

Preparing to Discern the Times and Seasons of the Lord

by Joanne Cook Danner

We must be cognizant of the times and seasons of the Lord that are upon the global scene and in our personal lives as believers (I Thess. 5:1-6). “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee” (Isa. 60:1-2, KJV). Concurrently, we are witnesses to this portion of Scripture becoming a reality. There is an obvious manifestation of gross darkness encroaching upon the world scene, but we also see the glory of God appearing on the horizon. Everything that can be shaken is being shaken. Worldly systems are crashing. We cannot trust in a politician, government, or economic systems. We trust in God alone. Mankind has become faint-hearted, but we choose to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Ps. 27:13, KJV).

The Scriptures convey to us that there is a time when greater works will be manifested through believers than have ever been seen in the earth (Jn. 14:12, KJV). There will be great miracles, healings, deliverances, and the salvation of multitudes. When we witness spiritual manifestations, we must not lose sight of our focus on Christ and our relationship with Him. As we see biblical prophecy being fulfilled before our eyes, we intuitively know that greater works will be required to meet the needs of the end-time harvest. We also intuitively know that there is a price to be paid before we can manifest the greater works in and through our lives to become carriers of the glory of God. We also know that this will require the very resurrection life of Jesus working through His people. He is coming to tabernacle with us. This is a higher calling than giftings alone. We must come into alignment with the divine purpose of God in our lives and in the earth. Serious times require a serious spiritual commitment. We must have His truth etched upon the inward parts of our heart.

We live in a time when the Lord is separating the precious from the vile. The pot of iniquity is boiling over, and the vile is being brought to the surface to be removed. The Lord will pluck up the evil roots. There is a qualification and processing going on in our lives. “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness does not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see” (Rev. 3:18, KJV). We must have kingdom vision to see beyond the natural and develop vision that originates from the heart of God and our relationship with Him first and foremost. The pendulum that divides truth from evil is widening. The Lord is removing the grey areas, especially in the church. It is one side or the other, and the Lord said to “choose whom you will serve” (Joshua 24:15, KJV). There is no room for pride, mixture, or compromise. The Lord condemns people who are non-committal and lukewarm. The Lord says that He will spew those who are lukewarm out of His mouth (Rev. 3:15-16). Let us all come under the side of the canopy of truth as Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. We must let truth have its perfect work in and through us. Truth in the inward parts will not be a reality to us until it is personalized, and we walk in the truth. We must have clean hands and a pure heart to ascend the hill of the Lord (Ps. 24:3-4, KJV).

Seasoned men and women of God have been walking the way of the cross and have been preparing for the kingdom of God to be manifested in the earth through His people for such a time as this (Esther 4:14, KJV). The preparation has been beyond the manifestation of gifts alone because it the

manifestation of the life of Christ Himself as head of the church that will operate through people who have had transformation of their character. The power of His resurrection comes through the fellowship of His sufferings (Phil. 3:20, KJV). That is the price to be paid to be conformed into His image. It is the spiritual dwelling place of living from the heart of God and dwelling in His presence as we become His dwelling place in the earth. Scripture tells us that He must increase in us, and we must decrease (Jn. 3:30, KJV). One of the most chilling Scripture verses tells us that some who operate in gifts alone, without the character of Christ as the underpinning for the operation of the gifts will hear the words, "Depart from Me" (Matt: 7:21-23). Even though they prophesied and were used in the gift realm, He never knew them. He never knew them experientially and subjectively through relationship. Their focus was not on a committed relationship with the Lord in the secret place. You see, the gifts and callings are without repentance. The gifts are freely given and are not a sign of spirituality. We are held accountable for how we use the gifts that God has given to us (Rom. 11:29). There is nothing wrong with gifts, but the operation of the gifts must be through the character of Christ that has been worked within our lives. There is no place for the pride of man in any form of ministry on this earth. There are some who have made gifts and ministry an idol in their lives. The Lord is a jealous God and will not share His glory with another (Isa. 42:8, KJV). He is jealous over His people, and He requires a standard of righteousness to be manifested in their lives.

The Lord is more interested in what we will become than what we will accomplish for Him. We must concentrate first on hearing the call of deep calls unto deep from the heart of God in the secret place. The doing is important but doing must have its genesis in relationship. Scripture tells us to daily work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12, NKJV). We must apprehend that which we are apprehended for in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:12, NKJV). It is a daily walk, and we must daily identify the little foxes that spoil the vines (Song of Sol. 2:15, NKJV). We must repent and come to the Lord with clean hands and a pure heart. King David understood the principle of continuous repentance. In Psalm 51, King David prayed for a clean, broken, and contrite heart. The thoughts and intents of the heart must be pure. We must continue to follow on to know the Lord through an intimate relationship and identify the little foxes that spoil the tender fruit on the vine. This refers to the fruit that is in the process of development. We do not want to abort the fruit as the fruit is that which the Lord desires to identify with in our lives in the garden of our heart. The fruit is that which is developed within us as we become like Him.

This is the season of the coming forth of the body of Christ. The church will move beyond the confines of a physical structure and will be revealed in the highways and byways of life wherever our steps are ordered of the Lord. There will be a corporate moving of the body of Christ in unity. Psalm 133 speaks of the unity in the body of believers with Christ as the head. The anointing will flow from the head to the skirts of the garments. The mind of Christ will bring transformation, unity, fruit, miracles, and glory. The days when men are elevated are of an old religious order. We are coming into the governmental order of God in the establishment His kingdom and rulership over the corporate church. He is looking for the humble and repentant heart. He dwells in the high and holy places with those who have the spirit of the humble and the heart of the contrite ones (Isa. 57:15, KJV). He is seeking the manifestation of the fully developed fruit. A revival of repentance, prayer, intercession, worship, and holiness will be the prerequisite to this end-time corporate move of God. Let thy kingdom come, and thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Let your kingdom come in us through rulership over our personal lives. We give you the glory. Come, Lord Jesus, come.