

1 Cor 12:10

10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.

Miracles and prophecy in terms of false prophets

- were and are gifts that can be influenced by demonic spirits.

the Magi and Simon the sorcerer.

And Matt 24 says false teachers will rise

- will show great signs and wonders to deceive,
- if possible, even the elect.

People in Corinth were looking for something to grab their attention.

The next best thing often came by way of deception.

In fact, the warning implied in the gift of "discernments of the spirits" is a clue to the understanding of the rhetorical questions posed by Paul in

1 Cor 12:29-30

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

Paul warned the church in:

Eph 6:12

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Solomon prayed that the Lord would give him an understanding heart to judge and that he might be able to discern between good and evil.

This is the gift that allows a person to recognize whether something is of God, the world, the flesh or the devil.

Now, I believe that every Christian possesses a gift of discernment but this does not mean that a person cannot be deceived!

1 John 4:1-6

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is

not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

4 You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. 5 They are of the world. Therefore they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. 6 We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

Satan has always tried to counterfeit the work and the word of God.

Every Christian needs discernment because the devil is a liar and a deceiver and the father of lies.

Paul warned the church in Galatia:

Gal 1:6-8

6 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, 7 which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed.

Satan has false ministers and disguises himself as an angel of light. One day, Satan will unveil the anti-Christ.

People often think of an anti-Christ as someone against Christ, someone opposed to Christ. The term “Antichrist” is only mentioned in John’s epistles. He’s also known as

- “the man of sin,”
- “son of perdition,”
- “the wicked one,” or
- “the lawless one.”

But the Greek word for “anti”

- doesn’t only mean “against,”
- it means “instead of.”

1 Tim 4 1

1 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron,

In Matt 24:11-12 Jesus issued a warning that many false prophets (religious imposters) will come in the last days and will deceive many. (He went on to say) lawlessness will abound, and the love of many will grow cold.

But in verse 13 he says. “But he who endures to the end shall be saved.”

So, we Christians should be on guard.

Test the spirits.

Don't believe everything you hear and read.

False prophets or false teachers

- will not come as wolves,
- they'll come in sheep's clothing.

JW's & Mormons

Here are some issues with the two cults. The primary verse for the JW's is Isaiah 43:10.

Isa 43:10

10 "You are My witnesses," says the Lord,
"And My servant whom I have chosen,
That you may know and believe Me,
And understand that I am He.
Before Me there was no God formed,
Nor shall there be after Me.

John 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

The JW's insert the letter "a" before God. So it reads, "the Word was a god."

We know from other scriptures that Jesus is called God!

Isa 9:6

6 For unto us a Child is born,
Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

In John 20:25, Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

Eight days later Jesus appeared to the disciples and Thomas was there and it was then that Thomas touched Jesus and believed.

John 20:28

28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!"

Does Jesus actually claim to be God?

Yes, Jesus said earlier in Jn 10:30, "I and My Father are one."

In Deut 6:4 it says, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!

JW's stand on Isaiah 43:10 which states there is no other God yet they call Jesus "a" God. That's only one of many errors in their theology.

What about Mormonism:

- The Mormons believe in many gods - these gods procreate spirit children Latter day Saints believe that God the Father was and is a man of flesh and bone who once lived on another planet and who progressed to become the God of this world.
- The Mormon Jesus is progressing and may become god of another planet.
- The Latter Day Saints have corrected obvious errors in books that they say are inspired inerrant holy books. There have been 4000 documented word changes in the book of Mormon alone since 1830.
- Mormons believe that Jesus and Satan are spirit brothers.
- The Latter Day Saints doctrine of salvation is not by faith in Jesus alone. To be saved one must have faith, be baptized by immersion, keep the teachings of the Mormon Church, do good works and keep the commandments.
- The Latter Day Saints have three heavens - one for the heathen, one for the Christians and one for good Mormons. When Mormons progress enough to be gods they will get a planet of their own to rule
- The Latter Day Saints teach as man is, God once was; as God is, man may become

What they say may sound good to some,

- but a little off can make a world of difference.

Looking at verse 8 thru the working of miracles in verse 10, all are supernatural activities.

But even supernatural activities are not always of God.

- That's why we need the gift of discernment.

Example: Ananias and Sapphira

- Peter had a gift of discernment.

Philip lacked discernment:

In Acts 8:5-8

5 Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. 6 And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. 8 And there was great joy in that city.

9 But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, 10 to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the great power of God." 11 And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time.

So here is this guy Simon,

- people are flocking to him because
- he's astonished them with sorcery for a long time.

In the case of Simon,

- People were astonished and they all gave heed to him.

To give heed means to hold the mind or the ear toward someone.

Acts 8:18-21

18 And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

20 But Peter said to him, "Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money!

21 You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. 22 Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity."

WHEN PHILIP went to Samaria vs 5-8 he had tremendous gifts from God but no discernment. Peter discerned what the sorcerer was about.

Another example of discerning of spirits:

Acts 13:6-8

6 Now when they had gone through the island to Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus (son of Jesus), 7 who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the sorcerer (for so his

name is translated) withstood them, seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith.

It's interesting to see a Jewish sorcerer because

- the Jews would have nothing to do with a sorcerer,
- in fact, they'd stone such a person.

Then verse 9 of Acts 13,

9 Then Saul, who also is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him

10 and said, "O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord?"

That's a Holy anger. Jesus Himself had a righteous anger in the temple when He overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. (Matt 21).

In Jn 8 Jesus is having a conversation with the Pharisees and He's claiming to be God. 41 "We were not born of fornication; we have one Father-God."

Jesus tells them,

John 8:44

44 You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

So here is this guy, bar-Jesus (son of Jesus) in Acts 13 and Paul tells him, you're no son of Jesus, you're the son of the devil.

Paul was the only one at that moment that was able to discern that bar-Jesus was full of deceit and all fraud.

Acts 13:11 And now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the sun for a time."

And immediately a dark mist fell on him, and he went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand.

Acts 16:16-19 Paul used the spirit of discernment:

16 Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18 And this she did for many days.

Did this woman have a gift of discernment? NO!

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. 19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.