

## **The Right Use Of Power**

**Government and Pentecost**

**John W. Ritenbaugh**

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Luke 21:36 is that very famous "watch and pray always" verse that every one of us is so familiar with. But we are always told to be looking for significant events occurring around the world so that we can detect what might be very minor fulfillments of prophecy.

We look in areas of government—to see what they are doing. We look at the weather and see if there is anything unusual occurring in that area. We look for military operations. Even as I speak, there is a war going on between the Serbs and the Croats over in what used to be Yugoslavia. We look for things in the area of health, economics, agriculture, academia, and also, in religion.

We look at certain areas of the world with a great deal of scrutiny, as in Europe. We spend a great deal of time looking at what is occurring there, especially in areas of government and economics. In the Middle East, we are trying to find out what Israel is doing. What are the Arabs doing? Is there anybody else who is trying to come into the area and exert some kind of influence? We look at what is going on in Russia. We also look, of course, at Israel both in terms of the Jews and in terms of the other Israelite nations.

Even as I speak, there are millions of people involved, whether they understand it or not, in the fulfillment of prophecies. Right now there is going on in southern Africa "the drought of the century," as they are calling it. It is a drought that extends from the equator out to almost to the Union of South Africa. They expect that by the time we get to around August or September, there are going to be thousands of people dying as a result of that drought. Undoubtedly it is going to be affecting the people in South Africa as well, even though at this time it has not stretched into that area.

Did you know that Denmark just rejected the Maastricht Treaty that had been worked out last wintertime, when all of the nations of Europe sent their leaders to this treaty and they decided that they would be united

economically by the end of 1992? However, they said there had to be a unanimous agreement on this treaty or it was null and void. Well, one of the twelve has now voted that they are not going to become a part of it because they fear the loss of their identity. They do not want to give up their local currencies. So they are just suspicious of it.

The leaders of Germany and France have now said, at least for publication, "Well, phooey on the Danes. Let's just reduce this thing down to eleven and we'll go on without them." That is going to affect tens of thousands of people, maybe millions of people there in Europe. And, of course, we understand that there are others waiting in the wings to vote on that and express their opinion regarding it.

All of these events that we look to in terms of prophecy tend to involve large numbers of people, areas in which large numbers of people are involved. The European Union is going to involve over three hundred million people. That drought in South Africa is affecting tens of millions of people.

I wonder if you ever thought that some of the most significant events that ever occurred on the face of the earth took place when there were only two people? Now if you are thinking, you are thinking, "Well, here's John Ritenbaugh, getting just like Herbert W. Armstrong. And it isn't going to be long before we're going to be back in Genesis the first chapter." That is exactly where I want you to turn! Because in terms of the day of Pentecost, some very significant things occurred all the way back then. In verses 26 and 28, it says:

**Genesis 1:26** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

**Genesis 1:28** Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

As God created, I think it is extremely significant that of all the creatures, all the things that He created, only **one** is in His image. That is mankind. This has very much to do with the purpose God is working out.

I also think it is significant that of all the creatures God created only mankind is given dominion over anything else, over things both animate and inanimate as well. If we would quickly review this chapter, we would find in verse 12 we are given dominion over the plant life. In verse 20, it is birds. In verse 21, it is the sea creatures. In verse 24, it is the land creatures.

It is in verses 26 and 28 that we have the very first inkling of man's awesome potential. We are in His likeness. We are in His image. And we have been given dominion in order to carry that out. "In His image"—that is an awesome statement. "Let him have dominion."

If you would care to look this word "image" up in the Hebrew, I do not think that you would find it to be very satisfying in terms of its definition, the kind of definition you would find in a dictionary. It merely means, "a shadowing forth, a phantom, a sketch, an outline." It gives the impression of a mere shape, almost like a stickman—if I can use that kind of analogy. It also has a definition, though, that means "whatever makes a man remarkable or procures respect." That is kind of interesting.

The word "likeness," for those who deal in the meanings and applications of words, seem to feel that this word means nothing more than to be an intensification of the word "image." Even though it is a different word, its meaning is very similar.

I think, just putting those two together, we would have to agree that the Hebrew shows very clearly that we are remarkable! Especially in comparison to plant life, to birds, to animal life, to insects, and to land animals. And it is because we are in the image of God that we are remarkable.

I am sure there is no argument from anyone who is within the sound of my voice that even though we are remarkable, we are merely an outline, a shadow, a mere copy or representation, a shadowing forth. We are illusory compared to God because He is the reality.

I still want to take an even closer look at this word "image," because I wonder what kind of thought that comes to *your* mind in regard to the word "image." Do you think of a mirror? It might depend upon your perspective of the word image. The word "image" in the United States in the last twenty or thirty years or so has taken on a deceptive application that obscures its true meaning. If that deceptive application gets in your mind between this and what God intends, it is going to skew you off so that you do not really catch even a glimmer of what God intends by this.

Let me give you an example. Today, a politician hires a public relations firm to create an *image* for him that the people will find acceptable and thus vote him into office. I wonder how many of you have done this. You are trying to hire yourself out on a job. So you dressed a certain way so that the personnel people would get from you a particular *image* that you wanted to project before them, and *you* would be the one they hired rather than somebody else, who came in dressed in a somewhat different way. Corporations try very hard to find the right *image* before the public.

An image to an American has, over the past fifteen or twenty years, subtly come to mean, "the illusion of what something is presented to be" rather than the essence of what it really is.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago there was cigarette brand with declining sales and a dandified name spelled "M-A-R-L-B-O-R-O-U-G-H." Marketing research showed that men simply would not buy it. It was not *masculine*. So they got their public relations people, their advertising people, together and they brought out an advertising campaign that conjured up visions of rugged cowboy masculinity lighting a cigarette, now spelled "M-A-R-L-B-O-R-O" in order to project a favorable image to men.

The essential reality did not change. The cigarette is still the Grim Reaper, wrapped in a sanitary white piece of clothing. But the *image*, the illusion, boosted Marlboro into America's best-selling brand.

In Hebrew, this word that is translated "image" is not a deceptive illusion. Image here means "the likeness of one subject expressed in another." That is important. It means, "the likeness of one subject [God] expressed in the other [man]." He is saying here, without saying it directly, that man is very much like God.

We use this meaning—the Hebrew meaning—frequently in the English in reference to family resemblance or characteristics. We say that a child is the spitting image of his father or his mother. What we are referring to might be facial features. It might be mannerisms of speech. It might be inflections. It might be posture, the way a person holds himself. It might be the way a person walks, a smile. It might be a gesture that is unconsciously expressed the way the family does it.

It is no illusion. It is the reality. It is the family trait. It is the essence of reality.

In what way is man in God's image? Our first tendency is to think of man in terms of form and shape as being in God's image. I do not feel that this is wrong. But I also do not feel that it addresses the right issue.

**Genesis 2:7** And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul [being].

I do not know about you but, from childhood, I carry an image of God kneeling over the created but inert Adam. He is lifeless. And then God performs the very first mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and Adam springs to life! Probably his eyelids fluttered a little bit, he took a deep breath, maybe a sound came, and then he bent from his waist and sat up.

I no longer picture it that way. Now I assume Adam is already alive and God is kneeling over him. Have you ever noticed that there is no indication

anywhere in the Bible that God had to perform mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to cows, or goats, or sheep, or any other animal that He created? He created them and they started breathing. Why should man be any different?

He is different because he is in the likeness of God. God had to do something. He **did** something to that man that actually made man into the image of God—because while he was lying there on the ground breathing, he was still yet a creature. He had animal life. He had a brain. But he did not have the spirit in man.

I believe when God knelt down and breathed into that man it was the infusion of the spirit in man. That is what **made** man in the image of God! That is what gives man the power to have dominion. That is what gives man the intellect he needs in order to rule the things that God has created.

Man had creature life, but man became a living being with intelligence, one who has the power to govern his actions. Not by instinct, but by memory and by conceptualization; by being able to think spatially. A man can appreciate beauty, communicate verbally, or write. A human being has feelings that are so far—in the expression of their subtlety and power—over an animal in terms of love or hate—if we look at those two as being extremes—and over all of the other degrees that fall in between as well.

We can create. We can destroy. The power is in a man to be able to do these things. It is in that spirit when combined with the brain, but it has to be developed.

I think that God is showing very clearly then that as we are, we are really nothing more than a pale representation of what we can be. Yet we are endowed with powers that lift us so far above the animals on earth that we can have dominion over them.

Mankind is then commanded to fill the earth and subdue it. I mentioned this word "subdue" in a sermon several weeks ago. Here is a more definitive definition of the word. It means, "to tread upon." "To bring into subjection" is implied. It does not mean, though, "to destroy" or "to treat violently," but "to control and direct."

It is the first indication of something that is addressed more clearly and specifically in chapter 2. It is in these two verses (Genesis 1:26 and 28) that God implies that He has conferred powers to mankind not given to animals.

It is also the first indication, when combined with Genesis 2:7 and 15, that when God confers a responsibility, He also confers the powers to carry out that responsibility.

**Genesis 2:15** Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

Here God clarifies what the powers are given for. Again, at first glance, it only appears to cover that which is physical and material. But with God's spiritual revelation, in other parts of the Bible, it tends to take a far greater implication.

If you have a King James, the word that I have in my Bible, "tend" or "cultivate," is "dress." The Hebrew means, "to work at." In 1611, when the King James was translated, the word "dress" meant, "to set in order." (Remember, government.) But gradually, it was applied to putting decorative details upon, "to embellish."

So when we say today that we are going to "dress," we include both parts of that definition. We are going to put ourselves in order. It also means that we are going to embellish what we look like.

The word in the modern Bibles has been now translated "tend" or "cultivate." They have subtle meanings that are a little bit different than the word "dress." "Tend" means "to pay attention to" or "to serve." I am going to *tend* to the dishes, or I am going to *tend* to my clothing. It means "to apply oneself to the care of" or "to manage the operations of."

"Cultivate," which I think is the best of the three definitions, means "to put through a finishing process," "to foster the growth of," or "to further or encourage." "Dress" is not wrong. "Tend" is not wrong. But I think "cultivate" most accurately applies the Hebrew meaning of that word.

Also there is the word "keep" there as well. We are to "dress and keep" or "tend and keep." That word means to "watch," "guard," "protect," "save," "retain," "preserve," "be faithful to," "take care of," "maintain."

Let us not forget we are talking about the powers that man has been given. He has been given dominion. God has given him powers to carry out the responsibility that has been given into his hands, that is, to have dominion.

Here is what he is to do. He is to put this that has been put into his hands through a finishing process, and he is to watch over it, guard it, protect it, and preserve its beauty.

Remember this was all given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which surely must have been a beautiful place to be. God was already letting them know and us know that as beautiful as this place was, it was not going to stay that way. It was going to be subject to natural law and it was going to begin to degenerate.

It was going to need maintaining. And it was going to continually need someone to cultivate it, to continue to dress it, and to keep it. That was going to take a great deal of work. Man was not only to preserve it, control it, and direct it but also to strive to even ennoble the Garden of Eden through his work.

It begins to become very clear that mankind from God's intention is to make *more* of his environment than he has been given. And God gave us the powers to do that. Let us never forget that the Bible is first and foremost a book of God's instructions regarding God's spiritual purpose. He is giving these concepts to us in a material and physical environment, but we are to transfer that into the spiritual because that is the primary focus of God's work in and through us.

He has shown us here the **fact** that one works, and the **reason** one works, and the **way** one works have very much to do with one's spiritual development. Notice I did not say "salvation." I said "development." We are saved by grace. But if there is going to be development from what God begins with whenever we first receive His Spirit, then it is going to require



something on our part to enable the fullness of development to take place. That is going to involve work.

Man has not used his powers very well, as both the Bible and secular history show. Go to Genesis 3:17. Adam and Eve have sinned. They have hidden themselves from God and have been discovered by God. God begins to make pronouncements regarding a judgment that is going to come on each one of them.

**Genesis 3:17-19** Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

The beauty of the Garden of Eden begins to unravel through degeneration because very quickly mankind, represented by only two people, Adam and Eve, are not using their powers to cultivate and guard God's creation as God commanded.

**Genesis 4:8** Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.

Cain used his power to murder his brother Abel. And what grew out of this is called in the Bible "the way of Cain." We will not go into that. Cain was the leader and was doing things that subverted every purpose that God gave to mankind.

**Genesis 11:5-6** But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them."

God here prophesied of the awesome potential of the powers that He has given to man. Let us reflect just briefly on how mankind from this point in time has used his powers. Has our approach improved at all since Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden? Did Cain improve it? Did Nimrod improve it? Was it improved in Egypt? Assyria? Babylon? Medo-Persia? Rome? How about Israel?

I think that we need to reflect on how Germany solved the "Jewish problem." Is that a right use of the powers God has given to man? Or maybe we ought to reflect—let us bring it right home—on how America solved the "Japanese problem," or the "German problem." Is that the way that God intends that man be in His image?

God gives man a spirit and he turns right around to use it to control other peoples' destiny through violence and death. That hardly seems to me that it is in the image of God.

In 1991, the United States, with other nations, went through a pretty large-scale war over there in Iraq. So we "solved" the "Iraqi problem." We came through it pretty well, with very few fatalities. But what about Iraq?! Was it all right for them to go through that agony? I will leave you to answer that question.

We have droughts going on right now. There are famines that are going on. A cholera epidemic. The AIDS epidemic is continuing unabated. Every single one of these has been in the news within the last couple of weeks. And in all likelihood, every one of them is in some way, to some degree, man-caused.

God is not cutting down the forest. God is not the one who strips the ground of all of its nutrients and creates a desert. God did not cause the lifestyle that has brought the curse of AIDS on people. God would not bring about the unsanitary conditions that prove fertile for the development of cholera.

Man has had a great deal to do with all of these things in the use of his great intellect. It is an **awesome power** that man has been given. We need to look at this, really bring it up-to-date, back in the book of Daniel. *We* are tearing down the forests of the world at a prodigiously rapid rate. *We* are fouling the

rivers, the lakes, the sea, and the air with the sewage of our culture. And *we* are befouling the minds of man through things like television.

God has not caused any of those things.

We find here in Daniel 12:4 a description of a knowledge explosion.

**Daniel 12:4** "But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book [a prophetic book] until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase."

Again, go back in time to Adam. I think that you will have to agree that from Adam up until the time of the early 1800s, maybe 1850, things pretty well went along without change. People were riding horses and donkeys. And horses and carriages were pulling them.

Then development began to come, first the steam engine. Then we applied the steam engine to a vehicle that would move. Then we had the telegraph. Then we had the telephone. Then we had radio and television so that now news can get instantaneously from one part of the earth to another, with only a few minutes delay.

We went from the steam engine, to the internal combustion engine, to the jet engine, to the rocket engine. Now we can explore space. Is Genesis 11:6 coming true—that "nothing would be withheld from man"?

Look at what we have done in terms of chemistry and metallurgy and biology. Now we are altering the genes of fruits and vegetables to produce fruits and vegetables that *we* feel are the kind that we need for our marketing economy. Look at the clothing we are wearing. In many cases, they are made out of materials that are not natural—polyesters, nylon, rayon, dacron, and many others besides. We take them for granted, but they did not exist a hundred years ago. I believe that nylon and rayon began to come along about sixty years ago. That is how recent it has been.

We have had a tremendous explosion of knowledge but mankind has consistently used the powers God gave us to conquer and destroy. And we can create tools to further increase our power to exploit and rape the environment and other people even more.

It is the misuse of the very powers that lift us into God's image that is at the very root of mankind's problems.

What can be done about it? Let us turn to Revelation 11. We used this scripture just yesterday. Verse 15 gives us the time element: "At the sounding of the seventh trumpet." Christ is going to return and He is going to take over the kingdoms of this world. He is going to reign forever and ever.

**Revelation 11:18** "The nations were angry, and Your wrath has come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that You should reward Your servants the prophets and the saints, and those who fear Your name, small and great [catch this last phrase], and should destroy those who destroy the earth."

That is a sobering statement. You need to feed this into your thinking about whether or not you are really tending and keeping, cultivating; whether you are creating beauty, whether you are building things up, whether you are maintaining so that things do not degenerate, or whether you are just letting things drift. Or are you working? Do you have a reason to work? Are you aiming toward the right kind of goal? We need to ask ourselves individually that question: Are *we* dressing and keeping as He commanded?

This prophecy shows that the destroyers are going to be destroyed. What we generally find is that mankind's history is one of brief spurts of productive building interspersed with long periods of destructiveness.

I have used the word "power" quite a bit. What does it mean? It means, "the right, ability, or capacity to exercise control, dominion." That is what God gave to man when He breathed into him. He gave him power to exercise dominion over the earth.

What went wrong? Why have we done what we have done? Where have we gone off track? What should we do to get it right? This is what Pentecost is all about.

In Luke 9:51, Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem. On the way there, He had to go through Samaria. It says there,

**Luke 9:51-54** Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?"

What were they going to use their powers for? It was a really carnal reaction, was it not?

**Luke 9:55-56** But He turned and rebuked them, and said, "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives."

Again, put this into Revelation 11:18. God is going to destroy those who destroy the earth. By "earth," I am sure that He means more than just the physical things that are growing out of the earth. He includes, I am sure, mankind, because we are of the earth. We are earthy. We are part and parcel of life here. Here Jesus' own disciples wanted to wipe the Samaritans out.

**Luke 9:56** "For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." And they went to another village.

Jesus extended at least a measure of friendship here to His enemies. They rejected Him, but He did not respond in kind. Jesus used His powers rightly

in every circumstance. Every word—I am sure even every expression of His face—every action He took was in the image of His Father in exactly the way God intended all the way back there at Adam.

By contrast, His disciples wanted to use their powers to destroy. They were being influenced by a destroying spirit and they did not know it. "You do not know what manner of spirit you are of." Very interesting. There is another player on the scene, is there not?

**I John 4:1** Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

I want you to notice the connection between "spirits" and "men." Test the *spirits* "because many false prophets [they are men] have gone out into the world."

**I John 4:2** By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,

I might add, at this point, even today the Jews do not confess that the Messiah came in the flesh. They are still looking for Him.

**I John 4:3** And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist ["against Christ"], which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

**I John 2:18** Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.

This may seem as though it is somewhat of a digression, but we have to understand where the misuse of mankind's power has come from and how this is going to be countered.

We have already seen the connection here in I John 4:1 with things that are supernatural—in terms that they are not human—and that these supernatural beings, called spirits, are able to manifest themselves. I am not talking about visibly. They manifest their thinking, the way that they would teach, through human beings, called here false prophets. We know that very many of them have gone out into the world.

John here is identifying the source of error. Remember, John was the one who about lost his temper there and was ready to wipe these people out in Luke 9. He is writing about something that he knows about firsthand, because he was the one who was rebuked when Jesus said, "You do not know what spirit you are of."

Now we find out that there are spirits who manifest themselves through human beings called false prophets. So we can understand very clearly that the supernatural is not always divine. There are supernatural beings that are able to manifest their characteristics through *human beings*.

If a person is unaware a wrong spirit is influencing him, as James and John were unaware, or if he wrongly believes he is in contact with the right one; yes, he is in contact with the supernatural but unfortunately it is not divine. It is not God who is the spirit. So he wrongfully believes that he is in contact with the right one. That person is helpless. That person is going to manifest the characteristics of the spirit.

**II Corinthians 11:3-4** But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus [It will not be a spirit that is going to come preaching. It is going to be a human being.] whom we have not preached, or if you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted you may well put up with it.

Why is Paul concerned about this?

**II Corinthians 11:13-14** For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.

To summarize this, the spirit will be reflected in the preaching. It will be anti-Christ even though it proclaims Christ. That is really sneaky. It will be anti-Christ even though it proclaims Christ. The "anti" part will be revealed in a lack of submission to the doctrines or the government of God.

This is very serious because God gave the responsibility to religion to give moral, spiritual, and ethical guidance to man. If mankind does not *know* the spirit that is behind the preaching, he is then going to reflect the spirit that is there.

**Matthew 7:15** "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves."

He is telling us you cannot tell on the outside. You have to get inside the teaching.

**Matthew 7:21** "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

This is why I said that the "anti" part would be revealed in the deviation from doctrines of God and also in the failure to submit to God's governance in one's life.

**Matthew 7:22-23** "Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'"



**Revelation 12:9** So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world.

**Revelation 9:11** And they had as king over them the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in Hebrew is Abaddon, but in Greek he has the name Apollyon.

My margin tells me that Abaddon means "destruction" and Apollyon means "destroyer." A destroying spirit has deceived mankind. Because he is deceived, it is unknown to him that he has been the helpless dupe of a destroying spirit.

Thus mankind, with these awesome powers and intellect that is somewhat godlike, yet we use these awesome powers to destroy, to maim, to sear, to rape, to exploit. It happens on a massive scale. It happens in individual relationships with one another, too. It is not confined to the great and mighty things. The great and mighty things are only an accumulation of small things that are allowed to go or build to where they become big.

This destroying, deceiving spirit, through all his minions, the demons, is able to deal with you and me on an individual basis. He is able to deceive us into using our powers to go counter to what God has intended, to what God had instructed all the way back in the Garden of Eden. We are to dress and to keep, to do things that produce positive results and beauty everywhere and in everything that we go and do.

Let us turn to John 8. It is quite a long dialogue that takes place here between Christ and the Pharisees. These people were claiming they were Abraham's descendants, and Jesus arguing back to them that they could not possibly be Abraham's descendants (except physically) because they did not reflect the same kind of works that Abraham did. Therefore, they did not reflect the same kind of spirit that Abraham did. You see, the works reflect the spirit.

**John 8:39-40** They answered and said to Him, "Abraham is our father." Jesus said to them, "If you were Abraham's children, you would do the works of Abraham. But now you seek to kill Me, a

Man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. Abraham did not do this."

**John 8:44** "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do."

It seems as though they had no control over themselves at all. They **wanted** to do these things.

**John 8:44** "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth [That is, he has nothing to do with it.], because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources [That is, he does what is natural to him.], for he is a liar and the father of it."

Here we have Satan described another way. He is a destroyer. Now he is a murderer. A murderer destroys life. He is a liar. He does not dwell on the truth at all. So he deceives all the time.

Here we are, human beings in the image of God. We have tremendous capacity, but we have used our powers just the way the father of destruction would have used them.

I think it is very interesting. The Hebrew word *ruach*, translated "spirit," *pneuma* in the Greek translated "spirit," and the English word "spirit" all mean basically the same thing. Underlying all of their applications is the same general implication. This is [an implication] of a *force* that is invisible, immaterial, motivating—sometimes powerfully. It is an invisible, immaterial *force* that is motivating. It encourages others to do something. Good or bad, we are not talking about the quality now.

Thus the Bible will use the word "spirit" for such things as "feelings," "attitudes." As a matter of fact, I believe that Bullinger says in his *Companion Bible* that the word "spirit" is given eight different applications in the Bible. Even the word "talents" can indicate "spirit," "love," "hate," or "envy." They are invisible, but they have motivating effects.

Human spirits are not always invisible, but you know that this works. By works, I mean that you know that they will motivate you to do something. For example, you come into a room where you see people with scowls all over their faces, or maybe anger is exhibited. You might say, "I wonder what kind of attitude they are in (or what kind of spirit they are in)?" I guarantee you if you are around it for a few minutes, it will begin motivating you to begin to react. And it may not take long, depending on who the person is.

If that person happens to be your husband or your wife, and you walk into room and you can tell immediately they are in a different spirit than you are, it begins to affect you. You are motivated to react almost immediately. It is a spirit that is flowing from them to you.

On the other hand, if you are around someone who is really up and positive and happy and congenial, we might call them outgoing, that spirit affects you in a positive way. You love to be around that kind of person because it motivates you to be like them.

That may be a simple explanation, but that is the way a spirit is. A spirit is invisible. It is immaterial, but it has powerful motivating effects. And because we have a spirit too, we are able to pick up on the spirit and attitude even of other people or, unfortunately, of supernatural beings as well. Mr. Armstrong used the term, "we are able to pick up their broadcast." That is about as clear of a way as it can be explained.

Matthew 24:21-22 tell us how far man's destruction of things is going to be carried. Man's use of his powers is going to culminate in the tribulation, where God says that except that He would cut it short, all flesh would die. No one would be saved alive.

**Luke 24:49** "Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Jesus promised to His disciples that they would be endued with "power from on high." Let us go to Acts 1. A few weeks later, this was fulfilled:

**Acts 1:4-5** And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

**Acts 1:8** "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

"You shall receive power." This occurred. It is recorded in Acts 2. But I want you to remember that power arrived like the sound of *wind*—a mighty rushing wind; air. I want you to get the connection between Genesis 2:7, when God breathed air into Adam. He was giving him a spirit. I am convinced of that. And when God gave His Holy Spirit, He duplicated it on a majestic scale, and it again came to mankind—this time God's Holy Spirit—like the sound of wind, air moving. Mankind then is given a power, this time the Holy Spirit.

We could spend a great deal of time showing what the Holy Spirit is. Psalm 62:11 says that "power belongs to God." It is saying that in the context of a person going through trials. We have a natural tendency to turn in every direction to reach out to other people, come up with solutions, to have the power to solve that problem, but the psalmist tells us God is the source of salvation. That is where the power to save in a right and good way resides.

In Jeremiah 32:17, it says that "God creates by His power." And in John 4:24, it says that "God is a spirit." Therefore, He is a creating spirit of greatest power. When He creates, things of positive function and awesome beauty emerge. What a difference between man and God. Man in God's image creates destruction. Almost everything man creates seems to have negative impacts. But when God creates, God creates functional beauty.

It says in Psalm 148:5 that He speaks and it is done. I do want to turn to Psalm 139 because I want us to see that His Spirit reaches out to every aspect, every nook and cranny, every corner of His creation.

**Psalm 139:1-6** O Lord, You have searched me and known me. You know my sitting down and my rising up; You understand my thought afar off. You comprehend my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but behold, O Lord, You know it altogether. You have hedged me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain it.

We cannot understand. We cannot comprehend. It is beyond our ability to understand how a Being could be at the center of His creation. And we know a little bit about the awesome size of His creation. We are able to even see the earth. There are billions of people on earth. How does God keep track of all that? It is too great. It is too high. But He does it, we know, by His Spirit.

**Psalm 139:7** Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?

It is not that he really wanted to flee. He is posing ideas and questions and concepts to us so that we can see that wherever we are, we are always under the scrutiny of God. Because God is a positive spirit, everything that He creates has positive function and beauty connected to it. His intention in everything for us is always positive, right, good, and in love and concern for our well-being so that we will fit within His purpose, and it will be able to be worked out in our lives. There is no negative connotation to Psalm 139.

From this, we ought to be able to derive great confidence that God is always with us because His mind permeates the entirety of His creation. He is actively using His powers, His Spirit, to govern in managing His creation. He is omnipotent. He is omnipresent.

The beginning of the source of all power is in the mind. Remember, man is in God's image. A man may make tools to intensify his powers, but the real power is in the mind because without the mind, he would not be able to create that tool that would intensify his powers.

God's Holy Spirit is the essence of His mind. That is where His power resides too—just like a man. Only He does not have to use steam shovels and

power tools to get things done. He **speaks** and the laws reverberate and work. The tool by which He carries everything out is His Spirit.

**II Timothy 1:6-7** Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind [or of "discipline," is really the best translation of that last word].

Without God's Spirit, understanding what we do about how we have been influenced—unwittingly, we did not know it—by a deceiving and destroying spirit, we are all to some degree insane, destructive, unbalanced, not able to properly use the powers that God has given to us.

Pentecost celebrates the giving to man of the one power that he needs to rightly guide and control and use all other powers: love. A spirit of love, a spirit of power, a spirit of discipline. That word translated "discipline" means "a reasoned use of." In other words, a person stops to think before he does what he does.

A person who has the Spirit of God to counteract the spirit of Satan is beginning already to have the tool he needs to rightly use things, because, like God, he is now in a position to do things as an act of love. He has then the power to make a reasoned use of, that is, reasoned according to God's Word, not according to Satan's methods, reasoned according to truth, reasoned according to right doctrine, reasoned according to right examples, before one acts and carries through with the thought that one might have otherwise gone on to do.

Do we ever look at love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faithfulness as powers? They are fruits, but those fruits are powers because they are aspects of that Spirit. Though they may be invisible, though they may be immaterial, they will motivate others in the right direction. If that Spirit is in us, it has the opportunity to motivate us in the right direction too—the power to motivate us to produce things of positive function.

An awesome power has been bestowed upon us—the power to rightly control all the other powers. None of us is ever going to be in the position as

we are now, I mean humanly, before the Kingdom of God is on this earth, to exercise the kind of authority that President Bush exercises. But God told us what He wants:

**Luke 16:10** "He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much."

Others may learn the same lessons in positions of great power, but we find that God is telling you and me we do not have to have that great power. All we have to do is meet our responsibilities in the way that He said, and we will learn. The characteristic will be developed within us regardless of how big the responsibility is. It does not take big responsibilities to learn to control power. It is being faithful in the little things, in the home, in the automobile, back to work again. It matters not whether this responsibility is great.

How are you taking care of the responsibility of prayer, of Bible study, of fasting? How about your marital relations? How about child training? How about proper diet? How about the way you keep your home, your automobile, your clothing? How about the use of your time? How are you exercising your powers?

Are you of a destroying spirit? Or are you of a spirit that produces things of a positive function and awesome beauty? That is what God wants. The characteristics are learned. Now that we have His Spirit, it can be done. We have the one power we need to rightly direct all other powers.

God tells us in Matthew 25:14-15 the spiritual gifts are given to complement natural endowments, such as skill or mental powers. These things, brethren, God has given to all. He has given gifts to everybody to whom His Spirit is given. He does not withhold those things. He gives us enough to carry out the function where He has placed us in the Body. It is the gospel of the Kingdom of God that gives us direction to vent that power toward.

What does this day celebrate? Yes, it celebrates the giving of God's Spirit, *but* we are in this church to learn to make the right use of power, and not mess up the way that Adam and Eve did, and not mess up the way we did before we repented and accepted the blood of Jesus Christ.

Truth, character, personality, knowledge, understanding, wisdom, education, money, position, natural abilities, humility, meekness, love, joy, peace, an honest and tactful tongue, and on it goes. These are all invaluable powers that God is developing and making use of.

**John 14:15-17** "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him [That is, it is unintelligible. It is unrecognizable.] nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you."

**John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you."

What Jesus wants us to learn to do is to make use of the powers that He has given to us and use them rightly.