

Discerning the Spirits



I remember the first time I ran across a charismatic believer from one of the mainline churches back in 1969 during my pastorate at Glad Tidings Tabernacle. This precious sister in the Lord from the ranks of Catholicism had been saved and filled with the Holy Ghost during a Mortimer Tildo Evangelistic Crusade. She came to Glad Tidings on fire for Jesus and was gung-ho about starting a women's prayer meeting at the church. I was excited about her enthusiasm for the Lord and gave her the go-ahead under my spiritual headship.

For the first couple weeks of the prayer meeting no problems were reported. But then, during the third week, one of the sisters came to me with an ill report. She related that that ex-Catholic sister had brought a rosary to the prayer meeting and during the meeting claimed she was having a vision of "the Blessed Mother."

When I heard that report, I instantly felt a check in my spirit. It felt like the Holy Ghost was saying, "Wrong, Brother Bob! It's dead wrong!" I called her before the deacon board the following Sunday after church

and confronted her about the supposed vision, telling her that it was against the Word of God and a tampering with the spirit of spiritism.

She said, "I'm telling you I saw the Blessed Mother and she told me to tell this church to get ready for breakups..."

"What do you mean 'breakups'?" I asked.

"That's all she told me," the ex-Catholic told me.

"It's not according to the

with another ill report. "She did it again," she said.

I groaned in my spirit. I had no doubt that this ex-Catholic, charismatic woman loved the Lord, but it appeared she hadn't let go completely of her Catholic idolatry. "What exactly did she do this time," I asked.

Sister Turner's face was beet-red with righteous indignation. "She brought her rosary and then she claimed she was seeing the Virgin Mary. She told us that

the Virgin was saying to prepare for discord and the scattering of the sheep."

I thanked Sister Turner for the information and immediately took it before the Throne. As I prayed on it, I discerned that Satan was taking occasion of this Catholic woman's error to try to sow discord among the brethren. I began



Word," I said. "You'll never find anyone communicating with the dead in Scripture. Mary's D. E. A. D.—dead..."

"I know what I saw," she said. "It was the Blessed Mother."

"Honey," I said, "I'm gonna have to relieve you of your responsibility of leading that women's prayer meeting. I'm gonna let Sister Turner lead it..."

"Fine," she said.

Well, I thought the problem had been solved, but then a week later Sister Turner came to me

to rebuke the Devil and bind the spirit of Catholic mysticism and idolatry that was trying to come through the front doors of the church. And then I loosed its hold off the church. I felt a release in my spirit-man and I knew what I needed to do to handle the situation.

The following Sunday morning service I called that Catholic sister in front of the church and rebuked her before everyone as an example of the sin of spiritism. She began to cry and

plead with me and the rest of the fellowship to believe her, but the more she cried, the more certain I became that she was being deceived by an unclean spirit masquerading as Mary.

As she stood there sobbing in front of the church, suddenly the Holy Ghost took control and my hand shot out and made contact with her forehead as I commanded the unclean spirit, "Come out!" She let out a shriek and fell to floor, slain under the mighty power of God. I knew in my spirit that the unclean spirit had gone forth.

I don't know what would have happened if I hadn't discerned the evil behind the visions that woman was having. I never saw her after that Sunday. I pray she didn't return to the error of Catholicism. But as pastor of Glad Tidings at that time, I was responsible for the spiritual well-being of my congregation. Without the discerning of spirits being in operation I might have let that spirit of error take hold in the church and who knows what would have happened?

I believe that if I hadn't been receptive to the discerning of spirits, Glad Tidings Tabernacle would have folded within a year. Without a congregation, I could never have started Faith Confession Tabernacle of the Mercy Seat of God. But thank God I discerned the spirits and when we had the church split ten years later, half of the congregation of Glad Tidings joined with me in forming the new, non-denominational work of Faith Confession Tabernacle.

There's been a lot of craziness in the charismatic movement. I've seen some real lunacy taking place as people blamed the most ridiculous things on the Holy Ghost. The charismatic movement

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has earned the name of "charismania." Some have even called it the "charismagic movement" due to some of the inroads into it by New-Age spies. With all of the idiotic antics being blamed on God, it's important to function in the discerning of spirits lest whole churches be led into error.

I remember one charismatic woman who came to us from the Episcopalians. She claimed that every night angels would come and repair several of the shoes in her shoe repair shop. She got up and testified in church one Sunday night, claiming that she'd actually seen one of the angels when she snuck into the repair shop around 1 a.m. one morning. Three months later she was out of business due to poor customer service and bad business. Needless to say, she didn't last long at the church.

Another brother came to us from the Catholic charismatic movement. He jumped up during a communion service at the church and announced that piece of cracker he had received was bleeding and that it had spoken to him, telling him that God was in our midst. When one of the deacons looked at the bit of cracker, it immediately went mute and every trace of blood had vanished into thin air. Then one woman got the giggles, but she wasn't laughing in the spirit. It was an indecent spirit of

disorder that had crept in through the silly announcement that crazy charismaniac had made. I had to rebuke her in front of the church before that rash of sinful laughter was stilled in the congregation.

Another time, during a week-long revival with Brother Russell Stiltskin at Glad Tidings, a visiting, charismatic Lutheran woman stood up while Brother Stiltskin was preaching and gave a prophecy, promising that if people would give her just one per cent of their income, God would triple their savings in one year. Through the gift of discerning of spirits, I stood up and pointed out that the Holy Ghost never interrupts the preaching of the Word and that God never promises that kind of abundance to somebody that only gives one per cent. I also pointed out that only a false prophetess would claim that God was telling people to give their money to her.

We need to discern the spirits

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even in the case of some of the greatly anointed men of God because they too can be in error. Even I myself have been found wanting and needed to repent of sin in my heart. But thank God, God gave the victory! Hallelujah!

I remember hearing about Brother Jimmy Swaggart's condemnation of Brother Jim Baker and, had I been in a place to do so at the time, I would have rebuked Brother Swaggart

If you're flowing in the Spirit, you're never wrong no matter what the Devil says.

openly just as Brother Oral Roberts did. I knew in my spirit that if Brother Swaggart continued, God was gonna judge him as the Word says. "Pride goeth before destruction" (Prov 16:18). And sure enough...it did. It wasn't long afterwards that Brother Swaggart fell into gross moral failing, but he repented of it right on national television and God gave him the victory. Amen.

But after it all happened, I learned that Brother Roberts had prophesied something that was only partially true. You see, my Beloved, "we know in part and we prophesy in part" (I Cor 13:9). Brother Roberts prophesied in truth the judgment coming on Brother Swaggart and the Assemblies of God, but he also prophesied a lie that Jim Baker would be found innocent of the charges. Can you see how discernment is needed even when listening to God's anointed?

Sometimes, God can give a true prophetic word to somebody, but then some demon spirit slips in and sows the seeds of deception and brings forth a lie out of the mouth which has just delivered a word from God even if it's one of the most anointed men of God to have ever walked the face of the earth.

When I heard the error that Brother Roberts spoke, I instantly sensed in my spirit-man that when Oral received the true Word of the Lord that Brother Swaggart would be

judged, Oral immediately let the spirit of fear enter his own heart causing him to think that he too might be judged for judging Brother Swaggart even though it was God through Oral that was judging Brother Swaggart. It was the moment of fear, spawned by one of the hound-pups of hell which then opened the door to a spirit of deception which inspired Brother Roberts to predict that Jim Baker would be declared innocent.

I don't know what kind of an effect that must have had on Brother Baker having heard that he was going to be acquitted based on a so-called "Word from the Lord," when he ended up being convicted. Do you see what kind of damage that can do? Brother Baker could have turned his back on the Lord and lost his salvation because of it. That's why it's so important for you as a child of God to be walking in the discerning of spirits.

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We're told by the Apostle John, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God..." (I John 4:1). Otherwise, you can fall prey to demons and wind up eternally lost due to a lapse of faith and a break-up with God. Yes, even Dr. Brother Bob Dinkins can speak in the flesh or give place to the Devil if I'm not completely functioning in the Feema flow at full vent. Amen. You need to test the spirits by the Spirit and try them by the Word of God. "If they speak not according to this

Word it is because there is no light in them" (Is 8:20).

Can you see how important it is to discern the spirits, my Beloved? Pay attention to those checks in your own spirit. Don't let Satan try to convince you that you're wrong. If you're flowing in the Spirit, you're never wrong no matter what the Devil says. Satan is a liar. Just rebuke him in the name of Jesus and be done with it. Amen and amen. ☐

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