

- I) V7-11 To another **discerning of spirits**
In this study we will examine the gift of **discerning of spirits**
I WILL BEGIN WITH GENERAL SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT
- II) **Discerning**: Distinguishing, or judging
It is reading hearts to determine if men spoke by the Spirit or some other impulse
WHY IS THIS NEEDED
- III) The bible reveals to us that there is a **spiritual world**
Inhabiting this world are **spiritual beings** that we know as angels
- IV) Some are faithful to God and others have rebelled
They are referred to as **fallen angels** as well as **devils**, or **demons**
Devil speaks of an accuser or slanderer
Demon (Latin) speaks of an evil spirit; Greek daimon: lesser god; hell knight
REVIEW
- V) I mentioned that the fall of the angels is mentioned in Revelation
Rev 12:3-4 speaks of an enormous red dragon
V4 Its tail swept **a third of the stars** out of the sky and flung them to the earth
- VI) When it reads a **third of the stars**, it would be speaking of fallen angels
In the book of Job, God asks Job a question
Job 38:7 (God spoke of) when the **morning stars** sang together, and all **the sons of God** shouted for joy
- VII) This is heavenly praise, when the angels sang when God created the earth
Sons of God is used when speaking of angels (Job 1:6; 2:1)
- VIII) Angels were God's heavenly choir, worshiping and praising God
Rev 5:11-12 Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. In a loud voice they sang: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!"
- IX) **Interestingly**, Satan was the heavenly choir leader
This is why it is important to be discerning, even as we sing songs
The enemy can influence our sense of who God is through the words we sing
Much bad doctrine can be taught through singing incorrectly about God

- I) We learn much from the songs that we sing
This is how deeply music and lyrics can influence us

- II) Satan was the choir leader in heaven
Ezek 28:13-14 You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald with gold. The workmanship of your timbrels (**tambourines**) and pipes (**row of hollow reeds**) was prepared for you on the day **you were created**. You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones.

- III) It seems Satan desired to be worshiped, even as God is
This was his sin that brought judgment upon him
Is 14:14-15 (he said) I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, To the lowest depths of the Pit.

- IV) Satan fell **by pride**, drawing a multitude of angels with him, and they became devils
AFTER HIS FALL

- V) He developed a hierarchy that opposes God and His work of salvation
Eph 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

- VI) Satan is the leader who has established an authority and form of government
Jn 14:30 The **prince** of this world comes, and has nothing in me.
2 Co 4:4 refers to Satan as **the god of this age**
PRINCIPALITIES

- VII) **Principalities** speaks of government (Satan's highest ranking demons)
POWERS

- VIII) Is another ranking just under principalities
1 Pe 3:22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and **powers** being made subject to him.
RULERS

- IX) A world ruler, exercising control; may be involved in political forces
Dan. 10:13 But **the prince of the kingdom of Persia** withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia.

SPIRITUAL WICKEDNESS

- I) Angelic hosts exercising evil influence upon the world
These create the atmosphere of perversion and evil that we see in the world
- II) They obviously are behind **every false religion** throughout the world
1 Ti 4:1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and **things taught by demons**.
- III) Demonic teachings contradict biblical doctrine, misleading believers
This is because they are not only believable, but also very attractive
- KEY**
- IV) **False evangelists** are revealed in Scripture as masquerading as **angels of light**
Because they appear genuine, people **can be** and **are** deceived by them
2 Co 11:13-15 For such men are **false apostles**, **deceitful** workmen, **masquerading** as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if **his servants masquerade as servants** of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.
- V) The basic **source of deception** comes by changing and questioning God's word
The first question in the bible is found in Genesis
Gen 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "**Did God really say**, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"
- VI) The serpent's questioning of God's word began in the garden and continues
His agents of deception will **change the gospel message** and undermine **Jesus**
This is why it is so important to rightly divide the word of truth
- VII) A **seasoned** believer can hear false teaching and discern truth from error
This is because they read the bible and are in a bible teaching church
By going through books of the bible, they are equipped and can discern
- VIII) Obviously, there are times when something **sounds** like it is true
We ask ourselves: Did this thought come from the Spirit, my flesh, or Satan
This is why we the gift of the discerning of spirits
- THE FACT IS**
- IX) All Christians **can** and **should** be **discerning**

- I) **YET, SOMEONE SAID**
It is a **strange fact** about life that **many people** who are **careful** and **explicit** and **exact** in almost every department of their lives **are at the same time**, when it comes to **spiritual things**, content with **vague uncertainties**.
- II) Christians are to be trained in the Word of God, and filled by His Spirit
As we mature as believers we become discerning by learning and practicing
Heb 5:13-14 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.
This produces a discernment that is learned by exercising your understanding
ON A DAILY BASIS
- III) We need discernment because our world is filled with **false prophets** and teachers
This is a way for us to know we are in the Last Days
- IV) The sad fact is many who are sincere believers are open to error
Because they trust the teacher so much, they believe anything he says
2 Ti 4:3-4 For the time will come when men will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears they will gather around themselves teachers to suit their own desires. So they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.
QUESTION
- V) How can you know that they are false teachers?
They preach a non-scriptural Jesus, using selected passages out of context
2 Co 11:4 For if he that comes preaches **another Jesus**, whom we have not preached, or if you receive **another spirit**, which you have not received, or **another gospel**, which you have not accepted, you might well bear with him
HERE ARE FOUR EARMARKS OF A FALSE TEACHER
- VI) **First**: What they say about Jesus: They normally deny His deity (Jn 1:1, 14)
Heb 1:8 to the Son He says Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever
Phil 2:5-6 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus; Who, being **in very nature God**, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage
Col 2:9 For in Him dwells **all the fullness** of the Godhead bodily
SECOND
- VII) Their final authority is normally extra-biblical
Publications, new revelations, hidden books of the bible they have discovered
Book of Mormon, New World Translation, Quaran

I) Jude 3-4 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for **the faith** which was once for all delivered to the saints. For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for this condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

THIRD

II) Their teachings take you away from the One true God

Dt 13:2 (they say) Let us follow other gods, gods you have not known, and let us worship them

FOURTH

III) **Their group or organization** is the **only** true way to God

They are the only true church or group of believers

Ac 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.

NOW WE LOOK AT THE GIFT

IV) Sometimes these things are not immediately apparent

This is common with new believers, or when Christians do not have resources

They can be incarcerated, in the military, or isolated

V) This is when discernment comes in: It safeguards us from this kind of seduction

1 Jn 4:1 Beloved, 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.

NORMALLY

VI) You test the spirits by God's Word, but what if you are still maturing in your faith?

This occurred with me in my early walk with the Lord

VII) This is where the gift of discernment comes in

This gift is difficult to possess because you can feel judgmental

This is not always true: sometimes, you might be the only one seeing it

EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE

VIII) God is giving you immediate understanding of the source of what is said

Mt 16:13-17 Peter called Jesus the Christ, but how did he know?

V17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, **but by My Father** in heaven.

IX) After declaring Jesus to be messiah, Peter tried to convince Jesus not to die

- I) Mt 16:23 He turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."
- II) Ac 5:1-11 Ananias and Sapphira
They sold some land, gave proceeds to be administered by the apostles
They kept back part of the proceeds, but claimed to have given all of it
- III) Peter exercised the gift of discernment and confronted Ananias
V3 Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself?
V4 Why have you conceived this thing **in your heart**
Jer 17:10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings!
- IV) V5 Ananias hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things
- V) Ac 8:14-23 Speaks about a man called Simon the Sorcerer
He saw the gift of the Holy Spirit given by the laying on of hands by the apostles
(8:19) After seeing this, he said **Give me this power** also that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit
- VI) V21 Peter (exercising discernment) said **Your heart is not right** in the sight of God
V23 **I see** that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity
- VIII) Ac 13 speaks of Paul ministering the gospel on the island of Paphos
He was sharing with Sergius Paulus, but the sorcerer Elymas opposed him
Ac 13:9-10 Saul filled with the Holy Spirit looked intently at him and said O full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteouss, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord
Ac 16:16-18 Paul in Lystra: Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and **said to the spirit**, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

- I) **When you sense something, you pray for God's direction**
You pray, and you act upon what you discern (JW women at my door)

- II) **God gives you insight that this is spiritual and not simply *natural insight***
Demon possessed man in Rameswaram