHER ECCL.. 12:9-10

The doctrine of the Nicolaitans

Words fitly spoken

The ministry of the teacher 1 Timothy 13

2.1 THREE WAYS OF TEACHING

1. By the Spirit (by prophesying)
2. By the word (by preaching)
3. By Letters (by writing)

2.2 EZRA THE TEACHER

Ezra is one of the most phenomenal characters in the bible, even though his exploits are recorded in only a few verses of the scriptures. He was a priest, an intercessor, a scribe and a writing teacher. He wrote the book of Ezra, and some bible scholars believe also he wrote the longest chapter in the bible, Psalm 119.

He was a captive in Babylon, but maintained his fidelity and call. He was one of the trios credited with restoring the Jews back to Jerusalem. While Zerubbabel restored the temple by the inspiration of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, Ezra restored the worship of God and Nehemiah restored the city of Jerusalem.

In the four-(4) chapters where Ezra's exploits were recorded (i.e. Ezra 7 and 10, Nehemiah 8 and 12). The bible carefully distinguished him. He is described as "Ezra the priest the scribe, a skilled scribe, expert in the words of the LORD and of His statutes who had prepared his heart to seek the LAW of the Lord and to do it and to teach status and ordinances to Israel?. Note the order; he first prepared his heart, then he sought the law, then did (practiced) it, before he began to teach a divine order for anyone who teaches (or preaches) the word of the LORD.

Even the heathen king Artaxerxes recognized him as a priest and scribe of the Law of the God of heaven (Ezra 7:12). So did all Israel, gathering as one man before Ezra to hear the book of the Law (Neh. 8:1). Together with fellow priests and some Levites, they read distinctly from the book of the law of the LORD, and they gave the sense, and helped the people understand the reading (Neh. 8:5-8). Or as the Good News Bible records 'They gave an oral translation of it' (Neh. 8:8). And all the people rejoiced greatly, "because they understood the words that were declared to them?

O LORD, make me an Ezra to my generation that you may be worshiped in spirit and truth. Amen.

By the Lampstand. May 2001.

3.0 THE WISEMAN AND THE TEACHER

Ecclesiastes 12: 9-10 brings together the two complementary but distinct ministries of wisdom and teaching:-"Not only was the Teacher wise, but also he imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright? (NIV).

It is more tedious to be a teacher than to be a Wiseman. The teacher will need to collect, ponder (i.e. carefully study), search out (or research and honestly test the truth) and then set in order (i.e. carefully arranged) these truth. Then He will then seek to find just the rights words to explain these things in the best and most accurate way that will make the truths to be acceptable, delightful and comforting to the listener/ hearer without distracting from the truth and honesty of the word.

It is not enough to be wise. Neither is it sufficient to be a Teacher (or Preacher). We must diligently aspire to be that kind of wise Teacher described in Eccl.12: 9-10. So help me God. Amen.

By the Lampstand. May 2001.

4.0 CULTURAL/HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND CHRISTIANITY

Does the social cultural, historical or even the political background of a people (or place) affect their practice of Christianity? Yes, it does, and we use the church in Crete, Ephesus and Athens to illustrate.

4.1 The Church in Crete

The Island of Crete (also known as Caphtor) was the original homeland of the ancestor of the Philistines (see Amos 9:7, Jer. 47:4, Gen. 10:14). There were Jews from Crete on the crowd that listened to Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:11). However by the time Apostle Paul visited the Island of Crete, he found the churches there in serious disorder due to lack of right leadership (pastor and elders) and to wrong teaching. For this reason, he left Titus in Crete as the pastor that he should “set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as commended” (Titus 1:5).

Paul goes on further to list the temperament and cultural behaviour of the Cretans: - they were insubordinate, belligerent, idle and smooth talkers, argumentative, uncontrolled, subversive, money-mongers, liars, greedy, lazy gluttons, behave like wild animals, resentful of authority, drunkards, pilfering/thieving, slanders, gossips, irreverent, false, rebellious, unruly, evil speakers, misleading teachers, unkind, non-peaceable, proud etc (See Titus 1: 10 – 2: 10, 3:1-2, 9).

Clearly, the Philistine ancestry of Cretans affected both the indigenous Cretans and the Jewish settlers. And this Philistine behaviour was still manifesting even after they became Christians and in the church. Indeed, Paul quoted the testimony of one of the own, the post Epimenides (who Paul referred to as a Prophet), as stating: “The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons” (Titus 1: 12-13). It was to the Cretans Christians manifesting this cultural temperament, that Paul sent the young Greek disciple, Titus as a Pastor – Teacher to “set in order the things that are lacking, appoint elders (spiritual leaders) and to rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in faith” (Titus 1, 5, 13).

4.2 The Church in Ephesus

Just as Titus was left in Crete to put things in order, so did Paul urge Timothy to “remain in Ephesus that (he) may charge some that they teach no other doctrine ... (I Timothy 1:2-4). As was the case in Crete, false teaching based on myths, legends, laws and genealogies was prevalent in the Ephesians churches (I Timothy 1:4-7, 4:1-3, 6: 3-5).

Ephesus (meaning city of the moon, sacred to Artemis) was a city devoted to the worship of the Asian fertility goddess Diana, called Artemis by the Greeks (Acts 19:35). It was a coastal city and a bridgehead between the East and the West, the commercial, political and religious center of Western Asia. Paul labored in Ephesus for three (3) years (Acts 20:31, 19:8-10), a great many Christian groups sprang up, and Paul laid the foundation of the strongest church of the first century. Conscious of the cultural, historical and religious background of Ephesus, as he was leaving Paul had warned the elders to expect the problem of false teaching (Acts 20:28-30).

Ten years later, his fears had materialized. Apocryphal Jewish legends and family trees were being made the basis of strange teaching (I Timothy. 1:4). The superior knowledge –gnosis- (I Timothy. 6:20) claimed by these false teachers soon grew into full-scale heresy of Gnosticism, whose initiates felt free to discard some

cardinal, Christian truths (Eerdmann's Bible Commentary). Since Ephesus was a center for some of the pagan religions of the region, Christian converts came from a society where superstition and false religious ideas were widespread. Also, a society with false religious beliefs usually had low moral standards. Thus while Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to correct the false teaching and Gnosticism, he wrote an epistle to the Ephesians (and nearby Colossians) churches to deal with these issues (Bridge Bible Commentary).

The choice of the Pastor was also strategic bearing in mind the cultural, historical and spiritual conditions of the place/church. Like Titus who was Greek, Timothy was half Greek and half Jew. Paul himself was cosmopolitan - Jew by birth, Greek by the pervading Hellenistic cultural influence and Roman by citizenship (Acts 22:3, 25-29). Thus he appreciated the cultural, historical, religious and spiritual background of the diverse peoples of his age, and was "singularly fitted to communicate the gospel across racial and cultural barriers" (Bridge Bible Commentary).

4.3 Paul at Athens (Acts 17)

By the time Paul came to Athens, Athens was a city with 1000 years of history, glorifying in past greatness – Athens, the founder of democracy; was the home of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Thucydides, Plato and Socrates. It had the greatest University of the world, was center of philosophy, literature, science and art, – bit a hard ground for the gospel (Eerdmann's Bible Commentary).

Athens means fountain of fire i.e. the sun, was a city devoted to the worship of the sun, and always with cruel rites (Crudens Concordance). As the chief center of learning in the Roman Empire, philosophy, religion and politics were taught and discussed freely in public places (Acts 17:17) and The Areopagus (Act 17:19). The Areopagus was an ancient court of great prestige with its ancient council of philosophers who exercise control on, and licensed those who could lecture publicly in Athens. Luke declared, "All Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). The Areopagus was made up of two schools of philosophical thoughts – the Epicureans and the Stoics (Acts 17:18) - both of which rejected Paul's well-researched address at the Areopagus (Acts 17: 22-32). A few however believed, including an Areopagite called Dionysus, whose name meant "the bright God i.e. the sun". From his name, he was obviously a pagan sun worshipper, who was "divinely touched" (an alternative meaning of his name (see Crudens Complete Concordance).

4.4 Contemporary Nigerian Christianity

As it was in Paul's day, so it is today: - our cultural, historical, religious, political and spiritual background influences our Christianity. As Nigerian Christians, we came from a socio-culturally pagan religious and spiritual background. The gospel brought by the Catholics had/has a Roman influence. That brought by protestant had an Imperial English (European) influence. The Evangelical, Charismatic and Pentecostal Christianity had American influence in varying degrees of extremities. Today we have a pre-dominantly Pentecostal Christianity in Nigeria, with all the marks of American marketing strategies, hero-worship, permissiveness and loose morality. The prosperity message reportedly has a Gnostic background through the influence of Kenyon, Hagin and Copeland. In the atmosphere of these matrixes of non-Christian cultural influences, false and extreme teachings are bound to flourish, as they are today.

As antidote to imminent false teaching, Paul commended the Ephesians elders "to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build up and give an inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:28-32). He charged Timothy for same purpose to "take heed to self and to the doctrine" (I Timothy. 4:16), and charged Titus to "rebuke sharply, that they many be sound in faith" (Titus 1:13). He wrote to the Ephesians portraying the model "Church of Christ" and to the Colossians lifting up and highlights the "Christ of the

church". We do well to take heed to these patterns, in this age of an onslaught of extreme western culturally influenced misleading teachings. May God help us to maintain a Christ-centred balance. Amen.

By the Lampstand, 13th June 2001.

5.0 THE DOCTRINE OF THE NICOLAITANS

In Revelation chapter two are two references to the Nicolaitans ? the deeds of the Nicolaitans in the letter to Ephesians (verse 5) and the doctrine (or teaching) of the Nicolaitans in the letter to the church at Pergamos. Who are the Nicolaitans?

According to the margin of the Contemporary English Version CEV of the bible, the Nicolaitans possibly claimed to be followers of Nicolaus, one of the seven deacons chosen by the brethren in Acts chapter 6. The bible is careful to note that Nicolas was a proselyte i.e. a Gentile who had accepted the Jewish religion. Nicolas therefore was product of three (3) cultures and three (3) religions:

- Greek (Gentile) by birth
- Jew (Judaism) by conversion, and then
- Christianity.

Obviously, Nicolaus was affected by these three cultures in his world view and religious beliefs. Every Christian is a product of his/her culture, religious and spiritual background. Even Peter, the first head of church, had great problems dealing with his religion-cultural past and it took a midday vision (Acts 10: 9-16) the assurance of the Holy Spirit (Acts 10: 17-20), and the Holy Spirit falling on the gentiles, when the Holy Spirit got tired of Peter's long sermon (Acts 10:44-45), before Peter could accept that his world view was narrow Acts10:46-48. Later in Galatians 2: 11-14, Paul still had to rebuke Peter and Barnabas on same issue.

It appears then, that because of their licentious Greek background, and taking the liberty they now had in Christ to extreme, the Nicolaitans thought that a Christians could join in idolatrous feast and practice immorality. This was akin to the doctrine of Balaam (Rev. 2:14-15). While the church in Ephesus resisted this teaching (Rev 2:6), it was compromising the faithful church in Pergamos (Rev. 2: 14-15).

It is instructive that Nicolaus qualified to be among the seven that were of "good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom" (Acts 6: 3-5). How come then, that shameful deeds and false doctrine will be associated with such a Christian?

That your favorite pastor, preacher or teacher is charismatic, winsome, insightful etc does not guarantee that false teaching will not emanate or be attributed to him. Peter talked of "our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written, speaking in them some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction; as they do also the rest of the scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Today in Nigeria we have two extremes of Gospel - the Gospel of the white garment (spiritual) churches heavily influenced by African Traditional Religions and the prosperity Gospel, heavily influenced by Western psychology and philosophy, and actively promoted by American style marketing strategies.

The antidote to false doctrine is a CHRIST-CENTERED message. Any teaching to adds to or distracts from what Christ taught and did is false, incomplete or extreme. Paul wrote many epistles against false doctrines. In the book of Colossians, he highlighted the "Christ of the church?". While Colossians chapter 2 highlights the principles of a Christ-centred message, Colossians chapter 3 points the way to a Christ-centred lifestyle, which we do good to imbibe that "Christ (be) all and in all? (Col. 3:11d). Amen. See 1 Timothy 4:10.

By the Lampstand. May 2001.

6.0 OF FALSE DEEDS AND DOCTRINE

“But this you have, that you hate the DEEDS of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate? Thus you also have those who hold the DOCTRINE of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate”. (Rev. 2:6, 15).

6.1 URIM AND THUMMIN

The Urim and Thummin were two small objects worn on the breast plate of the High Priest. They were used by the High Priest to obtain perfect judgment, decisions, directions, answers and counsel according to the will of God, for the King (leader) and the Israelites (Exodus 28: 30, Number 27:21). It was one of the three (3) ways God used to speak to his people, the others being through dreams/visions and through the prophets (Number 12:6, I Sam. 28:16).

The word Urim means lights, the shining (Hebrew), doctrine or teaching (Jerome) and declaration (manifestation (LXX). It is related to the name Uriel, meaning light of God (I Chronicles. 6:24, 15; 5, 11 etc). Thuminin on the other hand means perfections, the perfect, judgment (Jerome) or truth (LXX). Put together then, the Urim and Thummin give the meaning “perfect illumination (of the High Priest) for judgment and the declaration (manifestation) of the doctrine and truth of the LORD”. Deut 33: 8-10 illuminates why the Levites qualified to be priests to bear the Urim and Thummin. They were tested and proved faithful. Protecting and upholding God’s covenant was more important than even the lives of their family members. They were unbiased, blind to favoritism and hence had the imputed perfection of a judge. Thus the true instruction of the Law of God was committed into their hands (see Malachi 2:4-7).

Today we have Jesus Christ as the perfect High Priest (Heb. 5:5-10) who is the Truth and the Light (John 1:1-9). Then we have the Holy Spirit as our URIM, the Spirit of Truth to illuminate our paths into all truth (John 16:13). Then we have His Word, the Bible as our Thummin, the perfect law judgment and truth of God. Amen.

By the Lampstand. June 2001.

7.0 WORDS FITLY SPOKEN BY GBILE AKANNI

Words fitly spoken are like apples of Gold in pictures of silver Pro. 25:11

Men that are in leadership must learn to speak accurate, pungent, relevant words. A leader that does not communicate clearly cannot cause a definite change that will displace people from their lethargic situation. If you’re a preacher, you need to plead with God to give you the tongue of the learned that you’ll be able to speak words in seasons to those that are particularly in need.

Now only the Holy Spirit can give a man the tongue of the learned. Isaiah said He wakes me up morning by morning. He pulls me by the ear that I may hear. That’s the first thing we need to ask God for, not men with babbling tongues.

Men have not appreciated the word of the Lord with gravity. Do you know that one of the preconditions of a teacher is that he must be grave? The point of intake of spiritual truth is usually a point of serious consideration. If we are going to cause conviction to come on the hearts of our hearers, we must be men that subdue the heart of people and subject them to continuous progressive thoughts will you be able to carry the presence of God into the midst of the people. You must prepare your heart so that you can speak accurately.

“As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprove upon an obedient ear” Pro. 25:12.

For a teacher to be correct, he must have been an obedient ear. James says one thing that is very important "Be swift to hear, but be slow to speak and slow to wrath, because the wrath of God worketh not the righteousness of God. If you want to be an effective teacher, an effective minister, your hearing must be sharp. Don't be sluggish in hearing God. Don't allow God to shout before you hear. The moment God had to keep shouting before you hear, it reduces your sensitivity to hearing divine whispers.

"Once he has spoken, how many times have I heard? Twice. That's means a hearing so sensitive that when He speaks once, this ear that has heard re-echoes it to the second ear immediately, and its like double speaking.

Be slow to speak. Too many people are eager to speak. Some are eager to write books. Anybody who has grown a little with Jesus will know that every time God begin, to speak to your life, the moment you begin to speak about it, that's the end of it. That's the end. Hearing and speaking are mutually exclusive. You cannot be hearing and speaking at the same time.

A vision can only become progressive if we keep hearing from the Lord. Every moment, every time, in every way. But the hearing I am talking about must be obedient hearing.

"Whosoever boasts himself of a false gift is like clouds and winds without rain. Pro 25:14

As a leader you need not have an exaggerated sense of your importance. Do you name a child that has not been born. Do you do naming ceremony for a pregnancy? These are things if you want to last as a servant of God you must watch. He who boasts of a gift that is not there is like a cloud without rain.

Do not boast yourself of a false gift. The gift of a man makes a way for him. You do not need to boast. A genuine anointing does not need publicity. When God has deposited an anointing in your life, even when you are in a hole, He'll bring you out. It doesn't need struggle. Anointing is not competitive. Amen.

The above is a synopsis of a talk delivered by Bro. Gbile Akanni at the Ibadan Varsity Christian Union Re-Union Fellowship (IVCUAF) in November 2000. Appreciation to Bro. Hadiza of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the University of Ibadan, for the transcript that provided the synopsis.

8.0 THE SPIRIT OF TYRE AND SIDON

Tyre (meaning Rock) and Sidon (meaning plenty of fish/fishing) were the cities of Phoenicia and were prosperous seaports. Commerce was the chief source of their power and prosperity. Like the Canaanite (traders, merchants), they were famed traders. Her traders traveled far and wide to other seaports. The richest people of that age where Phoenicians and they even tried to influence Israelite kings with their gifts (Psalm 45:12).

But because of its prosperity and commerce, greed and corruption soon set in. They soon corrupted even the children of Israel, bringing fish and goods to sell even on the Sabbath (Neh. 13:16). Isaiah 23 is thus a judgement of Tyre and Sidon for her merchandise, her pride, her harlotry and her fornication.

There is a Spirit of Tyre and Sidon in the church today. There are Canaanite (traders, merchants), in the house of God (see Zech. 14:21). In the name of building His church upon a rock (Tyre) and soul winning (fishing) the plenty of fish (Sidon), servants of God has turned the house of God into a house of merchandise (John 2:16). As in the time of Nehemiah, trading is done even to the Sabbath (Neh. 13:16). All in the name of "prosperity".

But thus saith the word of the Lord "Now it shall come to pass that Tyre will be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king and it shall be that at the end of those seventy years, the LORD will let

Tyre get back into business. Her gain and her pay will be set apart for the LORD; it will not be treasured or laid up, for her gain will be for those who dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently and for fine clothing Isaiah 23:15-18. In that day there shall no longer be any Canaanite in the house of the LORD of hosts. Zech. 14:20-21. Amen.

By the Lampstand. May 2001

9.0 BETHEL

Bethel (meaning house of God, Gen.28:16-19) is a pathetic story of a place which in its latter days became referred to by the prophets as Beth-Aven (house of sin or house of nothing, Hosea4:15). It was a place of divine visitation, consecrated by one man Jacob, and desecrated by another man Jeroboam. It began as a place of worshiping God, and ended up as a place of worshiping idols devised after the heart of men (1 Kings 12:28-29, Hosea 10:5). At one time it was a place of obedience, later a byword for disobedience. Once priests like Samuel sat to minister there (1 Sam. 7:16), later priest who were not even Levites ministered (1 Kings 12:31) Once there was a traffic of angels, later it became a place for devouring she- bears and lions (2 Kings 2:23-24). To return to Bethel, Jacob asked all his household to put away the foreign gods, to call people to Bethel, Jeroboam set up golden calves as idols. In Genesis 35:1 God Himself asked that an altar to him be built. In Amos 3:14, God Himself said he will destroy the altars of Bethel, even to the horns. In Gen. 35:13-15, God talked to Jacob at Bethel. In Amos 5:5, He forbade Israel to go Bethel to seek Him, because Bethel shall come to nothing?.

What was responsible for this bad latter end? One word IDOLATRY. Hosea chapter 4 summarized their situation. The Good News Bible renders the first two verses of Hosea chapter ten thus: The people of Israel were like a grapevine that was full of grapes. The more prosperous they were, the more altars they built. The more productive their land was, the more beautiful they made the sacred pillar they worshiped. The people whose hearts are deceitful must now suffer for their sins. God will break down their altars and destroy their sacred pillars.

“O thou anointed man of God, how many Jeroboamic altars are you raising to ensnare the people of God. As the ministry prospers in your hand, what altars are you raising that have become idols, turning people away from Christ? Is the people’s faith still in Christ or the altars for prosperity, altars for visa/passport, altars for breakthrough? As you become more productive, producing results and miracles, what beautiful sacred pillars are you making for worship? ?

Now is the time to repent and retrace your steps, making Christ alone your cornerstone. Thus saith the Lord to the altars of Baal in Bethel “O altar, altar, hear the word of the Lord. I will visit destruction on the altars of Bethel. And the horns of the altar shall be cut off and fall to the ground”. (see 1 Kings 13:2, Amos 3:14).

And thus say the Lord of the house of Israel: seek me and live. But do not seek Bethel for Bethel shall come to nothing. Seek the Lord and live, lest He break out like fire in the House of Joseph and devour it, with no one to quench it in Bethel. Amen. (See Amos 5:4-6).

By the Lampstand. 30th May 2001

10.0 JONAH, NINEVEH AND TARSHISH

The story of Jonah is a very popular biblical story. He was told to “arise, go to Nineveh that great city and cry out against for their wickedness has come up before me. But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD? (Jonah 1:1-3).

According to Cruden's Complete Concordance, Nineveh is probably the oldest city in the world, and was founded by Nimrod (Gen. 10:11) Nimrod (meaning rebellious), was the first rebel on earth in audacity and idolatrous wickedness against God. In other words, Nineveh was an ancient spiritual stronghold that was thick in wickedness and idolatry. To these people, Jonah was sent as a missionary, to preach the gospel, because the LORD wanted them saved (Jonah Chapter 3).

Instead, Jonah chose to enter a ship going to Tarshish. He chose to be a missionary to Tarshish. Tarshish means "subjection of enemies?". Obviously, it was a city where much spiritual warfare has been done, where idolatrous altars have been pulled down where the heavens have been cleared of principalities, powers and rulers of darkness and it was easy to harvest souls. In addition, Tarshish was a Phoenician city, prosperous because of its merchandise and sea going ships (Isaiah 2:16, 23:1, Ezek. 27:25). It was a city where one could preach a "prosperity message" and have his offering bags filled with tens and hundreds of thousands. It was a convenient place to preach the gospel.

While Nineveh was in the Northeast, Tarshish was in the west. Today there are many ministers of God like Jonah called to be missionaries to the unreached strongholds and get nations saved. Instead they have entered ships to Tarshish, preaching prosperity messages. It may be that the turbulence in your life is because you are sent to Nineveh but you are on your way to Tarshish. Maybe you are the one causing turbulence in your fellowship, ministry or church, because you are a Jonah on the way to Tarshish instead of Nineveh. You may sacrifice every thing in the boat, and others may even help you sacrifice, in prayer and fasting. But there will be no peace until you are thrown out of the ship to Tarshish, and retrace your steps back to Nineveh. Hundred of thousands are awaiting you and your message of salvation? and many livestock too (Jonah 4:11).

By the Lampstand. 27th May 2001

11.0 FEAR NOT THE CHARIOTS

In Judges 4:7 Barak was deployed against "Sisera, the commander of Jabin's Army with his chariots and his multitude?". In verse 13, "Sisera gathered together all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people with him?". In verse 15, "the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and all his army with the edge of the sword before Barak AND SISERA ALIGHTED FROM HIS CHARIOT AND FLED AWAY ON FOOT. In verse 21, the peg of Jael finished off Sisera. Beloved, fear not the chariot. The LORD will rout the adversaries before you. Like Sisera, they will alight from the chariots and flee away from your presence on foot. Those you cannot catch and destroy will be killed by the peg of Jael. Amen! Alleluia!

By the Lampstand. May 2001

12.0 GOD'S SEVENTY THOUSAND AND ONE

How significant is one out of seventy thousand and one? How indispensable? Well God made clear in I Kings 19 10-17 to Elijah, and to all of us, how insignificant and indispensable such one is, when he quickly dispensed of the complaining and overzealous?

12.1 Elijah of his call and mantle.

Never for once think that you are very special, very unique or indispensable in God's order of things. And never for once allow men, situations or circumstances make you think you are. Jesus has given us the proper attitude to doing one's own individual bits in the kingdom, "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded. Say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done what was our duty to do? Luke 17:10. Amen

13.0 WHAT IS YOUR SURNAME?

I came across a little discovery recently that may explain why, despite being spirit filled; you still behave the way you do. John whose surname was Mark Acts 12:12, 12:25,15:37 was the young cousin of Barnabas that caused much contention between Barnabas and Paul because John Mark had departed from them in Pamphylia (land of many people/races), and had not gone with them to the work (Acts 15:36-40).

According to Cruden's Complete Concordance of the bible, the name Mark means indolent, the same as Marcus (Latin) from Marceo, to be languid, to be lazy. Little wonder, John Mark lazily departed and did not go with them to the work.

What is your surname? Is there any relationship between your erratic behavior and your surname?

By the Lampstand. 19th May 2001.

14.0 FAULTS, ERRORS AND SINS

Psalm 19:12-13 records three conditions of man which every child of God should pray to be delivered from.

"Who can understand his error? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back your servant also from presumptuous sins.

Errors are the mistakes we unintentionally make, but which we find difficult to accept. Faults are flaws in our lives and character which we desperately want to hide so that we may continue to have a good reputation. Sins are our carnal willful or deliberate breaking of God's regulations and laws. Thus while it is our pride and blindness that makes us err, it is our humanity that makes us to have faults and our carnality to consciously break God's law.

We need deliverance from all these others to tell us our errors and we to be gracious to accept them; asking God to cleanse and deliver us from our imperfections that cause us to fault, and allowing the Holy Spirit to restrain us from wilful sins.

"? then shall I be blameless, and I shall be innocent (perfect) of much (great) transgressions"! Amen.

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16.0 BIBLICAL BASIS FOR DEALING WITH AOLE'S CURSE ON THE YORUBAS

In 1817, Afonja of Ilorin was the Are-Ona Kakanfo - the head of the army of the empire, under the Alaafrican of Oyo - Aole (The King). That year, Afonja sent an empty calabash to the Alaafrican Aole, thereby signifying that he no longer acknowledged the authority of the Alaafrican. Aole had no choice but to accept and in the traditional fashion, he committed suicide, but not before Alaafrican Aole uttered his famous curse on Yoruba land recorded by Samuel Johnson on page 192 of his "History of the Yorubas, 1921:-

'From Alaafrican's palace forecourt, Aole shot three arrows, one to the north, one to the south, and one to the west, saying: "My curse will carry you to the sea and beyond the seas, slaves will rule over you, and you, their masters, will become slaves". Then, smashing an earthenware dish, he shouted, 'Broken calabash can be mended, but not a broken dish; so let my words be irrevocable'.

The curse seemed to take immediate affect and there had been neither unity nor peace in Yoruba land from then till today.

Aole was obviously a madman throwing arrows around (Pro. 26:17). But contrary to his words, a broken dish can be mended by the Potter, the Creator of heaven and earth. The Yoruba race before their creator is as clay in the hands of the Potter, and He can do as it seemed good to Him (See Jeremiah 18:1-6).

16.1 Neutralizing Curses

Curses cannot be taken back; but it can be made powerless by a blessing. In Judges 17:1-2 Micah was under a curse from His mother for stealing her money (unknown to her). When he confessed, the mother rendered the curse powerless by a blessing. After Jacob deceived Isaac and got placed over his brother Esau, Isaac later blessed Esau and limited that curse till when Esau becomes "restless and break Jacob's yoke from his neck" (Gen. 27:29, 38-40). This was later fulfilled in Genesis chapters 23 and 33. Applying been cursed by the mouth of the wicked, it shall be exalted by the blessing of upright Yoruba intercessors.

16.2 Arrows in God's Hands

As children of God, we are Arrows in the hand of the Warrior God (Ps. 127:4). Aole shot three arrows to the north, south and west. By prophetic action, God shall use you to 'Open the East window' and shoot "The arrow of the Lord's deliverance" and "the arrow of deliverance" from Aole's curse (see 2 Kings 13: 14-19). Like Jonathan, we shall shoot extra arrows beyond the three that Aole shot (see I Sam. 20: 20-22, 36-3). And the glory of God from the East will swallow Aole's arrows (Ezekiel. 11:23; Zech 14: 3-4); an East wind will remove his curse (see Gen 41:6-7; Isaiah 27:8).

16.3 A Call for a Holy Convocation

Therefore let all upright Yoruba sons and daughter call for holy convocations in their localities.

- a. Let us invoke the LORD Almighty the Maker and the Potter concerning the works of his hand according to Isaiah 45:8-11.
- b. Let us neutralize Aole's curse and exalt the Yoruba race by the blessings of our mouth (Pro. 11:11).
- c. Let us use Isaiah 49:1-6 to restore the Yoruba race to their place of honour.
- d. Let our prophetic mouth be like pointed arrows of the hands of the Lord. (Isaiah 49: 2; Ps. 127:4) to shoot the Arrow of the Lord's deliverance from the mountain of the Lord's strength.
- e. Let pray Psalm 62, 76, 120 and 144 for the deliverance of Yoruba race from Aole's curse. Then, the LORD will be seen over them, His Arrow like lightening, The LORD of host will defend them, The LORD their God will save them in that day. Amen (Zech 9: 11-17).

By the Lampstand. 13th June 2001.

17.0 A TIME TO CAST AWAY STONES Eccl.3: a

"Then a mighty angel took upon a stone like a great milestone and threw it into the sea, saying, Thus with violence the great city Babylon shall be THROWN DOWN and shall not be found anymore? Rev. 18:21.

Stones are the building blocks of edifices and solid structures. A house built of stones, or upon a foundation of stones (rock) is expected to last for ever (see Jesus' parable of the house built on a rock Matt. 7: 24-27). Christians are referred to "as living stones being built up to a spiritual house? (I Peter 2:5).

To cast away stones is to pull down, to root out, to destroy, to scatter and to throw edifices which were meant to last for a long time (or for ever). It means to apply (spiritual) force like that of a bulldozer or caterpillar, to hack down fortresses and dominions.

In Mark 13: 1-2, one of Jesus' disciples called his attention to the temple, exalting and admiring "what manner of stones and what buildings it was made up of. And Jesus answered him "Do you see these great buildings. Not one stone shall be left upon another that shall not be THROWN DOWN? (see also Luke 19: 44, 21:6). And in Rev. 18:21, we see a mighty angel of God, prophetically throwing into the sea a stone indicating how WITH VIOLENCE the great city BABYLON (and all it stands for) shall be THROWN DOWN, and shall be found no more.

17.1 IT IS TIME TO CAST AWAY STONES

The Spirit of God is saying to the prophetic, interceding and praying church that this is the time to begin to pull down every edifice, every argument, every high thing, every imagination, every throne, every tree that stands against the knowledge of God; using every weapon of our spiritual warfare that is mighty through God for pulling down strongholds.

In Jeremiah 1:10 is a six fold prophetic mandate given to the praying church, over the nations and over the kingdoms of men and Satan:-

To root out,

To pull down,

To destroy,

To throw down,

(Then) to build and to plant.

It is instructive that we are called to do four destructive actions before we are called to build and to plant. Alas, today we rush to plant among thorns, building towers of Babel with bricks for stone and asphalt for mortar. There are many nations (tribes) and kingdoms that still remain strongholds of bidding the strongman. We are called to come upon him in the stronger might of the spirit, and overcome him, take away all his amour in which he trusted, and plunder his kingdom (Luke 11: 21-22).

I list some of the strongholds and edifices whose stones we are called to cast away and level to the ground:-

1. Jezebel, her witchcraft and all she represents like, Jesus did. "Then he said, throw her down. So they threw her down (2 Kings 9:33).
2. Demonic and idolatrous altars in our families, villages and localities, like Gideon did (Judges 6:25-32).
3. The worship of Baal and every like false (traditional or imported) religious practices in the House of God like Elijah and Jesus did (1 Kings 18:20-40, 2 Kings 10: 18-28).
4. The unreached kingdoms and nations of men (Exodus 34:24, Daniel 4, Matthew 28:18-19, Rev. 11:15), like Jeremiah did (Jer.1:10).
5. The kingdoms of Islam and of the horse and its rider (Psalm 68, Isaiah 21:16-17).

May the spirit of God's soldier of Psalm 18: 28-48 come upon you, to beat them fine as the dust before the wind (and) cast them out like dirt in the streets. Amen.

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"O house of Jacob, Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord" Isaiah 2:5

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