

# The Ultimate in Navigational Aid

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 26 September 2010

Preacher: Alex Cowie

- [ 0 : 00 ]     Turning to John's Gospel then and the passages we read from and I want to begin in looking at verse 26 of John 14.
- The plan is to look at John 14, 26, John 15, 26 and John 16, 23.
- But what I want to do is to just give you a theme that we're going to consider. And the theme is the ultimate in navigational aid.
- The ultimate in navigational aid. Now you'll know more or less that scientists and technologists have probed the fascinating world of the secrets of migratory birds.
- Now in saying that you've got something that is wonderful in navigational function. So bear with the introduction.
- [ 1 : 14 ]     The fact of the matter is that migratory birds have this uncanny ability to travel, some of them from one spot to another, hundreds of miles.
- And then months later to travel back home again. And some can travel thousands of miles from one part of the world to the other part of the world and then months later fly back.
- And those involved in probing the secrets of migratory birds and this capacity they have for such accuracy in navigating the world have brought some interesting things to light.
- There are theories of course that they'll admit. They can't be absolutely certain. And some of the theories tell us about the how of this, how birds do this.
- And some of course, and this is a plausible theory, that some think that they respond to the magnetic field, that they have some connection with the magnetic field and they are able to use that.
- [ 2 : 26 ]     Others couple that with the use of landmarks. Others say they take direction from the sun, the position of the sun and even the stars at night.
- And I think there's a fair consensus putting all that together. But the interesting thing is that when they've said that, they say but there must be a kind of genetic program in there that goes from one generation of birds to the next.
- There is a kind of program, a prompt, and they call it migratory restlessness. It's time to get up and go.
- Some, I better watch what I'm saying here, some people have that same migratory prompt, haven't they? And certain times a year it comes on them and that's it.
- But you see the point, I'm being a wee bit flippant there, but you see the point. This is something they've had to acknowledge, this migratory prompt. They just get restless and they need to go.
- [ 3 : 34 ]     The Bible calls that a kind of knowing. And this is really interesting. Because we're talking here about navigational function.
- And our main point will come in a moment about the ultimate in navigational aid. The Bible then tells us that there is a kind of knowing.

Jeremiah tells us in verse 7 of chapter 8, the stork knows its appointed seasons. That's talking about migration.

And the thrush and the dove and the swift observe the time of their migration. So, we can notice that this is something extremely interesting and wonderful in its own right.

Actually, it is said that a human being, unaided, I mean without the modern technology, but just using the heat, could not travel the world.

[ 4 : 43 ] Even if they had a wee boat to do it in. They just haven't the sense of direction. So, we're talking about something that's intriguing here and wonderful in its own right.

What scientists have discovered can be rounded up into something far more profound. They have a kind of knowing. These migratory birds, they observe the times and seasons of their migration.

And I submit to you that this is not about the evolutionary process, but the divine programming of these creatures that he has made.

Wonderful it is. And then too, we can look at this from another angle. We can look at it from human invention in terms of navigational aid. I'll not ask for a show of hands as to who was a sat-nav in the car.

But sat-nav is an interesting navigational aid. It of course goes back to more sophisticated uses. The MOD and the military regimes of the world, those who deal in needing information, have used these aids to discover what is going on.

[ 6 : 10 ] The sat-nav of course uses satellite technology so that it can pinpoint latitude and longitude through signals that the programmer puts there and beams and you get your messages in your sat-nav and so on.

So that you're guided with relative accuracy to your destination. Well, we could spend some time on that, but I just highlight it, because it too is another form of navigational aid.

But far more wonderful and profound is the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit of God in and to the souls, to the mind and heart of human beings.

Because the Holy Spirit of God does that work. He enables us, He navigates us into the truth about the great issues, about the great issue of knowing God, of what it is to be with Him forever, of what it is to live for Him in this world.

It is the Spirit of God that navigates us into this knowing and navigates us through the difficulties of life to eventually arrive with Him, with God at last.

[ 7 : 41 ] And it's taking these three texts that I've mentioned, I want us to look at the points that I have here for consideration as to the ultimate in navigational aid.

First of all, the Holy Spirit navigates in the truth of the Bible. John 14, 26. You read the words there, if you look at the words, Jesus says in the upper room discourse, but the helper, or the comforter, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you in all things and bring them to remembrance.

And this is important, you see. Jesus is anticipating leaving this world and He's assuring the disciples of the advantage to them and to succeeding generations of His followers.

It's an advantage here that I go. Because the Spirit will come with a fuller teaching ministry. He will be sent by the resurrected Lord and the Father, as we read.

And He would take of the things of the Lord Jesus Christ and navigate us through them. Teach us the difference between truth and falsehood.

[ 9 : 06 ] He will teach us in the heights and the depths of biblical truth. You see what He says there? He will teach you all things and bring them to your remembrance.

And so that we remind ourselves that the Spirit applies with power and precision the enlightening, the saving word of God.

And it seems to me that it's vital for us to understand this and to be clear that we need the knowledge that the Spirit of God gives.

We need to know what He's saying in the word. If you ask the question, why are the churches across the world saying so many different things?

Why are there clashes on moral issues and social and economic issues? The bottom line is because those who are charged with teaching or who have taken it upon themselves to teach are not listening to what the Spirit is saying.

[ 10 : 21 ] The great navigator through these things. They're not listening to Him. They're not paying attention. In a small way, it's like having a sat-nav and not using it. He is the ultimate in navigational aid.

We need Him. We can't do without Him if we are to know God and if we are to live for Him here and if we are to be with Him forever. We need to know we need Him as our teacher.

If you think about it for a moment, the trouble came to the seven churches in the book of Revelation in chapters 2 and 3.

You've got Jesus speaking to the seven churches and they encompass the whole church for all time. By that I mean the problems in those seven churches recur.

And what you notice is that each church went into one form of error or another. They stopped listening to the teaching of the Spirit in the Word.

[ 11 : 37 ] The direction He gave through that teaching. And if you ask the question, how could this be corrected? There is an answer to it.

The answer is by listening to what the Spirit is saying, paying attention to what He's saying in the Word. But some may say then, but how can you be sure that what is there is true?

Look at the mixture as you've already mentioned of teachings in the church today. Take moral issues, that's a live issue, a relevant issue. You've got ministers and bishops and archbishops saying all different things.

A certain archbishop said that a certain lifestyle was okay just a day or two ago.

But what does the Spirit of God say in the Word? What is His teaching on the matter? What is the Bible saying to us, or rather the Spirit saying to us in the Bible?

[ 12 : 48 ] One thing we can be sure of, there is an answer. And we begin by reminding ourselves that God never contradicts Himself. The Spirit of God is not the author of confusion.

He's not confused Himself and He's not going to confuse us if we allow Him to navigate us in the teaching of His Word. Now, listen to what I'm saying here.

Because some people will say, well look here, it's a long, long time since the Christian church, indeed, the church, the people of God, when Jesus was here, stoned the adulterer or the adulteress.

Things were changing. So how can you argue that God doesn't change? My dear friends, listen, it's one thing to say that the maximum punishment for this or that crime need not be applied.

It's one thing to say that. It's another thing and utterly wrong to say that God has changed His moral position. God thinks the same of immorality, of sexual immorality today as ever He did.

[ 14 : 09 ] The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah stand as a testament to the reality of the judgment of God past, present, and future. stealing is still stealing, murder is still murder, coveting is still coveting, idolatry is still idolatry, and so on.

God has a regard for His day and the sanctifying of it. What He spoke in Moses' time, the Savior reaffirmed.

Indeed, what the Savior did is what He swept away the interpretations of the church leaders. And He got them back to what the Spirit was saying.

He helped them to see their need of being navigated into the truth and away from error. And John, as we've mentioned there a moment ago, in Revelation, warns of the eternal consequences for those who do not forsake their wicked ways.

The Spirit then, if we will be taught by Him, will teach us the way of God in truth. And we get God's mind, and when we have God's mind, we're not to be moved by the tide of popular opinion, however exalted the person claiming that opinion.

[ 15 : 52 ] We will hear what the Lord God will say, what the Spirit says in the Word. We will be taught of Him. And you see, that's the way to judge a preacher.

by what He says in relation to what the Bible says. I'm sure I've told you before about, in fact, we were just talking after breakfast today, we were having a cup of tea, and talking about a situation, I was preaching through Galatians in the north, in Bonar, years ago, and there's a couple coming and they were very interested, they had, well he had greener connections, his father had been an elder there and so on, and suddenly they stopped coming, and somebody else in the congregation remarked about the teaching they were getting.

We know it's true, but we don't like it. that's a dangerous thing to say, and it's a dangerous position to be in.

I know what you're saying is true, but I don't like it. I don't want to submit to what the Spirit is saying in the Word. And if we're like that at all, even if we've got a shade of that, then that's a prompt from the Lord Himself to head in the direction of Jesus, to call upon Him.

We need to be navigated into the truth, and away from error by the Spirit. The second thing is the Holy Spirit navigates His testimony to us.

[ 17 : 43 ] He brings it through all the rubbish that man concocts. And you find that, if you'll turn in your Bible to it, in John 15 and verse 26.

Just on the next page. But when the Helper comes, that's the Spirit, whom I shall send to you from the Father, notice what he says, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will testify or bear witness of me.

And here again, let's be clear on this, there's pinpoint accuracy in the testimony of the Spirit. This is something at another level, this is something that is absolutely, infallibly accurate.

Those of you who have a sat-nav in the car will know they're not always very accurate, and sometimes they're quite inaccurate. But the heavenly systems are absolutely accurate, because the great programmer is the Spirit of God.

He is the conveyor of an infallible signal to us in the word, his own testimony. And it is global, and it is navigational, and it is heavenly, and it's a perfect system.

[ 19 : 36 ] He has this testimony, and if we're switched on to a signal, we'll receive it. He gives a heavenly testimony, wherever and whenever he testifies in the Holy Scripture to the human heart.

And this testimony, you see, steers the heart in one direction, and that's in the direction of Jesus. his global navigational system is not dependent on a satellite, it's dependent upon himself, the great programmer.

And he always steers the heart with his testimony in the Bible to Jesus. Jesus said to the Jewish people, you search the scriptures, for in them you think you have life, but they testify of me.

And more, the Spirit testifies. You see what Jesus says, when he comes, he will testify of me. And that's what is being said here.

His specific mission has to do with his testimony concerning the person and the work of Jesus. And he brings home to us his witness on the gospel.

[ 21 : 12 ] It is the truth, it is the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And therefore if we are to be followers of the Lord Jesus, it must be through believing the Holy Spirit's witness in the word.

Ever wonder why Peter said, we haven't followed cunningly devised fables. We were eyewitnesses. We heard the excellent voice from heaven.

This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him, and don't stop listening to him. That's not only the Father's witness, it is the witness of the Spirit.

And you see, the Spirit orientates our mind and heart and will to embrace Jesus, and we need that. We need him to orientate us towards Jesus, to persuade persuade and enable as the catechism has, hasn't it?

To embrace Jesus by faith, to experience him, to know forgiveness of sins in him.

[ 22 : 30 ] And it's the testimony of the Spirit in the Word that we receive. you have that explanation for the fact that in one sermon thousands came into the church when Peter preached at that Pentecost where Jesus had ascended up on high.

That is what accounted for the wonderful transformation. It was a testimony of the Spirit that was received and believed.

They recognized that they were just what the Bible called them. They were sinners in need of salvation. They needed to turn from their own way to Jesus, to receive the forgiveness of sins and so on.

And we are the losers if we don't receive this wonderful navigational work of the Spirit, the witness of the Spirit to the truth in Jesus.

Now the last thing our time is whizzed on. It's simply the Holy Spirit navigates us through the truth. Verse 13 of John 16.

[ 23 : 57 ] You see it there? just on the next page, 957. He says, however, verse 13, when he, the Spirit of truth has come, he will guide you into all truth.

Now there's a sense in which that is universally the case in every age. We're not going into that. The light, the true light that people have, the creative, the inventive light, the intellectual light, actually is given by God.

It doesn't matter really whether people are atheists in the sense that they may not acknowledge it, but the reality is there. He gives all truth. But we're talking here about specifics.

We're talking here about how the Spirit navigates us through the truth of the Bible. people. Now, you'll be familiar, as I am, through the media, that it is a very common thing to hear this discipline or that discipline or this finding in this report is knowledge based.

Have you heard that? It's knowledge based. Now, at the back of that, there's a philosophical view, and it's this.

[ 25 : 28 ] Faith, in one form of religion or another, is not knowledge based. But what science does is knowledge based. And that's what lies behind this way of thinking.

But Jesus repeatedly called the Spirit of God, the great navigator we need, the Spirit of Truth.

That means he tells us the truth and nothing but the truth. But there's more. He is the ultimate scientist. He knows as no one else knows.

He knows all there is to know. His knowledge is comprehensive, exhaustive, it is infinite. He knows the mind of God because he himself is God, the Spirit.

And this is the one who guides us, if we will have his guidance, in the truth. Jesus says he illuminates, he guides you in all truth, but whatever he hears, he will speak.

[ 26 : 46 ] that's his business. He will guide you into all the truth. This is the way his role is described.

And the most important thing to get a hold of here is he guides us in the true knowledge of God. It's not an arrogance for us to say over against other faiths.

We know life eternal. We know we have eternal life. We know the Lord.

It's not an arrogance, it's a God-given gift. The Spirit of God has navigated us to that place where we can say, I know.

It's a humbling thing, but it's true. And you see, this knowledge, this saving knowledge, this knowing that Jesus died in our room instead, he bore our sins far away.

[ 27 : 55 ] He has given us the forgiveness of sins, we have peace with God, and so on. And his resurrection gives us that wonderful standing with God. That's right, nothing else can.

We're not arrogant when we say we know the truth. We've had that great navigator bring us to that place. And it cannot be done by our own efforts, our own intellectual ability, our own science knowledge, anything.

It can't be done. It can't be done by philosophy. No method of philosophy, inductive or deductive, will bring us to that place.

because the big problem is we're simply not capable in ourselves. We need by the Spirit of God to be brought to see the truth.

He enlightens us in the knowledge of Christ. And the only way we get to know the Lord Jesus and get to know him more and more is by the work, the progressive work of Spirit of God, guiding us, navigating us through the truth in Jesus.

[ 29 : 25 ] That's why we're singing in the psalm and we're just going to round off now. And we need to make this our constant prayer. O Lord, reveal to me your ways and all your paths help me to know.

Direct and guide me in your truth. Show me the way that I should go. That's the work of the Spirit.

And we can make that our prayer every time we sing. psalm 32 verse 8. Some of us learned that a long time ago and are still learning it.

I will instruct thee and thee teach the way that thou shalt go and with my eye upon thee set I will direction show.

Then be not like the horse or mule which do not understand. Don't be a rebel. Don't be stubborn. let it lie in our hearts.

[ 30 : 27 ] Let it rest in hearts. Let us respond to it that he will teach us in the way that we should go. And he will bring us by his global navigational heavenly systems to the place of our eternal blessedness.

Amen.