

SEALS, TRUMPETS & HEARING THE SPIRIT

Last week we looked at how seducing spirits can “compare Scripture with Scripture” in people’s minds and lead them completely *away* from the truth. The example I used was a certain Bible teacher who was giving his view of the “Two Witnesses” in the book of Revelation. He sought to expose the *traditional* view of these people as the error that it is, but in so doing, he replaced the traditional error with his own error which is *rooted* in a rejection of several truths. One is the truth of a first-fruits of the Church. Another one is the fact that the Two Witness ministry will be a *unusual* ministry of judgement, and that those who take part in that ministry will do things that most of today’s believers would view as “un-Christian”.

Therefore, in order to make these people fit into his own preconceived doctrinal mold, this Bible teacher sought to change and deny what John so clearly said about the ministry of the Two Witnesses. He turned what will clearly be a harsh ministry of judgment, which will be executed by divine power, into a typical Christian evangelistic ministry—and he did this *by* comparing Scripture with Scripture.

Last week, we ended with his interpretation of *how* the Two Witnesses will do the things John said they would in Revelation 11:6, which is shut the heavens so it doesn’t rain, turn the waters to blood, and smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will. He compared this passage to Revelation chapter 8 and the blowing of the first 4 trumpets. In this view, the *results* of the blowing of the first four trumpets are *the fulfilment* of the Two Witnesses turning the water to blood, shutting up heaven, and smiting the earth with plagues.

Since the Two Witnesses will be the whole “end time Church” in this Bible teacher’s view, they will also have to be your *typical* “Christians”. They cannot possibly slay their enemies (directly or indirectly), and they surely will not be calling down plagues on the earth *themselves*, or turning the water into blood *themselves*, or closing up the heaven *themselves*. To do these things themselves would be very un-Christlike. So in order for the Two Witnesses to be a good *Christian* witnesses, they will have to be powerless—which is exactly the opposite of what John said they would be. The only power they will have is the power to preach the gospel and pray for deliverance as they are being trampled under foot. Their prayers for deliverance ascend into heaven and are collected in the Altar of Incense. At some point known only to God, an angel will take those prayers and hurl them back down to earth. The events that follow—which are the trumpets—are *the result* of those prayers being cast back into the earth, and this is how the heavens are shut up, the waters are turned to blood, etc.

I didn’t have time last week to go into all that’s wrong with this strange interpretation; but I would like to mention a few of them tonight. In this teaching, our illustrious Bible teacher is saying that an event which is clearly said to take place *between* the 6th and the 7th trumpet, is actually taking place *before* the 6th and the 7th trumpet. Also, he is saying the 3½ years the Two Witnesses carry out their ministry is the *first* 3½ years of the 7-year tribulation, when the text implies strongly that it will be the *last* 3½ years.

I realize that some people believe the Tribulation is only going to last 3½ years and I don’t want to get into a debate about it. I’ll be fair though, and explain the two views. In Daniel’s famous prophesy of the first coming of the Messiah, he talks in periods of prophetic “weeks”. A prophetic week is a week of *years*, not a weeks of days. So every prophetic “week” represents a 7-year period. Seventy weeks total are mentioned in the prophesy. There were 69 “weeks” until Messiah came, and then He was “cut off”. Then there is a 2000 year gap; and then there is a final “week” and that week will also be a week of 7 *years*, like all the other weeks were weeks of 7 years. However, there is an alternative view of those 70 weeks. Some believe the first 3½ years of that last 7-year week

was basically the 3½ year ministry of the Lord Jesus before He was “cut off”. Thus, the only time period that remains to be fulfilled is the last 3½ years of that last prophetic week. In other words, in this view, the 2000 year gap falls in the middle of Daniel’s 70th week, not at the beginning of it. If the gap falls in the *middle* of that week, then the Great Tribulation will only last 3½ years. If the gap falls at the *beginning* of that week, then the Great Tribulation will be 7 years. At this point, I still hold to the 7-year view, and you’ll see why shortly.

As I said last week, we must be careful when interpreting the book of Revelation because it’s filled with symbolic language and word pictures, and also, in many places it folds back into itself and zooms in on a specific aspect of some event John has just seen and described. Some portions of Revelation are chronological in order and other portions of it are not. But there are some things you can be sure of, just by virtue of reading the text, as far as *timing* is concerned. You can be sure the seven trumpets do not blow *before* the seventh seal has been opened because it is clear from the text itself that the seven trumpets make up the seventh seal.

*And when he had opened **the seventh seal**, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And I saw the seven angels which stood before God; and **to them were given seven trumpets**. And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand. And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake. And the seven angels which had the **seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound**.*

Revelation 8:1-6

Regardless of what all the seals and the trumpets symbolize, the text makes it clear that the seven trumpets are all part of the seventh seal. Indeed, the seven trumpets ARE the seventh seal. They comprise the seventh seal. When the *last* or the seventh trumpet sounds, this is what is said:

*And **the seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, **The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever**. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because **thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned**. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and **the time of the dead, that they should be judged**, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in his temple the ark of his testament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*

Revelation 11:15-19

*And the angel whom I saw standing on the sea and on the land lifted up his right hand to heaven, and swore by Him who lives forever and ever, who created heaven and the things in it, and the earth and the things in it, and the sea and the things in it, that **there shall be delay no longer, but in the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he is about to sound, then the mystery of God is finished**, as He preached to His servants the prophets.*

Revelation 10:5-7

The seventh trumpet of Revelation chapter eleven is, I believe, the same trumpet Paul referred to when he said “*at the sound of the last trump*” the dead in Christ would rise (*I. Cor. 15:52*). I believe the seventh trumpet is also the trumpet Jesus talked about in Matthew 24:31, where He said He would send His angels with the “*sound of a loud trumpet*” in order to “*gather together His elect from the four winds and from one end of heaven to the other*”. When the seventh angel blows the seventh trumpet, the Lord will return. The mystery of God will be finished. There will be no more delay.

So when you read this portion of Revelation, you can be sure of a few things. First of all, the trumpets and the seals are *not* different descriptions of the same events. The seals represent one set of events, and the trumpets represent a completely different set of events. Second, the events of the trumpets *follow* the events of the seals. So regardless of how long a period all these events entail, this particular portion of Revelation *is* in chronological order. Let’s read what John says about the seven trumpets.

*And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound. **The first angel sounded**, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.*

***And the second angel sounded**, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was cast into the sea: and the third part of the sea became blood; And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ships were destroyed.*

***And the third angel sounded**, and there fell a great star from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters; And the name of the star is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.*

And the fourth angel sounded**, and the third part of the sun was smitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the stars; so as the third part of them was darkened, and the day shone not for a third part of it, and the night likewise. And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, **Woe, woe, woe**, to the inhabitants of the earth **by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels, which are yet to sound!

Revelation 8:6-13

Again, I'm not trying to interpret what all these symbols mean at this point. We're merely looking at what the text actually says. What I want you to notice is what the angel says at the end of the fourth trumpet. He says: "...*woe, woe, to the inhabitants of the earth by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound*". So the last three trumpets—numbers 5, 6 and 7—are also called the "woes" The "three woes" = the last three trumpets.

Remember, this Bible teacher said the first four trumpets are the *result* of the prayers and the prophesy of the Two Witnesses being answered. In order for this to be true, it would have to mean that the Two Witnesses went forth and began their ministry *before* the first trumpet sounded. Since the first trumpet is at the *beginning* of the seventh seal, what this means is, the Two Witnesses went forth as part of the *sixth* seal—or at the very least, *between* the end of the sixth seal and the very beginning of the seventh seal. This is utterly impossible according to the timing of the text itself because the seals and the trumpets are different sets of events, and they are in chronological order. Moreover, as we shall see in a few minutes, according to the text itself, the ministry of the Two Witnesses takes place during the sixth trumpet, not the sixth seal!

And the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit. And he opened the bottomless pit; and there arose a smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace; and the sun and the air were darkened by reason of the smoke of the pit. And there came out of the smoke locusts upon the earth: and unto them was given power, as the scorpions of the earth have power. And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads. And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment was as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man. And in those days shall men seek death, and shall not find it; and shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them.

And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were crowns like gold, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle. And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails: and their power was to hurt men five months. And they had a king over them, which is the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue is Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath his name Apollyon.

Revelation 9:1-11

The first "woe"—which is also the 5th trumpet—results in the bottomless pit being opened and the locust-like creatures ascending up out of that pit. These creatures will be given the power to torment *everyone* who has not been *sealed* by God. Since you and I will be on the earth at this time, you better hope that the ones who are "sealed" are not strictly "Jews" from the twelve tribes—like most of the Church teaches—because if they are, *you* will be tormented by these creatures along with everyone else who does *not* have that seal of protection!

And the sixth angel sounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar which is before God, Saying to the sixth angel which had the trumpet, Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. And the four angels were loosed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to slay the third part of men. And the number of the army of the horsemen were two hundred thousand thousand: and I heard the number of them. And thus I saw the horses in the vision, and them that sat on them, having breastplates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimstone: and the heads of the horses were as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths issued fire and smoke and brimstone. By these three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the smoke, and by the brimstone, which issued out of their mouths. For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads, and with them they do hurt. And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk: either repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

Revelation 9:13-21

The second “woe”—which is also the sixth trumpet—starts off with the invasion of a great army in the Middle East which slays multitudes of people. But this is not the totality of the events which make up the sixth trumpet. All of the next chapter (chapter 10) and most of chapter eleven *comprise* the sixth trumpet. The next chapter tells about the angel who has the little book that John must eat and then prophesy from. It is this angel who declares that in the days of the seventh angel, there will be no more delay. Then we come to chapter eleven.

And there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein. But the court which is without the temple leave out, and measure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months.

*And I will give power unto my two witnesses, and they shall prophesy **a thousand two hundred and threescore days**, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth. And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.*

And when they 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.

And they of the people and kindreds and tongues and nations shall see their dead bodies three days and an half, and shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves. And they that dwell upon the earth shall rejoice over them, and make merry, and shall send gifts one to another; because these two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

*And **after three days and an half** the Spirit of life from God entered into them, and they stood upon their feet; and great fear fell upon them which saw them. And they heard a great voice from heaven saying unto them, **Come up hither**. And they ascended up to heaven in a cloud; and their enemies beheld them. And **the same hour** was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven. **The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly.***

*And **the seventh angel sounded**; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

Revelation 11:1-15

Now, I want to point a few things out that should be obvious, but may not be. First of all, you will notice that after the Two Witnesses have finished their ministry and they have been killed by the beast, after they have lain in the streets unburied, God raises them up and they ascend into heaven in the sight of the very people who were celebrating their death. At that point, the angel says: “*The second woe is past; and, behold, the third woe cometh quickly*”. This is the same as saying: “*The sixth trumpet is past and the seventh trumpet cometh quickly*”. The “second woe” is the sixth trumpet. The “third woe”, the one which is to quickly follow, is the seventh, or the last trumpet.

So the ministry, death and resurrection of the Two Witnesses all take place during the *sixth* trumpet or the second woe. That means, the sixth trumpet is at least 3½ years long. It’s probably *more* than 3½ years long because the a third of mankind is *also* killed during the sixth trumpet—and this happens before the Two Witnesses are sent forth. This is the another reason I still hold to the 7-year tribulation view. The sixth trumpet *alone* is said to be 3½ years in length.

But the point I want to highlight here is that, according to what the text *itself* states, the events of the first four trumpets cannot possibly be *the result* of the prayers and the prophesies of the Two Witnesses because they don’t even *start* their ministry until the SIXTH trumpet! Even if those trumpets were blown one minute after the other, or at the same exact time, that whole idea still wouldn’t work. There is no way the first four trumpets can be the result of the prayers, or the prophesy, or the ministry of the Two Witnesses.

Also, in stark contrast to the claims of our esteemed Bible teacher; the ministry of the Two Witnesses obviously takes place during the *second* 3½ years of the tribulation period, not the first 3½ years because at the end of their ministry comes the seventh trumpet and the resurrection of the dead. Remember, we haven’t done any “interpreting” of the symbols yet. We have only looked at what the text *actually* states with regard the timing of these events. But that in and of itself will go a long way in helping you to separate truth from error.

I'm certainly open to be taught by others regarding Revelation. There are a lot of things in that book that I don't understand and can't figure out. I would be very happy if someone could explain them to me! Whenever someone says the Holy Spirit has revealed something from the book of Revelation to them, I'm usually interested in hearing what it is. But of course, when they say the Holy Spirit has showed them things which blatantly contradict the clear meaning of the written text, I'm not interested in that. When someone like this Bible teacher says God showed him the result of the ministry of the Two Witnesses takes place *before* they even begin their ministry, I know he's following another spirit.

The problem with people like this guy is, they are much too confident in their own ability to study the Scripture. That confidence comes from accepting various false doctrines which make them *blind* to the reality that we can easily be led in our Bible study by other spirits. Most of today's Christians have *no idea* that demon spirits can lead them to compare the *wrong* scripture with scripture. But what's even worse is that when you try to warn them about this possibility, they reject it out of hand and immediately begin to give you all kinds of reasons why such a thing isn't possible. The problem is, all the reasons they are giving you are based on *false* doctrine. They are based on a false interpretation of certain passages of Scripture!

You need to get the *absurdity* of this situation clear in your minds. In the Church System, you still have a big division over what it means to be "led by the Spirit". This division started way back in 1906, with the event of the Azusa St. Revival. From the beginning of the Reformation in the 1700's, till the outbreak of that revival, 95% of those in the Church System were basically *Fundamentalists*—and just like the Fundamentalists (and *defacto* Fundamentalists) of today, they taught that the *only way* God speaks to us is through the Scripture. What the Azusa Street Revival did was to bring back or restore the experience of hearing the Spirit directly and being led by the Spirit *directly*. From that point in history until this very hour, a great battle has been raging between these two main wings of Christianity—the Pentecostal/Charismatic wing and the Fundamentalist wing.

The question which has been at the center of this raging theological battle is *how* the Holy Spirit leads us. Everyone agrees that we *should* be led by "the Spirit" and not by our own reasoning, or our own logic, or our own human wisdom, or our own flesh. But *how* are we to be led by the Spirit? Can the Spirit lead us *directly*; or can He *only* lead us indirectly, through the Bible? Can the Spirit speak to us directly; or can He only speak to us through the Scripture?

The reaction of the Fundamentalist's to Azusa Street was to not only say it was all of the devil, and that all these new Pentecostal's were being deceived and following another Jesus; they actually declared a (verbal) religious holy war on Pentecostalism which has lasted to this very day. To this day, Fundamentalist's accuse Pentecostal's of *servng* Satan. To this day, they claim that speaking in tongues is not a gift from God, but instead, a demonic deception. To this day, whenever you tell them God can lead you and guide you and speak to you directly, they will say you are living very dangerously and you are heading for deception.

Yet, when you look at the *doctrine* and the *theology* of the today's Fundamentalist's, if you have any spiritual discernment at all, you will see that much of that doctrine is absolutely false and directly *contradicts* the very Scripture they place so much trust in. So, you have a situation where people who trust implicitly in Bible study to receive the truth and be kept from error, and who militantly claim that God will only speak to us through the Scripture, are themselves *filled* with error—error which they got from reading and studying the Bible! Moreover, they are totally blind regarding any Christian experience that is deeper than your basic salvation experience and once again, this blindness came from their interpretation of *the Bible!*

Yet, when you tell them you can be led by the Spirit directly, or hear the voice of God directly, or get a witness to the truth or error of something directly, or get a spiritual checking about something or get supernatural wisdom or discernment on a situation directly, they refuse to accept, or even consider, such a possibility. And right away they will warn *you* of the danger *you* are in of being deceived!

They actually have the audacity to stand there in their blindness, deceived and steeped in false doctrine, and warn you that if you don't live *like them* and do what *they do*, you will end up deceived! Can you see the picture yet? Can you appreciate the pathetic irony of it? They are blind and deceived—and they got that way through BIBLE STUDY!!—yet they stand there and warn you that if you try to be led by God any other way than through the Bible study, you will end up deceived!

As blind as these Fundamentalist's are, they are not near as blind or dangerous as *pseudo-Pentecostal's* or "*defacto*" Fundamentalists. True Fundamentalist's are what they are because of their (false) doctrine—which they got from studying the Bible. Defacto Fundamentalists are much more dangerous because they claim to believe that we can be led by the Spirit in a Pentecostal way, yet they turn right around and say just what the Fundamentalist's do regarding the danger of being led by anything other than the Bible. They talk out of *both sides* of their mouths and they confuse God's people. Some of these kinds of people have now left the System and are ministering their confusion out here. I will probably be exposing one of them by name in the coming weeks. (*No; it's not our illustrious Bible teacher*).

This is all part of the deception God is turning His people over to *because* they will not receive a love for *the truth* above all else. Yes, all Christians say they love the truth. But they only love the truth as long as it doesn't interfere with *their* life. As soon as the truth interferes with their desires, or their goals, or their job, or their sports and entertainment, or their relationships, they reject it because they love this life and the things of this life *more* than they love God or His truth. That's called *idolatry* and the penalty for idolatry is religious delusion. God turns them over to seducing spirits and they don't even realize it. They have no idea they have been deceived. They continue to walk around confident that God is protecting them and they continue to assume that they are safe because they continue to study their Bible. Yet, God Himself has turned them over to Satan.

Satan has succeeded in pitting hearing God through the Scripture, against hearing God directly through our own spirits, hearts, or minds. However, there is no such conflict in the Scripture itself. There is no war between hearing God directly, and hearing God through the Scripture, in the Scripture itself. That distinction is an artificial one and it was created by Satan for a *specific* purpose. That purpose is to keep us from being fully *conformed to* the image of Christ. It's intended to keep us from coming to *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*. Nobody will ever reach these goals without a being led directly by the Spirit.

For those who try to use the Bible to prove that we must be led *by* the Bible—I suggest that you give it up! You are wasting your time and you are also demonstrating your ignorance of the Scripture because the Bible never instructs us to be led by the Bible. Jesus said: "*My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me*" (*Jn. 10:27*). The Lord's sheep hear (present tense) HIS voice and they follow HIM. This is talking about hearing God's voice directly.

The fact is, many of today's ministers are hypocrites. They *talk* about being conformed to the image of Jesus, and they talk about coming to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, but then they turn around and say we can't actually be like Jesus, and we can't actually walk like He walked!

I say, quit double-talking. Quit trying to play both sides of the fence. Either we *can* be like Jesus in *this* life or we can't be like Him in this life. If you believe we can be like Him, then quit saying we can't be led directly by the Spirit because the Lord Jesus was definitely "led by the Spirit" when He walked among us. If you don't believe we can be like Jesus in this life, then be honest and say so. Stop being a hypocrite!

*The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for **the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord.** If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?*

Matthew 10:24-25

*In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because **in this world we are like him.***

I John 4:17 NIV

*For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate **to be conformed to the image of his Son,** that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.*

Romans 8:29

*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are **changed into the same image** from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

II. Corinthians 3:18

Those who want to deny that we are to be like Jesus and walk like Jesus in this life are welcome to do so. But they do so in contradiction of the very Scripture they look to for truth and protection. Sorry my friends, but you can't be like Jesus or be conformed to His image *without* having the same kind of relationship with Him that He had with the Father when He walked on this earth. You can't possibly go throughout the day doing *only* the things Jesus wants done and saying *only* the things Jesus wants said, without being led directly by Him and hearing His voice directly. A big part of the character and ministry of Jesus was his *ability* to hear His Father's voice and be led by the Spirit in a very *direct* way.

I'm still shocked at times, regarding the ignorance of Christians when it comes to the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said the Holy Spirit will "teach us all things" (*Jn. 14:26*). He didn't say the Bible will teach us all things. When John talked about those who left the congregations because they were not really genuine believers, he also said: "*But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things*" (*Jn. 2:20*). He didn't say we know all things because we study the Bible. He said we know all things because of the unction from God.

*But the **anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you,** and ye need not that any man teach you: but as **the same anointing teacheth you of all things,** and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*

I John 2:27

John said if you are a genuine believer, then you have an anointing that abides *within* you. That anointing teaches us of all things. It's the anointing *inside of you* that bears witness to the truth when you hear it. It's the anointing inside of you that teaches you of all things. John isn't saying that if we are a Christian, we never have to be taught anything by other believers. He's saying that because of the anointing that resides within us, we have the ability to bear witness or not bear witness to what those men are saying.

If you are always being led by the Bible, then when somebody teaches you something that can be backed up by verses in the Bible, you will automatically accept it, even if it's an error. But if you are learning to be "led by the Spirit", you will check your *inner witness* before accepting a teaching that seems to be Biblically based because the fact is, many people have been deceived by Bible verses. Many people are walking in deception right now because they don't know how to listen to the inner witness. They don't know how to follow the anointing that abides within them—and one of the biggest reasons they never learned how to follow that inner witness is because deluded religious leader tell them day and night that it's *too dangerous* to do so. Thus, they remain baby Christians who can easily be swayed by Bible passages; and they swallow anything they are taught, just as long as someone can provide a couple of Bible verses to support it.

The people who say we should only be led by the Bible claim they warn us not to try and be led by anything other than the Scripture because they are looking out for our souls. But the fact is, a big reason they fear hearing directly from God is because this kind of hearing gives us access to things Bible study could *never* provide. Hearing the voice of God directly, helps us *discern* things in real time. When you have the ability to hear God's voice, He can reveal *secrets* to you that the Bible can never reveal. He can reveal the wicked motives of a person to you—motives that only God can see. He can reveal a wrong spirit that's moving in a person; and again, that's something only He can see. Through the anointing that abides within us, He can let us know when someone is lying to us. He can reveal the idols of their hearts to us. He can let us know exactly where they are spiritually, and he can tell us precisely what their spiritual problems are stemming from.

But you see, people don't like the idea of *that kind* of information being made available to *other men*. They can deal with the idea that God knows the secret things of their life—I mean, after all, God is invisible and we can easily ignore an invisible God. But the idea that God would share those secret details with you or me—now that's a whole different story! This becomes a real threat to them. So they try to keep us chained to Bible study because you'll never be shown any of *their* secrets, or *their* motives as a result of Bible study! Only the voice of God in real time situations can reveal those kinds of things to us.

*If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men **or unbelievers enter**, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and **an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters**, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.*

I. Corinthians 14:23-25 NAS

Notice carefully what one of the benefits of the gift of prophesy is. Paul said if all prophesy, when an unbeliever comes into the room he will be convicted because the "secrets of his heart are disclosed". That means, through the gift of prophesy, the Lord will expose the secrets of his heart. A person who has never seen him before will

speaking the word of the Lord in a prophesy and that prophesy will contain details that only God and that person knows. In other words, God shows one person the secrets of *another* person's heart. *Ouch!* This is a kind of "Christianity" most of today's church-goers want nothing to do with! They don't mind it as long as we all consider ourselves in the same boat—that is, we all walk around confessing that we are weak and sinful people. Some of them can even handle being corrected, as long as it's in a *doctrinal* framework. But when God uses you to expose their *secret* things—secret motives, secret sins, some secret idolatry or some demon spirit they are walking under; then the whole story changes! All of a sudden they bare their teeth and they say who are you to judge me? How do you know this thing is an idol in my life? Who told you? Where do you get off telling me my motive was wrong for saying or doing that? How can you possibly know my motives?

You see, when we have the ability to hear the voice of God directly, and be led by the Holy Spirit directly, we also have the ability to be told secret things. God will tell us secret things about other people in order to protect us, and sometimes in order to help them. But many of those who profess to be Christians are in fact, very wicked people, and they don't like the idea of God telling you and me *secret* things about *them*. So they have come up with doctrines which say it's *not possible* for us to know the secret things of others. The only problem is, those doctrines contradict what is written in the Scripture. The Scripture says that we are to be like Jesus in *this* world. It also says we are to be conformed to His image in this life.

Well. . . behold the image we are to be conformed to!

*And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said **within themselves**, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus **knowing their thoughts** said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? or whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house.*

Matthew 9:2-7

*And an argument arose among them as to which of them might be the greatest. But Jesus, **knowing what they were thinking in their heart**, took a child and stood him by His side, and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for he who is least among you, this is the one who is great."*

Luke 9:46-48 NAS

*And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven. But he, **knowing their thoughts**, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through*

Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Luke 11:14-20

Jesus had the ability to know the thought of people's hearts. Where did that ability come from? It came from His ability to hear the Spirit directly and be led by the Spirit directly. The Holy Spirit knew what these people were thinking in their hearts. He knew the *secret* things, and He often revealed those secret things to Jesus. Jesus didn't come to know the thoughts of people's hearts by reading and studying the Torah! He could only know them as the Holy Spirit revealed them to Him, directly. And I say again: most of God's people today HATE this kind of Christianity because they don't want to be exposed like that.

As long as you walk beside these kinds of people and say: "*Oh yes brother, I'm a sinner just like you*"—they will put up with you. But when you come to them like Nathan the prophet did to King David and you say: "*Thou art the man; repent of this secret wickedness*"—that's a different story! You instantly become the bad guy and they turn on you like rabid dogs. You are instantly accused of being an unloving, judgmental person who is sticking your nose in where it doesn't belong.

When you try and tell them that it was the Holy Spirit that showed you that *secret* thing in their life, and that it needs to be dealt with, and that you are only trying to help them; they say you're crazy because God doesn't do things like that. They say God would never show you *my* secret sins and problems. But I have news for you—God does do things like that all the time. He shows us the secret things in order to *protect us* from liars and hypocrites and those who are deceived but don't realize it. He also shows us the secrets things of men's hearts so they can receive deliverance and come forth in Christ.

Not only is it hypocritical to say we should strive to be like Jesus, but then turn around and say we can't be led by the Spirit like Jesus was, it's even worse to tell us we can't even walk as other men in the New Testament.

*And when they had gone through the whole island as far as Paphos, they found a certain magician, a Jewish false prophet whose name was Bar-Jesus, who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence. **This man summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.** But Elymas the magician (for thus his name is translated) was opposing them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. But Saul, who was also {known as} Paul, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, fixed his gaze upon him, **and said**, "You who are full of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord? "And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you will be blind and not see the sun for a time." And immediately a mist and a darkness fell upon him, and he went about seeking those who would lead him by the hand.*

Acts 13:6-11 NAS

Tell me: which Bible verse did Paul read in order to know how to handle that situation? Did he whip out his "Pocket Torah" and try to find some verse that would be relevant to the situation? No! The writer of Acts said

he was “*filled with the Holy Spirit*”. It was the Holy Spirit who told Paul what to do! God talked directly to Paul at that moment. That’s what it means to be “led by the Spirit”!

*And at Lystra there was sitting a certain man, without strength in his feet, lame from his mother's womb, who had never walked. This man was listening to Paul as he spoke, who, when he had fixed his gaze upon him, and **had seen that he had faith to be made well**, said with a loud voice, "Stand upright on your feet." And he leaped up and {began} to walk.*

Acts 14:8-10 NAS

Again, what verse of the Bible did Paul read that enabled him to know the man had the faith to be healed. Did he whip out his “Pocket Torah” and try to find some verse that would be relevant to the situation? No! The Holy Spirit let him know that one man, out of the many that were present, had the faith to be healed.

When Peter announced the sudden death of Ananias because he lied to the Holy Spirit, which verse of the Bible was Peter quoting from? Which passage was he getting his direction from? He wasn’t getting his direction from the Scripture. He was getting it *directly* from the Holy Spirit.

Friends, in order for God to work through us to accomplish His will, we need to learn how to be led by the Spirit. And I don’t just mean being led by the Spirit on major issues. I mean being led by the Spirit on each and every decision we make. Even as small as what clothes we wear, and what gas station we stop in. That’s how *involved* God wants to become in our lives.

The problem is not that people *can’t* learn how to be led by the Spirit this way. The problem is they don’t want to learn how to be led by the Spirit this way because after all, what if the Spirit asks them to do things they don’t want to do? What if the Spirit asks them to do things that are *strange* in the average person’s eyes? If they really learn to be led by the Spirit, He will take them out of their comfort zone—and they don’t want that!

The fact is, many of today’s Christians don’t want to know the truth. They don’t want to learn how to be led by the Spirit because of what it might *cost* them. So God gives them what they want. He gives them a good *excuse* to not learn to be led by the Spirit. He gives them religious leaders who think they know everything because they study the Bible; and those leaders tell them day and night that being led by the Spirit, the way the apostles were led by the Spirit, isn’t really possible anymore—and even if it was, it would be much too *dangerous* of a walk to pursue because it’s so easy to hear the wrong voice. They tell them it’s much safer to just stick with Bible study because God will speak to you through the Bible.

Yes, God may continue to speak to you through the Scripture. But unless you learn how to be “led by the Spirit” in truth and not just in talk, you will never be fully conformed to the image of Jesus Christ. You will never reach the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ in this life.