

Discerning of Spirits – Introduction

In our review of walking by the spirit – living with the manifestations of the spirit in evidence in our lives – we have been so far focusing on the manifestations of word of knowledge and word of wisdom. Not that those other manifestations have not been mentioned in one or more of the records that we have read, they have been. The way that these manifestations are so closely united with each other, you really don't see many (if any at all) records in God's Word where just one manifestation is in evidence. But we have been focusing on word of knowledge (where God gives information about a specific situation that could not be known by the five senses) and word of wisdom (where God tells you what to do about that situation).

But there is a third revelation manifestation that we have not discussed yet and that is discerning of spirits. This manifestation is when God gives you the necessary information about the presence or non-presence of spirits and the identity of any spirits present. Usually, we think about this manifestation in respect to devil spirits (more about that in a minute), but it could be information about the spirit from God (the gift) or the spirit of man (soul life).

This revelation manifestation is received just like the other two that we have already discussed. God, who is Spirit, teaches His creation in you, which is now your spirit, and your spirit teaches your mind. Like the other information manifestations, it is not primarily important HOW God communicates to you, but that He does give information and instructions and that you KNOW.

Now, as I mentioned a minute ago, when people think of discerning of spirits, mostly they think along the lines of being aware of devil spirits and that certainly is a big part of this. For a lot of reasons, I do not want to spend a lot of Sunday mornings talking about the devil and devil spirits. But it is also not a topic that can be ignored entirely either. So, this morning, I want to approach this from the point of view of what Jesus Christ did and therefore what we do.

John 10:10

Jesus was unquestionably aware of “the thief” - aware of Satan’s opposition to him and aware of Satan’s purpose. At times in the Gospels, he speaks about Satan, Satan’s kingdom and Satan’s operations. He very obviously confronted devil spirits and those that were working for Satan.

Acts 10:38

During his earthly ministry, Jesus made it one of his chief aims to undo the works of “the thief”. A point you must absolutely be convinced on in approaching this subject is that “God is light and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). The only thing that the thief ever does is to steal, kill and destroy.

Colossians 2:15

Jesus brought Satan’s kingdom and schemes into the open. He triumphed over them openly and made a show of them openly. When you read the OT, you don’t read a lot about the devil or Satan. It’s there, but not a lot. Jesus changed that; he made a show of them openly.

Colossians 1:12 – 14

We have been delivered or rescued from Satan’s authority and translated into the kingdom of His Son by the work that Jesus Christ did. Satan, though he has dominion and authority in this world, has no dominion or authority over us because of what Jesus Christ did. This is all a part of redemption and being sanctified (set apart) for God.

Not only does Satan not have any authority or dominion over us anymore, it is quite the opposite. Just like the ones that Jesus sent during his earthly ministry, we have dominion and authority over them. But we must know that and claim that, else that becomes one more thing that “the thief” will steal.

Luke 10:1

Luke 9:1,2

Luke 10:1 – 11, 17 – 20

Ephesians 6:10 – 13

When Jesus sat down at the right hand of God, he was far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come (Ephesians 1:20, 21). And we are in him, we are his body. Where he is, we are.

We are not wrestling against flesh and blood. It may look that way, but that is not the truth of it. Ephesians 6:12 is true of us, but now when we get into specific situations, we need specific information and instructions and that is where the revelation manifestations, specifically discerning of spirits comes in.