

How the Church Lost the Gift of Discernment

We charismatics love prophecy and revelation. But we must be aware that not all spiritual information is from God.

We are living in a day in which spiritual eyes and ears are being opened to receive information with unprecedented clarity. At the same time, our adversary, the devil, is releasing deluding revelation from heavenly places in which the forces of darkness dwell.

The enemy does this in an effort to circumvent and subvert the purposes of God that are designed to be executed in and through His church. Thus it is imperative in this hour that we develop keen discernment, as the Bible commands us to: "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" (1 John 4:1, NASB).

Currently the Lord is allowing many in the church to see things taking place in the second heaven as well as portions of His perfect plan in the third heaven. The second heaven simply denotes the spiritual domain in which our adversary functions.

In Ephesians 6:12, the apostle Paul teaches us that we do not wrestle against flesh and blood but against spiritual adversaries in heavenly places. The phrase "heavenly places" is taken from the Greek word *epouranios*, which signifies a celestial or spiritual domain.

We know that our adversary does not reside in a place as lofty as God does because it was Satan's desire to ascend to the heights of heaven above God's throne. Paul spoke about a visitation he once had to the third heaven. Therefore the enemy of our soul temporarily maintains dominion over this

world through a heavenly place lower than the third heaven, which we call the second heaven.

From the second heaven, spirits of divination and sorcery attempt to masquerade as the Holy Spirit, creating disillusionment and discouragement in our camp. When people continue unknowingly to entertain revelation from the second heaven, hopelessness begins to fill their hearts.

In reality, it is the impartation of the plans of Satan. It is imperative for the church to understand this reality and be prepared for it.

In Isaiah 14:13-14 we discover the five "I wills" of Satan. The fifth "I will" was his misguided attempt to imitate God. In his declaration, Satan said: "I will make myself like the Most High."

This aspect of our enemy's plan is to masquerade as the Holy Spirit and be as much like Him as possible while imparting seeds of darkness and death. According to Matthew 24:24, this spirit is so convincing it will, if at all possible, deceive the elect.

However, resident in the spirit of God's elect is an ability to discern the deception. We realize that our enemy is not other humans but rather the evil influences released in the earth that operate through men and women who set themselves against the purposes of God.

In this season, spirits of delusion will introduce into the church the spirit of the world and attempt to nullify the grace of God. The views of truth necessary to purify the church are not those the world gives but those that are communicated by the Spirit of God. Spirits of delusion will attempt to lead God's people away from the reality of the kingdom as expressed in the Book of Acts.

False prophetic spirits will announce the sufferings of Christ

but not His glory. They will agree with Christ crucified but not Christ risen and the power of His resurrection.

They will even promote the gospel of God's grace but not the gospel of Christ's glory. The preaching of Christ's glory elicits the greatest enmity from Satan and is what he has worked so diligently to keep veiled from the eyes of the church.

Simply having a zeal for God is not sufficient to safeguard oneself against the deception of these deluding spirits. According to Romans 10:2-3, zeal must be accompanied by divine truth. Sincerity alone is not adequate, either. With sincerity of heart, Uzzah reached his hand to steady the Ark of the Covenant, yet his action cost him his life because he did not follow the Lord's protocol.

All of us can fall prey to the influence of seducing spirits when our works are performed as religious duties rather than out of a heart of passion for our Savior based in truth. By the grace of God, we are being compelled to return to the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.

Rightly Discerning the Word

A provision of heaven is set aside for this generation that is unprecedented. However, to appropriate this gift properly, we must accept God's refining fire so we can recognize seeds of corruption in our souls that can hinder our ability to receive His heavenly resources.

We have an open invitation to come boldly before God's throne of grace; yet the journey remains sacred and holy, requiring clean hands and a pure heart. The fruit of those who genuinely have their spiritual eyes and ears open and experience God in this way will be evident.

Revelations birthed in the soulish imagination will be likewise apparent. When people are moved by soulish

inclinations, they open the way for the imagination to formulate images and mental pictures that clearly do not carry the authenticity of third-heaven revelation.

Misleading messages also can manifest through prophetic words of flattery and self-promotion. That is not to say that a word from the Lord is always correctional or chastening—quite the contrary. God does point out areas needing grace and transformation, but with a spirit of reassurance and expectancy. His reproofs are galvanized in charity and comfort to our spirits—not necessarily to our flesh.

The anointing of the Holy Spirit helps us live above the realm of worldly influences. But the spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places have set themselves in opposition to the working of the Holy Spirit through God's people. Not only will this evil defiance create snares and traps for believers, but it will also assail our minds and spirits during seasons of prayer.

At times it may seem we are easily able to move directly into the realm of the Spirit during prayer. At other times it may seem as though all the forces of hell are opposing us as we attempt to come before the throne of grace in prayer and intercession.

These difficult seasons are divinely allowed to train us in warfare and establish spiritual fortitude and a track record of victory as we wrestle with the enemy. God's intent in this is that we discover by small victories the dunamis power, authority and amazing provision established for us on the cross.

To glean the nuggets God desires to show us often requires battling through intense spiritual resistance until we are able to soar above it and hear pearls He will express and see gems He is eager to disclose. To break through victoriously requires diligence and determination through fervent prayer

and intercession.

A dangerous form of false prophetic ministry similar to that of Edgar Cayce and Nostradamus is emerging in these last days. Even though some accurate information can be conferred in false revelation, true revelation must be grounded on God's Word and acknowledge the Holy Spirit's work through God's grace.

An account in the book of Acts makes this point clear: "A slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bondservants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.'" (Acts 16:16-17).

Paul ultimately rebuked the spirit of divination resident in the young slave girl, even though her insight must have been genuine. Her deliverance actually initiated persecution against Paul and Silas from those who had been benefiting from her false anointing.

Greater Measures of Revelation

In 1987, contemporary prophet Bob Jones had a revelation concerning a second shuttle disaster in the U.S. space program that would indicate the timing of God and point to a season of greater insight and greater deception. When the disaster occurred, it served as a signpost for the church.

The heart of the message is that the second shuttle disaster would mark a time in which God will open the door of heaven to grant access to the third heaven and His throne room. Throne-room prophets will receive their revelation from that lofty third-heaven, throne-room realm.

A warning attended the word, however. With the accompanying increase of authority in godly revelations, there will be corresponding counterfeit anointings released as well. These

forged anointings, in large part, will be in people with genuine gifts of revelation who allow their divine communication to be polluted and wrongfully administered.

The Old Testament prophet Baalam is an example of this form of prophetic presentation. He possessed a genuine gift and was recognized as a prophet, but he used his gift and authority for selfish gain.

The Scriptures clearly advise us to earnestly desire spiritual gifts, but in order to use them effectively we must have the right spirit. We need the Holy Spirit to guard and protect our hearts from every form of corruption that would prostitute or merchandise God's priceless gifts.

Obtaining prophetic warnings is an advantage of revelatory ministry. The Holy Spirit will provide enlightenment regarding the enemy's plans and strategies against the church. Numerous prophetic people are presently being endowed to discover and disclose the schemes of the adversary. This is an important weapon in God's arsenal for mobilizing troops for prayer and intercession to overcome Satan's sabotages.

I have been intrigued by the many creative ways military forces spy on their enemies. Often, the victory in a battle hinges on the validity and accuracy of intelligence information provided by spies. When an opposing force has insight into the plans and strategy of its enemies, the victories generally are assured.

This is also true in spiritual battles. Our God is all-knowing and is willing to share His insight.

He is willing to enlighten us to the plans of the enemy against specific individual lives, churches, cities or conferences. As a result of this intelligence, our forces can be mobilized to counterattack through prayer and intercession and also identify the enemy's spies infiltrating our camp to disrupt and divide.

The day is fast approaching when the prophetic ministry of the church, through the spirit of Elijah resting upon a company of people, will once again encounter the “prophets of Baal” in a Mount Carmel showdown. The church should not fear to take the prophetic gospel to the marketplace where our enemy is presently attempting—often successfully—to dominate.

In this showdown, the Spirit of truth will render the false spirits of revelation powerless, as with Paul, Elijah and other loyal servants of the Lord. The prophecies of those with the true revelatory mantle will precipitate immobility and disarray in the camp of the enemy.

The Lord is prophetically indicating in this hour that He is going to release the Zadok or righteous priesthood to teach the distinction between the sacred and the profane (see Ezek. 44:15-16). This ministry will be the government of God providing a cleansing light to purify the glorious bride of Christ.

The prototype for this righteous priesthood is Melchizedek (which is Hebrew for “my King is righteous”)—the Lord Jesus. If we are grounded in the truth of His Word and led by His Spirit, we will develop the discernment we need to determine if what we are hearing—in our own spirits or from others—is truly from Him.

Paul Keith Davis and his wife, Wanda, travel extensively speaking at conferences and churches throughout the United States. His first book, *The Thrones of the Soul*, was written as a clarion call to the end-time generation. For more information, visit .