

## ***What Believers Must Do to Have God's Providence, Provision, and Protection in the Days Ahead***

The winds of change are upon us and God is on the move. As stated in Isaiah 43:18-19 (NKJV), *“Do NOT remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.”*

In order to receive God's will for our lives often times we must leave behind people, places, and things to fully embrace new experiences and mandates from our Heavenly Father. We cannot hold onto the old and expect to fully embrace new mandates from God. This may require us to endure being in the wilderness for a time and give us the needed opportunity to prepare for what lies ahead until we are given our new marching orders.

We are entering into a season of uncharted territory and we must have a pioneering spirit for His Will to be accomplished. This is no time to “play it safe.” If you have said “yes” to the Lord you must be willing to get out of your comfort zone and rock the boat. Many people never achieve their destiny because they listen to their flesh, mind, and emotions. Furthermore, the approval of people is a great destiny killer.

God's grace is sufficient for anything He is calling you to do which seems beyond your ability. When you are over your head and don't know how you will stay afloat, this is when God steps in to empower you to do what you cannot do for yourself.

Just as the children of Israel had to be willing to follow the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night, we must seek the will of God and follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. Paul in Ephesians 5:17 exhorts, *“Therefore do not be vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is.”* A blunt but more to the point admonition is found in the Contemporary English Version translation, *“Don't be stupid. Instead, find out what the Lord wants you to do.”*

First seek His **Kingdom** and His **righteousness**....above all else. Jesus Christ must be the center of our lives. If we do not heed this timely word we will risk missing His provision, protection, and blessing in the days ahead. Believers need to realize

that just knowing God's Word is not enough. We must have the proper balance of being established on solid, Biblical truth, as well as knowing the voice of the Lord. Having a personal intimate relationship with Jesus is paramount to surviving what is to come.

If you do not take time to cultivate a personal relationship with Jesus how can you hear what the Spirit is telling you to do in this hour? God's word says in *John 10:27*, "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow me."

Not only is it vital to "hear" what God is saying, we must be obedient to "do" what we hear! In *John 14:15* Jesus states, "If you love me, **keep** my commandments." How can you love someone you don't intimately know? How can you intimately know someone you don't have a personal relationship with? You cannot. An intimate relationship always involves two way communication and rules without a relationship always leads to rebellion.

*"You diligently study the Scriptures **because you think** that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, **yet you refuse to come to me to have life.**" *John 5:39-40 (NIV).**

*"He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him; **the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.** For I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak." *John 12:48-49**

Also, it is critical for us to understand the significance of the parable of the Ten Virgins in *Matthew 25:1-13* below.

*"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now **five of them were wise, and five were foolish.** Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept*

*"And at midnight a cry was heard: '**Behold, the bridegroom is coming, go out to meet him!**' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered,*

*saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, **the bridegroom came**, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; **and the door was shut**.*

*"Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.'*

*"**Watch** therefore, for you know neither **the day** nor **the hour** in which the Son of Man is coming." ~ Matthew 25:1-13 (NKJV)*

Even though they were all believers (virgins), five were wise, and five were foolish. They all fell asleep waiting for the bridegroom's arrival. Therefore, it was not the fact that they fell asleep which excluded the five foolish virgins from entering into the wedding feast when the bridegroom (Jesus) finally came.

What made the difference is the five wise virgins were prepared and relied on the leading and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to endure and overcome until the bridegroom (Jesus) finally arrived. They had plenty of oil because they spent the majority of their time abiding in God's presence. They understood the significance of maintaining a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and the vital necessity to be led by and have the power of the Holy Spirit.

The five foolish virgins were excluded because they did not have a personal intimate relationship with Jesus Christ and abide regularly in His presence. Therefore, they could neither hear what the Holy Spirit was saying nor could they overcome and maintain their faith in Jesus until the end. This is substantiated by the fact they ran out of oil (the presence and power of the Holy Spirit). The five foolish virgins actually believed they could buy more oil by the deeds they performed to be seen of men, rather than abiding in the bridegroom's presence.

Unfortunately, this is often the case for many people who are so busy "doing" things for His Kingdom, rather than just abiding in His presence. This is a fatal mistake because we will only hear what the Holy Spirit is saying and be empowered by Him **if** we abide in God's presence. In other words, the five foolish virgins believed their "deeds" or ministry activities would buy them entrance into the wedding feast. Heed this message. **Nothing** is more important than having an intimate personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Your salvation is contingent on it!

Furthermore, we cannot buy (earn) the grace and presence of God with our works. This would result in us putting more faith in what we “do” rather than what Jesus Christ did on the cross. What we “do” is a by-product of our faith, love and devotion to God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit happens the moment we accept God’s free gift of grace by simply believing in His son Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. The empowerment of the Holy Spirit (baptismal of the Holy Spirit) is also a gift we must believe in to receive. So many believers are like Martha in that they are too busy doing kingdom work to savor just spending time in His presence like Mary did. The story of Mary and Martha is told in Luke 10:38-42. We must NOT be so busy that we do not abide in the vine (Jesus), and as a result, we wither and eventually die spiritually.

“I am the vine (Jesus), you are the branches (Believers). ***If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.***” John 15:5 (NIV)

“***But since he (the Believer) has no root*** (firmly planted in Jesus), ***he lasts only a short time.*** When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, ***he quickly falls away.***” ~ Matthew 13:21 (NIV)

“***If anyone does NOT remain in me*** (Jesus), ***he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.***” John 15:6 (NIV)

Below are the primary reasons Believers have forsaken and rebelled against the Lord, and unless they repent, they will perish.

1. We have forgotten our first love—Jesus Christ.
2. We do not read and study His Word for ourselves, and as a result, are being deceived by the apostate Church and the worldview.
3. We do **not apply** His Word and understand **the grace of God** given to us by the Holy Spirit **enables** us to live holy lives. We must live our lives as though Jesus can return at any time. If you knew Jesus Christ was coming back for His Church tomorrow would you change the way you are currently living?

*“For the grace of God has been revealed, bringing salvation to all people. And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in this evil world with wisdom, righteousness, and devotion to God, while we look forward with hope to that wonderful day when the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, will be revealed. He gave his life to free us from every kind of sin, to cleanse us, and to make us his very own people, totally committed to doing good deeds.” ~ Titus 2:11-14 (NLT)*

## ***We Must Go Back To Being the Book of Acts Church!***

We must fully embrace the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. The disciples were personally mentored by Jesus Christ during His earthly ministry, yet they were not ready to go forth and begin their mandates to establish the Church until they received the Holy Spirit. How much more should we pray and wait to receive the baptismal of the Holy Spirit before going forth with the Great Commission? This is so contrary to today’s teachings in the Church and this is why it is imperative we must learn more about the Holy Spirit and fully embrace the gifts thereof.

In Acts 1:1-8 below, Jesus told them to **wait** until they **received** the baptismal of the Holy Spirit. Also, it is noteworthy to observe, it was only then that they went from being Jesus Christ’s disciples to becoming His Apostles.

*“The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, **until the day in which He was taken up**, after He through the Holy Spirit had **given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen**, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.” ~ Acts 1:1-3 (NKJV)*

*“And **being assembled together with them**, He commanded them **not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, which,**” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but **you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now.” Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, “Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” And He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or*

*seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall **receive power** when the Holy Spirit has **come upon you**; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and **to the end of the earth.**” ~ Acts 1:4-8 (NKJV)*

Because they were obedient to gather together in Jerusalem as instructed and pray in one accord, everyone present received the promise gift from the Father—the baptismal of the Holy Spirit.

*“When the **Day of Pentecost** had fully come, they were **all with one accord in one place**. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then **there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each** of them. And they were **all filled with the Holy Spirit** and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” ~ Acts 2:1-4 (NKJV)*

Peter tells those who have witnessed what happened when they received the baptismal of the Holy Spirit what they must do to come into the Kingdom. First, they must repent from their sins (stop sinning), then they must accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior for the forgiveness of their sins. It is only then will they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit! Yet, many in Christendom mock God when they teach all you have to do is profess with your mouth Jesus Christ is your Lord and Savior, while not conveying the truth, we must stop intentionally sinning!

*Then Peter said to them, “**Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.**” ~ Acts 2:38-39 (NKJV)*

Then look what happens in Acts 2:40-47 below!

*“And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “**Be saved from this perverse generation.**” Then those who gladly received his word **were baptized**; and that day **about three thousand souls were added to them**. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine **and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers**. Then fear came upon **every** soul, and many wonders and*

*signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.” ~ Acts 2:40-47 (NKJV)*

PAY CLOSE ATTENTION. This is the Book of Acts Church the Lord will be restoring His Church back to in the days ahead to bring in the end-time harvest of souls! In one day's time, about three thousand souls were saved based on the testimony of the Apostle Peter. Then **the Lord** added daily to the growth of His Church (they didn't need special programs, entertainment, being politically correct, tolerant, or anything else to bring in new converts). It was the Lords responsibility to grow His Church because His Apostles and disciples focused on the following:

1. Teaching the Apostles' doctrine.\*

\*The doctrine the Apostles and Jesus and later the Apostle Paul taught from was strictly from the Torah and the Books of the Prophets. The New Testament did not exist yet. Please do not skim past this important fact. The Church must get back to teaching from the whole Word of God, especially the Torah, which are Yahweh's instructions for His people, not just the New Testament! Strong's # **G1322** διδαχή didachē *did-akh-ay'* From **G1321**; *instruction* (the act or the matter): - doctrine, hath been taught.

2. Fellowshiping with each other by the breaking of bread.

This is not talking about having communion, as the early Church automatically practiced the Jewish Seder during Yahweh's feast/holy convocation of Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. This is referring to eating and having fellowship together.

4. Praying

God's Church has stopped being a House of Prayer and this is why the Lord in this hour is raising up many houses of prayer in this hour. Jesus addressed this issue in Matthew 21:13, "It is written," he said to them, "'My

*house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of of robbers.'"*

5. Each soul began to have the reverential fear of God!

Proverbs 1:7 (NKJV) proclaims *"The fear of the LORD (Yahweh) is the beginning of knowledge, **But fools despise wisdom and instruction.**"*

6. As a result of **all the above**, many wonders and signs were done through the apostles, who later chose seven to serve the disciples who were rapidly multiplying by laying their hands on others to impart their anointing. This is substantiated in Acts 6:1-8 below.

*"Now in those days, **when the number of the disciples was multiplying**, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. **Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples** and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, **seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom**, whom we may appoint over this business; **but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.**" And the saying pleased the whole multitude. **And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.***

***Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people.** " ~ Acts 6:1-8*

7. It is the Church, not the government's responsibility to take care of the needs of God's people! Following is Jesus' version of a community of Believers:
  - a. All who believed were together
  - b. They had **all** things in common
  - c. They sold their possessions and goods and divided them among **all**, as anyone had need.



- d. They met **daily** in one accord (they were united in Spirit—there is no division when we are joined with one another in the Holy Spirit) in the temple which was the Church back then
- e. They broke bread from house to house, eating their food together
- f. They continually praised God
- g. As a result, they had favor with **all** people and the Lord added to their numbers greatly new Believers

## *Pray and Seek to Receive the Sons of Issachar Anointing*

Last, but certainly not least, we must pray to receive the Sons of Issachar anointing. Functioning in this anointing during these turbulent times will not only allow us to have God's supernatural providence, provision, and protection but more importantly, will allow us to bring in souls for the end-time harvest.

Someone with the "Issachar anointing" is a believer who:

Is able to discern the times or seasons we are in. Jesus warned us about the importance of recognizing the signs of the times we are in. We must stay alert!

*As stated in 1 Peter 1:13, "I brace up my mind and am sober (circumspect, morally alert) setting my hope wholly and unchangeably on the grace (divine favor) that is coming to me when Jesus Christ (the Messiah) is revealed." See also Matthew 16; Matthew 24; Mark 13; Luke 21.*

They possess strong character and they emulate the same characteristics of Jesus even when no one is looking. They are people of integrity and honor. They are "doers" of the Word.

*"Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, **put it into practice**. If you listen to the word, but do not put it into practice you are like people who look in a mirror and see themselves as they are. They take a good look at themselves and then go away and at once forget what they look like. But if you look closely into the perfect law that sets people free, and keep on paying attention to it and do not simply listen and then forget it, **put it into practice**—you will be*

*blessed by God in what you do.” ~ James 1:22-25 (TEV).*

*“May **integrity and uprightness protect me**, because my hope is in you.” ~ Psalm 25:21*

*“Similarly, encourage the young men to be **self-controlled**. In everything **set them an example by doing what is good**. In your teaching show **integrity, seriousness and soundness of speech** that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.” ~ Titus 2:6-8.*

They are able to handle heavy burdens with the empowerment from the Holy Spirit by **seeking and receiving** God’s grace.

They personify the meaning of Philippians 4:13, *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”* Even Jesus Christ needed God’s grace to achieve extraordinary mandates for God’s glory while on earth. How much more should we rely on and seek God’s grace to empower us to do great things for His glory?

*“And the child grew and became strong; he (Jesus) **was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.**” ~ Luke 2:40*

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of **grace and truth.**” ~ John 1:14.*

*“But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crossed with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by **the grace of God** he might taste death for everyone.” ~ Hebrews 2:9*

They accept personal responsibility and take action. They know how to confess their sins, ask for forgiveness and repent from all wrongdoing. They do not keep their sins hidden and share their shortcomings and areas of weakness with fellow Believers so they can be delivered and set free.

*“Should God **then reward you on your terms, when you refuse to repent?** You must decide, not I; so tell me what you know.” ~ Job 34:33*

*"Repent, then, and turn to God, **so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.**" ~ Acts 3:18-20*

*"Those **whom I love I rebuke and discipline.** So be earnest, and repent." ~ Revelation 3:19*

They are bold and courageous warriors with uncommon passion and valor who will never quit and will finish the fight despite the high cost involved.

*"But we do [strongly and earnestly] desire for each of you **to show the same diligence and sincerity [all the way through]** in realizing and enjoying the full assurance and development of [your] hope **until the end**. In order that you may not grow disinterested and become [spiritual] sluggards, but imitators, behaving as do those who through faith (by their leaning of the entire personality on God in Christ in absolute trust and confidence in His power, wisdom, and goodness) and **by practice of patient endurance and waiting are [now] inheriting the promises.**" ~ Hebrews 6:11-12 (AMP)*

*"I am strong and of good courage, I do not fear nor am I afraid, for the Lord my God, He is the one who goes with me. He will not leave me nor forsake me." ~ Deuteronomy 31:6 9 (NKJV)*

*"I am alert and on my guard; standing firm in my faith (my conviction respecting my relationship to God and divine things, keeping the trust and holy fervor born of faith and a part of it). I am courageous; growing in strength!" ~ 1 Corinthians 16:13.*

They are willing to humble themselves and be selfless servants by sacrificing their comfort, time, and money for the benefit of others.

*"I humble myself [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt me [He will lift me up and make my life significant]." ~ James 4:10.*

*"I am **not selfish and self-centered**, I deny myself, I take up my cross and follow Jesus. I forget myself, lose sight of myself and all my own interests." ~ Mark 8:34.*

*“I do **nothing** out of **selfish ambition** or **vain conceit**, but in humility consider others better than myself. I look **not only to my own interest**, but also to the interest of others. My attitude is the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing.” ~ Philippians 2:3-7 (NIV).*

They are willing to walk in difficult places and situations. In other words, they are willing to get out of the boat and walk on water like Peter did. As long as Peter was keeping his focus on Jesus he was able to walk on water. However, as soon as Peter took his focus off of Jesus he became fearful and started to sink. We must remember no matter what may come to keep our focus on Jesus!

*“**Because the Lord God helps me, I will not be dismayed; therefore, I have set my face like flint to do his will**, and I know that I will triumph.” ~ Isaiah 50:7 (TLB)*

*“I take comfort and am encouraged and confidently and boldly say, **The Lord is my Helper**; I will not be seized with alarm [I will not fear or dread or be terrified].” ~ Hebrews 13:6.*

*“If I have faith [that is living] like a grain of mustard seed, I can say to this mountain, Move from here to yonder place, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to me.” ~ Matthew 17:20.*

They know Jesus Christ is their source and refuge for **every** situation and need. Without God’s grace we can do nothing on our own. They fully rely on and place their hope in God. God is their fortress and place of refuge.

*“The Lord is my refuge and high tower when I am oppressed, a refuge and stronghold in my time of trouble.” ~ Psalm 9:9*

*“As I dwell in the secret place of the Most High, I shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.” ~ Psalm 91:1-2 (NKJV).*

*“I’m sticking with God. I say it over and over again—He’s all I’ve got left. He proves to be good to me and all who passionately wait and*

*diligently seek Him. It's a good thing to quietly hope for help from God." Lamentations 3:24-26 (The Message).*

They are willing to pick up their cross daily and drink from the same cup like Jesus did. They are willing to sacrifice their fame, fortune, sacred honor, and even their life if necessary.

*"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; **yet not my will, but yours be done.**" ~ Luke 22:42.*

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, **he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**" ~ Matthew 16:24 (NIV).*

*"And anyone who **does not carry his cross and follow me they cannot be my disciple.**" ~ Luke 14:27*

They fully trust in the Lord by not striving. In other words, they accept the Lord's will and rely on Him to bring them to where they need to be to fulfill His purposes for their life. By placing our hope and trust in the Lord we will inherit the promise of *Isaiah 40:31*, "I wait for the Lord [I expect, look for, and hope in Him]. I shall change and renew my strength and power. I shall lift my wings and mount up [close to God] as eagles [mount up to the sun]; I shall (am determined to) run and not be weary, I shall walk and not faint or become tired."

Eagles do not flap their wings to get where they are going—they glide effortlessly on the wind the Lord provides. Therefore, in order to achieve the purpose and destiny the Lord has for us we must rely on the Holy Spirit's daily guidance. When we hear the Lord we must obey what He instructs us to do. By being obedient to do what we hear we cannot miss our destiny and we will have His providence, provision and protection.

*"**If I diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord my God and do what is right in His sight, and listen to and obey His commandments and keep all His statutes,** (ONLY THEN) God will put none of the diseases upon me which He brought upon the Egyptians, for He is the Lord who heals me." ~ Exodus 15:26*

*"Because I seek (inquire of and require) the Lord [by right of my need*

*and on the authority of His Word], I shall not lack any beneficial thing.” ~ Psalm 34:10.*

They are alert and aware of opportunities to plant and water seeds for the purpose of winning souls. They view **every** area they infiltrate as the mission field ripe for harvesting. They use every venue as an opportunity to **show** and not **tell** the world about Jesus Christ. The mission field includes the marketplace, schools, buses, airplanes, ball fields, social gatherings and the civic arena. We will reap what we sow, and if we choose not to do anything we will reap the consequence In Matthew 25:24-30 below.

*Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful **but the workers are few.**” Matthew 9:37.*

*“Do you not say, “Four months more and then the harvest? I tell you, **open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest.** Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together.” ~ John 4:35-36.*

*“Then the man who had received the one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, “I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. His master replied, “**You wicked lazy servant!** So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Take the talent from him and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For everyone who has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. **Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.**” Matthew 25:24-30*

They will be sealed and protected during God’s impending judgment and the unfolding of prophetic end-time events because they stay focused on Jesus **and** as a result, are renewed and refilled by the Holy Spirit on a continual basis.

Remember in the parable about the five foolish virgins they ran out of oil (the Holy Spirit left them) because they needed a refill and didn't get it. How do we get sealed with the Holy Spirit? By abiding in His presence on a daily basis, submitting to and obeying the Holy Spirit and God's Word. Last, but certainly not least, eradicating all sin from our lives.

*"Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his **seal** of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come."~ 2 Corinthians 1:21-22 (NIV).*

*"And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a **seal**, the promised Holy Spirit." ~ Ephesians 1:13 (NIV)*

*Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, **sealed** with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are His, "and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord **must** turn away from wickedness." ~ 2 Timothy 2:19.*

These are the times we were forewarned about from Jesus. He told us to discern everything and keep alert. You need to know that just because you see people possess and use great spiritual gifts or talents, does not mean they are really God's children. See Matthew 7:22 below. The spiritual gifts or talents are not earned and they are irrevocable. Also, we should not only examine the fruit of the people we trust and listen to but we should also know their core beliefs so we are not led astray.

*"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. **Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.** Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. **"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we***

***not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" ~ Matthew 7:15-23 (NIV)***

In summary, it is every Believer's responsibility to "work out" our own salvation with fear and trembling. We will each be judged by Him for what we did or didn't do and we cannot blame anyone else for falling short or drifting away. It shouldn't matter when Jesus is coming back for His Church because we are mandated to occupy until His return. We are to use the talents we have been given to win souls, but not at the expense of losing our own. Anything you are involved in which keeps you from having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ must be cast aside so you can hear, "Well done good and faithful servant," rather than "Get away from me I never knew you."