

What Does the Bible Say About Judging Supernatural Experiences?

We need to be anchored by the Word of God! In today's increase of supernatural activity, we need to make certain our foundation is sure and that the plumb line of God's Word is our standard.

With this in mind, here is a list of nine scriptural tests by which we can test every revelation that we receive for accuracy, authority and validity. The following truths are for all of us—whether you are an acknowledged seer/prophet or everyday believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let's drop the plumb line of God's Word in our lives!

1. Does the Revelation Edify, Exhort and/or Comfort?

"But he who prophesies speaks to men for their edification and exhortation and comfort" (1 Cor. 14:3). The end purpose of all true prophetic revelation is to build up, to admonish and to encourage the people of God. Anything that is not directed to this end is not true prophecy. Jeremiah the prophet had to fulfill a negative commission, but even his difficult message contained a powerful and positive promise of God for those who were obedient (Jer. 1:5, 10). First Corinthians 14:26 sums it up best: "Let all things be done for edification."

2. Is It in Agreement With God's Word?

"All Scripture is inspired by God" (2 Tim. 3:16). True revelation always agrees with the letter and the spirit of Scripture (2 Cor. 1:17-20). Where the Holy Spirit says "yea and amen" in Scripture, He also says "yea and amen" in revelation. He never, ever contradicts Himself.

3. Does It Exalt Jesus Christ?

“He will glorify Me, for He will receive from Me and will declare it to you” (John 16:14). All true revelation ultimately centers on Jesus Christ and exalts and glorifies Him (Rev. 19:10).

4. Does It Have Good Fruit?

“Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles?” (Matt. 7:15-16).

True revelatory activity produces fruit in character and conduct that agrees with the fruit of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:9; Gal. 5:22-23). Some of the aspects of character or conduct that clearly are not the fruit of the Holy Spirit include pride, arrogance, boastfulness, exaggeration, dishonesty, covetousness, financial irresponsibility, licentiousness, immorality, addictive appetites, broken marriage vows and broken homes. Normally, any revelation that is responsible for these kinds of results is from a source other than the Holy Spirit.

5. If It Predicts a Future Event, Does It Come to Pass?

See Deuteronomy 18:20-22. Any revelation that contains a prediction concerning the future should come to pass. If it does not, then, with a few exceptions, the revelation is not from God. Exceptions may include the following issues:

- Will of person involved
- National repentance—Nineveh repented, so the word did not occur
- Messianic predictions (they took hundreds of years to fulfill)
- There is a different standard for New Testament prophets than for Old Testament prophets whose predictions played

into God's Messianic plan of deliverance

6. Does the Prophetic Prediction Turn People Toward God or Away From Him?

See Deuteronomy 13:1-5. The fact that a person makes a prediction concerning the future that is fulfilled does not necessarily prove that person is moving by Holy Spirit-inspired revelation. If such a person, by his own ministry, turns others away from obedience to the one true God, then that person's ministry is false—even if he makes correct predictions concerning the future.

7. Does It Produce Liberty or Bondage?

"For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" (Rom. 8:15). True revelation given by the Holy Spirit produces liberty, not bondage (1 Cor. 14:33; 2 Tim. 1:7). The Holy Spirit never causes God's children to act like slaves, nor does He ever motivate us by fear or legalistic compulsion.

8. Does It Produce Life or Death?

"... (W)ho has made us able ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Cor. 3:6). True revelation from the Holy Spirit always produces life, not death.

9. Does the Holy Spirit Bear Witness That It Is True?

"But the anointing which you have received from Him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. For as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and just as it has taught you, remain in Him" (1 John 2:27).

The Holy Spirit within the believer always confirms true revelation from the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is "the

Spirit of Truth" (John 16:13). He bears witness to that which is true, but He rejects that which is false. This ninth test is the most subjective test of all the tests we've presented here. For that reason, it must be used in conjunction with the previous eight objective standards.

God's Word tells us that we must prove all things and hold fast to that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21). At all times we must seek the Lord's wisdom, while refusing to use "wisdom" as an excuse for fear. We must be careful not to become offended at the genuine things that the Holy Spirit is doing, no matter how strange they may appear to us. Divine revelation and visionary experiences come in many different forms, and it is vital that we understand how to discern the true from the false.

Now, I know that some of you are waiting for me to dish out "some of the deeper things" to you by this point. But from my perspective, I would be remiss not to make sure these foundational truths are laid well before taking us further on our "mystical journey."

So study to show yourself approved a workman unto the Lord! Let us learn to test the spirits to see whether they be from God. I want you to step out on the tight rope of faith, but I also want to supply you with a safety net of the wisdom ways of God underneath to help catch you in your journey.

This is an excerpt from chapter 15 of the book Shifting Shadows of Supernatural Experiences, co-authored by James Goll and Julia Loren. Click the link to purchase the entire book in hard copy or as a downloadable e-Book from the Elijah List.

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