

How to Know We Belong to God

In John chapters 14-16, Jesus taught about His coming advocacy at the Father's right hand as the Holy Breath of God, and three times called God's Breath "the Spirit [*Breath*] of truth" (Jhn 14:17,15:26,16:13). The only other time in the New Testament this phrase is ever repeated is in John's first letter: "**Ye are of God**, little children, and have overcome them: because **greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world**. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. **We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us**; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we **the spirit [*breath*] of truth**, and **the spirit [*breath*] of error**." (1Jo 4:4-6).

John taught that everyone in this world has one or the other dwelling in them—if we don't have "the breath of truth," then we have "the breath of error." The entire world belongs to the devil because "For all have sinned" (Rom 3:23), "sold under sin" (Rom 7:14). Belonging to the devil means that he is our lord and master, and his breath dwells in us. We're powerless against him unless someone greater drives him out and takes his place. This is what happens at conversion—Jesus Christ becomes our Lord and displaces that breath with God's Breath: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall **your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit [*Breath*] to them that ask him?**" (Luk 11:13), "But when **a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him**, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils" (Luk 11:22).

John said "Ye are of God" (v. 4) and "We are of God" (v. 6). Being "of God" or belonging to Him is having His Holy Breath dwelling in our hearts which comes only through the Lord Jesus Christ, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that **the Spirit [*Breath*] of God dwell in you**. Now if any man **have not the Spirit [*Breath*] of Christ, he is none of his**" (Rom 8:9). But how can we know for certain that His Breath is dwelling in us?

The litmus test for whether or not we have God's Breath in our hearts is if we're hearing Christ and His apostles, "he that knoweth God **heareth us**; he that is not of God **heareth not us**." This is how we know which breath is in us, "**Hereby know we the spirit [*breath*] of truth**, and the spirit [*breath*] of error." It has nothing to do with

the sign of tongues given to the church in the days of the apostles because the apostle John himself said that it's all about whom we're hearing.

At the beginning of his letter, John stated three times that what he and the other apostles declared is what they heard from Christ, "That which was from the beginning, which **we have heard** ... That which **we have seen and heard declare we unto you** ... This then is the message which **we have heard of him, and declare unto you**" (1Jo 1:1,3,5). They were sent by Him and taught the truth they heard from Him. Therefore, "the breath of truth" corresponds to hearing the truth from Christ and from them, while "the breath of error" doesn't hear them.

Of course, "hearing" isn't just being a sounding board. It's taking to heart and governing our lives by the words of the one whom we belong. If we're being led by Christ—obeying His commandments and living by His teaching—then we belong to God, "For as many as are **led by the Spirit [*Breath*] of God, they are the sons of God**" (Rom 8:14).

Because of a flood of false teaching in this world from "the god of this world" (2Co 4:4), we deal with much confusion, deception, and ignorance of the truth. But if God's Breath is in our hearts, as the truth comes to our understanding, we'll embrace it and abide by it. Once we're no longer confused, deceived, or ignorant about the truth Christ taught, God requires it of us—we must own it and be unashamed of it. When Paul began his letter to the Romans with "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ" (Rom 1:16), it wasn't about the "gospel" being preached today. In agreement with how he ended his letter, he wasn't ashamed of the gospel Christ Himself preached, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to **my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ**" (Rom 16:25). We also must be unashamed of Him and His words, "For whosoever shall be **ashamed of me and of my words**, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and *in his Father's*, and of the holy angels" (Luk 9:26).

Sadly, very few people truly "hear" Christ and His apostles. When the truth they taught about God, man, and salvation comes to their understanding, they "turn away *their* ears from the truth" (2Ti 4:4). They won't hear because they're not of God, "he that is not of God **heareth not us**." This is how we know if we belong to Him, "**Hereby know we the spirit [*breath*] of truth**, and the spirit [*breath*] of error."