

Signs of Second Coming of Jesus

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of scriptural integrity and personal honesty in understanding the signs of Christ's second coming.

Duration: 1:10:14

Scripture: Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 1:21, Matthew 24:4, Luke 8:3, Acts 17:11, Ephesians 4:22, 2 Thessalonians 2:9-11, James 1:26, Revelation 12:8-10

Topics: "Eschatology", "Spiritual Deception"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of being vigilant against deception in the last days, warning against false prophets, counterfeit gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the need to compare everything with the truth found in Scripture. It stresses the significance of genuine transformation, control over one's tongue, and the manifestation of true holiness as evidence of a genuine relationship with God.

Transcript

I'm sure you've heard many messages about the second coming of Christ. That's a very popular subject with many people, many preachers. But if I were to ask you, from all the messages you've heard about the signs that would indicate that the coming of Christ is near, what are the first signs that come to your mind from all the messages you have heard in your life about the signs that point to the second coming of Christ? I've heard a lot of sermons in my younger days, and as I heard them, the signs that would come most frequently to my mind is wars and rumors of wars and tsunamis and earthquakes and Israel coming into the land, etc., etc.

But one of the things that I have sought to do is to try and approach the scriptures with a mind that is completely open, not bound by the traditions I inherited from my church background. I was born into an Orthodox, Syrian Orthodox church family, so I was baptized as a baby, christened. So when I was born again, when I was 19 and a half, I wondered, should I get baptized again? There's only one baptism.

I was bound by that tradition for one and a half years. And I studied the scriptures, and I saw there's not a single verse about child baptism in scripture. But there are millions of Christians who baptize their children.

So millions of Christians are wrong. There are even born-again Christians in some denominations who baptize their children. John Wesley was one of the greatest men of God who lived in England 250 years ago, but he didn't baptize adults, he baptized children.

Martin Luther and many others like that. Great men of God. So that teaches us great men of God can be wrong.

Millions of Christians can be wrong. So there's only one guide for our earthly life, written guide, that's the word of the Bible. And I find that many Christians say that the Bible is the word of God, but they don't read it as much as other books.

Then they are dishonest. And I'll tell you one thing, God loves honest brothers and sisters. If you were to make a list of the sins that Jesus condemned the most, if you were to make a list of the most serious sins, we would put murder, adultery, stealing, but Jesus hardly ever spoke about those sins.

He spoke about hypocrisy. The opposite of hypocrisy is honesty. He hated hypocrisy.

It was not to murderers and thieves that he said you will go to hell, it was to hypocrites. So I want to encourage you, my brothers, in more than 50 years of being a believer, I have discovered that God loves honest people. And so one aspect of honesty is this, if you say something, act according to it.

If you say, among all the millions of books there are in the world, there is only one book that God has written, and that is the Bible, I'm sure all of you say that. But if you're honest, you will study this book more than watching television, more than watching movies, more than other books. If you don't do that, I have to tell you, you're dishonest.

You don't speak the truth. You say something with your lips, you know, Jesus said that these people draw near to me with their lips, but their heart goes after their covetousness. They study the stock market more than they study the Bible, because there you can make money, here you get only spiritual riches.

And they prove by their life that they're really interested more in material riches than spiritual riches, but theoretically, if you ask them a question-answer paper, is the Bible the word of God? Yes, it is. Is that the only book that God has written? Yes, it is, but they don't go by it. Well, I decided to go by it, and when I compared what the Bible said with what I saw being taught in the Orthodox Church, I discovered a lot of it was not in Scripture.

What did I do? I just threw it away from my life. And then I came to another assembly, these were born-again people, and they emphasized certain things in the Scripture, but they studied the Scripture like we study history, or some other subject in school, it was all academic. It didn't speak about the Holy Spirit, so I never knew anything about the baptism of the Holy Spirit in that church, but they really studied the Scriptures, and I'm thankful for that, but I found I knew all this academically, but I didn't have power in my life.

And again, as I read the Scriptures, I saw that this church, though they preached water baptism, did not preach baptism of the Holy Spirit, and that's what I needed. And then the Lord filled me with the Holy Spirit, and then I knew that I needed supernatural gifts to serve Him. I can't serve Him with my natural ability.

The Bible says I must covet to prophesy. Every believer is urged to do that, if I want to serve God, and I began to do that, and then I went to Pentecostal churches, and I found so many different emphases on the different gifts of the Holy Spirit. And in every time, I said, just like I did with the Orthodox Church, I gave up that tradition, comparing it with Scripture, and then I was with the Brethren, and I compared them with Scripture, and then I saw what was taught in the Pentecostals, and I compared it with Scripture, and I said,

nobody's going to convince me about anything.

I don't care if a million people say something, if I don't see it in the Word of God, I won't accept it. And I want to tell you, that is what saved me from going astray, and I would recommend that to you. Let me show you a verse in Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17.

In Acts of the Apostles, chapter 17, we read about Paul and Silas going to a place called Thessalonica, preaching the Word of God, and there were verses of 1, and a number of people were converted, we read there in verse 4, and joined Paul and Silas, and there was a little church in Thessalonica, and that's the church to which Paul wrote the letter to the Thessalonians. Earlier, he was with a church in Corinth, and he wrote a letter to the Corinthians. We read later on in chapter 19, he was in Ephesus, he wrote a letter to the Ephesians.

He had the habit of writing letters to the churches. He was in Galatia, you read earlier in chapter 16, and he wrote a letter to the Galatians. But there was one church, one place he went to and planted a church, he never wrote a letter to them.

Have you wondered why? And that was in a place called Berea, a lot of people don't know about that, they know about Ephesians, Ephesus, and Corinth, and Thessalonica, some Christians have never heard about Berea. Let me tell you about Berea. From Thessalonica, verse, chapter 17, verse 10, Acts 17, 10, the brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea, and they came there and did the same thing, went to the synagogue and preached.

Now listen to this, the Holy Spirit's commendation and certificate of the people in Berea is this, they were more noble-minded than the believers in Thessalonica. I'd like the Lord to say that about me, that Brother Zach was more noble-minded than certain other believers. I say, Lord, can you say that about me? Don't you want the Lord to say that about you? How did the Holy Spirit give them the certificate? The reason is given is, first of all, they received the word with great eagerness.

They didn't sit there in the meeting with their mind wandering here and there, wondering what should I do tomorrow, or what should I do this week, or worried about something that happened last week. They sat in the word of God, in the church, listening with great eagerness. That's the number one quality, and not only does it apply to listening to God's word in the church, when they read the scriptures, we had to read it with great eagerness.

That's number one. That's why they were noble-minded. People who read the scriptures casually, people who listen to God's word in a church casually, they are not noble-minded.

The Holy Spirit compares believers in Thessalonica with believers in Berea, and the Holy Spirit will compare you with believers in some other place. He'll compare one church with another church, and say, they are more noble-minded, or this believer with that believer, and say, this believer is more noble-minded. I want a certificate like that from God, and the Bible tells me how I can get it.

By going to God's word, this book, with great eagerness, they received the word. Those days, they didn't have a Bible. This type of Bible has been available only in the last 500 years, since printing was invented.

In the early days, there was no Bible. The only Bible that was in the synagogue, where they had a scroll, and also only the Old Testament. Most of these letters were not even written.

So these early Christians, how could they study the Bible? When they came to the meeting, they couldn't come with a Bible in their hand, there were no Bibles, and there was no Bible in their home. If they wanted to study the Scriptures, they had to go to the synagogue, and look at the scrolls, and search the Scriptures. There was absolutely no other way to do it.

Maybe a few rich Jewish people could afford to buy one of these expensive parchments of the Old Testament Bible. Most poor believers just couldn't afford it. So when it says to search the Scriptures, they examined, verse 11, the Scriptures daily.

This is why they were called noble-minded. They, I mean, if the Bereans had a Bible like this, they'd have been thrilled. They'd say, we don't have to go to the synagogue now, we can sit at home and search it daily.

They took the trouble to go to the synagogue, look at the Scriptures, to search the Scriptures every single day. They had their work. They were not all full-time workers, you know, doing God's work.

They were in a secular job, they had to earn their living every day, and then when that was over, they went to the synagogue to search the Scriptures daily. I'm not surprised the Holy Spirit calls them noble-minded. And what were they searching the Scriptures for? They were searching the Scriptures to find out, this great Apostle Paul, what he's saying, is it right or wrong? Isn't that amazing? That they knew this man was a great man of God, he'd planted churches, he'd healed the sick, and done miracles, and he'd seen Jesus face-to-face, that's all very good.

But I still want to check whether this so-called great man of God who has seen Jesus face-to-face and done miracles, all that is great, but I still want to check whether he's preaching according to the Scriptures. I'll tell you this, if you can look at every man of God, a so-called great man of God who does miracles and tells you about all the wonderful things he did in different places, etc., and no matter what he preaches, you say, brother, that may be all right, but I still want to check whether what you're saying is in God's Word, you'll be safe. The Holy Spirit will say you're noble-minded.

That's what I decided. I said, I don't care even if it's the Apostle Paul, whichever great man of God today there is, I want to see if he is preaching according to the Scriptures. And so, you know, when they heard the Apostle Paul speak on the synagogue one Saturday, they would come to him and say, praise the Lord, Brother Paul, good to hear you, but we'll have to check up the Scriptures and tell you next week whether we agree with you or not.

Isn't that great? To walk up to an Apostle and say that? And so, they would check and come back to Paul and say, yeah, now we accept what you say. Now, today we don't have to wait a whole week. You've got the Bible right in front of you.

And if a man preaches to you anything, anything under the sun, and he cannot show that to you in Scripture, I'd say, don't believe it. It may be his own theory. It may be his experience.

Experience is not Scripture. A lot of people have experiences. You know, Paul was thrown off a horse and saw Jesus face to face.

Is that a doctrine? That was his experience. Okay. But his experience, I don't have to be thrown off any horse, and I don't have to necessarily see a vision of Jesus on a road.

That was an experience he had, which was a genuine experience, but it's not for me. And you didn't have it either. Because the Acts of the Apostles, let me tell you one simple thing, is not a book for getting doctrine.

It's a history book. And many people are dishonest when they come to the Acts of the Apostles. They pick out certain verses to prove doctrines which are their favorite doctrines, and they will reject other verses, which are also in the same book.

That's what I mean by being dishonest. The Bereans search the Scriptures daily. Now, if you go to the Acts of the Apostles, I remember once, I was with a group of people in North America, God-fearing, born-again believers, who were called the Hutterites.

Now, I don't know whether you've heard of them. There's a group of Christians who were persecuted in Europe in the 15th, 16th century. Amish, Mennonites, Hutterites, Anabaptists, they're all part of the same group.

And they had slight differences among them. The Hutterites are people who believed in communal living. That means they did what it says in the Acts of the Apostles.

They all had a common purse. Nobody earned his own money. They'd work together in a farm, and one leader would keep all the money.

And they'd eat together in a common hall. They said, this is how the early Christians lived. This is how we're going to live.

And they had a verse for it. Acts 2, verse 44, all those who believed had everything in common. They got their doctrine from Acts of the Apostles.

All those who believed had everything in common. All people had all things in common. They said, we're just obeying scripture.

But they were against the doctrine of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. They didn't believe in speaking in tongues or any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. So I was invited to speak there once.

And we had a question time with a number of young people sitting in a home. And they were trying to grill me. And the leader said, Brother Zach, doesn't it say in Acts 2, verse 44, that all those who believed had all things in common? Why don't you practice that? I said, before we go to verse 44, let's go to verse 4. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, I said.

They all spoke in tongues. Why don't you do that? End of discussion. End of argument.

They had for years picked out one verse and neglected the other. That is what I mean by dishonesty in coming to the Acts of the Apostles. And then I told them, you cannot get doctrines from the Acts of the Apostles.

It's a history book. You read there that Paul circumcised Timothy, Acts chapter 16. What doctrine do you get from that? You go to Acts 20 to 22, you read Paul shaved his head in the temple.

What doctrine do you get from that? Paul fought with Barnabas. They separated. What doctrine do you get from that? Many, many other things like that.

It's a history book. If you want to get a doctrine, go to the Epistles. Don't go to the historicals.

I mean, I've studied the Bible for 54 years, and I'll tell you a simple principle of understanding Scripture if you want to listen to me. If you try to get a doctrine from the historical sections of Scripture, you will be dishonest. You will pick out the ones that prove your favorite tradition and doctrine, and you will neglect things which contradict what you believe.

That's what these Hutterites were doing. So I go to a Pentecostal group. We have a discussion.

And they say to me, Brother Zach, doesn't it say in Acts 2.4, they were filled with the Spirit, and they all spoke in tongues? I say, right. I say to the Pentecostal, let's go to Acts 2.44. They all believed, and they all had all things in common. Why don't you preach that? End of discussion.

Because the Hutterites picked out one verse, and the Pentecostals pick out another. Both are wrong because they got their doctrine out of the Acts of the Apostles, and they pick out the verses which they like. And they are absolutely dishonest by not taking everything.

You either take everything, or say, that's not a book for doctrine. Well, if you want to be protected from deception, there's a simple principle there. In the New Testament Epistles, we have everything necessary for doctrine.

Now the same thing applies in the Gospels. If you go to the Gospels, and read the historical sections of what all Jesus did, and say, we've got to experience all that, you'll get a wrong doctrine. For example, there are numerous places in Scripture, in the Gospels, where we read, Jesus healed everybody who was sick.

Not 99%, 100%. Another place, he healed them all. What doctrine do you get out of that? Which place do you see? Every single person being healed.

There are as many sick people in Pentecostal churches, as there are in Brethren assemblies, who don't believe in healing. I'm not against praying for healing. I've prayed for the sick.

I've experienced healing in my own life, and I've seen healing in answer to prayer, with numerous people in our own church. I've seen barren women, giving birth to children in answer to prayer. I believe in it.

But I still do not believe, that everybody is healed, among believers. I don't preach that doctrine, because I don't find it in the epistles. I know it's there in the Gospels, Jesus healed them all.

But I don't get a doctrine from the historical sections of Scripture. And I want to say just one thing about healing. There's something better than healing, and that is health.

I don't pray for healing, I pray for health. And I would recommend that you pray for health. Say, Lord, give me wisdom, to preserve my body and health.

So that prevention is better than cure. And if sickness comes, then we ask God for healing. But let's not assume, that everybody is going to be healed.

Paul was not healed of his thorn in the flesh, 1 Timothy 5. We read that Timothy had a stomach's infirmity, that frequently troubled him. All the time Paul laid hands on Timothy, he was not healed. That was Timothy's thorn in the flesh.

It kept him humble. I'm just saying that in passing. If you want a doctrine, get it from a clear teaching of Jesus.

All the teaching of Jesus is clear. Absolutely clear. For example, Luke 9.23. You cannot follow Jesus, if you don't take up the cross, every single day.

It is impossible. Anybody. You have to die to yourself, every day, if you want to follow Jesus.

Not just go to church and sing songs, and read the Bible. You've got to deny yourself, and die every day. And anybody who thinks he can follow Jesus, or she can follow Jesus, without denying themselves every single day, has not read Luke 9.23. That's not history.

That's doctrine. So when I go to the Gospels, I take all the teachings of Jesus literally. Exactly.

But when I read the history of what he did, I say that's history. There's no doctrine there. Because I also read, in John chapter 5, where Jesus went to the pool of Bethesda, where it says there was a great multitude of sick people, and he healed one person, and walked out.

He didn't heal them all. Because Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit. We read in Acts chapter 4, there was a lame man, sitting at the gate of the temple.

We read in Acts 4, that he was 40 years old. And from birth, he was lame. And he'd been kept at the gate called Beautiful.

He was always begging for alms. And he'd been there, if he was 40 years old, he'd been put there probably for 30 years, to be a beggar. And when Peter came, you know, he asked for gold, silver and gold, and Peter said, I don't have any.

And he healed him. But long before Peter came, Jesus walked by that beautiful gate of the temple, numerous times, in three and a half years of his ministry. And he saw that man.

And the man would ask him for money. And Jesus would tell Judas, give him some money. Because Jesus didn't live by rules, such as, thou shalt heal everyone who is sick.

No. He lived by the leading of the Holy Spirit. And so, whenever he saw a sick person, he would seek the will of the Father.

Father, what do you want me to do for this person? Now Father, you're leading me to go to the pool of Bethesda. And there's so many, hundreds of sick people sitting here. Father, what do you want me to do? Go to that man, sitting there in the corner.

Heal him. And Jesus would heal him. What next, Father? Walk away.

That's how Jesus lived. He didn't live by rules. He lived by the leading of the Holy Spirit.

We tend to form rules and say, it must always be like this. That's law. We don't live under law.

We live by the leading of the Spirit. And it's a wonderful thing to live by the leading of the Spirit. Jesus lived like that all the time.

Sometimes he would do something and sometimes he wouldn't. He was led by the Spirit. And so, he came by this man at the beautiful gate of the temple.

Father, what shall I do? Give him some money. So he'd say, Judas, give him some money. He'd come by that same gate two weeks later.

What about now, Father? Give him some money. Regularly, for three and a half years, he walked in and out of that beautiful gate of the temple. Every time that man begged for money, he gave him money.

If Jesus had healed him, he would not have been sitting there when Peter came by. And we read in Acts 4, 5,000 people were saved seeing that man healed. They would not have been saved because Jesus did something on his own two years earlier.

You see the wisdom of listening to God, and when the Father tells you, don't heal him, just give him money, do that. A lot of people don't understand that. We live too much in our soul.

We don't understand the difference between soul and spirit. We act on human compassion. And that's the normal way.

There are Hindus and Muslims who act on human compassion. You don't need the Holy Spirit to act on human compassion. I know numerous organizations in India.

I know Hindu leaders who set up hospitals in India where they give free treatment out of compassion. Hindus, you don't need the Holy Spirit for that. There's an element of human compassion in a lot of people.

Even atheists. Not everybody is hard-hearted. So, if we act on human compassion, I think of the story of the prodigal son.

Supposing you were living next door to the prodigal son, and you saw this poor boy about to eat what the pigs are eating. I know what you'd do. You'd give him some food.

And every day you'd give him some food and make sure that he never goes back to his father's house because you're feeding him. But the father out there has got more wisdom. He says, I'm not going to send any money to my son.

And he hears a message that his son is living with the pigs. Yeah, let him live with the pigs. I want him to come back home.

I want him to get so sick and tired of his life that he comes back home. But some soulish Christian next door can keep on giving him money and food and make sure he never goes back to his father's home because that soulish Christian does not see God. He doesn't know how to live by the Spirit.

And you and I don't realize how much we have hindered the work of God by acting according to our reason. The Bible says in Proverbs chapter 3, now I'm talking about the type of Christian life which most people don't know anything about. But that's the life you're supposed to live if you're really filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's the way your life can be most effective on earth. Not just to do what other people say. Come here, go there, do this, do that and do everything they say.

Jesus never lived like that. The Bible says trust in the Lord with all your heart. Proverbs 3 5 heart or spirit.

Proverbs 3 5 and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him. Listen to the Spirit and he will tell you exactly what you're supposed to do.

Have you read Proverbs 3 5 and 6? As the child of Adam, we all have grown up responding to particularly two sources of information. One what comes through our eyes and the other what comes through our ears. What we read, what we see, what we hear.

This is our main sources of information. We have a little bit of information from touch and smell, etc. But mostly 90% of our information comes through what we see and what we hear.

Look at your own life. And our mind is influenced a lot by what we see and hear. And if you don't filter, I mean if you're not Spirit filled, if you're not really wholehearted, then you live by what you see and hear.

But when you're filled with the Spirit and you want to walk in the Spirit you're not going to just respond to all that you see. Like I said earlier about an advertisement. This advertisement says, you cannot live without this.

You filter that with the Holy Spirit and say, I can live without it. I don't need to buy that expensive stuff in order to live on this earth. So, it says about Jesus, I want to show you a wonderful passage about Jesus, which shows what a Spirit filled life is.

Which many people don't understand. You know, we're not supposed to, I'm not talking about milk now and this is what I'm sharing is meat. And I trust that all of you have drunk enough milk in your life that you're ready for some solid meat.

We're not supposed to be babies forever. We're supposed to grow up and this is solid meat. Isaiah chapter 11.

In Isaiah chapter 11 it is talking about the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. And he's our example. Jesus is the perfect example of the Spirit filled man.

There's nobody more perfect than him. And so whenever I want to know what does it mean to be filled with the Spirit I look at Jesus. He's my example.

I can't go wrong. When I see people laying hands on somebody and pushing them down and saying that's the Holy Spirit, okay, I want to compare it with Jesus. I go to the Scriptures and I see, where do I see Jesus laying hands on people and pushing them down? Never.

I see Jesus peaking people lying down on the ground and lifting them up. These people are doing the opposite. And there is a verse and there's a word for that which is the opposite of Christ in Scripture.

You know what it's called? Antichrist. Antichrist. Christ lifts people up, you push them down.

But how many Christians have discernment on that? How many Christians are bold enough to speak about it? I've had people tell me, oh, be careful brother. Don't speak against the Holy Spirit. I say, you're not going to scare me with verses like that.

When the devil also quoted a verse to Jesus saying it is written, and that Jesus said don't scare me, it's also written you shall not tempt the Lord your God. So when people say to me it's written, don't blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, I say it's also written in 1 John 4.1, beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits. See whether they are of God.

If you don't know the Scriptures, people will scare you with verses. If you know the Scriptures like Jesus, you know how to counter one verse with another. Do you know that the devil can quote Scripture? He quoted Scripture to Jesus.

Don't you think he'll quote Scripture to you? Perhaps through a preacher? You've got to be careful. So Isaiah chapter 11 speaks about the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus. Verse 2 speaking about, you know, the one who came out of Jesse and David in verse 1, that's Jesus.

The spirit of the Lord will rest upon him. You know, in the book of Revelation, you read about the seven spirits of God or the sevenfold Holy Spirit. Seven characteristics of the Holy Spirit.

All seven are here. The spirit of Jehovah, spirit of wisdom, spirit of understanding, spirit of counsel, spirit of strength, spirit of knowledge, and the spirit of the fear of the Lord. That's the sevenfold Holy Spirit.

And that was upon Jesus. And out of all these seven, one particular characteristic is picked out. The fear of the Lord, the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

The Holy Spirit, if he fills a person, brings within him a tremendous reverence for God. Fear means not that being afraid of God. I'm not afraid of God.

He's my dad. I'm not afraid of my dad. But I have a tremendous respect for him.

And the more filled with the spirit I am, the more I respect him. Because the Holy Spirit is a spirit of reverence for God. And if you don't have reverence for God, I say you're not filled with the Holy Spirit.

I'll tell you this, when I hear some of these modern, cheap, charismatic songs, I say these are not, there's such a lack of reverence in some of them. I'm not against them. Some of them are really good.

But some of them, when I hear that, I say these are love songs. Some half-converted cowboy, when he was in his unconverted days, wrote love songs for his girlfriend. Now he's half-converted and he writes love songs to Jesus like Hold Me Close, Never Let Me Go.

Who are you talking to, brother? Are you talking to Almighty God? Or you converted all those love songs you sang to your girlfriend now to Jesus? I can't imagine Peter singing songs like that, Hold Me Close, Never Let Me Go, and all that type of stuff. I'm just telling you how I hear songs like that and I say in my church, never again. We're not going to sing that.

The Spirit of God is a spirit that brings reverence for God. And everything we sing must have reverence. We must mean what we say.

And that's why I often tell people, when you sing a song, pay attention to the words. Because we're saying a prayer or a thanksgiving or a praise. Don't just sing it just because it's a nice tune or because somebody wrote it.

Mean it. And if you don't know the meaning, find out the meaning. For example, for so many years, maybe 20-30 years of my Christian life, I used to sing many songs of Hosanna, Hosanna, Hosanna.

I never knew what it meant. I was saying to God something which I didn't even know the meaning. Many of you sang Hosanna today in that song.

Tell me, what does it mean? What did you tell God? What exactly did you tell God when you said Hosanna in that song? Do you know the answer? I mean, Hallelujah, you know, it means praise the Lord. Hallelujah is short for praise the Lord. What about Hosanna? Oh, you see, it's there somewhere in Scripture.

It says in Matthew 21, Hosanna. Hosanna is a Hebrew word just like, it's a combination of two words, just like Hallelujah is Hebrew. Amen is Hebrew.

Many people don't know the meaning of Amen. We say Amen so many times. I've done it.

I'm telling you from my own mistakes. I'm trying to teach you from my own mistakes. I said Amen, Amen, Amen.

To me, Amen only meant the prayer is over, we can open our eyes. But that's not what Amen means. The word Amen is a Hebrew word which you could translate it as it shall be so.

It says the first time it comes in Scripture is Genesis 15, 6 where it says God said to Abraham you'll have children like the stars in the sky. Abraham said Amen. Abraham believed in the Lord and it's called Amen.

Abraham Amened the Lord. So when I say Amen to a prayer, it's not just the prayer is over. It means what that brother said, I believe it will be so.

It's an expression of faith. When I say Amen to my own prayer, I say something and I say Amen. Sometimes we repeat Amen when some brother says something.

I hope you mean it shall be so. It's an expression of faith. Well, the times of ignorance God overlooks.

But now onwards you know what you're going to say. The same thing with Hosanna. Hosanna is quoted from Psalm 118.

And it means save now we beseech you. That's the meaning of that. Save us now we beseech you O son of David.

It's from Psalm 118 towards the end. Save us now we beseech you. Psalm 118.

Let me read you that verse. Psalm 118 and verse 25 26. Lord save Hosanna we beseech you.

Blessed is he, verse 26, who comes in the name of the Lord. Now you know the meaning. So when you say Hosanna you're saying O Lord save us now we beseech you.

From what? You know those Israelites wanted to be saved from the Romans. Save us from the Romans who are ruling us. Today Christians say save us from hell.

But Jesus didn't come to save us from the Romans or from hell. He came to save us from our sins. You shall call his name Jesus Matthew 121 because he will save his people not from the Romans not from hell but from their sins.

Is that what you are meaning just now? When you said Hosanna Oh and not just a small request. Hosanna means we beseech you. Lord we are desperate.

I want to be saved from my anger. I want to be saved from my lust. Hosanna O Lord Hosanna save me now from I beseech you.

It's not just a weak request Lord. It's an earnest request. Please remember that next time you sing Hosanna.

I'll tell you how I found out. Because I decided I'm never going to tell a lie to God. And I discovered that I was telling more lies to God on Sunday morning when I sang songs without understanding the meaning than any other day.

And I think it's true with many Christians. There are beautiful songs among the Christian faith like take my life and let it be. Take my silver and my gold.

Not a mite would I withhold. Really? Take my voice and let me sing always only for my King. Really? You only want to sing for your King? You want to give every single mite of your silver and gold to God? Or are you telling lies to God? All to Jesus I surrender.

Really? I hope so. Otherwise it's a lie. Imagine coming before.

You wouldn't do that in a court of law. Would you go to a court of law and stand before the judge and say I'm giving all my money to this person if you don't mean it. But we say it in church to someone who's far greater than a judge to almighty God.

Dear brothers and sisters, you know why? The spirit of the fear of the Lord is missing. The reverence for God is missing. There's carelessness in our speech.

And that's the reason why God doesn't anoint us when we speak the word. When I sought God I said Lord how can you ensure that you'll always be with my mouth when I speak your word. The Lord said be careful with your speech all the time.

24 7. Then I'll be with your mouth when you stand in the pulpit. But if you're careless with your mouth the rest of the time in your conversation gossip, backbite, speak evil, don't expect me to be with your mouth when you stand in the pulpit. And I was so desperate.

I was so desperate. I'm still desperate that God will be with my mouth when I stand in the pulpit that I said Lord I'm determined. I'm going to be careful with my speech 24 7. A lot of things people speak about I just keep quiet.

I have nothing to say. I don't want to speak evil. I don't want to backbite.

I don't want to gossip. Because I want God to be with me whenever I stand in the pulpit. Because I know so many people are dependent on what I'm saying.

Not only in my church but they watch and listen to me on the internet sometimes years later. And I have to be extremely careful that it's God's word that's going forth. So it's the spirit of the fear of the Lord.

Now come back to Isaiah 11. It says here when the spirit of the Lord will make Jesus delight in the fear of the Lord and as a result he will not judge by what his eyes see. He will not make a decision by what his ears hear.

This is completely opposite to the way the children of Adam live. I told you that 90% of our information comes through our eyes and our ears. And here it says about Jesus he would not take a decision by what his eyes told him or his ears told him.

He'd say no I have to listen to the spirit. But with righteousness he would decide. With fairness verse 4. He will not judge by what his eyes see.

And I remember years ago when I was seeking God to be filled with the Holy Spirit and the spirit of the reverence of the Lord. The Lord showed me this you have to undo this way of life that you have inherited from Adam of making you know forming an opinion by what you have seen or taking a decision by what you hear. A lot of things you hear may not be true.

A lot of things you see, it may not be correct. For example, you see the sun moving in the sky it's not moving. It's a deception.

But you think it's moving. You think the earth is not rotating under your feet. It is rotating under your feet pretty fast.

You don't feel it. To teach us that we can't trust our senses much more in the spiritual realm. There's only one book that can guide me.

That's God's word. Let God be true and every man a liar. It says in Romans chapter 3. And I decided that long ago.

We have to face the fact that all of us have inherited traditions from our church background. And if you are if you say, no, no, no, I have not inherited then I can say nothing to you. You're just deceiving yourself.

You and I. We have got a lot of information packed in our mind and in our memory which we have got through what we seen and what we have heard from childhood, maybe from preachers and what you have read from different books of your own particular denomination and that has in a sense brainwashed you. And you're convinced it's right. And in those younger days you did not know the scriptures well enough to compare scripture with what you heard and you accepted it.

And you accepted it for so long that it gradually you felt that is the truth. And we can say that in your mind you have a doctrine like a vase which is a vessel which is in a particular shape. That is your doctrine.

The orthodox have got a vessel in one shape and the Baptists have got it in one shape and the Brethren have got it in one shape, the Pentecostals have got it in one shape, the Nazarenes have got it in one shape and the Methodists have got it in one shape. Everybody has got a doctrine, a different shape vessel which has been molded in our mind through many, many years. And then we take scripture and like pouring water into this mold or it's like pouring plastic.

They make plastic things by pouring it into a mold and it comes out that shape. And you have the Methodist shape and the Baptist shape and the Brethren shape and the Pentecostal shape because, and they've all got verses for it. Everybody's got verses for it.

Because they're pouring scripture into a predetermined mold. You'll never know the truth that way. That's one of the things I had to fight in my life.

I said, Lord, I've lived all my life with what I've read and seen and heard. Now I want to come to scripture just like Jesus said, like a babe. You remember the verse I quoted, Matthew chapter 11 verse 25, I thank you, Father, you have hidden these things from the clever and the intelligent.

11-25, and you reveal them to babes. You know, a babe comes into the world knowing nothing. It's a very blessed position to be in.

It knows nothing. If you teach that babe from childhood 2 plus 2 is 5, it'll grow up believing 2 plus 2 is 5. Completely wrong. So, if you come to the Holy Spirit, it won't teach you 2 plus 2 is 5. It'll teach you the truth.

But we've already got so much cleverness and intelligence because we are great Bible scholars, we've studied the Bible, we've heard so many preachers, we've heard, and we have not been like the Bereans, comparing every single thing with scripture, even if it is the mighty apostle Paul who preached. We're not noble-minded. We need to be noble-minded to understand scripture.

Then we will not be deceived. So, I was telling and talking about what is the sign of the Lord's coming. Now, let me turn you to Matthew 24.

When the disciples asked Jesus, what is the sign of your coming? That's a specific question. What will be the sign of your coming? Matthew 24, verse 3. What is the first thing Jesus said? Not about Israel, not about wars, not about tsunamis, not about earthquakes. What is the first thing he said? Make sure nobody deceives you.

Deception is going to be one of the greatest characteristics of the last days. And that's the only thing he kept on repeating. Wars and rumors of wars, he said in one verse, verse 6, and never mentioned it again.

Israel, if you count Israel as the fig tree, he mentioned it in verse 32 once, and that was it. But when it came to deception, he kept on repeating it. See to it that no one misleads you, verse 4. Verse 11, many false prophets will arise and mislead many.

Again, deception. And again, he says in those, verse 23, if someone says to you that here is Christ and there is Christ, don't believe them. Because many false Christs, false prophets will arise and even show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

Behold, I have told you in advance, verse 25, deception is going to be the greatest characteristic of the last days. And when you turn to the epistles, you find the same thing. It's consistent.

What Jesus said is repeated by the Holy Spirit in 1 Timothy chapter 4. It says the Spirit explicitly says. Now when everything is written by the Holy Spirit in the New Testament in the Bible, what does it mean the Spirit explicitly says? Hasn't He said all the other things? This is like when you get a letter from your father and he underlines something. Or you get an email from someone and it is highlighted in bold or in red.

That's the meaning of this. If Paul were writing an email, he would put this in bold and in red. The Spirit explicitly says that in the last days some will fall away from the faith.

This is talking about believers. It's not Hindus and Muslims will fall away from the faith. They're not in the faith at all.

It's people who are in the faith, Christians, who will fall away from it. How? Paying attention to deceitful spirits. Now if you believe that you're in the last days and you read this highlighted, bold underlined statement of the Holy Spirit that people will fall away from the faith listening to deceiving spirits.

Boy, you'd be very alert on that. Lord, I don't want to be deceived. I don't want to be deceived.

How can I protect myself from deception? Great apostles like Paul, Peter, different ones come and preach. How do I know whether they're preaching what's right? Be like the Bereans. Ask them to show it to you in Scripture.

Compare what they say with Scripture. I do not listen to people who just get up and hardly ever quote the Word of God. If you've heard any of my sermons, you'll find that almost every five minutes I go to Scripture.

You know why? Because I do not want your faith to stand in the wisdom of my cleverness but in the Word of God. And most people don't know the Word of God enough to be able to tell you where the Scripture is. They say, yeah, it says this, says that.

How do I know, brother? Please show it to me in Scripture. I don't have to go to the synagogue during the week now. I've got the Bible right with me.

Tell me where it is. Another verse, 2 Thessalonians chapter 2. Again, speaking about the last days, we request you, brethren, with regard to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together, our rapture with Him. Let me tell you something, he says, that day will not come.

The rapture will not take place. Verse 3, until the Antichrist is revealed, the man of sin. For so many years I believed, because I was taught that, that we'll be raptured before the Antichrist and the Tribulation.

I believed it for years and I even taught it until I studied the Scriptures more carefully and I got rid of this theological mold that I had formed, pouring every verse into it. I threw it in the trash and I said, I want to go to like the Bereans and search the Scriptures, and I discovered that the Church will go through the Tribulation and then Christ will come, like Jesus said, like the lightning shines from one end of the sky. Don't believe those who say, oh, Christ has come here, secretly there.

Don't believe it, he said. 2 Thessalonians 2 He goes on to say that the Antichrist will rise, one who opposes and exalts himself and then he says, be careful, because in the last days, verse 9, this one is going to come with the activity of Satan. 2 Thessalonians 2, 9, with power, signs, and false wonders.

So one of the things I'm warned about in the last days is there's going to be a lot of miracles being done by people who are not really leading you to Jesus. They will come in his name, but they will not manifest his character. I see one thing about Jesus' ministry.

He never took any money from the people he healed. I don't see a single example of that in Scripture. Never, never, never, never.

And he did far greater miracles than anybody's ever done. I never see the apostles taking money from those whom they prayed for healing, but that is the main thing I see today, and that proves to me these are

not servants of God. You can disagree with me if you like.

If you listen to me in the day of judgment, you'll thank me for being protected from deception. Do not be deceived my brothers and sisters. Then he goes on to say, these people come, verse 10, with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish.

And listen to this, because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. I want you to think of this little expression. It's very important.

Receiving, verse 10, the love of the truth so as to be saved. Receiving the love of the truth so as to be saved. Not just accepting the truth, but loving the truth.

Not just loving the truth, but loving the truth so as to be saved. Not to be saved from the Romans, not to be saved from hell, not to be saved from sickness, but to be saved from sin. Thou shall call his name Jesus because he shall save his people from the sicknesses? No.

He shall save his people from the Romans? No. He shall save his people from hell? No. He shall save his people from their sins.

That's the meaning. Matthew 1 21, the first promise in the New Testament. He shall save his people from their sins.

That is the love of the truth so as to be saved. And now listen to what I call the scariest verse in the New Testament. You think the scariest verse is going to hell? No.

The scariest verse in the New Testament is verse 11 of 2 Thessalonians 2 that God himself will deceive you. Now I'll tell you the devil is called a deceiver. Revelation 12 8 to 10.

The devil is a deceiver of the whole world. Ephesians 4 verse 22 I think says my lusts are deceitful. The devil is deceitful.

He's a deceiver. My lusts are deceitful. Jeremiah 17 verse 9 says the heart is deceitful above all things.

Look at the things that are out to deceive me. Satan, my lusts, a heart, my only salvation is if God protects me from deception. And if God also begins to deceive me, I'm doomed.

And it says here God will deceive some people. Read it. Have you read that verse? That's why I say it's the scariest verse in the New Testament.

If almighty God also joins the forces to deceive me, I'm finished. There's no hope for me. I can think I'm very clever.

I'm smart. I know the Bible. But if God tries to deceive me, I'm finished.

The devil can try as much as he likes. If God is on my side, the devil will not be able to deceive me. My lusts will not be able to deceive me.

My heart will not be able to deceive me. I must have God on my side. Now, who are the people whom God allows to be deceived? Who are the people? It says God will send upon them a deluding influence so that they may believe what is false.

You mean God makes people believe what is false? Read your scripture. God will make them believe a lie. He'll make them believe they are born again when they are not born again.

I have met numerous people like that. He will make them believe that they are filled with the spirit when they are not filled with the spirit. They don't manifest the spirit of Christ.

He'll make them believe that they have a certain gift of the spirit when they don't have the gift of the spirit. Take the matter of speaking in tongues. I believe there's a tremendous amount of deception in this area.

A lot of counterfeit tongues. I've heard numerous counterfeit tongues myself. See, unfortunately, the word tongues has been translated tongues.

What it means is language. Tongues is language. They spoke in other languages on the day of Pentecost.

And 1 Corinthians 14, it's a gift of speaking in a language. A supernatural gift, a language you never learned. But it's a language.

And I'll tell you the deception I see in this. Supposing you hear somebody speaking in Chinese. You can't understand a word of Chinese, but when you hear them speak, you know it's a language.

If you speak, if you hear somebody speaking in Hindi, Indian language, you don't understand a word of it, but you can make out if it's a language. But if you get up, if you hear a person saying, ababababababam, you call that a language. That's not a language.

You can make that out. And that's what's happening to a lot of people, and they live all their life in that deception that they see these two, three syllables back and forth and call it speaking in tongues. My wife, way back in 1969, came from the Brethren Assembly.

She was totally against the gifts of the spirit, like all Brethren Assembly people are. But she was in desperate need, because we were poor, extremely poor those days. She was very active as a young person in medical college.

Now she was married. She was married to a very poor person, and we had a child, and we were struggling financially, discouraged. We didn't even have our own home to live in.

And in the midst of discouragement, she went to pray with a godly sister. Now remember, she's 100% against the gifts of the Holy Spirit. And she was praying with this sister, crying out, Lord, please help me.

She had to confess bitterness and wrong attitudes that she had to different people, and cleared out her heart before God, and the Spirit of God fell upon her. And she began to speak in a language. It was not abababa.

It was a language that flowed out of her. She said it was so sweet that she didn't want to stop. She didn't want to come back to English.

She just wanted to do that. She spoke in English, but she said, no, I don't want that. And she continued.

That was a genuine gift. It changed her life 44 years ago. I know when I pray to the Lord in tongues, it's a language.

It's not an empty repetition of two, three syllables back and forth. It's a language that you can go on and on and on and on. It's a wonderful gift.

God doesn't give it to everybody. I don't know why. But the Bible says he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.

And I know when it's a genuine gift, because it edifies me. I was such a slave to discouragement and depression, frequently discouraged. But now, since I received the gift of tongues, discouragement disappeared from my life, because I'm tempted.

But whenever I'm tempted, I just keep speaking in tongues. Pray and pray and pray and pray in tongues. And it's gone.

I thank God for it. I believe the scripture. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself.

I say with the Apostle Paul, I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you. And I wish you all spoke in tongues. But God gives it to some.

I'm just telling you, there's a lot of deception. There's a lot of counterfeit. And what are the things that are counterfeited in the world? Nobody counterfeits toilet paper.

When you go to the store, are you afraid this is a counterfeit toilet paper? No. Nobody counterfeits newspapers. What do they counterfeit? Gold, diamonds, \$100 notes.

I think even \$1 notes are not counterfeit. It's not worth it. They only counterfeit things that are expensive.

So if there's counterfeit things, counterfeit tongues, the original must be pretty good and valuable. If there's any counterfeit of the gifts of the Spirit, the original must be pretty valuable. That's what I discovered.

So I must make sure, I mean, how many of you would go and buy a diamond and spend thousands of dollars and not even check whether it's a genuine one? I don't know head or tail about buying diamonds or gold. I never bought it in my life. But if I ever have to buy it in some situation, I'd take some expert with me.

I'd say, listen, I don't know head or tail about this. I'll get fooled. They'll give me a piece of glass and say it's a diamond.

I don't want to be fooled. And much more, I don't want to be fooled in the gifts of the Holy Spirit. If it says that he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself and I don't edify myself, then probably what I got is a counterfeit.

Maybe I just wanted to join the club. Everybody says I speak in tongues and I'm not speaking in tongues, so I manufactured something. So hey, I've also joined the club.

Dear brothers and sisters, there's a lot of deception. And if you don't love the truth, God will allow you to be fooled, to deceive yourself. God will allow you to believe what is false.

Now, you feel that something is shaking in your life, good. If your foundation is solid, nothing will happen. If you're founded on the rock, no storm, no message, nothing will shake you.

But if you find something shaking, you better check up. Check up with the scriptures, not with what I say. Check with the scriptures.

Be like the Bereans. Don't allow the devil to deceive you. These things are so important.

I want to know that I'm really saved. I want to know that I'm really filled with the Holy Spirit. I don't want to counterfeit.

I don't want to just give a testimony to impress you that I'm filled with the Spirit. What does your testimony mean for me? What human beings think of me is fit for the trash can. Their opinion of me is worthless.

I mean, if some really godly man like the Apostle Paul was going to give me an opinion about myself, that I would listen to because a man is a godly man. But most people are not so spiritual. Their opinion is fit for the trash can.

If they call me a prophet, throw it in the trash can. If they call me the devil, throw it in the trash can. Their opinion is worth nothing.

They don't know my inner life. Don't be satisfied that people think you're spiritual. Live before God and see, are you overcoming sin? Let me show you one verse.

James chapter 1. James chapter 1 and verse, I'll show you one area where a lot of Christians are deceiving themselves. James 1.26. James 1.26, it says, if anyone thinks himself to be religious or what we would call spiritual and he cannot control his tongue, his whole Christianity is worth zero. If anyone thinks he's spiritual and he cannot control his tongue, he loses his temper, he backbites and gossips, gossips, gossips, he cannot control his tongue, his whole Christianity is worth zero, whatever version of Christianity he has, Baptist, Brethren, Pentecostal, whatever it is.

If he cannot control his tongue, his religion, his Christianity is worth zero. I'd like to know how many Christians believe that. I could not control my tongue when I got married.

I didn't know about victory over sin those days. I was born again, but I didn't know victory over sin. I didn't take this verse seriously.

But I remember the day I took this verse seriously. I saw people who would speak in tongues, in other tongues, in the Pentecostal church Sunday morning and in the afternoon in their mother tongue, shouted their wife. I said, what type of language is this? You mean the spirit can control your other tongues but cannot control your mother tongue? That can't be the Holy Spirit.

I said, I don't want that. I said, Lord, I don't, I'm not able to control my mother tongue. I don't want just other tongues.

I want control over my mother tongue as well. That's how I knew that my other tongues was genuine. If the Holy Spirit cannot control my mother tongue and I'd say I've got some other tongues, I'd say I'm fooling myself.

How is it that the Holy Spirit can give you an unknown language but cannot control your mother tongue? Is that really the Holy Spirit or some other spirit? There are Muslims who speak in tongues, Buddhists who speak in tongues. It's not from the Holy Spirit. So let's take these scriptures seriously.

And if I'm honest, that's all you got to do. Go to scripture, be like the Bereans, compare everything in your life with God's word and you'll never be deceived. God has given his inspired word to guide us, protect us from deception in these last days, to protect us from deceivers.

Compare every preacher with Jesus. I always, before I invite people to speak in my pulpit, I check certain things. I say, is this man a humble man? Is he approachable? Jesus was the most approachable person of all.

He didn't have four bodyguards around him when he was moving around like some preachers today. He didn't say, my minimum fees is \$10,000 a night if you want me to come and speak. You see, all this deception is going on today and people think, oh great man of God.

He's not a man of God, he's just a deceiver. I compare everyone with Jesus and you'll never be deceived if you compare with Jesus. Is he approachable? Is he humble? What's his attitude to money? Jesus received money.

It says in Luke chapter 8 verse 3 that even the rich Herod's palace manager gave money to Jesus and he accepted it, but he never asked anybody for money. He never went around saying, hey, I'm doing a great ministry, will you guys support me? That's all today's deceivers will say all that. Jesus trusted his heavenly father for his needs.

That's how the apostles lived. Then we won't be deceived. If you compare everyone with Jesus that we see, and I tell you, we're living in the last days because exactly like Jesus said, there's tremendous amount of deception.

There's another Jesus being preached today. Another Jesus who can forgive your sin but cannot save you. Supposing I go to a non-Christian in India and I try to give him the gospel, hey, you and I are sinners.

I tell him, you know, we need to be forgiven. Jesus is almighty. He is God.

He died for your sins and that non-Christian says, that's great. I want that. But can this Jesus help me to save me from shouting at my wife? And I say, well, he can't save you from that, but you will keep shouting at your wife, but you can ask him to forgive you.

He'll say to me, I don't want this Jesus, you keep it. I want a God who will help me to overcome my anger. And if your wretched God cannot, can only forgive my sin, you're fooling me.

Isn't it right to expect that almighty God can at least help us to control our tongue? What sort of gospel are we giving to others? A gospel that doesn't work in our home? If you have a DVD player that doesn't work in your home, will you pack it up and give it as a gift to somebody? I hope you don't. If you have a gospel that has not worked in your home, do you give that to somebody? I hope you don't. Another Jesus who forgives us, but cannot save us.

Another spirit who gives us excitement, but doesn't make us holy. Everybody agrees, unclean spirits make people unclean. Evil spirits make people evil.

Holy spirit cannot make us holy. He just helps us to make a lot of noise. I remember one man walked into our church once, Sunday morning, he was a Pentecostal man and he said to me, you don't have the Holy Spirit here.

I said, how do you know? Do you live in my home, see how I talk to my wife, do you know how I handle money, do I know, do you know what's going on, how I live at home, have I brought up my children, you don't know any of those things, how do you know whether I have the Holy Spirit or not? He said, you don't

have enough noise in your meeting. Ah, I said, your trinity is father, son, and noisy spirit. My trinity is father, son, and Holy Spirit.

That's the difference. I believe in shouting and praising the Lord, but that's not the mark of the Holy Spirit. A drunken man can do that.

Another spirit and another gospel, another gospel that says, come to Jesus, he will give you wealth, he'll give you a better house, he'll give you a better car. I have been to some ex-communist countries and some of them tell me, when the communists were ruling here, we had some good Christians here, but then communism went and the Americans came with their money and Christianity in this country has become corrupt. I've heard people tell me that in Romania, Poland, different countries.

Another gospel, money, ease, you can watch movies now, and it doesn't matter if there are a few bad scenes there, just fast forward it. People who don't have time to read the Bible, dear brothers and sisters, I have shared the truth with you, I hope you will take seriously, we are approaching the coming of Christ, we should not be ashamed when he comes. Let's wake up.

That old gospel that some of your ancestors who lived 80 years ago and experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in Romania, they had the truth. Some of us have drifted away from that. They had godliness, they had poverty, they were not so wealthy as you, they didn't have all the gadgets you have in your home, but they had godliness.

Let's go back to that gospel, because they had a genuine power of the Holy Spirit. That's what we need in our day. Amen.

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