

Living Through Crises

Femi Bakare

Some men came to David at Hebron with the mind to turn the kingdom from Saul to him according to the word of the Lord. These men came from the twelve tribes of Israel, they were in their numbers and were armed. Among these were the tribes of Issachar (though few in number compared with other tribes) others were at their command. No weapon was recorded against these men, neither were they called warriors but they were armed with something significant that the rest do not have, something that if missing could spell doom for the entire armies - understanding of the times. This understanding helped the whole Israel to know what to do.

“From the tribe of Issachar, there were 200 leaders of the tribe with their relatives. All these men understood the signs of the times and knew the best course for Israel to take.” 1 Chron 12:32 New Living Translation

Their understanding was a boon to Israel because it brought about knowledge of the best course to take.

I think we need such understanding in times such as these, so as to know the best course to take, because the last days are here. Crises are some of the characteristics of these days. Crisis is a condition of instability or danger, as in social, economic, political, or international affairs leading to a decisive change - Dictionary.com. Crisis is an unstable situation of extreme danger or difficulty - WordWeb. Friends, these are days of crises; times of great danger and calamities. Whether you know it or not, we are living in the midst of increasing crises, the increase is geometric and cascading as a matter of fact, it is an inevitable state of global crises. It is a state of great stress that is difficult to bear and handle and we cannot pray against it; we cannot stop it from happening and it is even difficult to control. We must learn how to live through it.

“BUT UNDERSTAND this, that in the last days will come (set in) perilous times of great stress and trouble [hard to deal with and hard to bear].” 2Ti 3:1 AMP

Perilous times will (and not may) come! It is not terrorism or violence that will trigger this dangerous moment; it will be as a result of character deficiency.

“Remember this! In the last days there will be many troubles, because people will love themselves, love money, brag, and be proud. They will say evil things against others and will not obey their parents or be thankful or be the kind of

people God wants. They will not love others, will refuse to forgive, will gossip, and will not control themselves. They will be cruel, will hate what is good, will turn against their friends, and will do foolish things without thinking. They will be conceited, will love pleasure instead of God, and will act as if they serve God but will not have his power. Stay away from those people.” 2 Tim 3:1-6 NCV

Something worthy of note in these verses of Scripture is that, underneath these dysfunctional life styles are make-believes of spirituality (verse 5). Are you saying that people can be unholy, refuse to forgive, cruel, hate what is good, love pleasure instead of God and could still be seen as spiritual? Yes. No wonder that in spite of the proliferation of churches, the society is still in this mess. This is because most of these people profess to know God but deny Him in their works. They speak in tongues but manifest the character of the devil. Friends, the last days are here, check the statistics, the divorce rate in the church is high; the worst thing is that, Pastors now divorce and still continue to preach as if nothing happened. We now call sin, short comings and weakness.

The last days are also period of great apostasy-

“The Spirit says clearly that some people will abandon the faith in later times; they will obey lying spirits and follow the teachings of demons. Such teachings are spread by deceitful liars, whose consciences are dead, as if burnt with a hot iron.” 1Ti 4:1 -2 Good News Bible

When you look around, you will see posters in the name of church programmes, you don't need a prophet to tell you that these programmes are cooked up from a man that is being inspired by demons, programmes that stemmed from greedy hearts. I saw some recently with captions like 'Who tied my goat', 'Tied down in the village but needed in the City' 'Aunty Wetin I do you' and 'Kill them before they kill you'. The last one has the picture of the General Overseer holding a big cutlass on that poster. Paul the apostle says *“for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame.”* (1 Cor. 15:34). From the theme you will know that these people have lost touch with God and Scripture because it is a departure from the Spirit of Christ.

The reason for all these wrong emphases today is because there is a deliberate attempt from the enemy to make us depart from the faith, because if what people hear is false their faith will also be affected. Look around you if they are not talking about money or success, they are talking about how to kill your enemies.

What is Apostasy?

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia defines apostasy as “a standing away from”): i.e. a falling away, a withdrawal, a defection. It is also an abandonment of what one has professed; a total desertion, or departure from one's faith or religion - Webster's Dictionary.

When Paul says some shall depart from the faith, it means they were in faith before the departure, they had the correct gospel but somewhere along the line they gradually withdrew from the faith and gave in to teachings of demons. This suggests to us that there is a tendency to depart from the faith we once professed and even preached about. An example of this is Demas; Paul the apostle mentioned Demas as a fellow labourer (Phm 1:24); In Col 4:14, Demas was one of those sending greetings to the church in Colosse but by the time his name was mentioned again the third time, it was on a sad note:

“Demas loves the things of this world so much that he left me and went to Thessalonica...” 2Ti 4:10 CEV

There is nothing wrong for him to have left Paul, but the issue is what took him away- 'love for the world' and the Bible had made it clear that whosoever loves the world, the love of the God is not in him (1 John 2:15). The letter of Paul to the Colossians was written 62AD, Philemon was written 63AD, 2 Timothy was Paul's last letter and it was written between 66-67AD. If Demas was referred to as 'fellow labourer,' by Paul, it means this man was not just a nobody in the things of God but 4 to 5 years down the line something contended for his soul and won (things of this world). What is contending for your soul? Are the cares of this world flooding your soul? You must not buckle under, because if you do, the end is destruction. Friends, the enemy is not resting nor relenting; he is really seeking for those he will devour, we must not let him.

We must safeguard our hearts against the cares of this world; these are some of the forces that are contending with our faith in these last days. We must develop a capacity to really deal with them. Unfortunately, the majority of the gospel being preached today in most churches is causing a lot of damage to our soul, they are not powerful enough to help one deal with these contentions; as a matter of fact, it fuels it. They are materialistic messages that feed the soul but starve the spirit. They are human philosophies that have nothing to do with Christ, they appease the flesh and exalt self; little wonder sinners come around and they are not uncomfortable. Hardly is the issue of sin preached; if they do maybe once in a long while.

To be continued...