

5 Major Traits of the Python Spirit

Editor's Note: This is Part 2 in a 2-part series. [Click here](#) to read part 1.

The Spirit of Python is Different from Christian Prophecy

One characteristic of the Oracle at Delphi—and all pagan prophecy—is that it was self-induced. Preceding their prophetic functions, the priestesses would go through ritual baths, sprinklings and animal sacrifices, leading to a hyped and frenzied prophetic state.

One ancient drawing pictured the prophetess in a disheveled, frenzied state as she gave forth her oracle. Other pagan religions used music, dance, contortions and sex orgies to work themselves into a prophetic frenzy. (Do we charismatics have our own rituals by which we work ourselves into a “prophetic” state?)

In contrast, New Testament prophecy is not self-induced; in other words, it does not come forth at the initiative of the person prophesying. We do not work ourselves into a prophetic frenzy like the pagans. Paul is very clear in I Cor. 12:11 that the gifts of the Spirit, including prophecy, are given as *He [the Holy Spirit] wills*. Although we can learn about how prophecy and spiritual gifts function, it is dangerous to think that we can learn “how to” prophesy of our own initiative.

This is perhaps why Paul allowed this situation with the young woman to go on for “many days” before dealing with it and casting out the spirit. He did not have a how-to list for dealing with such situations but was dependent on the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I am convinced that when we begin to push ourselves into prophesying out of our own hearts, apart from the Holy Spirit, we open ourselves to false spirits such as the spirit of python that possessed this young woman in Philippi.

We Must Recognize the Counterfeit

Some today would have told this young woman that her fortunetelling ability was a gift from God and that she merely needed to submit it to Him. That was not Paul's approach. He discerned that her gift was demonically inspired, and he cast out the spirit that gave her that ability. When the demon went out, her fortunetelling powers were gone.

David Brainerd (1718-1747) ministered to Native Americans with great success. He tells of a medicine man among the Delaware who was feared and held in high esteem by the people because of his psychic and miracle-working abilities. Brainerd said that when he preached about the miracles of Jesus being evidence of His divinity, the people were not impressed and proceeded to tell him about this man and his supernatural powers.

The medicine man eventually came to hear Brainerd preach and was powerfully convicted by the Holy Spirit and eventually accepted Christ as His Lord and Savior. Like the young woman when she was delivered of the python spirit, he immediately lost all his supernatural powers. His testimony was, "When the Word of God came into my heart, the power I had known went out." His conversion and testimony had a powerful impact on the Delaware and other tribes in the region.

A person born into a family that practices palm reading, tarot card readings, use of ouija boards and other occultic practices may develop natural or soulish psychic abilities. They may also pick up demons, or what the Old Testament calls "familiar spirits." It is a grave mistake to think that these are God-given gifts that will hopefully be submitted to God.

They are demonic counterfeits of the true workings of the Holy Spirit and must be renounced and cast out.

Characteristics of a Spirit of Python

Luke uses “spirit of python” in regards to this slave girl probably because the spirit operating in her was like the one at Delphi. There is, of course, the possibility that she had actually been to Delphi and that is where she picked up this false spirit.

It is important to note that what she said was true. Satan and demons have some knowledge and will reveal their “secrets” in order to impress and draw people into their destructive web. Only our God, however, is omniscient, *i.e.*, all knowing.

Here are some of the traits of a spirit of python that are obvious in this narrative.

- **It loves to flatter.** The prophecy of this young woman was not given to encourage or affirm, but to flatter. We all need to give and receive affirmation and encouragement, but flattery is insincere and self-serving. So many today, including leaders, are so starved for affirmation and approval that they are vulnerable to the flatteries of a deceiving, python spirit. We must be so settled in God’s acceptance and approval that we are no longer susceptible to the flatteries of a false prophetic spirit. Beware of those who use prophecy to flatter and, thereby, gain advantage.
- **It demands attention.** This is indicated by the fact that she followed Paul and the others for “many days” continually giving forth her prophecy. Beware of those who use prophecy to thrust themselves into the limelight.
- **It loves to be seen and heard.** This is indicated by the fact that she kept putting herself at the center of

attention. Note those who use prophecy to make themselves the center of attention.

- **It wants to be important.** This is indicated by the fact that she directed her prophesying to the leaders of this new movement. Beware of those who use prophecy to gain status with pastors and leaders.
- **There is a monetary motive.** This young slave girl was raking in a lot of money for her masters. I am afraid this same motive is present in the charismatic/prophetic movement today. Some brashly offer a personal prophecy in return for a financial gift. Others are more subtle, like a “prophet” I once saw who expressed his desire to pray for everyone who would bring a certain designated offering to the front for his ministry. As he prayed and then prophesied over each one that came with their money, I saw women looking in their purses for money so they could go forward and “get a word.” I believe this man was opening himself to a false spirit—a spirit of python—by his devious actions.

Taking A Stand for Truth

There is so little discernment today that many churches in the modern charismatic/prophetic movement would probably have put this young woman on their prophetic team, for what she prophesied was accurate and positive.

Discernment is lacking because, in this post-modern world, the lines between true and false are being blurred and even erased. Reason and common sense are being replaced by a me-centered philosophy that creates its own reality.

Some in the charismatic movement are tapping into New Age writings with the excuse that “all truth is God’s truth.” If this had been Paul’s approach, he would never have confronted the python spirit and cast it out, for what was being said was true.

Taking a stand for truth is not always the most popular thing to do. Paul and Silas were arrested, beaten and thrown in jail because they distinguished between the true and the false and cast out the python spirit. Nonetheless, they refused to compromise truth and God sent an earthquake, physically and spiritually, and turned the situation completely around.

God is looking for people who will stand for truth in this hour. Truth is vital for it is our ultimate weapon against the "father of lies." This is why Jesus said,

""If you remain in My word, then you are truly My disciples. You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free" (John 8:31-32). {eoa}

This article is derived from Dr. Eddie Hyatt's latest book, Angels of Light, available from Amazon and his website at .