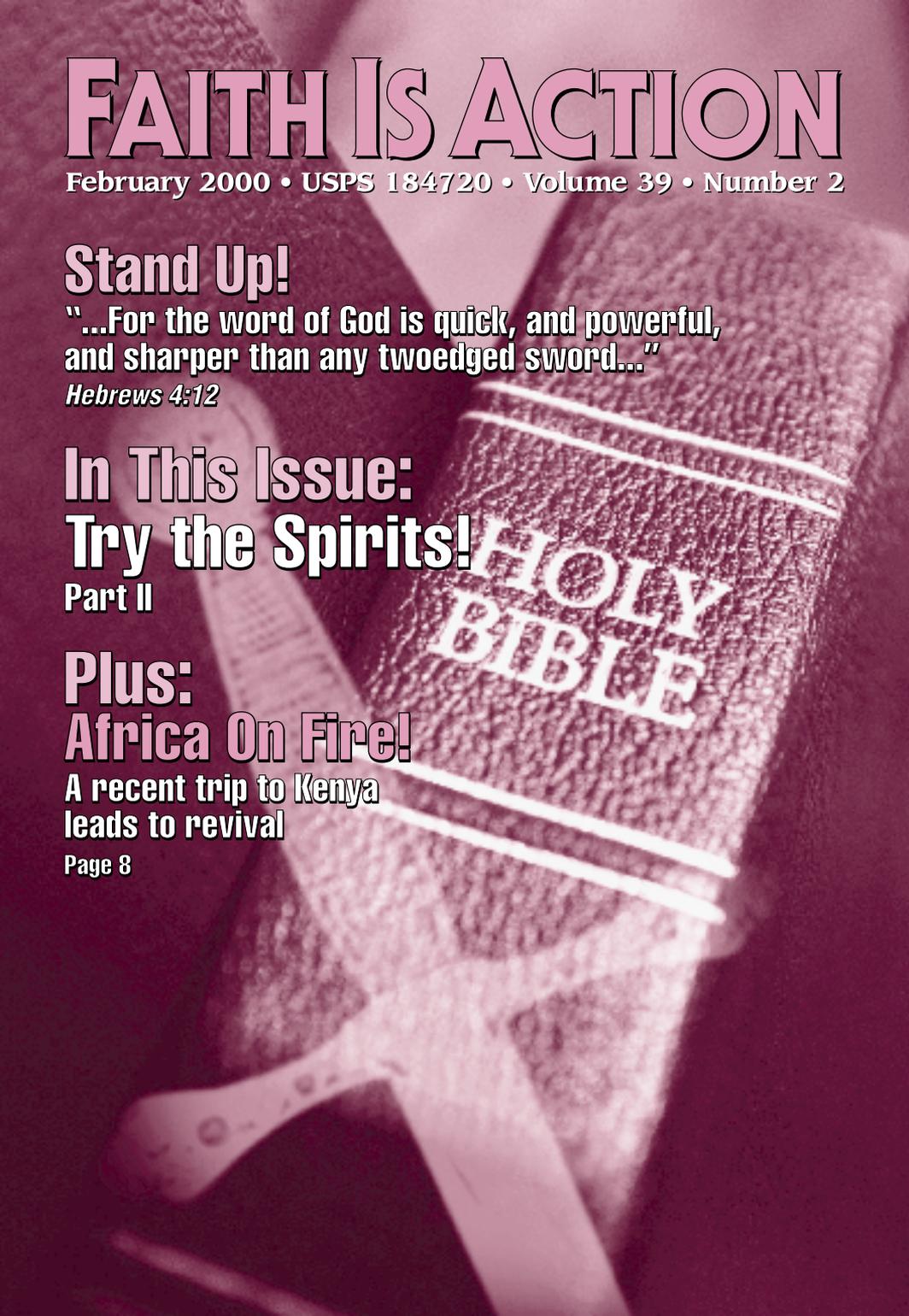


FAITH IS ACTION



February 2000 • USPS 184720 • Volume 39 • Number 2

Stand Up!

**"...For the word of God is quick, and powerful,
and sharper than any twoedged sword..."**

Hebrews 4:12

In This Issue:

Try the Spirits!

Part II

Plus:

Africa On Fire!

**A recent trip to Kenya
leads to revival**

Page 8

PART II

A BIBLE ILLUSTRATION

Balaam was a true prophet of God, but he compromised his gift for filthy lucre, and many today have been corrupted by the spirit of greed (Numbers 22-24). Israel's enemy, Balak, the king of Moab, sent his messengers to the prophet Balaam saying, "Go and curse the people of Israel for they are too mighty, and I will promote thee to very great honor, and give you anything you want."

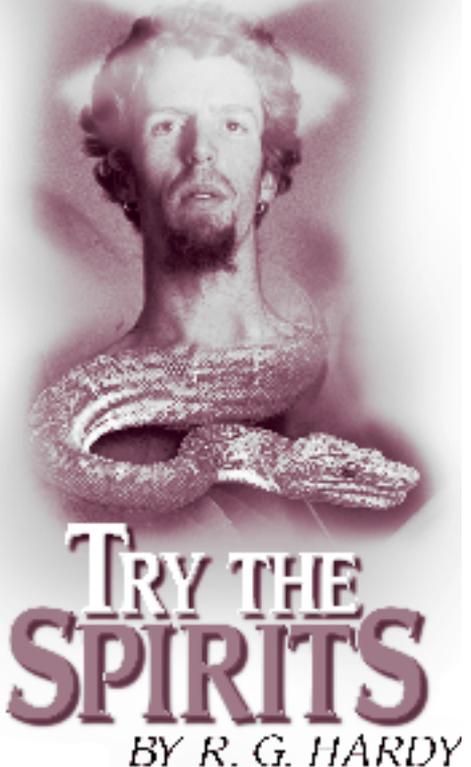
But when Balaam sought the Lord, God said, "*Thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed!*"

(Let me say here that the child of God does not have to worry about witches and wizards and root workers, because if God has blessed him, can no man curse him! The Word declares, "*There is no enchantment against Israel,*" and there is no witchcraft against the child of God! The only way it can work against him is if he believes it can. The Scripture promises, "*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.*")

Balaam told the king, "I cannot curse them. God said they are blessed." Balak sent more messengers to Balaam to persuade him to come and speak curses against Israel, but when Balaam went before the king, he began to *bless* Israel! When he opened his mouth, he began to prophesy blessings on them! The king said, "What hast thou done unto me? I told thee to *curse* mine enemies, and behold, thou hast *blessed them altogether!*"

Balaam was a prophet, and he knew that God wanted Israel blessed and not

cursed, but he wanted that reward so badly that he went before the king anyhow to curse them. God was angry and sent an angel with his sword drawn to stand in his way. When Balaam's mule saw the angel, he turned aside and ran into the field. Balaam got so mad, he began to beat the mule trying to get him to go, but the mule saw the angel that the now spiritually-blind prophet did not.



Then the angel stood again in the path, and the mule ran into the wall crushing Balaam's foot. Again, Balaam beat him, until God opened up the mouth of the mule, and he began to talk to Balaam. Even then, Balaam did not realize his folly or the supernatural intervention that was taking place!

Finally, God opened his eyes, and he saw the angel with the sword, and the angel said, "If that mule had not run you into that wall, I would surely have killed you!" But that did not stop Balaam. He went down to Moab anyway!

He would not accept the Word from God that they were blessed and not cursed, so he devised a scheme to get them cursed. You see, as long as one is righteous, there is no curse against him, and the only way that he can lose God's blessings and become cursed is if he is disobedient and backslidden.

Balaam's strategy was to get the people to commit fornication and whoredom. Then God's anger was kindled against them, and they were cursed. Later, when God had stripped all of the rebels out of Israel, He sent Israel against their enemy, and in the battle they slew the prophet Balaam. He died fighting against his own prophecy. He died in the camp of the enemy fighting his own words! And the NT writer Jude indicts many who shall do likewise in these last days: "*Woe unto them!... For they have ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.*"

It is hard to believe that people would be willfully ignorant to "**wrestle the Scriptures to their own destruction**" as Peter declared in 2 Pet. 3:6. The Greek says they *twist so as to warp the Scriptures*. Man takes his theories and judges the Word of God by them. If the Scriptures do not line up with his philosophy, he

seeks to *change the Word*. The Word of God cannot be altered: It is the ultimate judge! If the philosophy does not line up to the Word, then throw it out! The Word of God is the only antidote against all of these lies and false doctrines that are being spawned in these last days!

One must be rooted and grounded in the truth! And one is only as strong as the Word of God that is in him. He can only have as much faith as the Word of God he has generating it. Faith cometh by hearing and receiving the Word of God. Listen, when I know what the Word of God says about something, what do I care what the devil or man says!

FAITH IN THE WORD

If you want to know the truth, God is obligated to bring you the truth, and if you will walk in it, and obey it, you will never have to fear becoming deluded. But if one just has his faith on feelings and manifestations such as signs and wonders and spiritual gifts in operation, he can be easily fooled and deceived by these. Satan also uses signs and wonders to *prove his lies*. When God's servants Moses and Aaron went down before Pharaoh in Egypt, Aaron threw down his rod as God had told him to do, and it became a serpent before their very eyes! But that did not mean anything to Pharaoh: He had his rod-throwers too! They likewise threw down their rods, and for a time they were able to duplicate by demon power every miracle that Moses and Aaron performed by the power of God.

When God told Aaron to throw down his rod upon the dust of the ground and lice would come forth out of the dust, the magicians could not duplicate this miracle, because only God can create! Satan can only duplicate and counterfeit.

They told Pharaoh “*This is the finger of God!*” (Ex. 8:18:19).

We had better have our faith in more than signs and wonders. (And I do believe in signs and miracles. I believe that I have had as many miracles in my ministry as anyone living today, but healings and miracles will not give one *faith*: They will only give him *hope*.) **Faith comes by hearing the Word of God!** (Rom. 10:17). If someone gets healed by the power of God, and someone else hears their testimony of healing, it will give them hope that they can be healed too, but then it takes an anointed message from the Word of God to create faith for that healing.

A sign or a wonder has only one function, and that is to *confirm the Word preached*, (Mark 16:20). If there is no Word preached, there is no need for a miracle or a sign. And if the preacher has to perform a miracle to prove that he is preaching the Word, then it is an indication that the people are doubting.

Jesus said to Thomas, “*Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*” (John 20:29).

Jesus also stated to the Pharisees who sought a sign of Him: “*A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh a sign and none shall be given it.*”

As stated before, the Antichrist will fool the very multitudes and people of God with signs and wonders:

“*And now ye know what withholdeth that he (Antichrist) might be revealed in his time.*”

For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let (prevent) until he be taken out of the way.” (The rapture of the Church must precede the revelation of the Antichrist.)

“*...And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:*

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all powers and signs and lying wonders.” (The Antichrist will have all of Satan’s power to do wonders and signs to “prove” his lies.)

“*...And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish...*”

Why did they perish? Why are they deceived by the false prophet and taken in by signs and wonders and miracles even though he was preaching against the Word of God?

“*...Because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved*” (2 Thes. 2:6-12).

Paul’s admonishment to Timothy concerning the error of their day still stands:

“*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed **rightly dividing the word of truth***” (2 Tim. 2:15).

The term “rightly dividing” means “*to cut a straight line, to cut a straight road.*” Like the serpent of Eden, false teachers twist the truth, wrestle and distort God’s words and warnings, and Paul goes on in verses 17-18 to declare that such teachings eat as a cancer and the result is that they “*overthrow the faith of some.*” But the child of God need not fall victim to such ruin if he will follow Paul’s double charge: “**Study the Word of Truth**” and “**shun profane and vain babblings**” (verses 15-16).

DECEIVING AND BEING DECEIVED

If you love the truth, you do not have to worry about being deceived. But if when God presents the truth to some-

one, he resists it, and does not obey it, then the devil will come to him and say, "God does not mean that for you... *You are special.*" After awhile they wrestle with their conscience until they are in agreement, and they believe that lie, saying in their hearts, "Yeah, *I am special.*" And there's a special place reserved for them in hell too!

The safest thing for someone to do who isn't ready to serve God and live right is to say, "I know I'm not right," and get out of the church altogether until he is ready to get right. The most dangerous thing he can do is to play the role of the hypocrite. He is in danger of being turned over to a lying demon. As long as someone says, "I know I'm not right," God can still deal with him. But when he starts playing the hypocrite and justifying himself, and puts up a front by imitating the manifestations of the Spirit of God, he is on his way to getting a seared conscience, and God can not reach him anymore. He has only fooled himself. He has not fooled God, and neither has he fooled the real children of God who are spiritual. Paul said, "*But he that is spiritual judgeth all things*" (I Cor. 2:15).

The sad thing about being deceived is that there is no remedy once one has totally rejected the truth. In fact, false doctrines and lies beget more lies, and the deceivers not only deceive others, but *they* become more deluded in the process:

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:13).

It began when they "*resisted the truth,*" until they reached the stage they are "*corrupt in their minds, reprobate concerning the faith*" (2 Tim. 3:8).

This is why Paul admonished the

Church in Ephesians 4:14 that we must be matured and perfected by the Word of God through the five-fold ministry that we be "*no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men*" (this refers to intentional fraud in the Greek), "*and cunning craftiness, (trickery) whereby they lie in wait to deceive.*"

BEING OF SOUND DOCTRINE

The whole purpose of the child of God to sit under the teaching and preaching of the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor and teacher is that he may be spiritually matured to be able to discern sound doctrine and reject the false. There is something seriously wrong if someone in one of these five "speaking" offices does not preach *the whole counsel of God*. There is something seriously wrong when he only speaks flattery and fair speeches. In fact, Paul warned in Romans 16:17-18:

"Now I beseech you brethren, mark" (the Greek says to scrutinize) *"them which cause divisions and offenses **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;** and avoid them.*

For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches (well-chosen but untrue words and fine speaking) *"deceive the hearts of the simple (trusting)."*

Give me a real man or woman of God like Paul who commanded his young servant in the Lord what it takes to be an able minister of the N.T., especially in these last days of apostasy:

*"I charge thee... Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** with all longsuffering and doctrine,"* (2 Tim. 4:12).

Paul spoke in even stronger terms in his exhortation to Titus (1:13) of his responsibility as a bishop or overseer of God's people:

“Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers... Wherefore, rebuke them sharply (severely) that they may be sound (healthy) in the faith” (Titus 1: 9&13).

Why is it necessary for the true servant of God to sometimes resort to reproof, rebuke, and even sharp rebuke, when delivering the Word of God to His people? The answer is stated by Paul in 2 Tim. 4:3, where we left off above:

“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts will heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;”

This Greek figure of speech refers to the desire of the hearers to receive some new and spicy bits of information. Their *itching* is relieved by the messages of the new teachers which they *heap to themselves*. The consequences, however, are that they become deceived, departing from the truth, and are given over to lies:

“...And they shall turn their ears away from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.”

The outstanding point being made in this verse is more clearly defined by Greek grammar: In the first clause, it is the *“hearers with itching ears who are turning away from the truth.”* (This is written in the *active voice* in which the *subject* performs the action of the verb.)

The second clause is in the *passive voice*, denoting that the action of the verb is being performed *on the subject*, or *hearer* in this case:

“...Shall be turned unto fables (lies).”

What I want you to see in this verse is that once the hearer begins to turn away from the truth, he then is *turned unto the lie or error*. He may not start out to seek the lie, but all that he has to do is reject or turn away from the truth, and then he opens up the door to be turned unto the lie. And Satan will lose no time in sending his spirits of delusion.

Doctrines taught by Jesus Christ and the apostles are being totally disregarded, or worse, denied and rejected in the name of love and mercy. Preachers like me who adhere to sound doctrine are labeled “phobic” for taking a stand against such sins as adultery and homosexuality.

The following article published in the journal of a Christian organization, whose stated purpose is to “promote Biblical ethics of decency in American society,” is a shocking example. This excerpt is from its October ‘99 issue:

“It is time for the church to end its adultery-phobia. How narrow-minded the church has been in denying respect and acceptance for those who live an adulterous lifestyle. The church has shut its doors to an entire group of people, told them they weren’t wanted, that God has no place for them. It is time for the church to end their adultery-phobia.

“These adulterers are God’s children also. But the church has closed the door on them, not allowing them to serve as ordained ministers, unwilling to give them the full rights given to others. There is a small group of ignorant bigots who hold the opinion that they have the lock and key on God’s acceptance. These people aren’t willing to practice the love of Christ while denying that love to those whose lifestyle is different.

“When will the church learn that

people who are adulterers have no control over how God made them. And He did make them. They are God's children also. But a small group of radical right-wing bigots have blocked the acceptance of adulterers from becoming full members in God's church. Adulterers are born that way. Or their environment in early childhood created this nature in them. Either way, they have no control over their sexuality and the church has to end its adultery-phobia. The church doesn't need to be kicking adulterers out, but opening their doors to all of God's children. No one should be told he cannot have all the rights and privileges of the church simply because God created him to be an adulterer."

PROVE THAT WHICH IS GOOD

I have written this message to arm and alert the people of God for the spiritual warfare of the last days. The closer we are to the coming of our Lord, the more apostasy like this will increase. Paul told us in 2 Thes. 2:3, "*Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first...*"

What then are we to do? Do we brand all ministers as false? Do we quench the gifts of the Spirit and forbid prophecy for fear of fraud and misuse? (And let me tell you Saints, in many Pentecostal churches today, they have done just that. They have seen so much sham and falseness that they have lost all of the power and moving of the Spirit, because they stopped even the *real* from operating.)

No! As we have admonished again and again, we must *try or prove the spirits* to see whether they be of God. There are *real prophets of God who speak the truth!* (I know, because I am one of them!) There are fewer in these last days, and

no doubt, many more will depart from the faith before it's all done. But if we are wise in the Word of God and have learned to *try the spirits*, we won't be fooled by these. If we know God's voice, then a "*stranger (a strange voice), we will not follow!*" And God only speaks by His Word.

Even prophecy must line up to the Word of God. Thus Paul told the church of Corinth to "*let the prophets speak, and the others judge*" (1 Cor. 14:29). The basis of judgment is the **written** revelation of the Word of God.

All prophecy and preaching by a prophetic or flowing anointing are to be proven by the truth to see *which of the three spirits is speaking. God's Spirit and Word agree.* I refer you to the guidelines that Paul wrote to the believers in 1 Thes. 5:19-21:

"Quench not the Spirit.

Despise not prophesyings.

Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

The standard we use to prove, try, or examine the message and its source is the written Word of God! When we know the truth and are filled with the truth, we can easily recognize the lie and the counterfeit!

The prophet warned: "*...If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*" (Isa. 8:20).

It is when one does *not know* the truth than he can become confused and persuaded by the lie. I have been told that when bank tellers are trained to spot counterfeit bills, they are not given *counterfeit bills* to examine and study so as to become familiar with the counterfeit. Rather, they are given *real bills* to examine, study, scrutinize, and handle over and over. They become so familiar

with the *real money* and how it looks and feels, that they are able to spot the counterfeit immediately, because it does not conform to the characteristics of the genuine!

MY SHEEP KNOW MY VOICE

In the same way the Child of God can recognize the voice of the stranger, because He knows the voice of his Lord! Jesus said:

“And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers” (John 10:4-5).

In the Holy Land the shepherds still lead their flocks, and I recall one trip there when I saw this great truth demonstrated. Our tour bus had stopped near a sheep market and there were sheep everywhere. I watched as one man tried to get a group of sheep to move and they would not. He called and coaxed and he even tried to pull some of the sheep, but it was like trying to pull a mule. They would not budge, *because they did not know his voice*. He was a *stranger* to them!

Finally, their shepherd came and called to them, and *they followed him!* I have read that sheep are very nearsighted and can only see 3 or 4 feet in front of them, so the shepherd leads not *by sight*—but by *his voice*. Even so, if one is a Christian he hears and knows the voice of his Shepherd and *follows Him!*

It is important to see that the shepherd goes *before* the sheep and *leads them*. He does not drive them or push them: **He leads them!** Whenever you feel like you are being *pushed or driven* to do something and you are not sure if it is God—it isn't! *The Spirit of God leads us.*

Through the Word of God He confirms the voice that speaks to us, because **the Word is God's voice!** Anything that is in contradiction to the Word is not the voice of God! Then when you *hear* the voice of your Shepherd and you *know* it is His Word, you are to *follow*.

The Shepherd will always lead the sheep to **peace**: *“He leadeth me beside the still waters”* (Ps. 23:2). Still waters signify **peace**. Whenever God is in something, it will have an *air of peace* about it: *“He shall guide our feet into the way of peace”* (Luke 1:79).

“For ye shall be led forth with peace” (Isa. 55:12). *“Seek peace and pursue it”* (Ps. 34:14).

These Scriptures and others make it clear that whenever one has a choice to make or several ways to go, he should take **the one that leads to peace!**

“For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace” (Rom. 14:19), and one of the fruit of the Spirit is *“peace”* (Gal. 5:22).

THE SPIRITUAL DISCERNER

Every child of God who has the baptism of the Holy Spirit has the greatest “radar system” to discern the operations of the Spirit world. We are living in a dangerous age when occultic activities are proliferate. One can now access “psychic enlightenment” with the press of a phone or TV button. The land is filled with sorcery through drugs, cults, false religions and even in the cartoons and games geared for our young children. Such demonic phenomena will increase to the end of this age when Antichrist and the false prophet will be empowered by such forces to deceive the world and lead them to hopeless defeat against Christ at His Second Coming.

In recent years we have rejoiced in

amazement as we watched the miraculous fall of the Iron Curtain and the crumbling of the Soviet empire. For the first time in 70 years, the Gospel poured into the atheistic darkness of this land as multiplied thousands are being saved. And yet, the evil one, ever ready to inject his counterfeit spiritual experience, has seized the opportunity of religious freedom to bring a “revival” of occultic practices in Russia. It has been reported that staff members and associates of some of the highest political figures are psychics who teach how to manipulate people through eye contact and speech-making. This is just one example of the activity of lying wonders Satan is unleashing in these last days.

Those who are firmly grounded in and daily dining on the Word of God have the antidote to all these:

“For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thought and intent of the heart” (Heb. 4:12).

THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

Finally, fellowship and communion with the Holy Spirit is required for spiritual discernment in these dangerous times when there are many voices of error and seduction. The Holy Spirit is given to be not only our Comforter, but our teacher, our guide, and to expose our enemy and reveal things to come. (Jn. 14:26, 16:7-15).

While John warned his readers in his first epistle that there are those who possess an antichrist spirit whose purpose is to “seduce them,” he confidently added: *“But the anointing which ye have received of him (Holy Spirit) abides in you... and teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie... and ye know all things”* (John 2:27,20).

Jesus said He is *“The Spirit of truth who will guide us into **all truth**”* (John 16:13). It is He Who *“bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God”* (Rom. 8:16), and it is following His leadership after the new birth in Christ that approves us as the true sons of God:

*“For as many as are **led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God**”* (Rom. 8:14).