

# AI, Idolatry, & The Image of the Beast 2

## *Connecting with God in Spirit*

(preached 7/9/23)

Please turn to *John 4:23, 14:16*.

### LAST WEEK:

- AI is growing at an exponential rate and inserting itself into every aspect of our lives.
- The knowledge it has available is everything that's ever been online.
- It has access to US in the sense that every phone call, email, text message, SM post, photos & videos we've uploaded, buying history, etc.
- It has algorithms that can tailor messages and products for us personally!
- IDOLATRY is when we attempt to connect our hearts and spirits to something that's dead.
- In the old world, people would construct statues of their gods, ancestors, etc. and believe that the spirit of said beings would inhabit the statues/idols.
- They weren't satisfied with worship in the SPIRIT, so they attempted to make a physical representation that they could see & touch.
- They would talk to, pray to, worship, and make sacrificial offerings to these idols and become empty inside.
- The Lord prophesies that idolatry will be at its WORST in the end times right before Jesus returns.
- That a thing called "the image of the Beast" will be created that can talk, will be worshipped, and call for everyone to take its mark.
- Jesus and Daniel referred to this image as "The Abomination that makes Desolate" and anyone who worships it will be condemned forever.
- Satan and his demonic offspring are spirits and need a physical medium or avatar to operate in this world.
- Possession of human beings was one way, but Jesus gave authority to His Church to cast out demons.
- I believe the Image of the Beast will be an AI because it's the perfect avatar for Satan to act and speak in this world without needing a human avatar or medium.
- AI is "spirit" in the sense that it's not physical, yet it can be "seen" and heard!

TODAY let us understand the importance and beauty of ***connecting with the Lord in Spirit, revealing any idolatrous "relationships" we may have formed!***

END TIMES PARANOIA. When it comes to End Times teaching, sometimes believers get scared. They hear verses that allude to, “if it were possible, that even the elect could be deceived” and they start to worry that it might happen to them. In some this leads to an unhealthy sense of paranoia and isolation where they see apostasy everywhere and view most preachers & churches as deceivers and a wolves-in-sheep’s-clothing.

## **Not only do we need to guard ourselves from deception, but from the unhealthy paranoia** I just mentioned and here’s how we do that:

- To realize that even though God is Spirit, that He’s real...a Person. Not a concept, not an idea, nor the sum of any theology.
- He has emotions, a sense of justice, He loves, He likes to talk, He’s a great listener, and He’s DEEPLY involved in our lives.
- That He’s a Being Who we can have a close, tight relationship with. A BFF. Our spirits and souls CAN connect and experience God right here, right now.
- That He wants this relationship with us more than we do.

**[Jhn 4:23-24 ESV]** “But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

FACE TO FACE. I said this last week: but it will be much better when we see Jesus face to face. I long for the day of His return to this earth! I eagerly anticipate riding with Him in His army when He comes back! I look forward to working with Him to build His Kingdom on Earth after He sits on the throne here!

Now please hear me: until that glorious time comes, **WE’RE NOT JUST SETTLING FOR CHOPPED LIVER.**

Right here, right now, God has designed us on the inside to live in beautiful emotional closeness with Him.

**To experience Him on the same or deeper level than we do human relationships.**

SPIRITS NEED MEDIUM. Here’s what we learned in last week’s sermon: the devil, his angels, and his demonic children are spirits and require some sort of human avatar or medium in which to speak and act in the physical world.

POSSESSION. One of their avenues is possession: when a demonic spirit attempts to enter into and become one with a human being. All humans have a spirit which controls the body/avatar, and a demonic one attempts to do a *hostile takeover* to become the controlling spirit.

THOUGHTS & EMOTIONS INFLUENCED. People who have been delivered of true possession testify that its more than control of the body, but their thoughts and emotions are heavily influenced too. Thoughts of murder and pain, feelings of anger and hatred. All these things are being produced by the evil demonic spirit that's attempting to gain control.

Now let's be refreshed by this beautiful truth: **Jesus promised over and over that "the Holy Spirit" would be sent and given by Father to us and that we would "receive" Him.** After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples and this happened:

[Jhn 20:22 ESV] And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."

**Jesus did the same thing to them that He once did to Adam in Eden: He breathed on them and they received a Spirit!**

ADAM. In the beginning when He did so to Adam, is when Adam was truly born and became alive. Up until then Adam was a statue made of dirt. When God breathed on him, Adam received his own human spirit.

GOD'S SPIRIT. 4000 years later when Jesus breathed on His disciples, they already had their human spirit and now they received what Jesus had been promising: the Holy Spirit, Who is God.

**This is not possession.** The Holy Spirit isn't doing a "hostile takeover." He's here to be one with us, *to connect us to Jesus even though our Lord has ascended to Heaven.*

**The Holy Spirit is our right here, right now bridge between us and Christ.**

[Jhn 14:16-18 ESV] 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, 17 even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 18 "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you."

I say this to encourage myself as much as you: *we have not just been "left here."* **We haven't been abandoned. WE'RE NOT "ON OUR OWN."**

DIVORCE. My parents were divorced when I was 5 and I have a semi-traumatic memory of my dad leaving our home for the last time. I see him walking out the door, getting into his truck, and driving away. I remember asking my mother where he was going and her saying “your father isn’t coming back.” I didn’t understand why. All I remember was feeling like he’d abandoned me and that part of me was cut off forever. Even though he only lived a few miles away and remained active in my life, *I felt like I was on my own.*

## **When Jesus ascended to Heaven 2000 years ago that’s NOT what happened to us.**

- He didn’t just leave.
- He didn’t move a few miles away.
- We are NOT separated from Him.

Look at verse 18: He has NOT orphaned us.

Next, **we’re not just getting “the leftovers” in our relationship with Him.**

SECOND FIDDLE. Have you ever felt like you’re second fiddle in your marriage or some other relationship?

- That your spouse or whomever has other priorities whether work, someone else, a hobby, and that you only get the bare scraps of what’s leftover?
- Sometimes nothing at all?

***Does it feel like we have to “settle”*** in some of our marriages or other relationships?

- That the other party shows no signs of changing their priorities, so that we’re just going to have “take what we can get” although we want and need more?

**Do we feel that way about Jesus?** The Bible says He ascended to Heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father...amen. So we’re still down here, in physical bodies and we can’t see Him or touch Him. We can’t go to some inner room in our church where He happens to be living and have coffee with Him, get a hug, or have Him lay hands on us.

## **Do we sometimes think we have to “settle” in our relationship with Jesus?**

- That “all we’ve got” is to connect with Him in the Spirit?
- That said spiritual connection is lacking, not quite His best, and won’t/doesn’t truly fill our needs?
- Do we ever look back on the disciples and wished we could have spent time with Christ in the physical like they did?

# **I think it's time for repentance and I repeat: this sermon is as much for me as any of you.**

What sin do we need to repent of? Idolatry. *The creation of relationships and connections we've made to REPLACE the one Jesus died and rose for.*

**Human relationships are GOOD** and the Lord wants us to have them! He wouldn't have created the Church if He felt otherwise. Pastor Scott is NOT saying leave all human relationships behind...no.

What I'm asking is *have we created connections and relationship to fill the God-sized hole in our souls?*

- Do our hearts believe that because God is Spirit and lives in Heaven, that we have to "settle" until the Second Coming or we pass on?
- Do our hearts convince us that the only way to experience God is to read the Bible, but that no connection beyond that exists?

RIGHT NOW. Church, we can have a wonderful and emotionally close experience with God right now. On the day you and I were Saved, a glorious thing happened: *our Lord Jesus breathed on us and we received the Holy Spirit!* This wasn't symbolic or allegorical in any way.

NT TEMPLE. In OT times God designed the Tabernacle and Temple so that He could send the Holy Spirit to live there to connect with the people. You and I are the NT temples of God and He lives here!

*We are His way of speaking and acting in this world!* Jesus Himself was born of a woman and had a human body. He recruited other human beings, filled them full of His Spirit, then sent them out into the physical world to interact with other humans to preach the Gospel and work miracles.

**Third Heaven** experiences are amazing. Angelic visitations are awesome. Prophetic dreams where we see and hear God are totally cool!

**YET WE DON'T NEED TO WAIT AROUND FOR ONE OF THOSE TO CONNECT WITH CHRIST.**

**When He gave us the Holy Spirit, He brought part of Himself to earth.**

**God the Holy Spirit already lives on earth, with us, IN us.**

JOHNNY HEARD VOICES. Earlier I told you about possessed people experiencing BOTH the thoughts and emotions of the demonic spirit inside them. Back when I did medical transport, I got to know a fellow we'll call Johnny who struggled with drug addiction. One day Johnny was complaining that his ex had won full custody of their two children...and that Johnny's own dad had helped her, even testifying in court against his own son! After a series of questions from me, Johnny finally confessed to hearing "voices in his head" that 1) urged him to do terrible things I won't speak of from the pulpit and 2) filled him full of horrible emotions like rage and pleasure in inflicting pain on others. I asked him if his dad knew of these voices and Johnny answered "yes." Then I suggested that perhaps that's why his dad testified against him to protect his grandkids!

The point is *people possessed by demons are connected to them down to the thought and feeling level*. They may or may not be "one" but if they're experiencing a demonic spirit in their minds and hearts, I would call that a pretty "intimate" relationship, wouldn't you?

**If that's the case when a demon is inside, then how much more God the Holy Spirit?!**

**The connection Jesus made between us and His Spirit is oneness!**

KNOCKED ON DOOR. Whereas a demon inside is more like an domineering abuser whose forced its way in, the Holy Spirit of Christ did this:

**[Rev 3:20 ESV]** 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

DIDN'T KICK. He didn't kick the door down like a demon, He knocked. We invited Him in and when He entered, we sat down to dinner!

Look at this:

**[Jhn 14:23 ESV]** 23 Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him."

**With the Spirit living within us, we're denied NOTHING!**

I repeat: I look forward to the Second Coming because, from that moment on, we'll live with Jesus face to face. Praise God!

But until that blessed day arrives, Church, ***we're not having to "settle."*** We have Spirit of Father and Jesus living inside of us right now.

- Just as a demon inspires negative evil thoughts or hurting others and causing them pain, God will inspire thoughts of doing good for others and healing them.
- Just as a demon provokes evil feelings of hatred, lust, and spite the Spirit of God inspires feelings of love, joy, peace and patience.
- Just as a demonic spirit urges us to sin, God's Spirit urges us to holiness.

## **We have not received table scraps or leftovers, Church, we have received God's very Spirit!**

**[2Co 3:17-18 ESV]** 17 Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. 18 And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

NO VEIL. These famous verses are amazing! They not only speak of freedom, but look at verse 18: by having received the Holy Spirit we looking at Jesus with NO VEIL (barrier). We are beholding His glory and not dying! And we're seeing it RIGHT NOW. We don't have to wait for the Rapture or for when we pass on.

**Jesus is NOT restraining His love by not being here physically. Nor His joy, peace, patience, goodness, kindness, meekness, faith, or temperance.**

GAZE UPON HIM. Remember that BC, the "veil" was necessary because we could not stand to be in God's manifest presence. Now that Christ has gone to the Cross, risen from the dead, and ascended to heaven we have been BORN AGAIN into His likeness, and can now gaze upon Him with nothing in our way!

***Nothing stands between us and God!***

The Lord commands us to have good human relationships, especially with other Christians. What we should NOT be doing is **replacing our relationship with Jesus with some "likeness"...then it becomes idolatry.**

REPLACE WITH BEAST. In the last days, this world will abandon Jesus to the point where they fully replace Him with a false God known as the Beast. The Beast will have an image of itself created, perhaps in the form of an AI, that people ***will also attempt to bond themselves to.***

INVITES DEMONIC SPIRIT. I believe that anyone who worships the Beast or his image will be inviting a demonic spirit to come and live in their bodies! I believe this is why Revelation states that anyone who does is forever condemned to the LOF without the chance of redemption. The Beast will provoke them to become temples for demons.

**NOT YOU AND I! WE ARE TEMPLES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT! JESUS HAS BREATHED UPON US AND WE HAVE RECEIVED HIM!**