

I John 4:1-5
“Believe Not Every Spirit”

Background Scripture: *And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying; these men are the servants of the most-high God, which shew us the way of salvation. [Acts 16:16-17].*

Note: The slave girl’s demonic utterances were regarded as a voice of a god; therefore, her services were in much demand. Through Paul, Christ showed his authority over the world of evil. ***Although she gave accurate information the ability came from a forbidden source, the source in which we receive information is just as important as the information itself.***

Objective

Using the directive of I John 4, learn through scripture how the source of a perceived prophecy or teaching (word from the Lord) should be examined or scrutinized by the church as well as individuals, not only for its accuracy but also its source. In fact, it is the moral duty of a congregation to scrutinize any perceived prophecy in the name of the Lord.

Deeper Dive Discussion

Discussion (1) [Acts 8:9-13; 13:4-13]: read in session/class

Note: The sorcery practiced by both Simmon and Elymas was likely a form of black magic, witchcraft or astrology. Astrologists believe that the destiny of the individual is determined by the person’s birthdate in connection with the stars and planets.

All sorcery or astrology stands in opposition to the gospel of Christ because it is a form of idolatry, and demons attach themselves to it (**Deuteronomy 18:9-14**).

Note: Moses reminds the Israelites not to emulate the Canaanite practice of child sacrifices to pagan gods, performed in order to attempt to influence the course of future events. (**Leviticus 20:2-5**).

Those who used divination sought to predict future events or uncover secrets by the aid of evil spirits or by some human means (**Revelation 9:21**). In contrast, God’s way for us to gain truth is to listen to faithful prophets who declare His word (**vs. 14-22**).

The list includes mediums, spiritist or anyone who calls up the dead or consults with the world of spirits (**i.e., demons**) in order to discover secrets, predict the future or gain power. Communication with the dead is actually a communication with demons (**I Samuel 28:8-14; II Kings 21:6; Isaiah 8:19**).

Discussion (2) [I Timothy 4:1-5]: read in session/class

Note: The believer's protection against such demonic deception and activity involves utter loyalty to God the Father and the Lord Jesus, obedience to the Word of God, and fervent love for Jesus, the truth and the body of Christ. We must be aware that persons of great charisma and anointing can be deceived and then deceive others with a mixture of truth and error, and this awareness must be accompanied by a true desire within our hearts to do the will of God (**John 7:7**) and to walk in righteousness and the fear of God (**Psalm 25:4-5, 12-15**).

Personal revelation: Losing faith in God will lead to trust in other things, sources, people, and practices etc.

Final Thought: *And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye [Acts 19:15]*

Note: The public burning of occult books showed that the new believers were taught away immediately from occult practices. Witchcraft, black magic, sorcery, spiritism, astrology, fortune-telling, tarot cards, Ouiji boards and all other cult practices are idolatrous, associated with demons and must be repented of and abandoned in order to follow Jesus Christ as Lord.

One cannot continue on as a true believer in Christ and at the same time deal with spirits of attempt to gain contact with the dead (ancestors included). God condemns all such activity as detestable (**Deuteronomy 18:9-11**). Dabbling in the occult, and spiritism will leave one open to powerful satanic influence, demonic activity and oppression.