

BEAUTY FOR ASHES

*"TALK" GIVEN BY INNO-PRAISE HEDIBA,
DIRECTOR, MISSIONS AID INTERNATIONAL, LAGOS,
AT THE FULL GOSPEL BUSINESSMEN, FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL
G.R.A. CHAPTER, ONITSHA, ON 24/09/96*

THE BURDEN OF CHRISTIANITY

TEXTS: Isa. 61¹⁻³, Jer.30¹⁹, Matt. 12²¹

We shall observe one thing in our discussion today, and that is the necessity for proper instructions if the Church must know the will of God and also do it. Without this, much of our modern Christianity and its priorities will fail us on the day of reckonings. 2 Thes. 1⁷⁻¹².

Even the resurrected Christ did not make assumption. After his resurrection, He spent 40 days on earth, clarifying the demands and the requirements of the New Kingdom, with his chosen Disciples. Ac. 1¹⁻³.

Thus, the apparent ignorance and neglect of Missions-which is the centre point of the Gospel, by the Church, shows us the type, and vision of men who had steered the affairs of the Church, and the very reason our present Christianity is not having much impact upon the lives of our environs.

Therefore, we must carefully address this issue, knowing that He who gave us the Spirit of the Son shall be on hand to give us understanding and empower us to do His will.

Where we read in Isa. 61¹⁻³, the Lord Jesus had fulfilled His part, leaving us the other half...

Hence, in Jn.12:20-22 (cf. 12-28), there was an agreement reached between Christ and the Gentiles which ultimately led to "The Great Commission" as we know it today: Matt.28¹⁸⁻²⁰, Lu.24⁴⁵⁻⁴⁸, Ac. 1⁸.

The complaint of the Gentiles was that **CHRIST** was about to die (Matt.21¹²⁻¹⁴) without fulfilling Matt.12²¹ but having fulfilled Matt. 1²¹: prompting Jesus to make the pronouncement in Jn.12:24 assuring the Gentiles that His death was intended to achieve the very end of their desire (Mal.1¹¹).

Prior to this time, God's dealings had been with His covenant people, Israel. But the observant (proselytes) and God-fearing Gentiles had noted the statement made at the dedication of Solomon's Temple and which was collaborated by the prophet Isaiah centuries later, that *"mine house shall be called an house of prayer for all people"*. (2Chron.6^{32,33}, Isa. 56⁶⁻⁸, Ps.22²⁷⁻²⁸)

Hence, all through the Life and Ministry of the Lord Jesus, emphasis was carefully but silently made by the Divine Spirit of Lord on the presence and activities of other nations in Jerusalem, in preparation for their absorption into the common-wealth of Israel. (Eph. 2¹⁻²²).

Thus, when the Master arose, from the dead, the first declaration He made was; "Go ye" Mk. 16¹⁵. He did not ask after his mother or brethren; neither did He inquire of His property (If He had any) nor seek exalted positions for His Disciples in the government of (this world) (Ac. 1⁴⁻⁸). But He remembered His Covenant. Isa. 61¹⁻³, Matt. 12²¹ and the incessant cry of the heathen: Ps. 74²⁰, Jer.8²⁰.

Therefore, my exalted Brethren, it is to this great concern of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ that we shall address our minds; for to do contrary is to judge ourselves unprofitable servants, unworthy of the Great Kingdom.

THE CALL FOR MISSIONS, is the call to shine light to those that sit in darkness (Matt.4¹²⁻¹⁶), *and to give men beauty for ashes* (Isa. 61³). And it is a call that involves every Christian. Yes, **IT IS THE BURDEN OF OUR CHRISTIANITY**. And without **IT**, our profession is void and we stand the chance of being put to shame in the of His visitation (Like the 5 foolish virgins) cf. Prov.24^{11, 12}.

But before we go further, there are certain personal questions I would like you to consider:

PERSONAL EXAMINATION:

- (i). Am I really happy, genuinely challenged and fulfilled in Life?
- (ii). In light of eternity, am I making a consistent investment for God's glory and His cause?
- (iii). Is the direction my life is now taking leading me towards a satisfying and meaningful future?
- (iv). Can I honestly say that I am in the nucleus of God's will for me?
- (v). What percentage of my time, energy, resources/money have I joyfully given for the evangelisation of Africa Millions?

Having said this, I shall now proceed to show you the state of affairs as regard our topic:

- (a). The anguish of lost souls. Gen. 4^{9, 10}, cf. Ezk.33¹⁻⁶, Ac.20²⁴⁻²⁷.
- (b). The Cry of the Heathen. Jer.8²⁰, Ps. 74²⁰.
- (c). The Burden of God. Jn.4²¹⁻²⁶⁻⁴² (11:35) / Lu. 15¹¹,
- (d). The anxiety of Creation: Rom.8¹⁸⁻²² / Mt.24¹⁴ / Eph.3⁹⁻¹¹,

BUT WHY MUST YOU DO SOMETHING?

1. They have not heard. Rom.10^{14-16a},
- 2 "Your brother is in that Pit.." Job.33^{24b}, Ps.9¹⁷, Gen.11¹⁻⁹,

And the Promise is Ac.1⁸, = Lu.19^{11-13, (20-24)}.

What will you plead on that Day?

FROM ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE:

THE BURDEN OF CHRISTIANITY:

THE CALL FOR MISSIONS

WHERE IS HE?

Matt.2^{1, 2}, Mk.1^{27, 38}, Lu.2^{25-32, 36-38},
 Jn.12²⁰⁻²⁸, Matt.12²¹
 Matt. 21¹⁰⁻¹⁴, (2 Chron. 6^{32, 33}, Isa. 56⁶⁻⁸, Ps. 22²⁷⁻²⁸,)
 Gen.11¹⁻⁹, Jn.4²¹⁻²⁶⁻⁴², = = Eph.2: 1-3-11-,
 Hence, "Go Ye" Mk. 16¹⁵,