

Call to Obedience # 444
PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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...He Will Guide You Into All Truth... (John 16:13)

This is indeed a preposterous statement were it not to apply to the Godhead and to the Godhead alone. With that in mind, it is a most blessed declaration to His beloved children, coming to us from the Last Supper as Jesus gave His farewell address to His disciples.

This marvelous address to them makes up chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17 in the Gospel of John. It is the longest, richest, most comprehensive and important message Jesus ever gave. In fact, if it is all you had after your conversion, it contains everything you need to know instructing you how to walk humbly with God. In the Gospel of John we learn:

1. The Holy Spirit would replace Jesus' presence upon His earthly departure (14:16).
2. This Spirit which was always *with* God's people would now come to dwell *in* God's people. That happens at conversion when we are born again (14:13).
3. We will be able to do greater works through that Spirit than if Jesus had remained with us physically (14:12-13).
4. We will have more power to pray than ever before (14:14).
5. The simple requirement to have the Holy Spirit take up residence within us is total obedience to God. And obedience is the only solid proof of our love to God (14:23).
6. Revival will come through God's people becoming one (17:21). And finally, we learn:
7. **The Holy Spirit has always led His people into all truth and that He will continue to do so in the future ages of the church.**

And it is on this subject that I shall expound to you today. In His farewell address, Jesus explains that it has **never been the intention of heaven that the Holy Spirit be replaced by the Bible as the major source of guiding, teaching and transforming His people.** In other words, the Bible, which was not completed until the fourth century and was not readily available until the 15th century, would always be primarily foundational for the Christian faith, but it would never by itself without the Holy Spirit get us into *...the breadth, and length, and depth, and height* (Eph. 3:18) of our life with God. Clearly there is not enough paper in the world to print all the truth that God has stored up

for everyone of us. So again, in reference to our walk with God, the Bible must always be looked upon as having foundational instructions but never too much beyond that.

The fact that man could live and did live by the voice of God through His Spirit from the beginning of time without the Bible is evident in all Scripture. For example, for the first 2,500 years there was not even a scrap of the Old Testament. Then for the next 1,500 years until Pentecost only very, very few people had the whole Old Testament. There was still another 1,500 more years during the Christian era before the common man had both the Old and New Testament in his own language unless he could read Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek or Latin. **That makes 5,500 years of history of men walking with God without the Bible!** Again this gets us to the astounding fact that **we can learn to live godly without the Bible, but we cannot do so without the Holy Spirit.** Therefore, Jesus said: *My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me* (John 10:27). This means that there can be no following without hearing His voice by the Holy Spirit in the inner man. Paul also affirms this by saying: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* (Rom. 8:14). The evidence that a man is truly a Christian is that he is led by the Spirit of God or he is at least seeking to be led in such a manner.

Now, then by the Bible being primarily foundational only, let me give you the following proofs: 1) First, let us consider witnessing as the Bible tells us to witness. This is a foundational instruction, but the Bible does not tell me when to witness, what to say when I witness, to whom I am to witness, and to whom I am *not* to witness to because their hearts are not yet ready. But the Holy Spirit can do all that. Only the Holy Spirit can lead us into all truth.

2) The Bible tells us not to be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever (2 Cor. 6:14). This is a foundational instruction, but the Bible does not tell us which of the thousands of Christian girls we are to marry. However, the Holy Spirit can do so and wants to do so and will do so if we will let Him. Only He can lead us into all truth.

3) The Bible tells us to go to prayer meeting and to go to church: *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together...* (Heb. 10:25). This is a foundational instruction, but it does not tell us which church we are to attend or which prayer meeting we should go to and how often. Only the Holy Spirit can and wants to do so if we will let Him. Only He can lead us into all truth.

4) The Bible tells us that we need to seek the will of God each day. This is a foundational instruction, but only the Holy Spirit can tell us specifically what

to do during the first, second and third hour of each morning. The Holy Spirit can and wants to lead us into all truth.

Do I have to go on and on with this? I think you get the message. In His farewell prayer, **Jesus reaffirmed the importance of the Holy Spirit in teaching us and leading us into ALL truth** and we need to know that the Holy Spirit has always done so for His people.

For example, let us look at history and consider these beautiful specimens of men who walked with God without the Bible. They lived by the voice of God, by the Holy Spirit having guided them as He also desires to guide us.

Enoch walked with God and God took him. He was taught by the Spirit and directed by the Spirit to do the right thing, speak the right thing and be at the right place at the right time each day. He did so for 300 years and then God took him. Yet again, he had no Bible.

Abraham heard the voice of God giving him specific instructions as to where to go, what to do and what to say. He lived without the Bible giving him instructions and even before any of the Old Testament had been written.

Moses, without ever having read the word of God, was transformed from a proud, self-sufficient governor in Egypt into the meekest man on the face of the earth. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, he became a man with whom God could do anything that He wanted to do. What all will God do with you once you get tuned-in to the Holy Spirit, my friend?

Samuel was led by the Holy Spirit with pinpoint accuracy that allowed him to tell King Saul: *Then shalt thou go on forward from thence, and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel, one carrying three kids, and another carrying three loaves of bread, and another carrying a bottle of wine: And they will salute thee, and give thee two loaves of bread; which thou shalt receive of their hands* (1 Sam. 10:3-4).

Now, the primary reason why Christians were without the New Testament for the first 1,500 years of Christianity was that there was no printing press until the days of Martin Luther. Prior to that, writings had to be hand-copied which was expensive and people had to be able to read Aramaic, Hebrew, Greek or Latin and at times these writings were lost for generations (see Nehemiah and the stories of Josiah). But in all of those years, the Holy Spirit was always there teaching God's people and speaking through them by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit was never lost. Wonderful, wonderful, wonderful!

Now look at the marvel of Pentecost. The people there were from over 17 nations and were born of God and baptized in the Spirit. Imagine all of them returning to their countries as new converts without a single scrap of Christian literature. The first epistles were not written until 21 years after Pentecost. The first gospel (which is Mark) was not written until 31 years after Pentecost and the gospel of John was not written until 85 AD. Yet, without the New Testament, the early Christians evangelized the entire Mediterranean basin by the end of the first century. Again, the Bible was not completed until the fourth century and was not available to the common man until the Reformation. Many people still do not have the Bible in their own language today, but they are still able to walk with God as others did in days of old because they have the Holy Spirit.

The common perception that the more we read the Bible the more spiritual we become is not necessarily true. The Pharisees read and knew the Scriptures well, but it made them more like the devil instead of like God, to the extent that they finally killed the Son of God. Then they killed Stephen and then the Apostle James and so on. The holy Word of God was breathed and written by the Holy Spirit and can only be understood by the Holy Spirit teaching us. Without the Holy Spirit the Bible will only cause us to cut off ears and become more and more divided. If a carnal person reads the Bible without the Holy Spirit, he can make it into one of the most dangerous weapons on earth.

So, my friend, it is only during these recent times that most of us are blessed to have the written word of God in our own language. But again, we cannot live the Christian life without the Holy Spirit. Jesus' words: *My sheep hear my voice...* are still true. Paul's words: *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God* (Rom. 8:14). A Christian without the Holy Spirit is like a bird without wings or like a ship without a compass, going nowhere. *Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come* (John 16:13). What a gift, what a gift!

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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