

GOD'S STRATEGY

The Foundational Faith

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Praise God, the Lord of all, and peace to all sons and daughters of Adam.

This paper in your gracious hands is to clarify information on the strategy of God for us who believe.

There are some who talk of obeying God and pleasing Him. But what are the commands which please God? Is there a list of such? And, how does God lead us and speak to us?

Let us discover the subject of God's strategy in the Noble New Testament. We will observe God's thoughts.

INTRODUCTION TO CHRIST

John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ. And he was filled with the Holy Spirit (i.e. the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Truth) from birth. Is this important? ***"But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son; you will name him John. Joy and gladness will come to you, and many will rejoice at his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He must never drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth."*** (Luke 1:13-15) (verses quoted from NET (2006) translation except when adjusted to reflect the Injil Al-Sharif)

And, also, ***"When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit."*** (Luke 1:41)

As another example, Simeon heard from and obeyed the Holy Spirit to come see Christ Jesus when He was a child. ***"It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So Simeon, directed by the Spirit, came into the temple courts, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what was customary according to the law, Simeon took him in his arms and blessed God, saying, "Now, according to your word, Sovereign Lord, permit your servant to depart in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation"'"*** (Luke 2:26-30)

John introduced Christ as the one who would give the Holy Spirit. So, what is the Holy Spirit? And, how does He come? ***"John answered them all, 'I baptize you with water, but one more powerful than I am is coming — I am not worthy to untie the strap of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."*** (Luke 3:16) (see also Mark 1:7-8 and John 1:29-33)

Let us continue the observations by looking at the life of Christ.

CHRIST

Jesus was baptized with water and the Holy Spirit. ***“Now when all the people were baptized, Jesus also was baptized. And while he was praying, the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form like a dove.”*** (Luke 3:21-22) (see also John 1:32-33)

And Christ was led by the Holy Spirit. ***“Then Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan River and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness, where for forty days he endured temptations from the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and when they were completed, he was famished.”*** (Luke 4:1-2) And Satan tempted Christ but Christ did not commit any sin ever. ***“Then Jesus, in the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the surrounding countryside.”*** (Luke 4:14)

And Christ invites all of us to receive the Holy Spirit. ***“So I tell you: Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. What father among you, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead of a fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, although you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!”*** (Luke 11:9-13)

So, what does the Holy Spirit do?

The Holy Spirit guides us and gives us wisdom in His moment. ***“But when they bring you before the synagogues, the rulers, and the authorities, do not worry about how you should make your defense or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you must say.”*** (Luke 12:11-12) (see also Mark 13:9-13)

When a person receives the Holy Spirit he is born anew and that is by faith in Christ. ***“Now a certain man, a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who was a member of the Jewish ruling council, came to Jesus at night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs that you do unless God is with him.’ Jesus replied, ‘I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? He cannot enter his mother’s womb and be born a second time, can he?’ Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the solemn truth, unless a person is born of water and spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be amazed that I said to you, “You must all be born from above.” The wind blows wherever it will, and you hear the sound it makes, but do not know where it comes from and where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”*** (John 3:1-8)

The Holy Spirit gives life. ***“The Spirit is the one who gives life; human nature is of no help!”*** (John 6:63)

HOW DO WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Christ announced that He gives the Holy Spirit. ***“On the last day of the feast, the greatest day, Jesus stood up and shouted out, ‘If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. Just as the scripture says, “From within him will flow rivers of living water.”” (Now he said this about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were going to receive, for the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.)”*** (John 7:37-39)

And Christ explained who the Holy Spirit is and what He does for the believers. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth who resides in us and teaches us. ***“If you love me, you will obey my commandments. Then I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it does not see him or know him. But you know him, because he resides with you and will be in you. I will not abandon you as orphans, I will come to you. In a little while the world will not see me any longer, but you will see me; because I live, you will live too. You will know at that time that I am in my Father and you are in me and I am in you. The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him.’ ‘Lord,’ Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, ‘what has happened that you are going to reveal yourself to us and not to the world?’ Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves me, he will obey my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and take up residence with him. The person who does not love me does not obey my words. And the word you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me. I have spoken these things while staying with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and will cause you to remember everything I said to you.”*** (John 14:15-26)

And also Christ said, ***“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send you from the Father — the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father — he will testify about me”*** (John 15:26)

And also Christ said, ***“I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but will speak whatever he hears, and will tell you what is to come. He will glorify me, because he will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; that is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what is mine and will tell it to you.”*** (John 16:12-15)

Then Christ said ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.’ ***“So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace be with you. Just as the Father has sent me, I also send you.’ And after he said this, he breathed on them and said, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit.”*** (John 20:21-22)

And He gave instructions to wait for the Holy Spirit until He comes. ***“While he was with them, he declared, ‘Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait there for what my Father promised, which you heard about from me. For John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ So when they had gathered together, they began to ask him, ‘Lord, is this the time when you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?’ He told them, ‘You are***

not permitted to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the farthest parts of the earth.”

(Acts 1:4-8)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

After Christ died and rose from the dead and before he was raised up to heaven, He promised that He would send the Holy Spirit. And it began to be fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost. *“Now when the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a sound like a violent wind blowing came from heaven and filled the entire house where they were sitting. And tongues spreading out like a fire appeared to them and came to rest on each one of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven residing in Jerusalem. When this sound occurred, a crowd gathered and was in confusion, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. Completely baffled, they said, ‘Aren’t all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that each one of us hears them in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and the province of Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs — we hear them speaking in our own languages about the great deeds God has done!’ All were astounded and greatly confused, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’”* (Acts 2:1-12)

And Peter explains the Holy Spirit that He would come according to the prophecies. So, Peter said, *“‘And in the last days it will be,’ God says, ‘that I will pour out my Spirit on all people, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy, and your young men will see visions, and your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. And I will perform wonders in the sky above and miraculous signs on the earth below, blood and fire and clouds of smoke. The sun will be changed to darkness and the moon to blood before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes. And then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”* (Acts 2:17-21)

And Peter also explained, *“This Jesus God raised up, and we are all witnesses of it. So then, exalted to the right hand of God, and having received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father, he has poured out what you both see and hear. For David did not ascend into heaven, but he himself says, ‘The Lord said to my lord, ‘Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.’” Therefore let all the house of Israel know beyond a doubt that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ.’ Now when they heard this, they were acutely distressed and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘What should we do, brothers?’ Peter said to them, ‘Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”* (Acts 2:32-38)

This gift of the Holy Spirit is for all who believe, you and me both, Dear Honorable Reader. I

encourage you to receive the Holy Spirit by faith in Him.

EXAMPLES FROM THE LIFE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

Peter and John were threatened not to speak in the name of Jesus, but they prayed, ***“Lord, pay attention to their threats, and grant to your servants to speak your message with great courage, while you extend your hand to heal, and to bring about miraculous signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus. When they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak the word of God courageously.”*** (Acts 4:29-31) In other words, they did not consult themselves or each other or use their intellect but requested from God that He direct and they continued under the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Peter testified to the religious elders saying that the Holy Spirit is given to those who obey God. ***“But Peter and the apostles replied, ‘We must obey God rather than people. The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus, whom you seized and killed by hanging him on a tree. God exalted him to his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these events, and so is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.’”*** (Acts 5:29-32)

The Holy Spirit comes to those who believe. ***“Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. These two went down and prayed for them so that they would receive the Holy Spirit. (For the Spirit had not yet come upon any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then Peter and John placed their hands on the Samaritans, and they received the Holy Spirit.”*** (Acts 8:14-17)

The Holy Spirit did not come for worldly subservience. ***“Now Simon, when he saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, offered them money, saying, ‘Give me this power too, so that everyone I place my hands on may receive the Holy Spirit.’ But Peter said to him, ‘May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could acquire God’s gift with money! You have no share or part in this matter because your heart is not right before God! Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that he may perhaps forgive you for the intent of your heart. For I see that you are bitterly envious and in bondage to sin.’ But Simon replied, ‘You pray to the Lord for me so that nothing of what you have said may happen to me.’”*** (Acts 8:18-24)

The Holy Spirit speaks to us. For example, He spoke to Philip during his trip to Gaza. ***“Then the Spirit said to Philip, ‘Go over and join this chariot.’”*** (Acts 8:29)

After Philip told the Ethiopian the Good News, the Ethiopian believed and Philip baptized him. But after that God took Philip miraculously to another place. ***“Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away”*** (Acts 8:39)

The Holy Spirit encourages us. ***“Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria***

experienced peace and thus was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and in the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, the church increased in numbers.” (Acts 9:31)

The Lord gave a vision to Peter that meant that the Good News is not for Peter’s people only but appropriate for all people. *“While Peter was still thinking seriously about the vision, the Spirit said to him, ‘Look! Three men are looking for you. But get up, go down, and accompany them without hesitation, because I have sent them.’”* (Acts 10:19)

Then Peter went with the people who were not from his people and God gave them the Holy Spirit, by this confirming that God accepts the believers in Him, regardless of origin or religious background. *“While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all those who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had accompanied Peter were greatly astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on the Gentiles, for they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, ‘No one can withhold the water for these people to be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?’ So he gave orders to have them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to stay for several days.”* (Acts 10:44-48)

And after this, Peter explained to the other believers that God accepts all people who believe and gives them the Holy Spirit. (note Acts 11:12-16 and Acts 15:8)

The Holy Spirit inspires prophecy. For example, *“One of them, named Agabus, got up and predicted by the Spirit that a severe famine was about to come over the whole inhabited world. (This took place during the reign of Claudius.)”* (Acts 11:28)

And the Holy Spirit directs the work and actions. For example, *“While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, ‘Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.’ Then, after they had fasted and prayed and placed their hands on them, they sent them off. So Barnabas and Saul, sent out by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus.”* (Acts 13:2-4)

And God works miracles through the Holy Spirit. For example, *“But the magician Elymas (for that is the way his name is translated) opposed them, trying to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul (also known as Paul), filled with the Holy Spirit, stared straight at him and said, ‘You who are full of all deceit and all wrongdoing, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness — will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord? Now look, the hand of the Lord is against you, and you will be blind, unable to see the sun for a time!’ Immediately mistiness and darkness came over him, and he went around seeking people to lead him by the hand. Then when the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, because he was greatly astounded at the teaching about the Lord.”* (Acts 13:8-12)

And the Holy Spirit directs our direction. For example, *“They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in the province of Asia. When they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to do this, so they passed through Mysia and went down to Troas. A vision appeared to Paul during the night: A Macedonian man was standing there*

urging him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us!’ After Paul saw the vision, we attempted immediately to go over to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.” (Acts 16:6-10)

And the Holy Spirit is for those who believe in Christ. ***“While Apollos was in Corinth, Paul went through the inland regions and came to Ephesus. He found some disciples there and said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?’ They replied, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’ So Paul said, ‘Into what then were you baptized?’ ‘Into John’s baptism,’ they replied. Paul said, ‘John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.’ When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they began to speak in tongues and to prophesy.” (Acts 19:1-6)***

The Holy Spirit leads us, at times, to things we do not know and we do not know what to expect. But He teaches us in the moment. For example, Paul when he was speaking with the believers he said, ***“You know that I did not hold back from proclaiming to you anything that would be helpful, and from teaching you publicly and from house to house, testifying to both Jews and Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus. And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem without knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit warns me in town after town that imprisonment and persecutions are waiting for me. But I do not consider my life worth anything to myself, so that I may finish my task and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the good news of God’s grace.” (Acts 20:20-24)***

Other believers warned Paul of the danger to come. ***“After we located the disciples, we stayed there seven days. They repeatedly told Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem.” (Acts 21:4)***

And, ***“While we remained there for a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. He came to us, took Paul’s belt, tied his own hands and feet with it, and said, ‘The Holy Spirit says this: “This is the way the Jews in Jerusalem will tie up the man whose belt this is, and will hand him over to the Gentiles.”’ When we heard this, both we and the local people begged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul replied, ‘What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be tied up, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 21:10-13)*** Did the Holy Spirit not allow Paul to go to the city of Al-Quds? No. But the Spirit said that Paul would face difficulties. But it would be normal to flee from difficulties except that Paul listened to the Holy Spirit and arrived to Al-Quds and he was arrested. But the important thing to Paul was that he listen and obey the Holy Spirit.

So, what did Paul write, by the inspiration of God, about the Holy Spirit?

PAUL

It is not by the law or written code that we live, but we live by the Holy Spirit's strategy. We have been set free from the law and we live by the Spirit. ***“So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you could be joined to another, to the one who was raised from the dead, to bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful desires, aroused by the law, were active in the members of our body to bear fruit for death. But now we have been released from the law, because we have died to what controlled us, so that we may serve in the new life of the Spirit and not under the old written code.”*** (Romans 7:4-6)

Adherence to the written law does not save us because our flesh is sinful and weak. But, if we died and rose with Christ then we walk according to the Holy Spirit's strategy. ***“There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the life-giving Spirit in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. For God achieved what the law could not do because it was weakened through the flesh. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and concerning sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, so that the righteous requirement of the law may be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh have their outlook shaped by the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit have their outlook shaped by the things of the Spirit. For the outlook of the flesh is death, but the outlook of the Spirit is life and peace, because the outlook of the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to the law of God, nor is it able to do so. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, this person does not belong to him. But if Christ is in you, your body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is your life because of righteousness. Moreover if the Spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you, the one who raised Christ from the dead will also make your mortal bodies alive through his Spirit who lives in you. So then, brothers and sisters, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh (for if you live according to the flesh, you will die), but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live.”*** (Romans 8:1-13)

And Paul explains in detail about our close relationship with God through the Holy Spirit. It is a close relationship like adoption. From His kindness, God honors us in that we become His children by faith in Christ and God forgave our sins and we become His possession. ***“For all who are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery leading again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit himself bears witness to our spirit that we are God's children. And if children, then heirs (namely, heirs of God and also fellow heirs with Christ)”*** (Romans 8:14-17)

And, ***“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how we should pray, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with inexpressible groanings. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes on behalf of the saints according to God's will.”*** (Romans 8:26-27)

Paul talked about accepting other believers, though they are weak. Paul summarizes our life in

the Holy Spirit with three things; righteous (i.e. a holy life), peace and joy. How beautiful is the life of the believer! ***“For the kingdom of God does not consist of food and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*** (Romans 14:17)

The Holy Spirit gives us hope. ***“Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you believe in him, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.”*** (Romans 15:13)

Paul did not use wisdom or eloquence. But by the power of the Holy Spirit he preached Christ, and Him crucified. ***“When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come with superior eloquence or wisdom as I proclaimed the testimony of God. For I decided to be concerned about nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and with much trembling. My conversation and my preaching were not with persuasive words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not be based on human wisdom but on the power of God.”***

(1 Corinthians 2:1-5)

And Paul continues to explain saying, ***“Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things that are freely given to us by God. And we speak about these things, not with words taught us by human wisdom, but with those taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual things to spiritual people. The unbeliever does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The one who is spiritual discerns all things, yet he himself is understood by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, so as to advise him? But we have the mind of Christ.”*** (1 Corinthians 2:12-16)

And in explaining the Holy Spirit, Paul said, ***“But the one united with the Lord is one spirit with him. Flee sexual immorality! ‘Every sin a person commits is outside of the body’— but the immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body.”*** (1 Corinthians 6:17-20)

And the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual gifts for service to others, according to His will. ***“Now there are different gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are different ministries, but the same Lord. And there are different results, but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of all. For one person is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, and another the message of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another performance of miracles, to another prophecy, and to another discernment of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as he decides to each person, who produces all these things.”*** (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

Our life in the Holy Spirit is not by the law which results in death, but it is by His Spirit which results in life. And the life in the Holy Spirit is greater than the life in the law. ***“Now we have***

such confidence in God through Christ. Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as if it were coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who made us adequate to be servants of a new covenant not based on the letter but on the Spirit, for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. But if the ministry that produced death — carved in letters on stone tablets — came with glory, so that the Israelites could not keep their eyes fixed on the face of Moses because of the glory of his face (a glory which was made ineffective), how much more glorious will the ministry of the Spirit be? For if there was glory in the ministry that produced condemnation, how much more does the ministry that produces righteousness excel in glory!” (2 Corinthians 3:4-9)

We receive the Holy Spirit by faith, not by works. And after we receive the Holy Spirit, we live by faith, not by works. *“The only thing I want to learn from you is this: Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? Although you began with the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by human effort?”* (Galatians 3:2-3)

When we live by the Holy Spirit, sin is not reasonable because we have died with Christ. Does a dead man sin? Of course not! It is not us who live, but we have risen with Him, so He lives in us. Does Christ sin? God forbid! The life we live, we live by faith in the Son of God who loves us and gave Himself for us. *“But I say, live by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh. For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity, depravity, idolatry, sorcery, hostilities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, selfish rivalries, dissensions, factions, envying, murder, drunkenness, carousing, and similar things. I am warning you, as I had warned you before: Those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God! But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also behave in accordance with the Spirit.”* (Galatians 5:16-25)

God commands that we be filled with the Spirit. *“Therefore be very careful how you live — not as unwise but as wise, taking advantage of every opportunity, because the days are evil. For this reason do not be foolish, but be wise by understanding what the Lord's will is. And do not get drunk with wine, which is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making music in your hearts to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for each other in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.”* (Ephesians 5:15-21)

Be prepared to win and be strong in the weapons of the Lord and the Holy Spirit. *“Finally, be strengthened in the Lord and in the strength of his power. Clothe yourselves with the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavens. For this reason, take up the full armor of God so that you may be able to stand your ground on the evil*

day, and having done everything, to stand. Stand firm therefore, by fastening the belt of truth around your waist, by putting on the breastplate of righteousness, by fitting your feet with the preparation that comes from the good news of peace, and in all of this, by taking up the shield of faith with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With every prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and to this end be alert, with all perseverance and requests for all the saints. Pray for me also, that I may be given the message when I begin to speak — that I may confidently make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may be able to speak boldly as I ought to speak.”
(Ephesians 6:10-20)

Paul warned the believers to avoid people who rely on things of the flesh or on the law. He encouraged them to worship by the Holy Spirit and exultation of Christ. *“Finally, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! To write this again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you. Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of those who mutilate the flesh! For we are the circumcision, the ones who worship by the Spirit of God, exult in Christ Jesus, and do not rely on human credentials.”* (Philippians 3:1-3)

Paul knew that those who are chosen by God believe by the Holy Spirit and strong conviction and they receive the message with joy in the Holy Spirit even in difficulties. *“We thank God always for all of you as we mention you constantly in our prayers, because we recall in the presence of our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and endurance of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. We know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, in that our gospel did not come to you merely in words, but in power and in the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction (surely you recall the character we displayed when we came among you to help you). And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, when you received the message with joy that comes from the Holy Spirit, despite great affliction.”*
(1 Thessalonians 1:2-6)

And God commanded saying, *“Do not extinguish the Spirit.”* (1 Thessalonians 5:19)

We are sanctified not by our works but by the Holy Spirit and faith in the truth. *“But we ought to thank God always for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth. He called you to this salvation through our gospel, so that you may possess the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* (2 Thessalonians 2:13-14)

And, *“God did not give us a Spirit of fear but of power and love and self-control. So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me, a prisoner for his sake, but by God's power accept your share of suffering for the gospel.”* (2 Timothy 1:7)

God saved us and washed us by the second birth by which we joined with Him, and renewed us by the Holy Spirit. *“when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us in full measure through Jesus Christ our Savior. And so, since we have been*

justified by his grace, we become heirs with the confident expectation of eternal life.”
(Titus 3:4-7)

Let us summarize the strategy of God.

SUMMARY OF THE STRATEGY OF GOD

From the above we notice the following:

- There is prophecy that predicted the coming of the Holy Spirit.
- John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ and he was filled with the Holy Spirit from birth.
- Christ promised and gave the Holy Spirit.
- All are invited to believe and receive the Holy Spirit.
- God saves us and sanctifies us and gives us the Holy Spirit by faith and not by works.
- The Holy Spirit gives us life, new life in Christ.
- Human nature does not give life.
- The Holy Spirit
 - o speaks to us
 - o teaches us
 - o directs us
 - o guides us
 - o inspires prophecy
 - o works miracles
 - o encourages us
 - o empowers us
 - o resides in us, the believers
 - o intercedes for us as we pray
- We do not live by the law, but by the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Spirit confirms that we are fully accepted by God through Christ.
- The Holy Spirit gives
 - o righteousness
 - o peace
 - o joy
 - o hope
 - o love
 - o patience
 - o kindness
 - o goodness
 - o faithfulness
 - o gentleness
 - o self-control
 - o power
 - o gifts, which are for the service of the others and include:
 - wisdom
 - knowledge

- faith
- healing
- miracles
- prophecy
- discernment of spirits
- speaking in tongues
- interpretation of tongues

Finally, ***“Then Jesus came up and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”***
(Matthew 28:18-20)

Amen.