

GOD WILL PROVE HIS CHURCH

Bro. Isaac Ihekwoaba

QUOTABLE QUOTES

May God intervene in those areas of our lives we need help. If we need help in our marriage, business, finances and in our work with God, we ought to pray so that grace might reach us. God is our helper; learn to bring your questions and challenges to God.

I believe, it is time for the prison gates to be open. We speak the word of the Lord unto the prison walls that have caged in the people of God. Lord you are He that opens and no man can shut therefore let the doors be opened in the name of the Lord Jesus! Lord, we ask that your people might receive help on every side this morning. Let the season of dryness come to an end, we pray in Jesus name.

This is a time when men must know God; it is time to break up the fallow ground. Therefore, Lord release the rain upon us. Let there be a refreshing for your people. And may all the praise and glory be to you we pray in Jesus name.

(Sunday 14th Nov, 2010)

God is placing a very serious demand on His people. One of the things He is about to do is to bring a people to a place where He can prove or test them. His intention is to see whether we have taken heed to the things He has been saying to us. I say with every conviction today: - **GOD IS ABOUT TO PROVE HIS CHURCH.** We must do away with our lackadaisical attitude in attending to the things of the Lord, attitudes such as deciding whether or not to come for fellowship. Why must we pick and choose the opportunities God provides for us to know Him better? A day of proving is coming brethren. The day of reckoning is at hand. God will hold us accountable. He will ask us what we did with all the opportunities He provided for us to know Him. He will hold us accountable for all the words He has spoken to us through the various ministries in the house. We will be held accountable to do that which we preach. God will certainly prove you some day for that which you have spoken. That has been my experience and I know it has been yours. We all must be mindful of what we preach. For the preacher is expected to be first partaker. The more you say it, the more responsible you are to it. *James 3:1 "My brethren, be not many masters (teachers), knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation (judgment).*

We must begin to rise up as a church and begin to take God seriously because he is going to prove us. God took the children of Israel through the way He did in the wilderness to prove them, to find out what was in their hearts. **We must get back on track; we must get back to warfare.** We must review how we are walking with God. We must be determined to know God, not for the purpose of knowing for knowing sake but to know Him sufficiently for the deliverance for our own souls, to know the way He operates so that we can walk right with Him. **Our number one objective should be to know Him, so we can please Him.**

What does it mean to prove? Prove means to put to test. But this testing is not for testing sake but it is a test with an objective and the objective is to find out for sure if we truly understand the instructions we have been given; whether we have imbibed them and are we walking in them? The objective is that we come to learn His ways. Now God does not prove you to condemn you like man does. The intention of God is to prove you so you can improve; His intention is to provoke us unto love and to good works. He proves you in order to help you, so you come to the place where you overcome. I have found that with God even in the things you are doing well in, He prunes (*cuts*) that you may bear more fruit.

John 15:2 "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.

Pruning may be a painful and unpleasant experience for a plant, but all the same the gardener prunes it, because that is the only way the plant can have better opportunity to grow. So it is with us and the Lord. God's intention for these trials, rebukes and testing is so that we will bring forth much fruit. A lack of anointing, fruit and power in our personal lives is an indication that we are not responding or submitting to the dealings of God in this area of pruning. We become rebellious when we insist on doing what we feel we should do! **What God expects is that we submit to the pruning or testing and gain the strength and experience that will equip us to overcome.**

SCRIPTURE POINTS TO NOTE: THE REASON FOR THE NATIONS

Judges 3:1 "Now these are the nations which the LORD left, to prove Israel by them, even as many of Israel as had not known all the wars of Canaan".

God left certain nations on purpose around Israel. Why did God leave these nations? Did He not have the power to totally exterminate them? What was the purpose? What did He want to achieve? Brethren God will not take you through times of trial without a purpose. God will not allow that poverty without a purpose! He is allowing it so that He will achieve His preordained purpose for you. **God left the nations round Israel so that they may learn instruction.** There were many experiences and lessons God taught them through their interaction with these nations. There were many miracles and wonders He performed – All for the purpose of teaching them lessons about Himself and His ways.

- **learning the art of war**

Judges 3:2 "Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know, to teach them war, at the least such as before knew nothing thereof".

God allows the nations that are warring within you; He allows them because He wants to teach you the art (*strategies*) of overcoming. You must learn the art of war Praise God.

Another very important thought to note is that when we are proved by God and we overcome, the great victory and deliverance that is obtained extends to generations unborn. Many of us are benefiting from or should we say being blessed by the deliverances obtained by saints who had stood, fought great battles and overcome Satan. Take the bible for instance; men shed their blood for us to be able to read it. They endured much trials and testing.

If my children are to have some level of deliverance and prosperity in certain areas it will come out of some of the wars I as their father have fought and overcome on their behalf. This is why parents must war; the church must war because as we overcome the generational sins there is deliverance wrought for our children and the body of Christ. For example if your father was polygamous, you must fight to overcome the spirit of polygamy, for as you overcome, your children will also experience some measure of victory from your overcoming. We obtain not only deliverance for ourselves but also for generations yet unborn. Those nations are there, warring within, He allows them and as I go through the experience I can learn the art and strategies of overcoming. These wars are profitable to fight. We must learn to address certain satanic oppressions in our lives by warfare. Take sleep for example, many a time some of us are fast asleep whenever the word is being preached. Now such an experience cannot just be wished away; such deliverances are obtained only if you make a concerted effort to attack the spirit of slumber resisting steadfastly in spiritual warfare. It is a pity that we are not warring as we used to, we are not confronting the mammy water spirit as we used to, many a time we are laid back. This ought not to be.

- **Learning instruction**

It afforded them the opportunity to be taught of God. There is a generation that is taught of men but we need to be taught of God. There is indeed a place for teaching men God's word but the truth of the matter is that we also need the experience of being taught of God. So many things elude us because we are unable to settle down long enough to be taught of God.

We lack understanding of how God operates. There is a place to submit to the ministries God has put in the house to be taught. This prayer of David must not be far from us “teach me your ways oh God”. May we be humble enough to sit and learn of God?

- **Overcoming the laid back syndrome**

This is another reason God allows the nations. He wants us not to be laid back. He wants us not to be at ease because the devil as a roaring lion is seeking whom he may devour. The trouble of the nations will provoke you to get back to fasting and prayer. **We must get back to a life of prayer, if we are to overcome the spirits that are intent on overrunning the church in these times.** For the gates of hell not to prevail against us; we must be on guard and maintain our God given position of victory through warfare.

- **Obedience**

Judges 3: 4 “And they were to prove Israel by them, to know whether they would hearken unto the commandments of the LORD, which He commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses”.

Another reason he left the nations was to find out if they were ready to obey His word. Are we truly ready to obey God? A word comes from God, what do you do with it? Have you come to Church today with the mindset of “whatever the Lord says that I will do.” Or are you the hearer who selects out of that which is preached, only the things that you find comfortable to apply and you leave the rest? Are our hearts malleable or soft enough to receive ministry or do we prefer to rationalize and criticize or pick words out of context? Let us always come with HEARTS THAT ARE MORE WILLING TO DO THE WILL OF GOD THAN TO REJECT IT.

THE INSTRUMENTS OF OPPRESSION:THE KINGS

Judges 3:3 “Namely, five lords of the Philistines and all the Canaanites and the Sdonians, and the Hivites that dwelt in mount Lebanon, from mount Baalhermon unto the entering in of Hamath”.

God allowed these kings to remain to oppress and afflict Israel as a result of the rebellion in their hearts. May the doors not be opened to the enemy because of our own rebellion but let there rather be a willingness to do the will of God so that the door will remain permanently shut. Avoid rebellion. The intention of the devil is to bring you to a place of servitude so you are not able to raise your head and do the will of God.

Judges 3:7 “And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgot the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves. Vs 8 “Therefore the anger of the LORD was hot against Israel, and He sold them into the hand of Chushanrishathaim King of Mesopotamia: and the children of Israel served Chushanrishathaim eight years”.

Chushanrishathaim (*double wickedness by interpretation*). The children of Israel disobeyed God. They walked in their own carnality. They did what was right in their own eyes, walking in rebellion against the word of God. They were stiff-necked and God allowed an entrance of this king (*double wickedness*) to oppress them. Why? Because there had been issue of rebellion in their hearts. The reign of this king brought in much sorrow, pain and hurt to the children Israel.

Judges 3: 1`2 “And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the LORD: and the LORD strengthened Eglon the King of Moab against Israel, because they had done evil in the sight of the LORD”.

Eglon (*symbolic of the flesh*) had no strength but God gave him the strength he needed and he came against Israel. Eglon speaks of gluttony. It speaks of the Christian who gives himself to food, to luxury, to leisure; it speaks of the spirit that causes men to become lovers of pleasure (*television, sports, sleep etc*), more than lovers of God. Eglon is the reason why some Christians cannot grow. Why ministries are not standing in power and anointing in the house is because we give ourselves to much of these things. Some people can afford to watch television from the moment they come back from work till they get to bed. What are you doing with your time? **Eglon represents the Christian who plays around with his time, the one who does not know that this is the time to redeem the time because the days are evil. You must strive to destroy the Eglon in your life.**

THE WAY OUT

Close the doors

We must close the doors so the avenger of blood can not come in. This closing cannot be done mechanically. We close the doors by obeying God, by doing things He nudges us to do by His spirit. Remember the doors are in the realm of your soul, the realm of your mind. So God may speak to you when you pray e.g. Lord heal me of this sore throat. The Holy Spirit may tell you to stop drinking cold water. And when you stop, the sore throat goes Or you may be healed immediately then the instruction comes the next day, “do not drink cold water again, much like, ‘ go and sin no more’. When we create openings, things go wrong. The mishaps or misfortunes that the enemy plagues us with often times are as a result of open doors and these doors can only be shut by obedience of God’s word in your mind and actions. We must constantly ensure that the thoughts that go through our minds, the things we say, the actions we take are not opening doors for the enemy to afflict us. **My prayer is that our doors will remain permanently closed.**

Cry to God for deliverance

God will raise deliverance once we begin to cry out to Him in repentance. If need be, we must come with prayer and fasting. Remember Jabez. He took a review of himself and he said I must come and cry out to God. God will certainly raise men or circumstances to help us as we cry to him. Some times as we cry to God we may find that the rate at which we fall increases e.g. may be we have said ‘Oh God deliver me from this anger,’ you may find suddenly that God may allow men who will agitate anger in you to come your way more often. And as you overcome you become free. God is looking for men who are absolutely determined to follow Him so He can show Himself strong on their behalf.

THE DELIVERERS

EHUD:

Judges 3: 15 “But when the children of Israel cried unto the LORD, the LORD raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man lefthanded: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab”.

Ehud (he who praises) was the man God sent to deliver Israel at the time. He was left handed. This signifies the fact that He was not one to follow the crowd. He does not fit into the usual routine timetable, of mediocrity. He was different from the norm of lackadaisical Christianity. An unusual Christian. We should ask ourselves what type of Christian am I? Are we following the crowd and living in compromise?

Are we walking and doing business the way of the world? God is looking for left handed men of God (*men who will walk against the norm.*) Those who are concerned with doing that which pleases God, those who stand in the place of prayer bringing deliverance by intercession in their secret closet, to the people of God. Those who will not be part of the unrighteousness.

An interesting point to note in this passage was that no one assigned Ehud to kill the king, he was only the leader of the delegation that was to go and appeal to the wicked king to stop the oppression against the children of Israel. Obviously, there was a great burden in his heart about the oppressive king. So it must be for us brethren. Are you carrying the Lord's burden? Are you worried about the oppression, the devil brings upon the people of God. We must carry the burden of the house. God will freely deposit burdens about the house to those who are concerned. And as you go before the Lord in prayer bearing that burden, God will supply strength and give you the wisdom on what to do in practical terms about it.

Ehud wisely turned back from the crowd and was able to assassinate the king and free Israel. Brethren this is not a crowd matter, you must learn to ask of God and follow His instructions. For it is only the word of the Lord and the specific instructions from the Lord if followed, that can deal a death blow to the spirits.

Judges 3: 20 " And Ehud came unto him; and he was sitting in a summer parlour, which he had for himself alone. And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat".

Vs 21 "And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly".

GOD IS LOOKING FOR MEN LIKE EHUD; MEN WHO WILL NOT GO IN THEIR POWER OR MIGHT BUT WHO HE WILL GO IN THE NAME OF THE LORD AND DECLARE HIS WORD WITH BOLDNESS TO DEAL A DEATH BLOW TO THE DEVILS PRESSING THE NATIONS.

DEBORAH:

It is not usual for women to be in-charge but it was an unusual time in Israel. An interesting fact is that Deborah realizing her limitation in the natural as a woman called on the man Barack to go with her. Deborah must have been a spiritual woman to even sense the need and to stand in the place where she could hear from God. Our sisters must learn to walk in the spirit. In doing so they not only bring additional strength for the men, but become instruments to inspire unto good works. What a blessing to have a wife who will encourage her husband to stand in the place of warfare. Deborah was an inspiration for Barack to war. The man and the wife standing together provide an insurmountable force. Men, you must create the room for your wife to be a part of what the Lord is doing in this hour.

GIDEON AND THE THREE HUNDRED MEN:

Notice the progression here. The deliverer had moved from being just one individual to a corporate body of people. Gideon with three hundred men were able to deliver Israel from the oppression of the Midianites who severely oppressed them at the time. The victory at this time will be wrought by a corporate body. It is no longer an individual thing.