

GREAT EXPECTATIONS IN THE NEW YEAR – PART ONE

This is your Friend and Minister, dr. Joshua Uhiara, bringing you Healing Word from the Master, a program of the Master's Vessel Ministry which lets you know that Jesus loves you as you are, but loves you so much that He will not leave you as you are.

Friends, I welcome you back again as we journey through the scriptures this New Year. And I want to speak today on: Great Expectations in the New Year.

Great Expectations in the New Year

And our text is taken from Psalm 121:1-6

Psalms 121:1-6 (a song of Ascents)

I will lift up my eyes to the hills —

From whence comes my help?

2 My help comes from the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth.

3 He will not allow your foot to be moved;

He who keeps you will not slumber.

4 Behold, He who keeps Israel

Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

5 The Lord is your keeper;

The Lord is your shade at your right hand.

6 The sun shall not strike you by day,

Nor the moon by night.

7 The Lord shall preserve you from all evil;

He shall preserve your soul.

8 The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in

From this time forth, and even forevermore.

Let us pray.

PRAYER

Father, we want to thank You again for this opportunity we have to come to You and to listen to Your Word. May You, dear Lord, bless the hearts of all who would hear today, particularly those who would want to obey...in Jesus Name. Amen!

This psalm is one of the psalms of ascents: the psalms of ascents. Psalms of ascents are a group of fifteen psalms or sacred songs from Psalm 120 to psalm 134. They were probably sang by Jewish men as they ascended, *ascent*, to Jerusalem where they appeared before God at three Jewish festivals every year – Festivals or the feast of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. We find it in Deuteronomy 16:16.

Great expectations remind me of a popular novel by Charles Dickens, for the same title which we read in those days in secondary school. Two people in the novel had similar great expectations, but dissimilar in the means of fulfillment. One of them Ms. Havisham had the great expectation of getting happily married. And the other, Mr. Pip had the great expectation of becoming an English gentleman; and so married at a higher social class. And that was when England had this social class consciousness.

Ms. Havisham great expectation was dashed. The person she was to marry disappointed her, abandoning her at the altar during the wedding ceremony.

Mr. Pip saw his expectation fulfilled, but not without initial setbacks.

But let me observe one thing that is common to these two great expectations: they were not great at all. Why? Because the expectations were placed in people

and custom. And as a result Ms. Habisham lived the rest of her life with a broken and vengeful heart. It is advisable and desirable to have great expectations; because those who expect nothing get it, that is, nothing.

As we explore this important subject permit me to ask three vital questions that will help us accomplish our goals:

- i. What is the source of your expectations; in other words, how great are your expectations?
- ii. What is the strength of your expectation, or how strong are your expectations?
- iii. And then thirdly, what is the substance of your expectations, or what do they accomplish?

Let me take each if these.

1. What is the source of your expectations in this New Year? Where are your expectations located? The source of your expectations determine their greatness. Your expectations will only be as great as the source of your expectations. Expectations that do not derive from God are not great expectations.

The Psalmist in Psalms 121 has expectations when he says, *I will lift up my eyes*. The lifting up of his eyes speaks of expectations. But what was the source of his expectations? *From whence, he says, comes my help?* And he says, *my help comes from the Lord*. The Lord here is Jehovah – Jehovah the self-existent One – the self-sufficient One. The source of his expectations was not the hills, it was God – nothing more, nothing less: nothing else. This is what makes his expectations great.

Some of us Christians are tempted sometimes or most of the time to behave like chickens rather than the eagles. We constantly fix our eyes below rather than above – as the Lord commands us to do. In Colossians 3:1-3,

Colossians 3:1-4

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not

on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.

Great expectations

In Hebrews 12:1-2,

1 Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Look at verse 2

2 looking unto Jesus [great expectations], the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

And so such chicken Christians – those who look down rather than look up keep comparing themselves with themselves even though God says that doing so is not wise. 2 Corinthians 12:10.

This explains the reason why we keep competing with each other. I thought that the late Nkem Nwankwo's book, *My Mercedes is Bigger than Yours* is a satire that describes non-Christians. But sadly today, we Christians are preoccupied with the sizes of the Mercedes of membership, the Mercedes of our affluence, the Mercedes of our influence. We have forgotten God's warning in Psalms 146:3-4

Ps 146:3-4

3 Do not put your trust in princes,

Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help.

4 His spirit departs, he returns to his earth;

In that very day his plans perish.

But in verse 5 this comforting words:

*5 Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help,
Whose hope [or I would say expectation] is in the Lord his God,*

*6 Who made heaven and earth,
The sea, and all that is in them;
Who keeps truth forever,*

What is the source of your expectations? Remember that the source of your expectations determines how great your expectations will be. If your expectations are placed in things or in people you don't have great expectations. But if your expectations are placed in God Jehovah the Self-existent God, the Self-sufficient God, then you can say, that your expectations are really great.

We still have two of the questions to answer. And we will do that when next we return.

Let us pray

PRAYER

Father, we want to say thank You for this opportunity we have had now in this short time to hear Your precious Word. I am praying for those who have received Your Word; we pray, dear Lord, that this Word that they have received will bear fruit in them, that you will lift their eyes up away from people and things, and that they may fix their eyes on You, that their expectations will be derived from You God who never fails: the God who is awesome in power. Grant this, dear Lord, we pray in the Name of Jesus Christ. Amen!