

## THE DANGER OF UNCLEAN SPIRITS CONCLUSION

Tonight I'm going to end this series by looking at religious spirits. There is a reason you don't hear any teaching on "religious" spirits today, aside from all the other reasons we have already looked at, and it's because at first glance, there really doesn't seem to be much information about these spirits in the Scripture. Indeed, much of what we have learned about them has been learned by *experience*.

Over the years, as we helped people get delivered from various types of bondage, we began running up against this spirit *before* we had any idea what it was. It wasn't a case where we read about religious spirits in some "deliverance manual" or heard some minister teach on the subject and we became curious to find out more about them. I don't have that kind of curiosity. I have never sought understanding of the demonic kingdom just because it fascinates me or because I want to stuff more religious knowledge into my brain. The things we have learned about unclean spirits, including religious spirits, we have learned *out of desperation* as we sought God for answers to the problems people who came to us for help, were facing. I believe God showed us many of the things He did simply because we were trying to help *His* people get free from the enemy's grip.

The Lord was able to show us truth in this area because we were *open* to it. Our minds were not filled with all the garbage that prevents the average Christian from understanding how unclean spirits move and operate. The Holy Spirit had already been teaching how to recognize and overcome spirits for years, prior to learning about this particular type of demon. But at a certain point, He began to lead us into situations where we ran up against these particular spirits again and again. At that time, we had *no idea* what it was we were dealing with. All we knew was that it was a demon, and it was different from the other spirits we had dealt with, and it always had the person it was moving through deeply involved with the things of Christianity. Once God got our attention and we began earnestly seeking Him about it, He was able to show us what these spirits are and He instilled in us the ability to recognize them.

What I'm talking about now is strictly an issue of spiritual discernment—which means it's a *subjective* experience. Most of you are probably aware by now that all subjective experiences are *null and void* as far as Fundamentalist (and Pentecostal *de facto* Fundamentalists) are concerned. If you can't provide a chapter and verse for something you believe or have experienced, then in their eyes, you are involved in "extra-biblical" error. When I talk about not having a "chapter and verse", I'm *not* talking about accepting things that are *against* the Scripture. I'm talking about things that are not specifically mentioned in Scripture. So, I'm letting everyone know right up front that our knowledge and experience with these kinds of spirits is subjective. We didn't get it from the Scripture. We got it by direct revelation from the Spirit, as we sought God for answers.

Having said that, I would also like to say that so far in this series, we have been looking at *objective* truth. We *have been* looking at "chapter and verse" regarding the points I've covered. What I have shared so far has *not* been my personal opinion—it's been what the Scripture clearly teaches. So when it comes to what I have shared so far, my attitude is different. I don't just think these things are true—I *know* they are true. Anyone who has a problem with them, has a problem because their minds are bound and held captive by these spirits. They can't receive the truth, even when it's comes straight from the Word of God.

In order to deal correctly with what we are facing in this hour, with regards to these religious spirits, I believe there are four basic truths we must get grounded in.

The first truth we need to be grounded in is the fact that there are *all kinds* of religious spirits. Religious spirits have been around since Lucifer fell. Indeed, Satan is the most religious spirit you will ever run up against. In the Old Testament, when you read descriptions of how different civilizations or empires—like for example, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria or Canaan—had different gods and temples types of religious rituals, you are reading about the work of *religious* spirits among men.

Religious spirits spoke to those people and taught them how to worship their various deities and idols. There were many different kinds “priesthood’s” in the Old Testament. Each culture and religion had it’s own. Of course, there were only two priesthood’s that were ordained of God, and thus, were not demonic in nature—the Levitical priesthood and the Melchizedek priesthood. But there were other priesthood’s in existence in the Old Testament and all those *other* priesthood’s had priestly offices, religious rituals, and sacrifices, both animal and human. All this elaborate worship didn’t just come from those people’s “flesh”. They were being lead and guided in that worship by *religious* spirits.

In the New Testament period, you had Greek and Roman gods being worshiped. There were temples for these gods, sacrifices and specific rituals, and also a priesthood for each one of them. Again, all this elaborate worship didn’t just come from those people’s “flesh”. They were being lead and guided in that worship by *religious* spirits. Many times the people who prayed to these god’s and idols got their prayers answered by the unclean spirits who were behind all this false worship.

Those who think false worship is just a work of man’s “flesh” would say: “Hey Daniel; how do you know anyone ever got their prayers answered by the demons who were behind all this false worship?” My answer would be: I know they did because they *still do* today. People in China (who pray to a statue of Buddha) testify to answered prayer. People in India (who pray to Ganesh or Kali, or any of the 300,000 Hindu gods) testify to answered prayer. People in the southern half of Africa (who pray to trees and to nature itself) testify to answered prayer.

People in Haiti and in sections of South America practice Voodoo and they testify to answered prayer. People in America and Europe (who pray to a statue of Mary) testify to answered prayer. The Mormons, who pray to a false “Christian” god, not only testify to answered prayer, many of them will tell you they had a very real supernatural experience called “a burning in the bosom” when they first accepted Mormonism. All these people testify not only to having their prayers answered by the various “gods” they serve, they testify that those “gods” speak to them and communicate with them as well.

If demons communicate with, and answer the prayers of idolaters *today*, what makes us think they haven’t been doing so all along? Why do you think people follow false religions anyway? Do you really think millions of people would serve “gods” who never did anything for them? How long would you serve *your* God if he *never* communicated with you in any way, if he *never* let you know He was real and that he was caring for you, and if he *never* answered a single prayer you prayed? The fact is, all false worship involves *religious* spirits.

Of course, those who say all false worship is a work of “the flesh” will call all those who say their gods talk to them and answer their prayers, liars. They will continue to proclaim that people who are not serving the true God never get any of their prayers answered (how can “flesh” answer prayer?), and that people who are not serving the true God never hear any kind of communication from those gods because they are not real. But that kind of talk only shows that how ignorant we can be. It also shows that some people would rather believe a lie that keeps their false theology (that everything’s the “flesh”) intact, than accept the truth which destroys that theology.

The second truth we need to be grounded in is the fact that even though religious demons have been around from the beginning, something *unusual* happens in the last days that enables them to seduce a large portion of the Church of Jesus Christ: (1) the power that has been restraining Satan over the last 2000 years is removed at this time; and (2) a demonic prince is let loose from the bottomless pit, which specifically goes after the Christian Church in order to deceive it. Speaking of the entity that will sit in the temple of God in the last days, who is called “that Wicked” and the “man of sin”, Paul said:

*Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? **And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he may be revealed.** For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains {will do so} until he is taken out of the way. **And then that lawless one will be revealed** whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming;*

*II. Thessalonians 2:5-8 NAS*

It’s very clear that the last days are different from any other period of time in the history of this planet. The mystery of iniquity (ie: lawlessness), which has been working since Paul’s day, has been restrained by something and that restraint has prevented “that lawless one” from being revealed. However, in the last days, that restraint is removed. This is a *time-specific* event. It will only happen once in the entire history of mankind and it will only happen in the last days.

At the same time the restraint is being removed from the lawless one, a powerful demonic prince arises from the bottomless pit. But in order to understand who and what this prince is, we first need to understand something about the bottomless pit. In Revelation 9:2-4 & 10-11, John saw the “bottomless pit” opened. What came out of that pit were supernatural creatures, called locusts. He said the leader of these spiritual creatures was another supernatural creature—an angel named Abaddon or Apollyon. In Revelation 20:1-3, John described how an angel who had the key to the “bottomless pit”, came down from heaven with a great chain in his hand and bound Satan and cast him into that pit for a thousand years.

In Luke 8:31, when Jesus cast 2000 demons out of the Gaderene man, it says those spirits asked the Lord not to “*command them to go out into the deep*”. The Greek term that’s translated “the deep” in that passage is “*abussos*” (ab'-us-sos), and it’s the same Greek term that is translated “bottomless pit” throughout the book of Revelation. So when those 2000 demons asked Jesus not to send them into “the deep” they were asking Him not to send them into the “bottomless pit”.

Thus, the information we have concerning the *bottomless pit* shows that it is a place where spiritual creatures are held prisoner. All the creatures that are associated with the bottomless pit in Scripture are *spiritual* creatures—the locusts, angels, demons, and Satan. World governments do not dwell in the bottomless pit. World religious organizations do not dwell in the bottomless pit. Human beings do not dwell in the bottomless pit. Only spiritual creatures dwell in that pit.

This is very important to understand because *twice* in the book of Revelation, John said “the beast”—which is the entity almost all Christians refer to as “*the Antichrist*”—ascends out of the bottomless pit. This means that what comes up out of that pit in the last days is first and foremost, some kind of *spirit*

*And when they [the two witnesses] shall have finished their testimony, **the beast that ascendeth out of the bottomless pit** shall make war against them, and shall overcome them, and kill them. And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*

*Revelation 11:7-8*

***The beast that thou sawest** was, and is not; and **shall ascend out of the bottomless pit**, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.*

*Revelation 17:8*

The creature, who is let out of the bottomless pit, is the first beast of Revelation chapter 13—the one with seven heads and ten horns, which John saw rising up out of the “sea”—and it is simply called “the beast”. John never calls it the Antichrist. He only refers to it as “the beast”. The second beast in that same chapter, which comes up out of the “earth”, does have a name, and it’s name is “*the False Prophet*”.

The very term “false prophet” tells us this is all about worship. And when you read Revelation chapter 13, sure enough, you find that the first beast wants to be worshiped and in fact demands worship. The False Prophet, through a demonstration of miracles, causes those who dwell on the earth to worship the first beast. You see, this is all about false religion. It’s all about worship! The Dragon and the first beast want to be worshiped by the entire planet. Yes, there will be a Global Police State, represented by the seven heads and the ten horns of the first beast. Yes, eventually there will be an individual leader of that Global Police State, who will be one of the “horns” on the head of the beast. But *the purpose* of all this is to force or seduce the entire population of the planet to worship the beast and the Dragon.

It’s important to know that “the beast” is first and foremost an *invisible* demon spirit. Long before this beast is manifested through the Global Police State or the final human leader of that State, it goes after the Christian Church, as a demon spirit, in order to seduce it. I call this entity a “demonic prince” because that’s what it is. Demon spirits who rule over a *world* empires, like Persia and Greece, are called “princes” in the Scripture (*Dan. 10:20*). Just as there was an invisible spirit called the “prince of Persia”—who ruled Persia through it’s human head; and just as there was an invisible spirit called the “prince of Grecia”—who ruled Greece through it’s human head; so *this* spirit will be the one who rules the final world empire through its human head. First through the “ten kings” (human leaders), and then through one king. It’s this demonic prince that has been let loose from the bottomless pit in our day, and it’s *this* demonic prince who is wrecking havoc in today’s churches.

Like the situation with the revealing of “that lawless one” in II. Thessalonians 2, so the situation with this demonic prince being let out of the bottomless pit is a *time-specific* event. It will only happen once in the entire history of mankind and it will only happen in the last days. I’m not sure when the actual reign of this prince over the final global government will begin, but it’s reign is clearly said to last for 42 months: “...and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months” (*Rev. 13:5*). At the end of that time, he will be defeated in battle by the Lord and the armies from heaven, and along with the False Prophet, he will be cast into the Lake of Fire (*Rev 19:20*). What this tells us is that we are facing something no other generation of believers has ever had to face. Only the last generation of saints will ever have to face the Beast and the False Prophet.

But of course, the reality of what we are facing never even comes close to sinking into the hearts and minds of most of today's Christians because of all the garbage they have been taught. First of all, most of them are still waiting for the pre-tribulation "rapture". They don't think they will ever have to face these two beasts because they assume they will be safely tucked away in heaven before either of them comes on the scene. Also, they have no idea these two beasts are invisible spirits. They have been taught that they are human political and religious leaders/ They have no idea these two demon spirits have already come on the scene.

The third truth we need to be grounded in is the fact the *main object* of the two beasts in Revelation chapter 13 is not just to set up a Global Police State and reduce the population of the planet to a manageable level so people can be made slaves of the new social order. The main object of all this is to bring the entire world into beast worship and Satan worship. The Global Police State and the One World Religion are just the means or the tools these two beasts will use to introduce beast worship and Satan worship all over this planet. Satan worship is the end result and the *goal*.

Since establishing the worship of Satan all over the planet is the goal of *everything* these beasts do, it should come as no surprise that this is what Paul is talking about in Second Thessalonians 2, when he said "that lawless one" will sit in "the temple of God" in the last days. I gave some reasons last week why I believe Paul was talking about the church and not a literal building when he said this entity would sit in God's temple. The first reason is because Paul received a revelation regarding God's ultimate purpose in having a "temple" to begin with and that purpose is to have a temple of "living" stones, not one of literal stones. To make a literal building the temple of God, *after* He has completed the real temple, comprised of His people, would be to go backwards.

The second reason I gave was that if a literal "Third Temple" is ever built, it will be *subsidized* by the Final Global Government—which means it will be subsidized by Antichrist. It will be *built* by Christ-hating Jews and will involve animal sacrifices, which will be a mockery of the once-and-for-all sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. Also, the one who sits in that temple will not be Messiah but Messiah's enemy, the Antichrist. If you think the apostle Paul would ever call a building that was subsidized by Antichrist, built by Christ-hating Jews with restored animal sacrifices that deny and mock the sacrifice of Jesus, which will be occupied by Antichrist, the "temple of God"—you need to have your head examined!

Understanding what Paul meant when he said that lawless one will sit in God's temple is very important because if that temple is *Christians* and not a literal building over in Jerusalem, then you have THE explanation for what's happening right now in the churches. Speaking of this lawless one, Paul said:

*And then that lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord will slay with the breath of His mouth and bring to an end by the appearance of His coming; {that is,} the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders,*

*II Thessalonians 2:8-9 NAS*

When Paul said the "coming" of the lawless one is with all power and signs and lying wonders, he was talking about this entity coming to God's temple. This is how the lawless one will enter the temple, take his seat in that temple, and exalt himself above all that is called God—through supernatural power. By signs and lying wonders, the lawless one will convince many of the *living stones* of the temple of God that *he* is God.

If it weren't such a serious issue, it would be funny listening to today's ministers say: "*Satan has no power, except what we give him*"; or "*Satan can't do any real miracles*". They talk about his power like it's no big deal, like it's nothing a genuine believer needs to worry about. This is incredible to me because not only does the Scripture say that by the time Jesus returns, only be a *small* remnant of people on this entire planet will *not* have been deceived by Satan; all you have to do is look around and you will see the carnage and the destruction this fallen cherub is causing right now among the saints! He's already managed to destroy thousands, if not *tens* of thousands of once-genuine believers and the deceptions are only going to get stronger.

The fact is, ministers who make light of Satan's power to deceive, or who claim he has no *real* power, are liars. Either they are intentionally refusing to see the truth because it would destroy their precious doctrine concerning "the flesh", or else demon spirits have seduced them and blinded them to the truth. If what you are seeing all around you doesn't produce a soberness in you, and a realization that you need to walk very carefully in these days or you will end up deceived too, then you are *already* walking in religious delusion.

I pointed out in a session some months back that the Greek term that's translated "all"—as in *all* power and signs and lying wonders in the KJV version of this passage—is the same Greek term Jesus used when He said "all" power and authority was given to Him in heaven and on earth (*Matt. 28:18-19*) It is the Greek word "*pas*" (Strong's #3956). It has several different meanings, but one of them signifies "the highest degree" or "the maximum" of what is being referred to. Not that Paul is saying Satan will be as powerful as Jesus. But he *is* saying Satan will be given incredible power in the last days, and that power will be used to deceive many of the living stones who make of the "temple of god.

Also, last week we saw how three unclean spirits are sent to deceive the kings of the earth by working miracles, and the Greek word for "miracles" there is the same Greek word that's used when describing the miracles of Jesus. I also quoted a few passage from John, which used that same word with regards to the miracles of Jesus, and pointed out that if John thought the miracles of those unclean spirits in Revelation were just a magician's trick and not genuine miracles, he would have found a *different* Greek term to use to describe them.

*...and with all the deception of wickedness for those **who perish**, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. And for this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, in order that **they all may be judged** (KJV "damned"] who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.*

*II Thessalonians 2:10-12 NAS*

Aside from the pre-tribulation rapture error and the false notion that the two beasts of Revelation chapter 13 are only humans or organizations, another reason most of today's Christians will *never* even consider the possibility that Paul was talking about Christians and not a literal building in this passage is because he said those who succumb to the lawless one will "perish". The NAS says they will also be "judged". The King James says "damned. Of course, we all know a Christian can never possibly end up damned, right? In order for a Christian to "perish" and end up "damned", the doctrine of Eternal Security would have to be a lie. So too would a lot of other doctrines which form the basic theology of most of today's Christians. So most ministers bend over backwards trying to prove that the ones who perish and end up damned were all *unbelievers* to begin with. They can't see how foolish it is to teach that God is going to send a strong delusion upon the *unsaved*.

Hello? The unsaved are already walking in a strong delusion. The unsaved already believe the lie and they are already damned. Satan isn't trying to damn the damned, or deceive the deceived—that's asinine. He's not going to and fro, seeking to devour the unsaved. He has already devoured the unsaved! He's going to and fro, seeking to deceive and devour the Christian. He's after God's temple!

When Paul talked about people refusing to receive a love for "the truth" that they might be "saved", he's wasn't talking about the unsaved refusing to accept the gospel when it's presented to them. If he was talking about the unsaved rejecting the gospel message, he would have used the term "gospel" (or one of its equivalents)—but he didn't. He said these people didn't receive a love for "the truth". He's talking about *Christians* who refuse to receive a love for the truth. We don't normally think of Christians having to receive a love of the truth, do we? I mean, hey, how many Christians do you know who walk around saying they "hate" the truth? Probably zero. All Christians *say* they love the truth; yet many of those Christians are getting deceived right now.

Why? One reason is because it's very easy to walk in deception regarding our *true* spiritual condition. It's very easy to *think* we have a love for the truth when we don't. Loving the truth is indeed one of the requirements for living under the protection of God in this hour. But we have to love that truth *above* everything and everyone else—and that's where the problem lies. It's easy to love the truth when that truth doesn't *challenge* any of the religious views or ideas we hold dear. It's easy to love the truth when that truth doesn't *interfere* with any of the desires, or goals, or relationships we hold dear.

Christians perish because they won't receive a love of the truth regarding the absolute need to die to self. They perish because they won't receive a love of the truth regarding the absolute necessity of walking in holiness. They perish because they won't receive a love of the truth regarding many of the issues of salvation and redemption I have talked about in this room for the past two years. They perish because they won't receive a love of the truth regarding their relationships and they won't let God deliver them from the idolatry they walk in. Also, they perish because they won't receive a love of the truth regarding their adversary and his power.

I personally know people who have made the love of the truth a spiritual safety mechanism and they are trusting in *it* for protection. Since they believe they love the truth above all else, they really don't think they can be deceived. And the sad part is, a few of them have already been deceived and don't even realize it.

Listen, my friends: Paul was not talking the unsaved perishing in that passage. He was talking about *believers* perishing. He was talking about us. It's we who need to be "saved" from the power of deception that is being unleashed right now. He was saying that in the final hours of this age, many Christians will no longer have a love for the truth because of all the doctrinal error (*doctrines of demons*) they will have been taught. Since they will not love and follow the truth, they will have no other place to go but into the arms of Satan.

The fourth truth we need to be grounded in is the fact that the last-days "falling away" is not a falling away from all the external trappings of Christianity. The ones who are being seduced and falling away are not returning to the world and becoming murders and drunks and dope addicts again. The great end-time falling away is a falling away from, or a departure from, the truth—not from the Christian religion. It's a departing from *true* Christianity to a *false* Christianity; from the true Holy Spirit to another spirit; from the true Jesus to another Jesus. The ones who are falling away still read their Bibles, still pray, still listen to Christian music, still go to church, still tithe and still do all the other things a genuine believer do. If we think the end time apostasy is about falling away from all things religious and Christian, we will never understand what's happening right now.

The lawless one doesn't go to all the trouble of convincing the living stones of God's temple that *he* is their God, only to have them return to their former pagan lifestyles! That would defeat the whole purpose of the charade. Antichrist wants to take his seat in the temple so the stones of that temple worship and follow him! This is the whole point. Religious spirits come to us posing as the Holy Spirit, and they have been granted the power to do almost all the things the Holy Spirit can do in our lives.

So we are facing two very dangerous situations right now. Firstly, as we grow spiritually, our adversary changes his tactics. The wiles and the devices Satan uses on those who are coming to spiritual maturity are not the same ones he uses on baby Christian, or on carnal Christians. We would recognize those kinds of tricks right away. As we mature, his wiles become much more subtle and deceptive. Secondly, the time we are now living in is the most dangerous time (spiritually speaking) in the history of this planet. You've got a situation where Satan is being allowed to do things—especially in the realm of counterfeiting the things of God—that he was never allowed to do before.

Add to this all the error most of us have been taught that makes us utterly blind to the possibility of religious spirits speaking to us and moving through us, and you've got a certain recipe for disaster among today's average Christian. They don't take any of the precautions the Scripture requires of us, if we are to remain under the protection of God. Instead, they walk around in arrogant pride, thinking they are eternally secure; thinking Satan can't possibly touch them or hurt them; and walking in false faith and false grace. Since they are walking completely blind (spiritually speaking), they open themselves up to these religious spirits and eventually they begin to follow them. This is the beginning of the lawless one taking his seat in the temple of God because he is *beginning* to take his seat in the lives of the *living stones* that comprise that temple.

The fact is, in our day, Christians can easily end up following religious spirits *as God*. We can pray to them *as God* and have our prayers answered by them. We can worshiping them as God and think we feel the presence of God as we do. We can receive spiritual revelations from them, either directly or through the study of Scripture. We can receive dreams and visions from them, along with interpretations. We can receive all kinds of supernatural gifts from them. We can receive healing from them. We can even experience a changed life by them. Any kind of interaction we can have with God, we can *also* have with religious spirits. They will communicate with us, just like the Holy Spirit communicates with us. They will lead and guide us, just like the Holy Spirit leads and guides us. They will answer prayers, just God answers prayers.

So as we seek God for wisdom regarding these spirits, the first thing He shows us is that they *religious*—very religious. I know this sounds elementary, but it's not. When I say religious, I mean "Christian". These spirits are not afraid of Christianity. For example, very few of today's Christians would ever question the desire to read the Bible. I can promise you that for about 99% of the Christian population today, when they have a desire to read the Bible, they automatically assume that desire is coming from God. The possibility that such a desire might be coming from a unclean spirit that is religious demon will never, ever cross their minds.

Such a possibility may trouble you and you might say: "*Brother Dan; why in the world would a demon give me a desire to read my Bible?*" The answer is: So it can give you a false or twisted revelation as you read that Bible. But of course, if you are like the vast majority of today's believers, you won't think such a thing is even possible. And even if I could convince you that it was, it still wouldn't phase you because you have been taught that God loves you *too much* to ever let anything like that happen. You have been taught that because God is sovereign, He *cannot* let anything like that happen to you—else His sovereignty would be compromised.

We are also used to being told that since the battle we face is between our flesh and spirit, one of the ways we can win this battle is to occupy ourselves with *spiritual* things and keep our minds on *heavenly* things. If we occupy ourselves with heavenly things, that will keep us from walking in the flesh. This is true. I say much the same thing. I encourage people to “mind” heavenly things set their affections on things above. However, we *also* need to make sure that the spiritual things we are occupying ourselves with are coming from the Holy Spirit and not religious spirits. The sad reality is, many of today’s Christians are very spiritual. Indeed, the only thing you ever hear them talking about are spiritual things. They are *very* occupied with spiritual things. But the problem is, they are entangled with *religious* spirits and all that spirituality is hurting them, not helping them.

So the first thing we need to be aware of is the fact that religious spirits are religious in a Christian sense. They aren’t going to tempt you to go out and drink a beer, or play the lottery, or sleep with your neighbor’s wife. They are going to try and involve you with things that are Christian in nature. They will give you thoughts and desires which are not only Christian, but which match your particular Christian experience.

The next thing we need to know is that they are not primarily purveyors of spiritual darkness but rather, of counterfeit light. In the natural realm, there is a big difference between darkness, genuine light, and counterfeit light. Darkness is the *absence* of light. On the other hand, counterfeit light is *not* darkness. Counterfeit light *is* light—it’s just not genuine light. Genuine light and counterfeit light can be compared to the light that comes from the Sun and the light that comes from a 60 watt light bulb. Both kinds of light are “light”. But only one is genuine light. Only one comes from God—God created the Sun. The other light is man-made.

It’s the same with spiritual darkness, light, and counterfeit light. Spiritual darkness is the absence of spiritual light. In the realm of doctrine and teaching, spiritual darkness is the absence of *truth*. It is false doctrine or false teaching. Counterfeit spiritual light is much different. Counterfeit light is light; it is truth. However, it’s not *genuine* truth in that it’s not coming from God. It’s truth which is coming from another *source*. This is a concept that God’s people are still ignorant of. Most of us are only accustomed to looking at things in the context truth and error. We view what people say as either true (light) or false (darkness). We judge what ministers teach as either true (light) or false (darkness). We have not yet become skilled at discerning the difference between genuine light (ie: truth from God) and counterfeit light (ie truth from another source).

I have been trying to warn people for years that the religious spirits we are facing in this hour can tell the *absolute* truth and minister *correct* doctrine. When a religious spirit speaks or ministers truth to us through someone else, or directly from the spirit realm, we are no longer dealing with issues of truth and error. We are dealing genuine light verses counterfeit light. We are dealing with truth from the correct source and truth from a corrupted source. In this kind of a situation, the yardstick so many of us have been using all our lives will fail us miserably. If your standard of discernment rests *solely* on whether or not something is “true”—and this includes being *Scripturally* true—I can assure you that you are headed for trouble. You will have no way of judging between genuine truth and counterfeit truth because they are *both* truth. Counterfeit truth is not falsehood or error.

Multitudes of today’s Christians are having spiritual experiences and getting spiritual revelations and preaching things which are coming from the *wrong* source. But because we are so used to using the yardstick of truth and error, the fact that much of their doctrine is true, blinds us to the fact that *the source* of it is wrong. Once you realize what these spirits are capable of doing, you will do more than judge everything with a “true or false” yard stick. You will start asking God to show you the source of things. So much of what we accept from preachers and teachers as coming from God, is actually coming from religious spirits.

Many times someone has sent me an article they thought was great, and assumed I would think was great, but which had as it's source some other spirit. I mean, what are you supposed to do when someone sends you a teaching that's basically *true*, which has blessed them, but which you know came from a *polluted* source? Good grief! people hardly pay any attention to my warnings as it is, even though I am always careful to produce the evidence that a certain person is teaching false doctrine. How much less will anyone believe me if I tell them a person who is teaching basically *correct* doctrine is getting that correct doctrine from a *religious* spirit?

That kind of thing just doesn't compute in most people's brains. They can't believe that Satan or any of his demons would ever tell the truth. They don't think Satan is even capable of speaking the truth. They get this false idea from a mis-interpretation of what Jesus said, when talking to the Pharisees. He said:

*Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because **there is no truth in him**. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

*John 8:44*

Please notice that Jesus didn't say Satan can't possibly "speak" the truth. He said there is no truth "in" Satan. All that means is that Satan has been completely corrupted on the *inside*. He's no longer capable of believing the truth, or abiding in the truth, or walking in the truth, or of bringing forth truth from inside of his own being. But if you think it's not possible for Satan to speak the truth in order to deceive someone, you're very foolish.

You may be wondering how you open yourself up to these religious spirits? There are different ways. One is by letting someone who is walking under the influence of these spirits lay hands on you and pray for you. That results in a *direct transference* of those spirits into your life. Even praying casually with someone who is under the influence of these spirits can open you up to them. Any kind of *spiritual union* with them, via union with people who are walking under them, can open you up to them. So be careful who you pray with, who you study the Scripture with, who you take communion with, and who you are spiritually intimate with.

Just being part of a church, a religious group, or a movement that is under the power or influence of these spirits can open you up to them. That was the case with brother Jim Jones—if you remember his testimony. When he had that false experience, he was attending a school of ministry that was *birthed* by the spirit of Antichrist. Mike Bickle, who has that school, was part of the original Kansas City Prophets and they were all deeply involved with not only religious spirits, but with spirits of the occult and of divination as well. Jim had to submit to their authority and spiritual covering in order to attend that school, and when he did, he also submitted himself to the religious spirits who started that whole mess. I'm thankful that the Lord was faithful to him, and also that he had a heart that *continued* to seek the truth, even when the truth hurt.

*Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. **It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them**. It set itself up to be as great as the Prince of the host; it took away the daily sacrifice from him, and the place of his sanctuary was*

*brought low. Because of rebellion, the host [of the saints] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.*

*Daniel 8:9-12 NIV*

Another thing that opens the door to these religious spirits is rebellion. Daniel describes the rise of the little horn, which most people agree is the Antichrist. At the time Antichrist rises to power, it's said that the host of the saints are given into his hand because of "rebellion". It's dangerous to rebel against the *known* will of God in these days my friends. Rebellion will open you up to these spirits.

As a result of our own personal experience, I would also say that pride and arrogance will open you up to these spirits very quickly. I've watched people who had a problem with pride slowly come under their influence and they are still walking under these spirits to this day.

Carelessness will also open you up to them. This is why I rant and rave so much against the lie of Eternal Security and all the other errors that put people in a state of *false* security. Once you allow yourself to get in that kind of a state, your life become very careless and you walk in religious presumption, not true faith.

The next question you will be asking is how do we recognize these spirits? That's not easy to answer. Much of the ability to recognize them comes only through spiritual discernment. That's why I am always encouraging people to ask God to give them a special gift of discernment regarding these spirits. They are very hard to spot sometimes because they are such good imitators of the Holy Spirit. They talk all the right Christian lingo; they know how to quote the Scripture to lead us away from the truth. They can sing songs about Jesus, they can sit in a church and speak in false tongues; they can prophesy false prophecies in the name of Jesus.

They can make you feel a "presence" that you think is the presence of God. They are especially good at working miracles to deceive us. I'm not talking about big miracles you might see in a revival. I'm talking about the small things in your life that you recognize as working of the Holy Spirit; like in Jim's testimony. The Lord has a way of *confirming* things in our lives that are of Him. These are little miracles.

For instance, you might get a revelation and while you are wondering if that revelation was from God, another brother or sister will call you and tell you that God just showed them the *same* thing. These are supernatural workings by which God lets us know he is speaking to us. But once you come under the influence of these religious spirits, they can do the same thing. They can bring forth miracles, which serve as confirmations to the things *they* are telling us, which will then lead you away from the true Spirit of God.

These are the kinds of signs and lying wonders that *the lawless one* will use to take his seat in *your* temple. Thousands of people who were once solid Christians have allowed another spirit to take its seat in their lives. This is why Rick Joyner and all those guy's will *never* be delivered from the delusion they are in. Every day, the demons who are talking to them are *confirming* the things they are telling them through miracles. Every day, they are experiencing the power of these demons. They have become so attuned to them nothing you say would ever convince them they are following another spirit. The lawless one has *shown himself to be God* in their lives through power, signs and lying wonders. Hey, once you have Jesus and Michael the arch-angel visiting you every couple of days, and you are seeing 3-D, technicolor visions every day, and you are moving in real spiritual power every day, that kind of deception is virtually impossible to break free from.

Of course, we have found that these religious spirits do have some traits that you can spot. One of them is confusion. Confusion usually accompanies these spirits. When dealing with people who were walking under the power of religious spirits, we could actually feel religious confusion. So if you suspect someone you are dealing with may be walking under these kind of spirits, see if you feel confused when you are in their presence or when you are talking to them.

Another trait we often encountered in people who were under the influence of these spirits is that they have a way of turning the things you say around, so that it sounds like you are saying the *exact opposite* of what you are really saying. In other words, there is often a communication problem. You are saying one thing, which is coming from the Spirit of God, but they are only hearing what those spirits are letting them hear. Many times, what they hear is something completely different than what you said. So when they repeat what you said back to you, it's just the opposite of what you really said. Therefore, if you are dealing with someone and you find that there is a consistent communication problem, it's possible you are dealing with one of these spirits.

Another thing you find when someone is walking under the influence of these spirits is that often they will do strange things and say the Lord told them to do it. They will also receive strange, and even bizarre, interpretations of certain passages of Scripture, but to them, it will sound perfectly normal and reasonable.

As a matter of fact, many times we will meet people who seem a little "strange" or "off" and we automatically assume they have some personality quirk or maybe a mental problem, when in fact they are actually walking under the power of religious spirits, and it's those spirits that are making them strange.

As far as finding out whether or not *we* have any of these spirits working in our own lives, the only thing I can say is that it's a possibility for *all* of us. None of us are so far advanced that we can't come under the influence of these spirits—especially if we become involved with *other people* who have them. Just go to God with an open heart and tell Him you know you are not above being deceived by these spirits and if they have any part in your life right now, you want Him to show you so you can get free from them.

If we have a desire to know the truth, God is more than willing to show us the truth and deliver us if we are involved with them at all. Ask God to give you a *special dose* of discernment when it comes to these spirits in particular because they are so dangerous. Then believe that God will hear your prayer—and start watching and listening. If we really want to know the truth, God will show us the truth. That's all I can say.