

## UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES: The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

Now these were the numbers of the divisions that were equipped for war, and came to David at Hebron to turn over the kingdom of Saul to him, according to the word of the LORD...of the sons of Issachar who had **understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do**, their chiefs were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their command. (1 Chr 12:23, 32 NKJV)

### An End-Time Mandate for the Local Church...

"It is still rare to find any local church that is training, equipping, and releasing their people into their purpose. This will change for all that survive the coming few years...Few in the body of Christ understand this, but to the degree they do, they tend to **advance very quickly**. Those who do not understand it tend to remain **locked in spiritual immaturity**. When the Lord spoke of the signs of the end of the age, one of the things He said was, "Woe to those who nurse babes in those days" (see Matthew 24:19). **We could interpret this as "Woe to those who keep their people in immaturity."**

~ Rick Joyner, "A Clear Vision and Plan - The Greatest Christian Life," January 26, 2015.

**Spiritual Maturity...**Knowing who you are, what you're here for,  
and how life in the kingdom of God works!

## Part 3: Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom

### - A Few Thoughts About the Spirit of God...

- **The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Jesus.** He is not an impersonal force, but our friend, counselor, comforter, guide, teacher, and constant companion!
  - **Holy Spirit empowers us to live a victorious life** as Believers, doing the work of ministry through us...He is **building the kingdom through us!**
  - Holy Spirit is not just the one who enables ministry in our lives, **He is the goal, He is God, Himself!**
    - As God, He is not looking for a performance-driven people, but a Spirit-driven, glory-driven, **intimacy-driven church** that is compelled by love for Him. He is looking for relationship.
    - Holy Spirit is a spirit being, we should understand that He has a personality and traits. He speaks (*Tim. 4: 1*); He **has a will** (*1 Cor. 12: 11*); He is **knowledgeable** (*1 Cor. 2: 11*), He **teaches** (*John 14: 26*); He **has a mind** (*Rom. 8: 27*); He **loves** (*Rom. 15: 30*); and He **can also be grieved or insulted** (*Eph. 4: 30; Heb. 10: 29*).
    - Holy Spirit is personally involved in the salvation of every soul. No one would ever be able to meet or receive Jesus unless Holy Spirit drew them. He convicts the world of sin. He **works miracles**. He **reveals the will of God**. He continually **points us to Jesus**. Holy Spirit **confirms that Jesus is the Christ** (*Acts 2: 22*), and He continually aided Jesus to **confirm His work** (*Matt. 12: 28; Luke 4: 18-21*). **The only interaction you have ever had with God has been through the agency of Holy Spirit.**

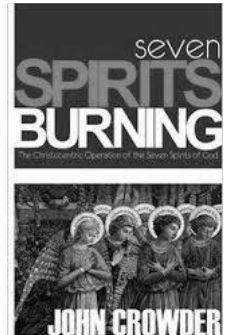
### - What Are "The Seven Spirits of God"?

*There shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit. And the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. And his delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. (Is 11:1-3 ESV)*

- We are living in a day when the Lord is **revealing hidden truths and restoring ancient pathways**. He doesn't just want us to know about the Spirit of God, but to go beyond the veil and discover for ourselves the dynamic nuances of the **sevenfold nature of the Holy Spirit** that Isaiah said rested on Jesus.

- As we become **more connected with the truth of God's sevenfold nature**, the person of Jesus will be more dynamically reflected in us. Not only will we know about His nature, but we will begin to manifest that sevenfold nature in ever-increasing measure in our lives.
  - *God blesses the one who reads the words of this prophecy to the church, and he blesses all who listen to its message and obey what it says, for the time is near. This letter is **from John** to the seven churches in the province of Asia. Grace and peace to you from the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come; **from the sevenfold Spirit** before his throne; and **from Jesus Christ**. (Rev 1:3–5 NLT-SE)*
- One of the most cryptic references in the Book of Revelation is to the **seven Spirits of God burning** before the throne in Heaven. For ages, the seven Spirits have eluded scholars and sparked wonder in the hearts of believers, hungry to peer into the mysterious depths of the invisible realm.
  - *"Write this letter to the angel of the church in Sardis. This is the message from the one who has the **sevenfold Spirit of God** and the seven stars: **"I know all the things you do, and that you have a reputation for being alive—but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what little remains, for even what is left is almost dead. I find that your actions do not meet the requirements of my God. Go back to what you heard and believed at first; hold to it firmly. Repent and turn to me again. If you don't wake up, I will come to you suddenly, as unexpected as a thief.** (Rev 3:1–3 NLT-SE)*
  - *From the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder. And in front of the throne were seven torches with burning flames. This is **the sevenfold Spirit of God**. In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal. In the center and around the throne were four living beings, each covered with eyes, front and back. (Rev 4:5–6 NLT-SE)*
  - *Then **I saw a Lamb** that looked as if it had been slaughtered, but it was now standing between the throne and the four living beings and among the twenty-four elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which represent **the sevenfold Spirit of God** that is sent out into every part of the earth. (Rev 5:6 NLT-SE)*

"Today, the Lord is speaking more about this subject in the Body of Christ than perhaps ever before in history. The Lord is revealing His seven Spirits not just for the purpose of intellectual curiosity. Nor is this revelation simply a matter of cognitive talk, but **the Lord is releasing explosive demonstrations of power** through His servants. As you are established in the truth about God's sevenfold nature, the person of Christ should be more brilliantly reflected to you. And a greater manifestation of the Spirit's virtue, favor, ability and intimate interactions should manifest in your life. **The sevenfold virtue of Holy Spirit speaks of His fullness flowing through the life of the believer.**" ~ John Crowder, *Seven Spirits Burning*.



#### - What the Fear of the Lord is NOT...

*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom. (Prov 9:10 NKJV)*

- **It DOES NOT say that the fear of the Lord is the END of wisdom!**
  - **The Law:** **"The ministry of death and condemnation."** Even in the OT, the Law was meant to be a tutor which lead us to Jesus. Jesus is the fullness of the wisdom of God.
 

*Now if **the ministry that brought death** (the Law), which was engraved in letters on stone, came with glory, so that the Israelites could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, fading though it was, will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? (2 Cor 3:7–8 NIV)*
- For a believer, the **fear of the Lord is never in relation to a fear of punishment**. That doesn't change the fact that stupid actions have bad consequences. Sin still has ramifications in our earthly lives. God may give His children discipline, but discipline and punishment are different things. Discipline relates to instruction, training and to guiding their paths toward joyful, fulfilling lives. I can discipline myself to play piano or write a book. I am not punishing myself.
- **The fear of the Lord is NOT being afraid of God!** Does this sound like a God we should be afraid of?

***How precious are your thoughts** about me, O God. They cannot be numbered! I can't even count them; they outnumber the grains of sand! (Psa 139:17–18 NLT-SE)*

- Being afraid of God does not apply to us anymore, because **Jesus fulfilled the law!**
  - **As we live in God, our love grows more perfect.** So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence **because we live like Jesus here in this world.** Such love has no fear, because **perfect love expels all fear.** If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first. (1 John 4:17–19 NLT-SE)

## - What IS the Fear of the Lord?

- **John Bevere**, who has written extensively about this subject in, *The Bait of Satan* and *The Fear of the Lord* says, “The first and foremost definition of the fear of the Lord is to be scared, even terrified **to be separated from God**”... Why? Because we are to “love what He loves and hate what He hates.” If you only have a fear of punishment, but no love of God, **it will eventually propel you to run from Him.**

- Remember the “wrap up” of the **seven-fold Spirit of God** that Isaiah speaks of in Isaiah 11?

*“...And his (Jesus) delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. (Is 11:1–3 ESV)*

- **John Crowder**, in *Seven Spirits Burning*, paints a picture of the fear of the Lord that is releasing, not constraining... “Not only do we enjoy the fear of God, but this word “delight” literally means to “shine forth” and to ‘inhale as a fragrance.’ You glow with the fear of God as it radiates out of you, as a fragrant authority.”
- The fear of the Lord should **manifest differently for the nonbeliever and the saint.** For the non-believer, it is indeed a fear of punishment. The fear of hell and the prospects of damnation should be as real as breathing and as horrible as his unredeemed imagination will allow.

*For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. (Matt 7:14 ESV)*

*Fear of the LORD leads to life, bringing security and protection from harm. (Prov 19:23 NLT-SE)*

- The fear of the Lord is not simply **reverence** either...

“To merely say that the fear of God is simply reverence, somehow takes away its punch. The common notion of reverence is often a conjured, bland uncomfortable type of corporate melancholy that you find in stuffy old churches. It is reminiscent of a funeral dirge. This is not true reverence, nor is it the fear of the Lord.” ~ **John Crowder**, *Seven Spirits Burning*

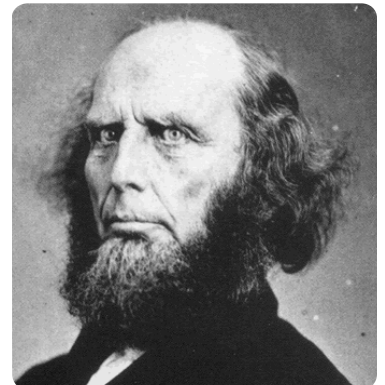
- The fear of the Lord is not just something you do – be afraid of Him – **it is actually a person** (Holy Spirit) that emanates from you. Jesus **IS** the Fear of the Lord.
- **If you do not fear God, you are already in bondage to the fear of man.** Man pleasing is ultimately a form of cowardice, and is on the top list of qualifications for being tossed into the lake of fire!

*“But cowards, unbelievers, the corrupt, murderers, the immoral, those who practice witchcraft, idol worshipers, and all liars—their fate is in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” (Rev 21:8 NLT-SE)*

## - How is the Spirit of the Fear of the Lord Manifest in the Life of a Believer?

- It creates an “**oracle**” spirit (Whitfield, Wesley, Finney, “Even speaking the sweetest words were like barbed wire.”) **Oracles have the power and authority to captivate a crowd.**
- One day in upper New York, prior to one of his meetings, **Charles Finney** decided to take an afternoon stroll through a nearby textile factory...

“I went slowly toward them. They saw me coming and were evidently much excited. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread, but I observed that her hands trembled so that she could not mend it. I approached slowly, looking



Charles Finney (1792-1875)

on each side at the machinery as I passed, but observed that this girl grew more and more agitated and could not proceed with her work. When I came within eight or ten feet of her I looked solemnly at her. She observed it and was quite overcome, and sank down and burst into tears. The impression caught like powder, and in a few moments nearly all in the room were in tears. This feeling spread throughout the factory. The owner of the establishment was present and seeing the state of things he said to the superintendent, "Stop the mill and let the people *attend to religion*, for it is more important that our souls should be saved than that this factory run."

- **The revival swept the factory** for days, as people from the rafters to the cellar packed the place for days of preaching – almost every single factory worker was saved.
- **A central function of the fear of the Lord is that you can no longer be purchased.** You don't prophesy according to man's agenda, but consistent with Heaven's agenda. These modern-day-oracles have been delivered from the man-pleasing spirit!

*The fear of man brings a snare. (Prov 29:25 NKJV)*

*"Burn with unrelenting passion as you worship God in holy awe." (Prov 23:17 Passion)*

*"Soak yourself in the Fear-of-GOD." (Prov 23:17 Message)*

- In the days ahead, we are sure to get an up-close-and-personal look at what we see in **the book of Acts**...

Now God worked **unusual miracles** by the hands of Paul, so that even handkerchiefs or aprons were brought from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out of them. Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists took it upon themselves to call the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "We exorcise you by the Jesus whom Paul preaches." Also there were seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.

And the evil spirit answered and said, "**Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?**"

Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known both to all Jews and Greeks dwelling in Ephesus; and **fear fell on them all**, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. And many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed. (Acts 19:11–20 NKJV)

- **The Key:** The way you **access** the Spirit of the fear of the Lord is to **value, honor** and **focus** on it.

#### - **The Fear of the Lord, Wisdom, and Understanding the Times...**

- We will **NEVER** have understanding of the times and know what to do apart from the Holy Spirit's enablement!
  - Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. It is the **pipeline to the Holy Spirit's power** that all other aspects of the Spirit's nature (Wisdom, understanding, council, might, and knowledge) flow through.
- It is in the **Holy Spirit's divine nature** to give us understanding of the times!
- Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to not only know what to do, but **to do it!**
- God is MORE willing to **train, equip**, and **enable** us to do His will than WE ARE to receive it. **The key is OUR obedience!**
- **Another Key:** The **closer you get to God**, the more **necessary** the fear of the Lord becomes to you! The bottom line...God wants us to be **serious** about our relationship with Him!