



Test the Spirits

Robin M. Bertram

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PREFACE

This course of study is an in-depth look at the Ministry of Deliverance. It is intended to reach those who are in need of personal deliverance and those who feel called into prayer ministry. It may be effectively used as a training tool for pastors and leaders who are interested in the development of a deliverance team. It may also be used in conjunction with teaching tapes, other books and resources, or as a stand-alone resource. The subject matter contained herein is addressed in the context of deliverance ministry, and is not considered an exhaustive study of the subject. It does, however, attempt to highlight topics that are frequently dealt with during sessions of deliverance ministry.

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Test the Spirits

*Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world
(1 Jn 4:1).*

We all hear, at some time or another, an inner voice, a faint whisper, or an inner leading. We must be able to clearly discern where such voices originate. Soulless or carnal individuals may follow a voice which is heard outwardly from another individual, or inwardly, which may be of an ungodly nature. Even the most ardent, mature believer must be cautious to distinguish between the voice of God, a voice spoken out of the soul of man, or a demonic voice. Following a voice other than God's voice can wreak havoc on an individual's life, marriage, career, or family. It can destroy relationships, homes, and churches. Therefore, we must be able to test the spirits, know their origin, and respond accordingly.

The Word of God promises that we, God's sheep, will hear and follow His voice. This is the right and privilege of every true believer. It should be an expected part of fellowship with our Lord and Savior. Satan's objective is to disrupt our communion with God. Therefore, believers are to be strong in the Word and keenly aware of the schemes and tricks of the enemy. We must be ever-growing in discernment in order to avoid traps and pitfalls that have been set before us which are intended to pull us from the plans and purposes God has for our lives. An important aspect of the Ministry of Deliverance is the use of the gift of discerning of spirits. This gift is

fundamental in the proper operation of deliverance. However, discerning between good and evil, which the Bible states is obtained through practical application of the Word of God in given situations, is equally important. The best scenario is a deliverance ministry where both the gift of discerning of spirits and the ability to apply God's Word accurately are present. Knowledge without application is futile. Understanding the origin of a voice and discerning it properly is fundamental to the success of a deliverance session. Where do these voices come from? Voices can have three origins: God, the inner man, or the voice of a demonic nature. The Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or the demonic spirit may sound the same in our hearing. However, the intentions will not be the same.

We are influenced by the voices we hear. God gives us direction. He speaks to us. We fellowship with the Lord spirit-to-spirit. God is spirit and we must commune with Him in spirit and in truth. Believers are to hear. There can be an outward hearing such as an audible voice, inward hearing of words spoken, or just an inward impression. God does speak and believers do hear! Spending time quietly with God and allowing Him to commune with us is quite necessary. It is very difficult to hear when you are always doing the talking. True communication is two-sided therefore, sitting before Him with a heart to simply listen will increase the capacity to hear. We also are influenced by those individuals around us as we hear their voices. Influences of man which are of a fleshly, soulish origin can stem from the voice of another. These voices can flow from personal desire or ambition within others: family, friends, pastors, advisors, mentors. Soulsh influences can come from the mouth of a carnal or immature prophet. They can come from the pulpit if there is a pastor with a personal agenda working there. They can come from one's own inward desires, and through the voice of a friendly "suggestion." Fleshly or soulsh voices can be as dangerous to the Body of Christ as the demonic, Satan-serving spirits. Words spoken over an individual have power to build up or tear down, to encourage, discourage, or even to destroy. Make no mistake: any leading other than the leading of the Holy Spirit can be a means of bringing destruction, therefore it is of the utmost importance to discern the voices accurately.

TEST THE SPIRITS

There are voices of a demonic dimension. These voices flow from demon spirits who are sent to do Satan's bidding. These voices can appear to have originated within one's own mind. However, they may be sent as a message from Satan and be destructive in nature. They may be directive in nature, intended to pull an individual off course. They may be suggestive with evil intent, foul, unclean, and laced with unholy opinions or suggestions. They may be in direct conflict with the Word of God, with a tempting, alluring, or seducing overtone. They may have a nuance of degradation, condemnation, or defilement. Often, an individual will be fooled into believing that the destructive voices are of his own making. In actuality, Satan sends a demonic voice and the hearer chooses to agree or disagree with that voice. Herein lies the concern. The hearer chooses to believe the condemnation or destructive words sent, therefore giving power to the devil to operate. In opposition, the voice of the Holy Spirit will only convict, never condemn. Suggestions of condemnation will always be rooted in the demonic. There is a voice in our inner man which is comprised of our own thoughts, however, Satan can, and does, attempt to send thoughts or voices to us that are not our own. Hence, there is a battle in the mind which often comes when we are weak or troubled, and then we are tormented or influenced in some way by the enemy. Satan is not a creator, but the created. Therefore, he is neither omnipresent, omniscient, nor omnipotent, only God has all of these attributes. Therefore, Satan must use his servants to do his bidding; hence, demonic voices are carried forth by demon spirits at the direction of their leader. Consequently, we must test the spirits.

Voices can also stem from the mouth of a false prophet, a servant of Satan. Behind the false prophet is the spirit of the antichrist, which the Bible indicates is among us even now. Both the false prophet and demon spirit have the same objective: to pull one away from God and to steal the worship He so deserves. The voice of the false prophet is subtle and deceptive. Their objective is to lead individuals into covetousness, idolatry, or rebellion. The false prophet is jealous, self-seeking, and ambitious for notoriety. Just as the Pharisees who were reprimanded by Jesus, these men and women are righteous in appearance on the outside, but full of hypocrisy and deceit on the inside. They seek personal gain, promotion, and reward. They

elevate themselves through manipulative tactics. They are not God-appointed, but are self-appointed. They exploit those who are willing to listen. They abuse, profit from, and take advantage of anyone who is in their realm of influence. We are instructed clearly in scripture to test the spirits. There are four distinct areas to which one may look in order to identify whether the voice they are hearing is from the Holy Spirit, the flesh of man, or of a demonic nature. Spoken words that are given from another individual can be weighed, and should be weighed, especially if they are those of one claiming the office of a prophet. Evaluation of motive, character, attitude, and spiritual fruit in the life of the speaker will be good assessment tools as each is carefully scrutinized. The motive of a person who claims to have “a word” should be totally free of manipulation, intimidation, or control of any kind. It should not be given in a threatening or scolding manner. The character of the speaker should be assessed. Are they trustworthy, reliable, and devout? Are they honest to their word, not a gossip or a slanderer? They should have a reputation for being godly and prayerful. One claiming to have “a word from the Lord” should not be haughty, boastful, or arrogant. Their attitude, when giving a particular word, should not be angry, spiteful, or have an underlying tone of revenge. The true prophet of God would not give a word in an attempt to gain or maintain position, to appease, or appeal to the flesh. The speaker of a “true word of God” does not give it for show or out of fear, but under the unction of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the fruit of the Spirit should be seen in the speaker as “the prophetic word” comes forth. There will also be evidence of fruit in the life of the speaker. They will have a witness from the mouths of others as to the operation of their gifts. Prayers are answered with some evidence of such. They will have had a positive impact on those to whom they have ministered. Prophetic words are given to edify, exhort, and comfort. They are meant to build the body, both individually and corporately. They will in no way ever refute scripture but, rather, be reinforced by it. Therefore, all prophetic words must line up with the written Word. They will not violate scriptural guidelines or precepts. They may, however, bring correction, direction, reproof, and admonition. Reproof must also line up with biblical principles and should be dismissed if not. Prophetic words will point to Jesus, His work, and His Word. It will

be aligned with the life and the teachings of Jesus, which requires obedience to His commands and faithfulness to His precepts.

...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev 19:10).

True prophetic word will glorify God by revealing His will. The voice of the true prophet, his inspiration and his authority are all from God. His words are not self-generated, but come under the influence of, and are directed by, the power of the Holy Spirit. A true prophet of God is sent by God, called, and commissioned. First, in recognizing their insignificance before God, they have a clear understanding of the importance of their call, and they are completely dependent on Him. The prophet of God will speak only the words that God has given him. He will give *the word* whether those who are to receive it choose to hear and accept it, or choose to ignore and reject it. The prophet of God does not fear man or what man might do to him in response to *the word*. God will hold the prophet accountable. If a word is to be given and he should decide not to give it, the messenger of God would then wear that responsibility. It is the role of the prophet to proclaim, to warn, and to bless. A sentinel, a term sometimes used in scripture for the messenger of God, will often call people to repentance within their message. He will announce the plans of God, the purposes of God, and the judgment of God. He will encourage and lead by biblical standards. He is to also be a watchman over the sanctuary and intercede for individuals, churches, cities, and nations.

Functions of a prophet may also include the impartation or activation of spiritual gifts, confirmation of ministries, or the announcement of anointing. A prophet may be foretelling by means of giving predictions of things that are to come, or they may be forth telling, such as preaching and communicating the mind of God for the present time. God sets the prophet in a particular church with the intent of “equipping the saints for the work of the ministry.” There may be several who hold the office of a prophet

and they are to be responsible for the weighing and judging of prophetic word as it comes forth within the church environment. Above all, the general message of all prophets is always repentance. A true prophet of God will lovingly point out trespasses of the people and encourage them to act in accordance with the Word of God, thus building the Body through truth!

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and teaching of demons through the hypocrisy of liars whose conscience are seared with a hot iron (1 Ti 4:1).

Your Personal Notes:

TRUTH OR LIE

False doctrine is ever-present. Guidelines for what constitutes false doctrine can be found as one looks at the churches in Colossae at the time of Apostle Paul's ministry. They had been influenced by teachings that had forbidden marriage, demanded abstinence from certain foods, and followed profane myths and old wives' tales. They were led by these false doctrines to instill a form of self-righteousness that included self-abasement and excessive ritualism, and gave an inordinate amount of attention to angels, thereby encouraging the worship of heavenly entities. These teachings were inspired by the devil. They were meant to lead believers away. They were teachings that encouraged false spirituality by means of obtaining wisdom through self-effort, such as false asceticism. They were teachings that veered away from the truth, although the teachers of such apostasy would claim divine inspiration. They encouraged the observance of certain festivals, new moons, and the forbiddance of certain food and drink. These regulations were of human origin and had no eternal value associated with them for the control of self-indulgence, which is what they were intended to do. As individuals are working in prayer ministry, it is extremely important to be able to discern faulty belief systems which have been mixed with Christianity.

Heresy in the Greek, signifies "a choice" according to the *New Unger's Bible Dictionary*, and is defined as a chosen course of

thought and action, hence, one's chosen opinion or tenet. It is defined as a sect, or party, "...whereas dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims, doctrinal departures from revealed truth, or erroneous views" took root. At the root of a heresy are the stubborn opinions which ignore truth and submit solidly to the prescribed theology instigated by man, overriding the written precepts within the only real source of complete truth, the Holy Bible. Study truth and the false will become very evident.

The same day some Sadducees came to Him, saying there is no resurrection (Mt 22:23)...

Your Personal Notes:

SADDUCEES AND PHARISEES

The priests and scribes were students of the Holy Scriptures. They had become divisive in their opinions and two groups ultimately formed: the Sadducees, who were of the priestly order, and the Pharisees, who were from the scribes. The Sadducees were a religious sect which was aristocratic in nature and included high ranking individuals who were named by Zadok, the priest. The high-priestly families adhered only to the written law, thus accepting only the first five books of the Old Testament, and refused the traditions of their fathers. They ferociously opposed the notion of resurrection, emphatically stating that it was not a teaching of Moses, therefore it was to be rejected. Such cultic mindsets would say that the resurrection was a great hoax or they may say that it was merely mythology. Some proclaimed that Jesus returned only in spirit and not in body. Others proposed that He did not die at all. There were accusations that the disciples had simply hallucinated His return or, worse yet, that they had stolen His body from the tomb leaving behind an empty grave. They claimed that the event had been fabricated to obtain profit. There were claims that the disciples went to the wrong tomb and had erroneously concluded that Jesus had risen. Fundamentally, Christian faith has only one acceptable stand, and that is a literal bodily resurrection from the dead which transpired, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was raised from the dead, historically, both bodily and spiritually, by the supernatural power of God!

The Pharisees were legalists, and sometimes referred to as *separatists*. They had been so-called by their opponents or adversaries due to their desire to come out from the

uncleanness of the pagan society that had been so influential in the degradation of the Israelite nation. They were scholarly, well-versed in scripture, and therefore the basic foundation of their desires to be separated from the unclean was a legitimate goal. They realized the dangers of mixing with the society of the day and the things of the world. However, there were other issues in which they did not place appropriate importance. One such issue was that they would cross land and sea to make a convert, only to make him twice as much a son of the devil because of their flagrant exclusion of important matters within the faith. In other words, they could preach it, but had no real power to back up their claims. Healing was low on their list of priorities. They refused the Ministry of Deliverance Jesus had performed, claiming it was of the devil. They encouraged tithing, but did not lift a finger to help those burdened and heavy laden by demonic forces. They looked good, sounded good, and carried the adulation of men; however, Jesus Christ of Nazareth was not impressed. Being separated from uncleanness was not their wrong, but being filled with it was! Jesus said they were filthy inside. They were empty. They were dried up. They had no power and no real authority. Out of jealousy and fear they questioned others who moved under real power of the Holy Spirit. Those under their care surely did not see change come to their helpless situations. Jesus took it upon Himself to declare, *“Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.”* They were bound to numerous rules and regulations. They were more concerned with tithing than with faith, justice, or mercy.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith.

It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others (Mt 23:23).

They were full of hypocrisy, greed, self-indulgence, and all kinds of filth. Therefore, it was easier for them to condemn Jesus for the good He was doing than to deal with their own ineffectiveness. Not so hard to imagine, even in some churches today, where healing and deliverance are rebuked for being performed in the sanctuary, on the Sabbath. Remember, Jesus did this very thing, Church! Beware of churches that look good on the outside, but have no real power to bring healing or deliverance to those members in need. They might just be leading you down a very dangerous path!

Judaizers claimed that in addition to having faith in Jesus Christ, one must also keep the Mosaic Law in order to be part of the body of believers. The Judaizers were demanding that Titus, a Greek, should be circumcised, therefore circumventing the grace provided through the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the purifying effect of His Blood. Mixing the legal demands of the law with the precious gift of grace is just as prevalent today in some arenas. Therefore, one may be faced with the possibility of confronting such faulty mindsets during a deliverance session.

Gnosticism is a belief system that is based on the presumption of a superior capacity for knowledge. Gnosticism had found its way into the churches of the Colossians. Their belief system deified the angelic intermediaries. They gave inordinate attention to powers of the spirit realm. Ascetic practices were represented as being proof of self-discipline instead of a means of obtaining self-discipline, therefore the whole notion of humbling oneself in fasting had been lost on attempts of displaying false righteousness. Gnostics chose to deny the humanity of Jesus even to the extent of denying the reality of His physical body.

Some thought He was possibly an aeon-sort of a spirit. They believed the world was created evil matter and in opposition to the spirit world, which is good. They regarded all spiritual experiences as good, without limitation. In other words, spiritual experiences took on overriding precedence over any other authority. This erroneous belief system had a strong influence over the Colossian Church. Rooted in Gnosticism, the deification of angelic forces and spiritualism permeates our culture today. Speaking to the dead through mediums has become a form of pop culture entertainment as it is leading the unsuspecting down a path of destruction. Psychics, palm reading and Tarot card reading is a fashionable activity for Hollywood elitists and has therefore become a hot topic on the big screen, highly influencing and intriguing our youth. Addressing such distorted thinking is paramount to the success of deliverance ministry. It is not uncommon to find those who are in need of deliverance ministry to over-spiritualize things or place undue emphasis on a particular spiritual experience often giving it greater precedence than the written Word of God.

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ (Col 2:8).

Syncretistic thinking, mixing of the religious traditions of the Greek and the Oriental culture, was a function of their erroneous belief system. Pluralism abounded in which many acknowledged that there were more than one or two kinds of ultimate reality. Judaism and Christianity were threatened with the ongoing challenge of avoiding the temptation of mixing their beliefs with the Greek-Persian occult rituals. Heretics denied Jesus, as the Pharisees denied His work. Legalism, rituals, and intellect motivated them. They followed

tradition to the point of opposing the true work of the Holy Spirit. They chose to believe that spiritual experiences were dangerous, and demanded credentials over a demonstration of God's power. In Acts, chapter four, Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin to be persecuted after a lame man was healed. They asked, "*By what power or by what Name did you do this?*" Heretics and Pharisees constantly questioned Jesus's authority His credentials, and His background. They chose to ignore the power of God flowing in and through His life. The heretics refused to acknowledge Jesus and did not take into account His spiritual authority, as He moved in healing, deliverance, and even raising the dead! Most assuredly, deliverance ministers will be attacked from within the church, and it will be from those individuals who are fearful of being exposed as being false. It is therefore imperative for those who are called to be watchful, alert, and informed as to what to look out for. All teaching, preaching, and ministering must proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, that He died, was buried, rose on the third day and sits at the right hand of the Father. Those who go beyond it are those who fail to acknowledge Jesus as the Word of Life, the source of life, and that He came in the flesh, as God incarnate.

Everyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ, but goes beyond it, does not have God; whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son (II Jn 9).

BLESSED ASSURANCE

We have the truth in us. God has so graciously provided His Spirit to lead, guide, and direct us into all truth. It is His desire that we be well-informed; however, it is also our responsibility to know the scriptures.

And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know Him, because he abides with you, and he will be with you, and he will be in you (Jn 14:16-17).

False teachings will invariably cause a question to rise up in our spirit. The Holy Spirit will prompt us to line up what we are hearing with the written scripture. Therefore, it is absolutely imperative that each and every believer be grounded in the Word of God. It is the knowledge of the real that will expose the twisting of the truth and thus, identify what is false, and that revelation will come by the power of the Holy Spirit. Hence, we are to judge all teaching biblically. To do so one must know for himself what the scriptures actually say. Intelligent individuals with eloquent speech may lead the unsuspecting down the wrong path. Moreover, false teachings cater to the intellectual mind because they are generated by what is devilish. Therefore it is imperative to know the truth. We are to reject teaching that does not have a biblical foundation. We are also to move in wise council, but weigh all things with the truth of God's Word. The gifts of the Spirit are also given to assist in the discerning of false teachings, especially the spiritual gift, discerning of spirits, which offers protection to the hearer and enables them to judge from

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what spirits are speaking, whether they are from the Holy Spirit, a human spirit, or demonic voices. This is a critical gift in the Body of Christ and may be used to prevent misleading influences. The gift can be effective in exposing false teachers, false apostles, and false prophets. Knowledge and revelation gained from scripture will guide us when faced with the potential of hearing false teaching. Scripture will not contradict scripture; therefore a principle found in the Bible will have that same principle exhibited in another portion of scripture. Therefore, the Holy Spirit, the gift of discernment, and the written word of God is our protection from all that is false.

Your Personal Notes:

WHO IS WITH US?

There is a tendency to belittle itinerant ministries who work outside of the structure of the local church or those from another background, but Jesus advised His disciples to allow those who were doing the work to continue in it. This is a lesson for the local church today. Jesus clearly encouraged those who were under His teaching not to forbid the work, but to understand that they were all on the same team, working to accomplish the same goals. Remember, those who were working apart from the disciples were using the name of Jesus to accomplish the deliverance. Issued here is another caveat. Individuals, as they minister deliverance, must remember it is of the utmost importance to avoid being burdened unnecessarily by human traditions. These traditions may often be opposed to the work, therefore, it is highly recommended to simply follow the lead of Jesus as He went from town to town, meeting the needs of the people. He gave much credence to the importance of liberty; moreover, His disciples should do the same. Churches oftentimes have become exclusive, thus prohibiting laymen within the congregation the freedom to minister. However, one of the church's main objectives is to train the congregation for the work of the ministry, according to Paul as he wrote to the Church of Ephesians. They should learn this lesson by looking at the teachings of Jesus as He spoke to His disciples concerning the Ministry of Deliverance.

John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for he who is not against us is on our side" (Lk 9:49-50).

Why is this precept an important issue in the Body of Christ? The Church needs more workers in the field, not only sitting on the pews. Many churches have become a breeding ground for dissention and disunity. It is the most frequently used tactic the devil uses to destroy servants of God. Many times this dissention is no more than a power struggle. It often begins in the leadership and spreads throughout the congregation. There also may be a grass roots effort to remove current leadership, or prohibit some who are not “part of the team” from working. Whatever the surface issues may be, the color of the carpet, the way to collect tithes, or who is going to be this month’s greeters, the underlying problem is most frequently a struggle for power. Power struggles leave Jesus out of the picture altogether. They are an attempt to achieve the very things we are to put down, our carnal desires. They are mere flesh-pleasers, gratifying the need to be somebody. Churches which have experienced a repetitive stream of splitting have nestled, somewhere within the head, a power-craving individual or group whose main objective is to rule. Frequently, individuals who leave are blamed for the strife and inner turmoil, however, the splitting goes on and on. Hence, the ones who are the very cause of the split hold tightly to the reins of power. Beware of a church in constant turmoil. Deliverance ministers quite frequently come under attack in this type of environment. Jesus taught that the heart of those who are His will desire to gather in and seek for those who are lost. They will have a heart for sinners and a desire to see them come to the true knowledge of a living Savior. There will also be those whose desire is to scatter. Those who desire to scatter will be the attacker. Watch out keenly for the attacker, therein lies the source of conflict!

Satan’s goal against the Church is division. He knows spiritual law. He knows that if a house is divided, it will eventually fall. He plants within the congregation the dividing spirit which operates through

constant slander, power struggles, and dissention. This dividing spirit, or spirits, works through willing individuals to cause continuous distrust, discord, and disunity. Such individuals have a kind of charisma working in their favor. They are able to convince others of reasons for their discontentment. Often, these voices will be influential in having key leaders pushed out of their position. They will divert those who are actually called to be uprooted, and try to substantiate their own personal agendas. They will most likely be well-embraced by the congregation and possibly be in some form of leadership themselves. They will display attitudes of concern for the church, but only in the context of furthering their own desires and agenda. They will often use “words of the Lord” that are not weighed by other prophetic voices, but have been allowed free access to voice their opinions as so-called prophecy. Deliverance ministers must be aware of the environment in which they intend to work. Environments such as these are set up to attack the true servants of God. Heed these warnings as a precautionary measure to avoid undue stress and strain. Environments that nurture the voice of the false prophet will wreak havoc on the ministers of deliverance, and they will become the target for all the problems within that particular church. Know those with whom you labor and know them well! How will one recognize a false prophet? They will have no fruit. They may have all the right words, but no demonstration of power. They may say they are a Christian, but are void of the fruits of the Spirit. They will be the attackers, the slanderers, and the ones who set themselves up to be admired and honored.

THE VOICE OF THE FALSE PROPHET

Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves by their fruit you will recognize them (Mt 7:15).

The antichrist spirit is behind the work of a false prophet and the characteristics of a false prophet are carefully outlined in scripture. False prophets reject authority, slander what they don't understand, and cause division. They are grumblers and malcontents. They indulge in their own ungodly lusts and abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain. They are bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage. Often, they will deny the truth of the written scripture and bring in destructive opinions, dissensions, and disunity. Most importantly, they deny Jesus as part of the Godhead.

For certain intruders have stolen in among you, people who long ago were designated for this condemnation as ungodly, who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ (Jude 4).

There may indeed be a false word given and the speaker of that word may not necessarily be a false prophet. In such a case, it is important to understand that prophecy is not infallible, and neither is the prophet. A prophet who has had little or no training, or who may be very young in their gifting can potentially give an inaccurate word. A word given may be resonating from the flesh or it may be given at the wrong time, but it is not given maliciously. Conversely, the false prophet operates with malicious intent, and sometimes within the context of the church government.

In the church environment, there are to be two or three prophets who speak, one at a time, and let the others weigh the word. Weighing the word is foundational in scripture and should be followed as a clear directive given by the Apostle Paul. There will be a witness of the Holy Spirit, the word will line up with scripture, and there will be agreement that the word is indeed of the Lord. False words will sometimes be given in a mumbled, confused or incoherent voice, and often come because there is no accountability set in place. They may be words of promise, offering the receiver fortune, fame, or great notoriety. They may be words that encourage the flesh instead of the spirit. There may be directives attached that encourage personal decisions such as marriage or becoming pregnant. When an individual receives such words, they must be carefully weighted. Many times such words are merely the flesh of man, and it is wise to have them assessed by those who are proven in their gifting. The spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets, hence, the spiritually mature and discerning should be given the responsibility, and prayerfully placed in the role of judging the word. False words can destroy. They can severely interfere with the flow of the service. They can be disruptive to the message the Lord is conveying through the pastor or teacher. They can change the environment so that the intended tone of the service is changed. A false word will bring confusion and disorder. It will leave those in its hearing feeling somewhat tainted. Consequently, the purpose for which it was sent would be fulfilled.

The fruit of a ministry of the Gospel will always point you toward Jesus! Words without demonstration of power are just words, and the works of our faith will follow us. There will be evidence of the beliefs that one holds. Just as the Scribes and Pharisees had all the right words, their message did not convey evidence of their teachings or fruitfulness. They were proud and oppressive, false in

their professions. They knew the scriptures, but ignored the spirit in which they were given. Those who are false will often encourage others to continue in a way that is ungodly. They will encourage wrongdoing and show no signs of remorse. They will refute truth under the guise of “Christian liberty” and therefore promote a continuation in a path of deception. True servants of God, however, will display and promote godliness and humility. They will move on behalf of others, not out of recognition, but out of the needs of others. They will be self-sacrificing and will encourage those around them to walk closely in accordance with scripture, instead of manipulating theology into a loose form of carnal liberty. Those who operate in Kingdom authority will have fruit which represents the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. Moreover, they will have a proven track record of supernatural events that spread the Gospel, and exalt the name of Jesus...good fruit!

For false christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect if that were possible (Mt 24:24).

A prophet who only prophesies good, prosperity, or no fear of judgment is indicative of a false prophet. Prophets are seers. They see what is to come. Therefore, it would be remiss to expect a prophet to give only the good or positive side of things. The role of warning which a prophet plays can help in thwart oncoming attacks and hardships. It is through their prophetic insight that preparations are made, decisions are considered, and efforts to deal with impending situations are implemented.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: “Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you; they fill you with false hopes. They speak visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of

the Lord. They keep saying to those who despise me, 'The Lord says: You will have peace. You will have peace.' And to all who follow the peace, and to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts they say, 'No harm will come to you'' (Jer 23:16-17).

Prophets who use their gift as a means of obtaining power, position, or benefits of any kind are most likely false prophets. Manipulation, domination or intimidation under the guise of prophetic insight is detestable in the eyes of God. It does not go unnoticed. Those who are caught in that trap most likely are aware of their intentions. Therefore, any prophetic word received that has an undertone of control should be completely discarded, as well as those given in an attempt to gain place or position. It is mixing what is precious with the profane; hence, the unjust use of such a treasured gift in the Body of Christ will bring swift judgment.

...The prophets follow an evil course and use their power unjustly. Both prophet and priest are godless even in my temple I find their wickedness (Jer 23:10-11).

True prophets of the Lord will serve willingly without regard to cost, personal desire, or ambitions, as opposed to false prophets, who serve for personal reward, financial gain, and self-satisfaction. Those who intend to profit from their gifting will invariably suffer harm for doing so.

Its rulers give judgment for a bribe, its priest teach for a price, its prophets give oracles for money; yet they lean upon the Lord and

*say, "Surely the Lord is with us! No harm shall come upon us"
(Mic 3:11).*

False prophets will lead individuals away from the Lord. Possibly the most clear-cut indication of a false prophet will be those who attempt to sway people away from worshipping the Lord. It is a dangerous thing to assume someone is false, when they are truly working on behalf of God. Conversely, it is also dangerous to submit to prophets or pastors who encourage wrongdoing by failing to bring correction to sin within the congregation or, worse yet, actually joining in the sin of others. False prophets will present a gospel other than the Gospel Jesus preached. They will stand in opposition to the works He performed. They will intellectualize their own kind of gospel and lead followers away from their devotion to Christ.

But I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by its cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you submit to it readily enough (II Co 11:3-4).

They encourage wrongdoing. Prophets that are not of God will most assuredly not be encouragers of godly living. Prophets and pastors who put their stamp of approval on sin will answer to a just God. They will not be bringing the truth of the scripture to encourage change in those to whom they minister, but will most likely encourage them to continue in their wrongdoing, dismissing sin or repentance as being irrelevant through their actions.

...They strengthen the hands of evildoers, so that no one turns from his wickedness

(Jer 24:14).

False prophets send themselves. Clearly, the mission of a prophet is a hard road. Scripture indicates the difficulties that come along with the office. One who chooses their own path most likely will not have experienced difficulty or pain. The true prophet of God will encounter great opposition and ridicule. Their directives come from God and they go forth out of love for the Lord and not of their own accord. False prophets go forth out of a desire for power, control, acclaim, attention, and other selfish motives.

I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their messages; I did not speak to them yet they have prophesied (Jer 23:21).

Just as in the days of Jesus, the false prophets attack the true prophets of God. A good indication of who is real and who is false is to simply identify the attacker. False prophets are found within the church setting. They are planted there because Satan attempts to thwart churches' efforts and make them ineffective. Hence, a tool to use in identifying a false prophet in your midst is to simply look at the history of those prophets who were there before. Is there a history of those with a prophetic voice being pushed out or driven out of the church? Has there been a repeated cycle of individuals who gave prophetic word in the past but are now ostracized from the church? False prophets dishearten the righteous falsely. Pastors who allow true prophets of God to be openly attacked or slandered will bear the weight on their shoulders for the prophetic words that were shut off due to such attacks. Pastors, heed this warning and quickly

identify the attacker. Those who are false prophets are often readily accepted because they have learned to say just what people want to hear. They gain advantage through words that sound soothing to the ear. They promise good. They give words which feed the flesh of an individual. They smear whitewash by speaking peace when there is no peace. A false word will have no weight to it, no anointing and, most importantly, it will have no effect. These words are meant to benefit the speaker instead of the hearer, and with the true prophet of God, the reverse is true. A true prophet of God will bring forth words that will benefit the hearer in some way, even in the case of a rebuke given in love. That being said, prophecy is in part and the fullness of the meaning of the spoken word is oftentimes unclear. Quite frequently it is only after an occurrence or happening is looked at in hindsight that one gains insight as to what that word actually meant. Also, it is common to find that a prophetic word may have a deeper meaning associated with it. However, the spirit of the prophet of God will always have the best intentions for the hearer in mind. The words given will not be given to their detriment.

Individuals who try to turn people from the truth are false prophets. They may do so by lack of understanding, but most likely it will be an obvious attempt to encourage those around them to continue in falsehood and sin. True prophets of the Lord cry out "Repent!" It is their theme, their constant message, and that will never change. Prophets of God should have a deep understanding of the written Word of God. Those who claim to be prophets, but do not study or meditate on the word of God, are not ready for their position even if they have truly been called. Prophets who have a shallow or twisted understanding will be unable to point out scriptural truth as it is written. False prophets will dissuade individuals from seeking truth on their own, but instead encourage them

to accept their word on spiritual issues. True prophets, however, will encourage individuals to seek out truth independently, through prayer and study, and allow the prophetic utterances given to be weighed by other prophets. New Testament examples of false prophets are Bar-Jesus and Elymus. Paul, a true apostle of God, responds...

“You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, full of all deceit and villainy, will you not stop making crooked the straight paths of the Lord” (Ac 13:10).

False prophets promote immorality. Those who claim to be a prophet, yet encourage infidelity, fornication, adultery, or have a history of divorces without biblical ground behind them, are to be heavily scrutinized. Those who promote divorce in prayer counseling or pastoral counseling between two believing Christians should also be scrutinized. This should be a red flag. Clearly, those who counsel should do so based solely on biblical precepts and those who stray from those biblical precepts may not be of God!

“Also among the prophets of Jerusalem I have seen a horrible thing: they commit adultery and walk in falsehoods” (Jer 23:14).

Those who prophesy lies are doing so because they are false. False prophets mimic their father, who is the father of lies. Therefore, they are to be deemed as false. A true prophet can prophesy an accurate word that does not come into being. There is evidence in scripture that backs up this scenario. True words can be thwarted due to fear, doubt, unbelief, pride, and an array of different blocks and barricades sent to hinder the word from coming forth. Here, however, is the case of prophets who make up lies for their own gain and tenaciously deceives.

“How long? Will this be in the hearts of the prophets ever turn back---those who prophecy lies, and who prophesy the deceit of their own heart” (Jer 23:26)?

False prophets destroy and scatter the servants of God. Once again those who have a history of destroying reputations through slander and malicious words are simply false prophets. They will run out of the church those with the capability of exposing them as false. They will deceptively stand behind those who are supposed to be the decision makers and lead them into blatantly destroying God’s servants. Those who do such things stand on the sidelines and look unaffected by the fallout. However, God knows the intentions of every heart. God is absolutely just and He does not allow sin to go unchecked. He will also start in His house as He brings forth judgment. Often, the deliberate slaughter of God’s servants seems to have no consequences, but it does, and will. God reminds us through the words of His true prophets that judgment will come. Therefore, look at the reputations of members of the congregation who are no longer present, those who have been scattered. Have they been defamed or have their reputations been tarnished in some way? Have they been publically discredited? Did it come from the pulpit? Caution, there may be a false prophet in your midst.

Therefore thus says the Lord God of Israel against the shepherds that feed my people: You have scattered my flock, driven them away, and not tended to them (Jer 23:2).

The defining characteristic of a false prophet is that they use their power to lead people away from the one and only true God and entice them to follow false gods. They are scatterers. Therefore, if the scattering continues, then one can safely presume that there is a wolf in the house! False prophets serve a false god. They may or may not be part of a local congregation, but their desires are all the same. They seek for themselves power and position, and often obtain it through flattering words of exhortation. They are concerned for their own well-being over the concerns for the congregation. They are most dangerous when they stand behind another who holds a visible office. They inflict their influence on the pastor or leaders, thereby setting policies of the church which are of an ungodly nature. The plans of God are usurped because leaders have chosen to be persuaded by man instead of by God. The pastor or leader who submits himself to follow the false prophet will have difficulty hearing from the Lord for himself. False prophets in the church setting quite often convince those around them that their opinions have proven true by discrediting others. Therefore, they convince others that they are vital for the growth and vitality of the church. This deception is embraced and the scattering continues! Moreover, the false prophet attempts to destroy the very direction God desires for that particular church. Important ministries are squashed out, prayer ministry cannot get off the ground, enthusiasm wanes, and healings and deliverances are kept under cover in an effort to undermine such ministries, as well as to discredit those with true gifting. Discussions concerning the true prophets of God may come up frequently in council or board meetings in an effort to openly disqualify the true prophet from working in that environment. A good test and measurement is to ask these questions: Are there biblically based directives for weighing the words of a prophet? Are you being encouraged to follow God through those prophetic words? Do they line up with scripture? Are you given information that is to be taken as final authority, without question, or is it implied that you

are being rebellious if you do not agree? Are you encouraged to respond in a godly, biblical fashion when issues do arise?

“If there rises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder, and the sign or wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, ‘Let’s go after other gods’ – which you have not known – ‘and let us serve them’, you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the Lord your God is testing you to know whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul” (Dt 13: 1-3).

There are great consequences to walking in error as a priest or prophet. The consequences are real. Some take it upon themselves and claim offices they were not specifically called by God to have and, therefore, they open themselves up to many dangers. They become an adversary to God. They walk in deceit and attempt to deceive those around them. They will suffer great consequences, and the end result may even affect their children. Prophets and priests have a great responsibility and will wear the burden of those they are given to watch over and guard. It is critical that those in ministry understand the importance of handling the things of God with great care, and one must not lose sight of those responsibilities.

Yet let no one contend, and let none accuse, for with you is my contention, O Priest. You shall stumble by day; the prophet also shall stumble with you by night, and I will destroy your mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; I reject you from

being a priest to Me. And since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children

(Hos 4:4-6).

Be very careful and do not presume a worker in the harvest field is a false prophet. It is a very dangerous thing to call unholy what God calls holy. However, it is absolutely critical that one understands who is responsible for their souls. Whatever is in the head is also in the Body. Therefore, if there is sin in the leadership, it will permeate throughout the congregation and everyone will be adversely affected. It is a spiritual law or principle that sin within the group will have dire consequences on everyone who is under that leadership. It is also important that a true prophet of God is not labeled false. If those in church leadership positions have a habit of calling those around them false, they should be forced to step down from that position. If the pastor discredits, slanders, or lies about those who leave his congregation, he too, should be forced to step down. Churches who do not require their leaders to be godly assume the same penalty due those who are actually the offenders. Know the character of those in leadership.

Jesus was presumed to be false. Paul was presumed to be false and so were other sincere servants of God. However, it is important to resist the leading of those whose goal it is to turn you away from the truth written in scripture. Therefore, one need not study what is false, but more importantly, one should study what is real and true and know for themselves what is actually written. Truth will eventually expose the false, even if it is taking place within the confines of disguise, within the walls of the sanctuary.

And I saw three foul spirits like frogs coming from the mouth of the dragon, from the mouth of the beast, and from the mouth of the false prophet. These are demonic spirits, performing signs, who go

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abroad to the kings of the whole world, to assemble them for battle on the great day of God the Almighty (Rev 16:13-14).

Your Personal Notes:

SPIRIT OF JEZEBEL

The spirit of Jezebel is a good example of the false prophet or prophetess. Is it possible for a spirit to operate within the walls of the

sanctuary of God? Current popular theology says no, however, according to John, the Revelator, it is! There is a dispute within the structure of organized Christianity as to whether evil can have an effect on the Christian community or invade a Christian church. Many servants of God believe wholeheartedly that Christians are completely untouchable by the effects of the devil or his ministers of evil. However, this belief system is proven erroneous throughout scripture as it is clearly written that false teachers and prophets will lead even the elect astray if possible, and that these false teachers are influenced by demonic spirits. Therefore, it is wise to know the means by which the devil will attack. One such way is by the spirit of Jezebel. The Jezebel of the Old Testament and the Jezebel of the New Testament offer insight into the dangers of this spirit. One may assume a connection with the two, although there are no real clear-cut proof of such a correlation, except in having many of the same characteristics. It is most probable that Jezebel of the Old Testament is simply a type used to forewarn the Church of what was to come and therefore confirmed in the New Testament through revelation to the churches in the form of a warning.

As one studies the revelation given to John by God, as he wrote the forth letter sent to the church in Thyatira, he included a commendation for their good works. Good works in their charity, their service, their faith, their patience, and their faithfulness. But there was one thing held against them, tolerating that so-called prophetess, Jezebel. It was a stern admonition. The reprimand was written rebuking the church for allowing “that woman Jezebel” to be endured. The phrase, “that woman” rings with distain; there is a tone of disgust and anger which infers that the situation is absolutely detestable. Certainly, it is of great value for churches and church leaders to acknowledge such a harsh reprimand. The church, while allowing the errors of her ways, would indeed take part in her destruction. It was aiding the defilement and pollution as it took root in a holy place. It was bringing to the table licentiousness, fornication, and the idolatrous nature in which those under her spell were required to bow to her ways, and acknowledge her as superior. It was to eat at the table of spiritual prostitution, thus following the ways of error, and rejecting the true doctrine of God’s Word. The

Church of Thyatira was known as the church which tolerated sin, and the result led to its ultimate demise.

The characteristics of the “Jezebel” found in Revelation include the fact that she called herself a prophetess. Take note, God did not call her a prophetess. She called herself a prophetess and exalted herself to a position which she was not given by the Lord. She was not presenting herself as worldly but, instead, worked within the religious context of the church. Seducing others into her trap, she encouraged immorality, was tolerated and exalted by leadership, and was actually allowed to teach false doctrine. She claimed superior authority within the governmental structure of the church and had no real opposition. She went uncontested in her position. She also led those under her control into idolatry and sensuality. The cost of tolerating such behavior is great. The letter goes on to state that God will throw her and her captors onto the sick bed. Death and distress will be prevalent, especially to those who have believed the “deep things of Satan.” The wicked seducer was accepted as part of the “beloved” while leading them into utter ruin. Jezebel of the Old Testament was infamous in the establishment of the Phoenician worship of false gods. King Ahab, Jezebel’s husband, allowed her to usurp his own authority as she took matters into her own hands. This usurping of authority is a characteristic that can be identified within the structure of a church as Jezebel is exposed. However, such usurping of authority is often quite concealed. The Jezebel spirit moves into position through manipulation and seduction, therefore, the false prophetess usually becomes established quite easily.

Jezebel was a persecutor of the real prophets of God. She was the attacker. She was the destroyer. She had four hundred and fifty servants of Baal and four hundred false prophets of Astarte within her domain. It was her goal to wipe out the voice of the real prophet for fear that she would be exposed as false. Fierce in her attack, she meant to annihilate the true servants of God. The Jezebel spirit will typically be in opposition to those who have some proven gifting in prophecy. She will attack their character and their reputation through slander, false supposition, and lies. She will accuse them of being pretentious in their efforts. She will tear them down through the formal structure under the pretense of caring for the flock. She will

use her charm to lure those around her to side with her opinions. Those who do not follow her lead, then become her adversary and next target of elimination.

The spirit of Jezebel often parades herself as the final authority. She will require a bowing “to her will and her ways” or face the consequences. Often she will operate with a weak-minded leader who refuses to acknowledge the wrongs, even when there are blatant errors, using the written Word of God. Malachi warns pastors and shepherds of the importance of carefully guarding scripture and the resultant consequences if those Levitical responsibilities are ignored. One of the most notable attributes of the Jezebel spirit is the ambition for preeminence. Jezebel seeks to control. Her name actually means “refuses to cohabitate or without cohabitation.” Therefore, anyone who she feels challenges or threatens her position, or her supposed power, will eventually come under scrutiny. She is a formidable foe unless, of course, she is allowed to control or manipulate. If she does not have your support, then she becomes an arch-enemy. Often she will get someone else to do the “dirty work” while she stands back and looks rather innocent. Consequently, there will most likely be a history of church splits or a noticeable turnover in membership. She has the appearance of conformity to the proper structure, while in actuality she is the puppet master behind the controls, and her weak counterpart, one under the influence of an Ahab spirit, takes on the responsibility of approving her actions, even if the Word of God is compromised in some way. The spirit of Jezebel is rooted in pride and self-exaltation. She will be found in operation among those churches that refuse to deal with issues of pride and control within leadership.

Jezebel takes great pleasure in discrediting others and defames the character of real servants and prophets of God, most frequently through slander, lies, and false accusations. Her desires are solely for

personal gain, and will sometimes undermine the system for her financial benefit as well. She operates with an element of surprise and frequently has some foreseeing capability, quite possibly a clairvoyant. However, there is a noteworthy absence of true spiritual authority. There will be no anointing, no weight, and no power on the prophetic word. Often the given word is used to intimidate or threaten the receiver. It is most often given for show, to obtain power, to mimic the real, or to confuse the congregation. This kind of spirit will wreak havoc in a church. Hence, we are to rid the influence of Jezebel from our midst to prevent one man's sin from affecting the entire congregation. Remember, her followers and their children will suffer great repercussions as warned in Revelation.

There is hope and healing, however, for those held captive to the Jezebel spirit. Those who operate under the spirit are using the name of God to actually oppose the truth of His doctrine. Therefore, the offense is no small thing in the mind of God. Since He has exalted His name and His Word above everything, it is to be treasured and protected within His Church. God gave those who were held captive a chance to repent, but they rejected His offer. There is repentance available for those who move under the Jezebel spirit, as well as for those who have allowed the seductress a place in the household of God as teacher and prophet. When an individual repents, there should be fruit of the change evidenced in their life, and to those who refuse the gracious offer of God, the time for repentance may expire. Remember, Judas also sought the Lord with tears, his deed had been done, the Savior of the world was on His way to the crucifixion, and death was the fruit of his work. Therefore, time for repentance is in the hands of God and He knows those who will turn from their path of destruction. Those bound by such a spirit must first be willing to acknowledge their sins. They will know if they were truly called of God. They will know if they have decided their

own path, thus usurping the plan of God. Those who allow false teachers and false prophets to be in position also know whether they were told by God to promote a certain individual to a position of authority within the church. Many times those in need of deliverance will assign acknowledgement to God for an event in their life, but upon closer investigation, the happening or occurrence which took place was birthed in the midst of sin. The result is hurt and harm to the Body of Christ and defamation to His good name. Henceforth, the seducing, so-called prophetess demands position as teacher or prophet and the congregation simply follows along, falling head first into danger, sickness, and even death. Do not be deceived and refuse to submit to the Jezebel spirit!

Walking in the ways of the Lord and His directly given will, written in scripture, will allow us to hear the leading of the Lord when we need to. Our relationship with God is one of a child in much need of a father's guidance. This is truly His plan for us, therefore, one may safely assume that as we walk, He will lead us into all truth. Turn and run from even the hint of all that is false. We are commanded to test the spirits. Voices can be from the Holy Spirit, the human spirit, or a demonic spirit. False voices, false words, false prophets and false doctrine can create havoc in an individual, a family, or a church. Listen carefully to the words, line them up with scripture, and be prepared with truth on your side.

Your Personal Notes:

TEST THE SPIRITS

The Study

TEST THE SPIRITS

We all hear, at some time or another, an inner voice, a faint whisper, or an inner leading. We must be able to clearly discern where such voices originate. Soulless or carnal Christians may follow a voice that is ungodly. Even the most ardent, mature believer must be cautious to distinguish between the voice of God and a voice spoken out of the soul of man. Following a voice other than God's can wreak havoc on an individual's life, marriage or family. It can destroy relationships, homes, and churches. Therefore, we must be able to test the spirits, know their origin, and respond accordingly. The Word of God promises that we, God's sheep, will here and follow His voice. This is the right and privilege of every true believer. It should be an expected part of fellowship with our Lord and Savior. Satan's objective is to disrupt our communion with God. Therefore, we as Christians need to be strong in the Word and keenly aware of the schemes and tricks of the enemy. We must be ever-growing in discernment in order to avoid traps and pitfalls that have been set before us, which are intended to pull us from the plans and purposes God has for our lives.

Topics of Study

Three Origins of Voices

Functions of a True Prophet and a False Prophet

Distinguishing between False Doctrines

Jezebels of the Bible

Foundational Principles

Behind every false prophet lurks the spirit of antichrist.

Heresy is the mixing of truth with lies, which cause diversity of opinion thus leading man away from pure truth and replacing it with theology of man.

Self-righteousness stands in opposition to the Spirit of Christ.

Syncretism is alive and present in many congregations.

An important aspect of the ministry of deliverance is the use of the gift of discerning of spirits. This gift is fundamental in the proper operation of deliverance. However, discerning between good and evil, which the Bible states is obtained through practical application of the Word of God in given

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situations, is equally important. The best scenario is a deliverance ministry where both the gift of discerning of spirits and the ability to apply God's Word are present. Knowledge without application is futile, as is the gift of discernment without proper knowledge of application. Understanding the origin of a voice and discerning it properly is fundamental to the success of a deliverance.

Where do these voices originate?

Voices can have three origins: God, our flesh, or the devil. We are influenced by these voices. God gives us direction. He speaks to us. We fellowship with the Lord "spirit to spirit" – our spirit with His Spirit. God is spirit and we must commune with Him in spirit. Influences of fleshly or soulish origin can stem from unhealthy, controlling relationships where one party reigns in power, over another. They can flow from personal desire or ambition within one's self. They can come from the mouth of a carnal or immature prophet. Fleshly voices can be as dangerous to the body of Christ as the demonic, Satan-serving spirits. Make no mistake; any leading other than the leading of the Holy Spirit can be a means of bringing destruction. These voices can flow from demon spirits who are sent to do Satan's bidding. Voices can also stem from the mouth of a false prophet, a servant of Satan. Behind the false prophet is the spirit of antichrist, which the Bible states is among us even now (1 John). Both the false prophet and demon spirits have the same objective: to pull one away from God and to steal the worship He so deserves to have poured out. Therefore, we must test the spirits.

How do you test the voices?

- Do they convict or condemn?
- Do the words offer help or harm?
- Do they encourage or disturb?
- Do they offer biblical solutions or worldly solutions?
- Are they truth or lies?
- Are they manipulative or are they directives based on scripture?
- Line them up with the word of God.

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 Jn 4:1

Biblically, what does the Word of God

call a False Prophet?

Denying the deity of Jesus: *I Jn 4:2 II Peter 2:1 Jude 4*

The antichrist spirit is behind the work of a false prophet: *I John 2:22*

List 3 characteristics of a false doctrine: *I Timothy 4:1*

Define Heresy

What was a common belief of the Sadducees? *Matt. 22:23*

What did Jesus call the scholarly Pharisees who knew the word of God? *Matt 23:13*

Who were the Judaizers? *Gal 2:4*

What is Gnosticism?

Why must we as Christians, know the word of God more than ever before?

See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the elemental spirits of the universe, and not according to Christ. Col 2:8

Resist the opinion of man, and choose to accept the written instruction of the Lord; His Holy word--the Bible!

What is syncretism?

Do you see it in our culture today?

Have you heard the lie that there are many ways to heaven?

What does the Gospel of John tell us?

Syncretistic – a mixing of religious traditions of the Greek and the Oriental cultures— Pluralism. --Judaism and Christianity were threatened with the ongoing challenge of avoiding the temptation of mixing truth with Greek-Persian occult rituals.

Commit to memory:

I am the way, the truth, the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
John 14:6

Asceticism: Self-imposed righteousness obtained through acts-- Paul teaches that they are human commands and teachings that have an appearance of wisdom, but are of no value in checking self-indulgence (Colossians 2:16-23).

- Abstaining from certain foods
- Abstain from marriage
- “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch.”

Heretics deny the Master as Pharisees deny the Masters work:

Pharisees

- Legalism, rituals, and intellect motivated them.
- They follow tradition to the point of opposing the true work of the Holy Spirit.
- They chose to believe that spiritual experiences were dangerous, and questioned credentials over demonstration of power.

- They constantly questioned Jesus' authority, His credentials, and His background and chose to ignore the power of God flowing in and through His life.

In Acts 4: 1-22 Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin to be persecuted after a lame man was healed. They asked, "By what power or by what Name did you do this?"

"We are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses; but as for this man (Jesus), we do not know where He is from." John 9:28-29

*Woe to you,
scribes and
Pharisees,
hypocrites! For
you tithe mint,
dill and cumin,*

How do we identify False Prophets and Teachers?

False Prophet

- Reject authority
- Slander what they don't understand
- Abandon themselves to Balaam's error for the sake of gain
- Grumblers and malcontents
- Indulge in their own ungodly lusts
- Bombastic in speech, flattering people to their own advantage
- Causing divisions
- Denies the truth of the written scripture
- Destructive opinions, dissensions, disunity

How can we recognize a false teacher?

What assistance do we have in identifying false teachings?

We have the truth in us: *But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and you know all things. 1 Jn 2:20* (John speaks here of Christians) *And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. This is the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know Him, because he abides with you, and he will be with you, and he will be in you. Jn 14:16-17*

We have the Holy Spirit to show us: *But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. Jn 14:26*

We are to judge the teaching not the teacher based on the word of God: God is judge. We are to reject teaching that does not have a Biblical foundation. We are also to move in wise council, but weigh all things with the truth of God's word.

We have gifts of the Spirit to aid in discerning the voices: There is a spiritual gift, "discerning of spirits," which offers protection to the hearer and enables them to judge from what spirits are speaking, whether they are from the Holy Spirit, human or demonic voices. This is a critical gift in body of Christ and may be used to prevent misleading influences. (1 Cor12:10)

Knowledge and revelation gained from scripture will guide us: There is also a "discernment" which stems from training in the Word of God. *But solid food is for the mature, for those whose faculties have been trained by practice to distinguish good from evil. Heb. 5:14*

What does the Word say about those who may not be "With us"?

John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we forbade him, because he does not follow with us. But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him; for he who is not against us is on our side." Lk 9:49-50

He who is not with Me is against me and he who does not gather with Me scatters Lk 11:23

Why is this an important issue in the Body of Christ? Lk 11:17

How do we recognize a false prophet? Matt 7:15

How critical is it that we understand false prophets and the word of God? Matt 24:24

List 12 biblical signs of a false prophet: The defining characteristic of a false Prophet is that they use their power to lead people away from the one and only true God to entice them to follow false gods.

*False messiahs and false prophets will appear and produce signs and omens, **to lead astray**, if possible, the elect. Mark 13:22*

What are the consequences of walking in error as a Priest or Prophet? Hosea 4:4

Know that you know that you know before presuming a worker in the harvest field is a false prophet.

The fruit of a ministry of the Gospel will always point you toward Jesus!

List two men who were considered to be false

1.

2.

Jezebel called herself a prophetess (not called by God!!!)

- Worked within the religious structure
- Attacked the real prophets of God because they exposed the false things
- Usurped proper authority
- Undermined the legal system for personal financial gain

Characteristics of Jezebel:

- Ambitious for preeminence
- Seeks control
- Refuses to cohabit —name means “without cohabitation.” Unless “she” can control and manipulate
- Gets someone else to do the “dirty work,” stands back and looks innocent
- Discredits others’ character
- Operates with an element of surprise (does seem to have some foreseeing capability—clairvoyant)
- No anointing on the word, no weight, or power however it may seem to fit the situation

We are to rid the influence of Jezebel from our midst because one man’s sin will affect the entire body. Revelation 2:20-28

Your Notes:
