



The Concern

In the past several years I have heard many songs and sermons, read a few books, and watched a couple of video presentations on how special Ethiopia is in God's agenda and how dear and close the nation is to God.

After finishing reading an on-line version of a recently published book, *Ethiopia: The God Factor*, I brushed up an old pen to once more attempt the issue to be seen as squarely and biblically as possible. Although I was prompted to write this short article after the reading, I would like to point that the book is not the target. I have beforehand shared the gist of this article with the author.

From the sermons and chapters of published books what I gathered is that the general theme is the same. They all state that Ethiopia, on account of Psalms 68:31, is very special. What, really, is special about Ethiopia? Is it the oft-repeated one verse? Or is it the forty plus times it was mentioned in the Bible? The overused verse ኢትዮጵያ እጅችላን ወደ እግዚአብሔር ትዘረጋለች። And the Geez ኢትዮጵያ ታበጽሕ እደዊሃ ኅበ እግዚአብሔር - Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. (Ps. 68:31) has been so misused and overused that it lost its original intent and meaning. At one point in the history of Ethiopia

the verse had been the motto of the country.¹ That was a time of intense ill-treatment and by some thought to be an appropriate slogan.

“Biblical Ethiopianism”

Among not a few Ethiopian preachers and writers this verse was so dislocated out of its context that, when it is taken back into its context, for many, it seems out of place. This verse, as all verses of the Scripture, should be understood and be exegeted in its biblical setting, not in a pop understanding. It is dismaying at how Ps. 68:31 was treated by many Ethiopianists over the last decades.

I am not sure if the term ‘Ethiopianist’ was ever used before. If it is something I coined, what I mean here by ‘Ethiopianists’ is those folks who promote the special position or ‘specialness’ of Ethiopia and elevate Ethiopia regardless of past history, present circumstances, or future prophecies in the light of the Bible. Some even go far too extremely to be ‘Ethiopia supremacists’ like white, or male, or black supremacists do. By ‘Biblical Ethiopianists’ I mean our preachers and teachers of the Bible who try to twist to elevate Ethiopia over all other nations. I heard one notable preacher saying that America was not mentioned in the Bible while Ethiopia is written all over the pages.

Some of my readers, especially those enamored by such sermons might have already labelled me as some sort of bigot. Therefore, I should make clear if I am a sort of anti-Ethiopia or some one carrying a prejudice. No, I am not both. I am an Ethiopian by birth and by psyche. Even though my current earthly citizenship is of another nation I equally love, my Ethiopian ancestry. However, I rather heartily cherish my being a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20). I am not boasting of having multiple citizenship. After all, we all are citizens of the same globalizing world. This is, however, without denying our Christian responsibility and allegiance to our respective countries.

¹ During the five-year Italian occupation this verse is printed on official documents of correspondence.



Since my foremost citizenship is heavenly, I use a sure frame of reference to see any nation, whether it is Israel or Ethiopia, China or Chad, past history, current affairs, or future events. This frame is seeing any and all things from a biblical point of view. By ‘biblical’ I mean serious Scriptural scrutiny and not a pick-and-choose approach.

It is this deplorable pick-and-choose approach of not a few preachers to the Bible that created the unfortunate fallacy of Ethiopia’s being the supplanter of Israel. The fact of Ethiopia’s divine nomination to replace Israel has been presented as a palatable ‘fact’ for many religious Abyssinians. For many Evangelicals, leaders included, Ethiopia still stands out despite local and global state of affairs.

The ‘broad masses’ are very gullible and easily feed on what is presented to them. In most instances, Christians, even Evangelical believers are illiterate when it comes to biblical knowledge. Their staple spiritual food is the sermons they hear on Sundays. The average believers depend on leaders and ministers for all sorts of instruction rather than digging for biblical truths for themselves. While seeking guidance from mature believers is commendable, not knowing God’s word for self is an inauspicious condition that should not be perpetuated.

On the other hand, it is appropriately expected of Christian scholars and biblical expositors to deem the skewed trend and curb errors, especially, in this regard, the erroneous understanding of out of context verses. For ‘biblical Ethiopianism’ to right the wrong has been past overdue. By ‘biblical Ethiopianism’ I mean to mark those who strongly stand on a verse or two to argue our [Ethiopians’] colourful distinction in God’s agenda.

In my opinion, this biblical Ethiopianism has sprung for two major reasons. The first is biblical illiteracy including the above-mentioned selective citing approach to the verses of the Bible. This lack of hermeneutics is a problem not only to the topic at hand, but to all other errors. I will come back to this point later. The second is a world-view confusion.

A World-view and Identity Confusion

We have been wrongly told that we are God’s chosen people. Our kings and emperors were referred to as God’s special elect or *ሥዊመ እግዚአብሔር*. The latter is partly true for the Bible teaches that all authority is bestowed from above (Rom. 13 etc.). The way our emperors used it, though, was as supra anointment.

We have also been told that our emperors were specifically from the tribe of Judah, whom eternal kingdom was promised to. Almost all Ethiopians accept this for fact when the fable was a creation of the 13th century. Our royal chronicles and even history text books teach this as factual with no encouragement of academic questioning to source criticism.

We were also told we were the foremost cradle of civilization, the geographic Eden. Were we given the chances to mingle creationism and evolution, we would end up being the very place of human creation or the evolving center of the primordial life. One book goes so very far to say that even the river Tigris is named so because the children of Ham who originated from Tigray termed it so.²

The biblical Ethiopianists’ world-view is so confused that in order to maintain and promote that identity, they traverse away from well regarded rules of hermeneutics. One such misunderstood verse is: *Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the LORD.* (Amos 9:7 KJV). In fact, this is a verse many ‘Ethiopianists’ read it forward and understand backward. They read their notions so much into the verse that they understand it as God favours Ethiopians more than the children of Israel. I have read this very view clearly stated in one web site. Next to the verse it said, “Even among the people of Israel, the Ethiopians seem more dear to the Almighty God.”³ The verse, however, is a rebuke to the Israelites that they had become farther away from God as the physically far away people of

² የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ጥያቄዎችና ባሕሎች፤ ገጽ 41።

³ Ben’s web page / EthiopiaFirst.com. The web page has since had a facelift and I couldn’t locate the verse in its current setting. The rendering I quoted is taken about 10 years ago.



Cush. Cush at that time was considered as the farthest corner of the world. Thus our Lord said in Matt. 12:42 that the queen of the south came from “the end of the world.”

respectable rendering as Ethiopia in meaning is an equivalent to Cush.

Reference and Context

Yes, it is true that the term ‘Ethiopia’ with all its variants has been written in 42 Old and 1 New Testament verses. Let us pause here and ask three important questions:

1. Is being mentioned many times a leak-safe warranty of God’s favour? Egypt is mentioned more than 650 times. That is, 15 to 1. Syria more than 120 times. Amon (present day Jordan) about 120 times. If we would show off our name in the 40 places, where would Babylon be? For even Babylon was mentioned more than 260 times. You see, being mentioned for scores of times in the Scriptures by itself does not hold water. The timeless question should be how it was mentioned.
2. Context, context, context. What is the context for the verses? Diligent students of the Scriptures ask how and in what circumstances a person or a country are mentioned rather than their simply being mentioned. They study the context. Context, in simple terms, is the immediate surrounding of a particular verse including its setting, genre, nature and the time it was written. I will come back to this subject later in this article. However, it suffices here to mention that ignoring this gem of biblical hermeneutics is the worst blunder.
3. Is the Ethiopia mentioned in Psalms the Ethiopia of today? Who is Ethiopia in the Old Testament? What name was used in the verses? What is it and where is that? The name Ethiopia entered into the Scriptures when the Greek Old Testament known as the LXX or the Septuagint was translated from Hebrew. About the time it was translated, that is, between 250 and 130 B.C., the term Ethiopia represents the land and the people known as Cush in Hebrew. It was a

Who Really is Ethiopia?

The name Ethiopia is coined by the Greek authors prior to Septuagint to name the black people in general or the people south of Egypt in particular. The Greek Αἰθίοψ - Aithiops (made of two words ‘ethos’ and ‘opsis’) means simply ‘burnt face.’ Who has a burnt face? Look at any native African and will get the answer. The Hebrew חם (Cush) also means the same thing. It meant ‘black.’ When we take the term’s narrower belt it could mean the Nile basin south of ancient Egypt while the broader connotation could comprise the nations and peoples to the south of ancient Egypt. Even though the usage is unlikely, the meaning broadly implies the whole black people.

Even though the part of our history/tradition that links the Ethiopia to ancient Israel is, by historical consensus and evidences, a later creation, (late 13th century A.D.) it is true that Ethiopia has a rich and colourful history. This being true, scrambling for few verses and claiming them disregarding context is a grave mistake.

Concerning Ps. 68, we do not, for sure, know who wrote it and when it was written. Some of the psalms have titles attached to them giving out a little historical background. This psalm doesn’t. Therefore whether it was written during (and by) David is unsure. It is, however, sound to assume the psalm was David’s. In David’s time the alliance and skirmishes between Cush and Egypt were well known. After David’s it was Solomon’s golden reign which also is the beginning of our virtual history. The years following Solomon, truly, were not of ideal relationship between Cush and Israel/Judah.

This, in turn, could be a staunch challenge to corroborate the facts of the so-called Solomonic dynasty in Ethiopia. During Solomon’s son Rehoboam Ethiopia allied itself with Egypt. Although this was an alliance to curb an



encroaching conqueror, how could Ethiopia/Cush ally itself with a longstanding enemy of Israel in the light of a recent ‘marriage’ of the two nations? According to the chronicles of Kibre Negest, this was the honeymoon period.

Only 20 or 30 years after Solomon’s death, during the reign of Asa, the third king of Judah, the Ethiopian king Zerah mobilized by far the largest army in the history of that period to bring Judah down. (2Chr. 14). It is recorded that not one soldier returned alive. This Zerah (፲፭፻፱፻፳፻፱ Zerah Ha Kushiyy) most probably and following reliable Egyptian documents, is the third king of Egypt after Shishak. According to a notable Bible expositor Albert Barnes, he is Ethiopian by birth and Egyptian by marriage.⁴ According to another source they are Nubian mercenaries.⁵ With the possibility of a wider kingdom, the war which decimated not only an armed force, but also a generation, happened during this ‘honeymoon years’ of Ethio-Israel relations. A million strong at that time seems a chunk of an entire population and with that goes the celebrated diplomacy in the first few decades of its ‘commencement.’

Supposing nearly all my readers are Amharic readers, I would like to copy a little section of a critique I wrote two years ago on the content and current trend of Ethiopian gospel songs. The excerpt is a section that deals with songs about Ethiopia’s special blessedness and runs thus:

ኢትዮጵያ ሆይ ስሜ ትንቢት ልናገር
ከንግዲህ አይሆንም ጭንገፋና ውርደት...

ስለ ኢትዮጵያ የተነገረው ጥቅም ብዙ ነው። ምን ያልተነገረ፤ ምን ያልተዘመረ መልካም ትንቢት አለ? እንደ ትንቢቱ ብዛትም ቢሆን ኢትዮጵያ እንደ ሮኬት ተተክላ ቀድሞውኑ እከዋክብት ጉያ በደረሰች ነበር! ኢትዮጵያ በመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ውስጥ ብዙ ጊዜ ተጠቅሳለች። ታሪካዊ የሆኑትን ትተን ትንቢታዊ የሆኑትን ብቻ እንኳ ብንመለከት እና ሁሉም ገና እንዳልተፈጸሙ ቢመስለን፤ መልካም ከሆኑት ትንቢቶች ይልቅ አስፈሪዎቹና አደጋ የተነገረባቸው እንደሚበዙ አስተውለናል? ለምሳሌ፦

እናንተም ኢትዮጵያውያን ደግሞ በሰይፌ ትገደላላችሁ።
ሰ፪.2፥12

የኢትዮጵያ ድንኳኖች ሲጨነቁ አየሁ። ዕን.3፥7

እነዚህን የዘመረ/ያስጠነቀቀ ዘመሪ አላየሁም፤ አልሰማሁም። ይህ አፍራሽ ነዋ! አይዘመርም። ኢትዮጵያ ለእግዚአብሔር ልክ የበኩር ልጅ እንደሆነች ያህል ሲነገረን ነው የኖርነው። ይህንን ሽንገላ አሁንም ለብሰነው እየኮራን እየኖርን ነን። በአፈ ታሪክና በሃይማኖታዊ ታሪክ ሲነገረን የኖረው እግዚአብሔር [እንዲያውም] እስራኤልን ትቶ እኛን መመረጡ ነው። ይህ ግን ተረት ብቻ ሳይሆን የተሳሳተ ተረት ነው። ቢገባን ግን [በዚህ ዘመን] ኢትዮጵያ ከሱዳን ወይም ከቻይና ለእግዚአብሔር የተለየች አይደለችም። እግዚአብሔር በዚህ ዘመን አንድ ሕዝብ ብቻ ነው ያለው። ያም በክርስቶስ ደም የተዋጀው ክርስቲያን ሕዝብ ነው። እስራኤልም እንኳ በዚህ ዘመን በክርስቶስ በኩል ነው የእግዚአብሔር ወገን የሚሆኑት። [ከጥቂት ዓመታት በፊት] አንድ ድረ ገጽ [EthiopiaFirst.com] ላይ አሞጽ 9፥7 ተጠቅሶ ኢትዮጵያውያን ከእስራኤላውያን ይልቅ ለእግዚአብሔር ቅርብና የተመረጡ መሆናቸውን ጽፎ አይቼ እንዴት ከወውዱ የወጣ አገላለጥ መሆኑ አስገረመኝ።

ከዚህ በተጨማሪ ደግሞ መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ በዘመን ፍጻሜ በኢትዮጵያ ብቻ ሳይሆን በዓለሙ ሁሉ ስለሚሆነው ረሃብ፤ ቸነፈር፤ ጦርነት፤ ሁከት፤ ነውጥ የሚናገረው ሁሉ ከተጤነ አገሪቱን በራሳቸው ትንፋሽ እንደ ቂሪላ የሚፏት ሰባኪዎችና ዘመሪዎች በተጠነቀቁ ነበር። በቅርብ ያነበብኩት ስለ ኢትዮጵያ የተጻፈ አንድ የትንቢት መጽሐፍ ልክ ዱሮ በደርግ ጊዜ የወጣውን የ10 ዓመት መሪ ዕቅድ ይመስላል። በአገሪቱ በየፈርጁ በየክልሉ ውስጥ የሚገነቡትን፤ የሚፈበረኩትን፤ የሚመረቱትን ሁሉ ነገሮች ያካተተ ነው።⁶ ራዕዩ የሐንስም እንደዚህ በዝርዝር አልተጻፈም። ያድርግ፤ እግዚአብሔር ከዚያም ብዙ እጥፍ ይጨምር። ግን ምኞትና ጸሎት አንድ ነገር ነው፤ በመለኮታዊ እውነት ላይ ያልተመሠረተ የተስፋ ዳቦ ግን ሌላ ነገር ነው። ዘመሪዎቻችንም እንደዚህ ያለ በነፋስ የተሠራ የተስፋ ዳቦ ነው ይህንን ሕዝብ እያስገመጡ ያሉት። ይህ ደግሞ አያጠግብም። ኢትዮጵያን ጎበኛች ማለትና መጸለይ አንድ ነገር ነው። ከእንግዲህ መከራና ችግር፤ እርዛትና ጦርነት አይሆንም፤ አይኖርም ማለት ግን በመጨረሻው ዘመን እነዚህ ነገሮች እንደሚኖሩ ከሚናገረው ቃል ጋር መጣላት ነው። የትኛው ነው ትክክል? ቃሉ ወይስ ዘመሪው? ቃሉ ነው ትክክል።⁷

As slightly noted in the excerpt, God has spoken about future events. Some are specific and some are general. Some have already been fulfilled and some yet await their appointed time. But the teachings on the imminent spiritual renewal and blessedness of Ethiopia and its being set-apart from all other nations of the earth begs for detailed critical inspection. Especially, in light of the doctrine of the last things, the special position of Ethiopia and Ethiopians is a sure far-fetched teaching.

⁴ Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible. Albert Barnes (1798-1870), Electronic reference.

⁵ The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Gaebelein, Frank. E. ed. Pp. 486-7.

⁶ በቁስ በሊና ሰርካ የተዘጋጀ የትንቢት ሺድዮና መጽሐፍ።

⁷ ይድረስ ለዘመሪዎች ቁ. 1 ስለ መዝሙሮች ሕጻኖች የቀረበ የኦዲዮ መጣጥፍ።



Psalms 68:31

Before I zoom in Ps. 68:31, I would like us have a panoramic view of the verses in which Ethiopia/Cush is mentioned. With some overlaps, out of the 42 verses (that is excluding Ps. 74:14 which doesn't have anything to do with Ethiopia in the original tongue) 17 are factual verses that state geographical location and the people in general terms. 17 are historical in essence telling facts about Ethiopia(ns) in the past, or as they were, at the time of chronicling them. That leaves us with the rest 8 or 9 that could be termed as future at the time of the writing. That the verses spoke about the future at the time of their writing does not necessarily make them future forever and for all readers of all time. We could read prophecies retrospectively as future, but they are no longer prophecies awaiting fulfilment but already fulfilled.

Out of the 8 or 9 prophetic verses only this one attracted so much attention that it overshadowed all others. Of course, no Ethiopianist would preach on verses like Zeph. 2:12, Hab. 3:7 or Isa. 11:11 and 45:14 for the simple reason that these may be considered as negative confession or negative prophecy. Therefore, they are eclectic in their selection of verses. Thus, by its 'positive message' or by popular vote Ps. 68:31 has been the beloved motto.

The glaring question is, "Does Ethiopia possess a special category in God's economy and future events?" According to the very recent book I mentioned in my entry paragraph, the answer would be a resounding 'yes.' I am not capitalizing on the book. But its similitude with Ethiopianist preachers on the particular verse has a tone of implausibility. The book, as the many sermons we may have listened to, is a celebration of Ethiopia's special call and lofty position which is derived from and circles around Ps. 68:31.

If this verse is a positive and yet-to-be-fulfilled prophecy, when would the time of its fulfilment be? Has Ethiopia / Cush ever stretched her hands to God? Was there a time in our history that this country or its people surrendered to God? What are the factors to think the time of stretching of hands is now? History and Scriptures tell us that there was

no nation on earth that surrendered to God. Not even Israel as a nation. The closest they were was at Mount Sinai. Even then it was very short-lived. Their rebellious nature made them traverse the wilderness if Zin for 38 years until all unbelievers died. Their entry into Caanan didn't make them faithful either. Except for scattered revivals the overarching picture of the nation was generally religious but unfaithful.

History also attests no nation surrendered to the rulership of God at any point in time. Not during Constantine when entire armies and citizens marched to rivers to be baptized. Not in the reformation periods of course. Not now. This is not pessimism. God does not force Himself on any nation as a cosmic rapist. He is a God of love that wins hearts.

What does Ps. 68:31 really say?

:MI፱፻፲፭ EICJ UIXx [hm MI፻፶፫ I፱N MI፱፻፷፭ hI፶፻፭:32

shall come out- princes- out of Egypt- Cush-
quicken- her hands- to Elohim-

Nobles shall come out of Egypt, Cush quickens her hands to Elohim.

መኳንንት ከግብጽ ይመጣሉ ኢትዮጵያ እጆችዋን [እፍጥና] ወደ እግዚአብሔር ትዘረጋለች።

No text of the Bible ought to be out of its context. If a text be elevated to the theme of a book or a sermon, the same should be examined as thoroughly as resources allow. What is the context of Psalms 68:31? This psalm is a triumphal song unto the Lord. It starts with the words Moses said in Num. 10:35 as he starts a journey with God leading His people. This psalm has phrases announcing enemies being scattered and flee from Him; being driven like smoke and melted like wax; earth trembling; kings of armies fleeing; kings being scattered; captives being led away; heads of enemies being smitten and crushed; their blood being spilled; enemies being licked by dogs' tongue, etc.

It is amidst such upper hand on enemies that Ethiopia is mentioned as stretching hands to God. The immediate verse preceding this is a plea to rebuke the people who delight in war. The picture of Cush at the period of the writing, as stated



earlier, is that of belligerent. Its lot would not be expected to be other than what is outlined in the chapter.

It is pleasing to think of the stretching as hands as of prayer and supplication and acknowledging of the One true God. But reading contextually, it most obviously is a stretching of hands in surrender and defeat.

I believe in addressing a nation in general and God's people in particular as a responsibility of Christian leaders. I equally firmly believe it is required of Bible teachers to present the Word of God as what it is, God's Word, without preconceived notions.

Does God have a special nation, people, or country at this dispensation? What does the New Testament teach about this? Well, God has only one people in the new covenant. He has only one body. That one body is the church, the body of Christ, a body of believers redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus on the cross.

God, through Jesus' flesh has abolished enmity and has broken down the partition called the middle wall (Eph. 2:14-16). Therefore, in God's present dealings, there is no Jew or Gentile. Not even Jew, Let alone Ethiopia! We should know and appropriate our place in God's kingdom. We Ethiopians are not unique and peculiar. We are just a nation amongst hundreds or thousands like us. We are the drop among the gentiles in the equation "Jews and Gentiles."

If there was any good that we received as a whole nation, it is not because of us. It is in spite of us and because of God's unfailing loving-kindness. Ethiopians in general, are a God-fearing people. A great majority of this very religious people has acute lack of biblical understanding that could lead to the knowledge and acceptance of the true faith: faith in Jesus Christ.

If we beguile our people with the fallacy of their spiritual status, we are not doing justice to the Word of God. Neither are we doing justice to the people we consider dear and think we are sharing the greatest news with.

Telling our gullible people we are special and showers of blessings are just above our heads ready to burst is not tantamount to praying for revival, blessing, and brokenness. It is not calling upon in supplication for open doors and hearts for the gospel and hands that are stretched to receive it. May God help us to understand the difference and firmly stand for the timeless truths in His Word.

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Notes

የኢትዮጵያ ታሪክ ጥያቄዎችና ባሕሎች፣ ዶ/ር ሀብተማርያም አሰፋ፣ 1986፣ አዲስ አበባ።

በቁስ በሊና ሰርክ የተዘጋጀ የትንቢት ቪዲዮ-ና መጽሐፍ።

ይድረስ ለዘመናዊ ፍ. 1 ስለ መዝሙሮች ሕጻጆች የቀረበ የኦዲዮ መጣጥፍ።

Albert Barnes' Notes on the Bible. Albert Barnes (1798-1870), Electronic reference.

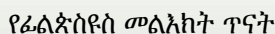
The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Gaebelein, Frank. E. ed. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1988.

* * * * *

መጽሐፍ ቅዱስን (የ፲፱፻፶፬ ዓመተ ምሕረት ትርጉምን) ከቃላት መፈለጊያ ጋር ለማንበብ፣ ለማጥናት፣ ዕለታዊ ምንባብ፣ የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ጥናት፣ ትምህርቶች፣ ነፃ መዝሙሮች ወዘተ ማግኘት የምትወዱ www.iyesus.com ይጎብኙ።

መጽሐፍት ለማንበብ የምንመኝና እንደልብ የማናገኝ ሰዎች ከታች ያለውን ማስታወቂያ እንደምንወደው እንምታለሁ።

ይህንን ጽሑፍ ማንበብ ከቻሉ ደስ ይበልዎት!!
 እጅግ በጣም ጥሩ የሆኑ ጠቃሚ የአማርኛ መጽሐፍት
 በነጻ ሊያገኙ እንደሚችሉ ያውቃሉ??
 ወደ www.good-amharic-books.com
 ይሂዱ!! እዚያው ላይ እያሉ ሊያነቡ ይችላሉ፡ ወደ
 ኮምፒውተርዎ ሊወስዱ ይችላሉ፡ ፕሪንት አድረገው
 ሊጠቀሙ ይችላሉ፡፡ ጥያቄ ወይም አስተያየት ካለዎት
 በ 972-509-2602 Brad Lapsleyን ያነጋግሩ፡፡





የአሮጌም ልጆች ናዳብና አብዩድ በየራሳቸው ጥናውን ወስደው ሽላት አደረጉበት። በካዩም ሰጣን አዳራሽ። በእግዚአብሔርም ፊት እርሱ ያካዘዛቸውን ኬካ ሽላት አቀረቡ። ሽላትም ከእግዚአብሔር ፊት ወጥቶ በካቸው። በእግዚአብሔርም ፊት ሞቱ። ዘኬ. ፲፥፩-፪

በእግዚአብሔርም ፊት ኬካ ሽላት ባቀረቡ ጊዜ ናዳብና አብዩድ ሞቱ። ዘኬ. ፳፯፥፳፯



መንፈሳዊ ግለትና ትኩስነት በክርስቲያን ሕይወት ውስጥ መጠበቅ ያለበትና መብረድ የሌለበት ነገር ነው። ይህ ትኩስነትና አዲስነት በመንፈሳዊ ልደት ተጀምሮ በመንፈሳዊ ዕድገት የሚቀጥል ነው። መሆን ያለበት እንዲህ ነው። በመለኮታዊ አሠራር ይጀምራል፤ በመለኮታዊ ኃይል ይቀጥላል። የኃይሉ ምንጭ መለኮታዊ ነውና ተቀባዩ ካልታከተ ሰጪው አይነጥፍም። ተቀባዩ ደግሞ እስከ ፍጻሜው እንዲተጋ እንጂ ዳተኛ እንዳይሆን ቃሉ እንዲህ ሲል ያበረታታል፤ በእምነትና በትዕግሥትም የተሰፋውን ቃል የሚወርሱትን እንድትመስሉ እንጂ ዳተኞች እንዳትሆኑ ተሰፋ አስኪጥላ ድረስ እያንዳንዳችሁ ያን ትጋት እስከ መጨረሻ እንድታሳዩ እንመኛለን፤ ዕብ. 6፥11-12

በብሉይ ኪዳን በመጀመሪያ በመሠዊያው የነደደው እሳት እንዳይጠፋ ተነግሮአል። ይህ የማያቋርጥ መስዋእት የማያቋርጥ ግንኙነትና የሰመረ አንድነት አመልካች ነው። ዘኬ. 9፥24 የመጀመሪያው እሳት ምንጭ እግዚአብሔር መሆኑን ይነግረናል፤ እንዲህ ሲል፡ እሳትም ከእግዚአብሔር ዘንድ ወጣ፤ በመሠዊያውም ላይ የሚቃጠለውን መሥዋዕት ሰቡንም በላ ሕዝቡም ሁሉ አይተው አልል አሉ። በግምባራቸውም ወደቁ።

ዘኬ. 6፥12-13 ደግሞ ይህ እሳት አንዴ ከወደቀ በኋላ መጥፋት የሌለበት መሆኑን እንዲያስረዳል፡ እሳቱም በመሠዊያው ላይ ዘወትር ይነድዳል፤ አይጠፋም ካህኑም ማለዳ ማለዳ እንጨት ያቃጥልበታል የሚቃጠለውንም መሥዋዕት በዚያ ላይ ይረበርባል በዚያም የደጎንነትን መሥዋዕት ስብ ያቃጥላል። ዘወትር በመሠዊያው ላይ እሳት ይነድዳል አይጠፋም።

የክርስትና ሕይወትም መሆን ያለበት ይህ ነው። በአዲስ ኪዳን ክርስቲያንና ቤተ ክርስቲያን ከሌሎች ተምሳሌዎች ጋር በመብራትና በመቅረዝም ተመስለዋል። መብራት እንጂ መጥፋት የሌለባቸው። መንደድ እንጂ መከሰም የሌለባቸው ናቸው። ይሁን እንጂ ሁሉም እንዲህ አይሆንም።

የአንዳንድ ክርስቲያኖች የቀደመ ፍቅርና ግለት በተለያዩ ድካሞች ወደ መቀዝቀዝ ይወርዳሉ። ልክ እንደ ኤፌሶን ቤተ ክርስቲያን ምእመናን። ራእ. 2፥4 እንዲህ ይላል፡ ዳሩ ግን የምነቅፍብህ ነገር አለኝ የቀደመውን ፍቅርህን ትተሃልና። ለዚህ ችግር ጌታ የሰጠው የመፍትሔ ርምጃ በቁጥር 5 እንዲህ ተጽፎአል፡ ከወዴት እንደ ወደቅህ አስብ ንስሐም ግባ የቀደመውንም ሥራህን አድርግ፤ አለዚያ እመጣብሃለሁ ንስሐም ባትገባ መቅረዝህን ከሰፍራው እወስዳለሁ። ሦስቱ መደረግ ያለባቸው ነገሮች የወደቁበትን ስፍራ ማወቅ፡ ንስሐ መግባት፡ እና የመጀመሪያውን የተተወ ነገር ማድረግ ናቸው። ይህ ካልሆነ ማስጠንቀቂያው የመቅረዙ ከሰፍራው መወሰድ ነው። ምናልባት ጭል ጭል እያለ ያለ መብራት ለወዲያኛው መጥፋቱ ነው። መንፈሳዊ እሳት መከሰም የለበትም። የጌታ ተከታይ ሆኖ ሳለ የክርስቲያን ሕይወት መደብዘዝ የለበትም።

በአንጻሩ ደግሞ ሰው ሠራሽ እሳት መለኮስና መቀጣጠልም የለበትም። ሰው ሠራሽ እሳት የሚመስል እንጂ መንፈሳዊነትና መንፈሳዊ ጉልበት የሌለው፤ በስሜትና በስሜታዊነት የተሸፈነ፤ በሰዎች አነሣሽነትና ገፋፊነት ወይም ለመምሰል ሲባል የሚደረግ ሞቅታና ግለት ነው። ጉልበት ብቻ ሳይሆን ዘላቂነትም የለበትም። ስለዚህ እንደ ፋሽን በሚለዋወጡ ነገሮች፡ ከስተቶችና ልምምዶች የሚደገፍ ነው። እነዚህ ልምምዶች መንፈሳዊ የሚመስሉበት ምክንያት ምናልባት በቤተ ክርስቲያን ወይም በክርስቲያኖች አካባቢ ስለሚደረጉ ወይም ጀማሪውና አለማማጁ ክርስቲያን አገልጋይ ስለሆነ ይመስላል።

ከላይ በመግቢያው ላይ በተጠቀሱት ጥቅሶች ያልታዘዙትን ሌላ እሳት ያቀረቡት የአሮጌ ልጆች ናቸው። አሮጌና ልጆቹ የክህነት ፈንታ የተሰጣቸው በመሆናቸው ናዳብና አብዩድ ካህናት ናቸው። ካህንነታቸው ግን የራሳቸውን እሳት የእግዚአብሔር እሳት አላደረገውም። እንዲያውም መቅሰፍት ሆነባቸው። ሰብዓዊና ስሜታዊ ልምምዶች ክርስትና ስለተነሡ መንፈሳዊ ይሆናሉ ማለት አይደለም። (ክርስትና መነሣት - በ40 ወይም በ80 ቀን - ክርስቲያን እንደማያደርግ ሁሉ ማለት ነው። ክርስትና ከክርስቶስ ጋር የመገናኘት ጉዳይ እንጂ የሃይማኖት ሥርዓት የመፈጸም ነገር አይደለም።) እንግዲህ እነዚህን ሰው ሠራሽ እሳቶች፤ መንፈሳዊ የሚመስሉ ግን ያልሆኑ ልምምዶች መፈተሻችን ምን መሆን አለበት?

እነዚህን በየጊዜው የሚፈለፉ አዳዲስና አሮጌ ልምምዶችን በየዋነነትና በቀላሉ የሚቀበሉና የሚያራምዱ ሰዎች መለኪያቸው ኅሊናዊ ዳኝነት ነው። ኅሊናዊ (subjective) ዳኝነት ሲባል የአንድ ነገር ትክክለኛ መሆን ወይም ያለመሆን ነባራዊ (objective) በሆነ መለኪያ ሳይሆን በሰዎች ስሜት፤ በሰብዓዊ ልምምድ፤ በሚፈጥረው አርኪነትና ጥቅም የተደገፈ ነው። ነባራዊ በሆነው የማይለወጥ ቃል ብቻ ሳይሆን በአመክኖአዊነትም (logicality) አይደገፍም። ስለዚህ የኅሊናዊነት ስሕተት ከሰው ወደ ሰው ብቻ ሳይሆን ከጊዜ ወደ ጊዜም የሚለያይ ሚዛናዊ ያልሆነ ዳኝነቱ ነው። ለክርስቲያን የምንም ልምምድ፤ ትምህርትና ድርጊት ነባራዊ መለኪያ ቃሉ ወይም መጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ነው።



ምንም ልምምድ በቃሉ ተፈትሽ የማያልፍ ከሆነ እንድንቀበል መገደድ የለብንም። አንድ ሰው የነዚህን ልምምዶች ወይም ትምህርቶች ትክክለኛነት ቢጠረጥር ወይም ቢጠይቅ ደግሞ እንደ ስሕተተኛ ወይም ከሐዲ መቆጠር የለበትም። ከቃሉ ጋር የሚጋጭ ልምምድ በትዝብት መታየት ብቻ ሳይሆን መገለጥና ከሽፋኑ በታች ያለው ምንነት ወይም ማንነት መታየት አለበት። በእውነቱ በቤተ ክርስቲያን ውስጥ የሚታዩ ከስተቶችና ልምምዶች ብቻ ሳይሆኑ ማናቸውም ነገሮች በቃሉ ቢመረመሩ ይህ ምርመራ መበረታታት አለበት እንጂ መወገዝ የለበትም።

ሰው ሠራሽ እሳቶች ወይም ሰብዓውያን ልምምዶች ሰው ሠራሽ ስለሆኑ ዕድሜና ጉልበት የላቸውምና ከጥቂት ወራትና ዓመታት መሰንበትና መከረም አልፈው አይሄዱም። አልፈው ሄደውም አያውቁም። አንዳንዶቹ በተጀመሩበት አካባቢ ሲከሰሙ በሌላ ቀበሌ ደግሞ ይለኩና እዚያ ወረታቸው እስኪያልቅ ድረስ ይሰነብታሉ። በዘመናዊው ካሪዝማዊ እንቅስቃሴ ውስጥ manifestation እየተባሉ የሚጠሩ ልምምዶች የዚህ ሁኔታ ምሳሌዎች ናቸው። Manifestation ለሚለው ቃል የአማርኛ አቻ ስላላገኘሁለት ነው እንዳለ የተጠቀምኩት። ቃሉ በዐይን የሚታዩ፣ በጀር የሚደመጡና በሰውነት የሚገለጡ ወይም አካላዊ በሆነ ሁኔታ የሚደረጉ ትዕይንቶችን ምንነት የሚገልጥ ነው።

እነዚህ ትዕይንቶች በአንድ ቦታ በአንድ ወይም ጥቂት ሰዎች ተከስተው የሚያልፉ ልምምዶች ሳይሆኑ የሚሰነብቱና የሚከርሙ እንዲሁም በርካታ አማኞችን የሚነኩ ናቸው። ከቅርብ ዓመታት ወዲህ እየመጡ ከሄዱትና ካሉትም መካከል ጥቂቶቹን ልጥቀስ።

- በጉባኤ ውስጥ እንደ አራዊትና እንደ እንስሳት መጮኽ። እንዲህ የሚያደርጉት ነገሩን መንፈሳዊ ሲያስመስሉት እንደ ውሻ ከጮኹ አውሬ ማባረራቸው፤ እንደ አንበሳ ካገሉ ጠላትን ማስደንገጣቸው እንደሆነ ይነገርላቸዋል። ዱሮ እንዲህ የሚያደርጉ ተወስደው ይጸለላቸው ነበር። አሁን እንደ ጤናማ ይታያሉ። ይልቅስ የነሱን ጤንነትና መንፈሳዊነት የሚጠይቁት አጋንንት እንዳለባቸው ይጠረጠራሉ። ይደንቃል።
- ማማጥ። ይህ በ90ዎቹ መጨረሻ ከቶሮንቶው ንቅናቄ በኋላ የተጀመረ ትእይንት ነው። በዚህ ልምምድ ሰዎች (ወንዶችንም ጨምሮ) ወገባቸውን ይዘው ተንበርክከው ወይም ተጋድመው ልክ ነፍስ ጡር ሴት ልትወልድ እንደምታምጥ በመጮኽ፣ በማቃሰት፣ በመወራጨት፣ በወሊድ ሂደት ውስጥ ያልፋሉ። ይህን የሚያስደርጉ ሰባኪዎችም እነዚያ ሰዎች አንዳች መንፈሳዊ ነገር ወይም ሰው እየወለዱ እንደሆኑ ያስረዳሉ። የምንም ነገር የልደት ወረቀት ወይም የመውለዳቸው ማረጋገጫ ተሰጥቶአቸው ግን አያውቅም።
- ቅዱስ ሳቅ። ይህ ያለ ማቋረጥ እየተንከተከቱ ለረጅም ጊዜ መሳቅ ነው። ስብከት መሃልም ሊሆን ይችላል፤ ለሳቅ ሲባል ስብከቱ ቢቋረጥም ምንም እንዳልሆነ ይቆጠራል። ይህ ልምምድ አንድ ወቅት የዘመኑ የካሪዝማዊነት ፋሽን ሆኖ በብዙዎች ዘንድ እየተሰበሰቡ ጥርስ የማስጣት ነገር ሆኖ ከረመ።
- መገንደስ። ይህ ከሌሎች ቆየት ያለና አሁን ቀነሰ ቢልም ጥቂት ባልሆኑ ካሪዝማውያን የሚደረግ ልምምድ ነው። ወደ ፊት የተጠሩ ወይም ሊጸለላቸው የመጡ ሰዎች በትንፋሽ፣ በጣት፣ በልብስ፣ በመዳፍ እየተነኩ ወይም በጣት ማመልከት ወዘተ እንደ ዛፍ ይገነደሳሉ። ከአወዳደራቸው የተነሣ ተደጋግመው የደረሱ አደጋዎች ስላሉ ሲወድቁ የሚደግፉና እርቃን የሚሸፍኑ አጋፋሪዎች የሚማስኩበት ልምምድ ነው።
- የማይተረጎም ልሳን። ይህ ተናጋሪው የማይተረጎመው፣ ሌላም የማይተረጎመው ምን እንደተባለ ማንም የማያውቅበትና ስለዚህም የማይታነጽበት ልሳን ብዙዎች በሚገኙበት የመናገር ልምምድ ነው። በ1ቆሮ. 12-14 ስለዚህ በግልጽ ቢጻፍም የተጻፈውን ከመታዘዝ በልምምድ መታዘዝ አይሎ ሲገዛ ይታያል።

እነዚህ የውሸት ፈውሶችን፣ የማይፈጸሙ ትንቢቶችን፣ የግምትና መለምት 'መገለጦችን' (መገለጥ የሚባል የጸጋ ስጦታ አለመኖሩን ሳንዘነጋ) ሳንነካ ነው። ከላይ የተጠቀሱትን ጥቂት ምሳሌዎች ስንመለከት ልምምዶቹ ስሜትን ሊነኩ፣ እውነት ሊመስሉ፣ በአንዳንዶች እንዲያውም የመንፈሳዊነት መስፈሪያ ተደርገው ሊቆጠሩ ይችላሉ። ግን እነዚህ ነገሮች ሰው ሠራሽ ልምምዶች ናቸው? ወይስ በቃሉ የተደገፉ ጉባኤን የሚያንጹ ድርጊቶች ብሎ መጠየቅ ትክክለኛ አካሄድ ነው። አንዳንድ የዋሆች፣ "እነዚህ ልምምዶች ተለማማጁን እስከጠቀሙ ድረስ ምንም ጉዳት የለባቸውም" የሚል አቋም አላቸው። ከእነዚህ የማይርቁት ደግሞ፣ "ለላውን እስካልጎዱ ድረስ ቢኖሩ ምንም ችግር የለበትም" የሚል አስተሳሰብ አላቸው። ለእነዚህ ምንጩ ሳይሆን ውጤቱ ነው መለኪያው።

የተለማማጁ ጥቅም መለኪያ ምንድነው? ሌላውን አለመጉዳታቸውና፣ እነርሱን ራሳቸውንም አለመጉዳታቸው የሚፈተንበት መፈተኛ አለ? ነገራዊ በሆነው የማይለወጠው መፈተኛችን በእግዚአብሔር ቃል እነዚህን ነገሮች መፈተሽ እነዚህ ነገሮች ሰማያዊ ወይም ምድራዊና ሰው ሠራሽ መሆናቸውን ለመለየት ይረዳናል። ሰው ሠራሽ ብቻ ሳይሆኑ ሰይጣን ሠራሽ እሳቶች በቤተ ክርስቲያን አልፍኝ ውስጥ እየነደዱ መሆናቸውን ላለማየት አንገታችንን ማዞር የለብንም።

የአምልኮ ወቅት ጩኸት፣ ውኃ የማያነሡ መዝሙሮችን ለማሞቅና ለመሸፈን የሚደረግ ከልክ ያለፈ የሙዚቃ መሣሪያ ድምጽ፣ ተጨምቆና ተገድዶ የሚደረግ ጭብጨባና እልልታ፣ እየተጠየቀና እየተለመነ የሚባል 'አሜንና ሃሌሌይ'፣ የአማኞችን ስሜት ማጣዝ ወዘተ መንፈሳዊ መቀጣጠል የሚመስላቸው ጥቂቶች አይደሉም። ለነፍሳችን የሚቀርልንና ለዘመንና ለዘላለማችን የሚሆንልን ስንቅ አገኘን? ለረጅሙና ዋጋ የሚያስከፍለው ጉዞ የሚሆን ጉልበት አገኘን? ከፊት ይልቅ ለተሻለና ለላቀ ግንኙነት ታደስን? ክርስቶስን ያለወቁ ልባቸውን የሚመረምር፣ ኃጢአተኝነታቸውን የሚናገር ቃል ሰሙ? በእውነትና በመንፈስ እግዚአብሔር ተመለከ? ብለን ብንጠይቅ መልሳችን ሰውር አይሆንም።

እሳት ሁሉ እሳት አይደለም። ለብ ለብ ክትፎም እሳት ሸቶታል። እመንገድ ዳር በቆሎ ጥብስ የሚሸጡልን ሰዎች የሚጠብቁት በቆሎም እሳት ነክቶታል። ብቻ ሁለቱም ከውስጥ ጥሬ ናቸው። ከ3 ዓመታት በፊት ባለቤቴ ወላጆቿን ልትጎበኝ ሄዳ ያዘጋቸችልኝም ምግብ ስላለቀ ከግርሰሪ ሁሉ ነገር የተጨመረበትና ሊበስል የተዘጋጀ ሊጥ ፒሳ ገዝቼ መጣሁና ማብሰል ጀመርኩ። ለ15 ያህል ደቂቃ መብሰል እንዳለበት ብቻ ነው በችኮላ ያነበብኩት። ከዚያ 15 ደቂቃ ጠብቄ ሳወጣው አሁንም ሊጥ ነው። ሊጡ ግን በጣም ይሞቃል፤ እንዲያውም ያቃጥላል። እላየ የተጨመሩት ነገሮች በስለው ተንጨርጭረዋል። ኋላ ግራ ሲገባኝ ደውቶ እርሷን አላገኘሁም ግን የሆነው ስናገር ያገኘኋት ልጅ፣ "በምንድነው ያበሰልከው?" አለችኝ። "በማይክሮዌቭ ነዋ!" አልኳት። "አይደለም፣ የሱ ዓይነት ፒሳ የሚበስለው በምድጃ (oven) ነው። ለዚያውም ምድጃው አስቀድሞ ግሎ ነው" አለችኝ። አወይ ጉድ! የኔ ፒሳ ለ15 ደቂቃ በሰው ሠራሽ የማይክሮዌቭ እሳት እስከ ውስጡ ተጠብቦአል፤ ግን አልበሰለም። ሊጥ እንደተጠፈጠፈ ገብቶ ሲወጣም ሊጥ ነው! የሞቀ ነጭ ጥሬ ሊጥ።

ሰው ሠራሽ እሳት ሊለበልብም ሊያቃጥልም ይችላል፤ ግን አያበሰልም። የናዳብና የአብዩድ እሳት ሌላ እሳት ነበረ። የራሳቸው እሳት ነበረ። የሚያሳዝነው እነዚህ ሰዎች የጠፉትም በእሳት ነበረ። አገልጋዮችም ተገልጋዮችም ይህን እንጠይቅ፤ የምንቆሰቁሰው፣ የምናነድደው፣ የምናራግበው እሳት "በምድር ላይ እሳት ልጥል መጣሁ" ያለው ጌታ የለኩሰው እሳት ነው ወይስ የኛ እሳት?

ጌታ ከአርያም ይባርካችሁ። ዘ.መ.





የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ጥያቄዎች

ከታች በቤተ ክርስቲያናችን በምናትማት ትንሽ መጽሐፍት ከምናወጣቸው ጥያቄና መልስ ውድድሮች ገጽ ውስጥ የተወሰደ ክፍል ይገኛል። ለእናንተም የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ እውቀት ትንሽ መፈተሻ እንድትሆን ወይም አትማችሁ በቡድንና በቤተ ክርስቲያን እንድትጠቀሙበት እንዳለ በመውሰድ (ከማስታወቂያው ጋር) አትሜአለሁ። ሌሎቹንም ጥያቄዎች ለማግኘት ብትፈልጉ ጠይቁ።

የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ጥያቄዎች መልስ የምትሰጡ መመለሳችሁን ቀጥሉ። ከሚቀርቡት 300 ጥያቄዎች በዚህ እትም 140 ደርሰዋል። ከታች ባለው ሰንጠረዥ በ8ቱም አቅጣጫ ሠላሳ የመጽሐፍ ቅዱስ ሰዎችን ሰሞች በመፈለግ ካገኛችሁ በኋላ በቀሩት ባልተሠሩባቸው ዘጠኝ ፊደሎች ጌታን በማመናችን ከምናገኛቸው ነገሮች አንዱን ጻፉ። አንዳንድ ፊደሎች ተደጋግመው ጥቅም ላይ ሊውሉ ይችላሉ።

አ	ብ	ያ	ታ	ር	ያ	ስ	ሎ	ው	ጳ
ብ	ብ	ቆ	ዕ	ያ	ም	ቃ	ዔ	ዘ	ዮ
ደ	ም	ር	ን	ላ	ህ	ሉ	ሊ	ሎ	ለ
ና	ኮ	ር	ሃ	ታ	ነ	ቤ	ቂ	ኖ	ቀ
ጎ	ል	ያ	ድ	ም	ና	ሴ	ዮ	ዮ	ስ
ል	ሔ	ራ	ቤ	ሩ	ት	ሞ	ለ	ሐ	ስ
ቤ	ሮ	ኢ	ዮ	ብ	ና	ት	ይ	ን	ና
አ	ቤ	የ	ኢ	ት	ኤ	ወ	ሐ	ስ	ዮ
ቴ	ል	ጌ	ል	ቴ	ል	ፌ	ል	ሶ	ር
ቲ	ቶ	ል	ያ	ት	ላ	ስ	ዝ	ዔ	ቦ

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መልስ፡ _____