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This booklet is dedicated to all who sincerely desire to learn more from the Word of God in order to live a God-glorifying life-style, and to those who will use it to teach others the positives of God’s Word in the here and now.

## Foreword

**K**athy Nunes-Vaz has been involved with The Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry for many years. She (together with her late husband John), were instrumental in encouraging me to see the value of having my writings published more widely and went about producing a range of booklets for me. Initially they were mainly distributed in the South Pacific nation of Vanuatu, but from those small beginnings, books, booklets and manuals have been written and published in several languages, which have been a tremendous blessing to many thousands of people. After John's passing away, Kathy picked up the printing of a number of my books – which she still does today – and has enabled us to impact more and more lives.

I asked Kathy to consider writing this booklet to include in our range of small booklets that we are producing on important subjects to do with the prophetic ministry, so that you might get the benefits of what the Lord is showing us in this Ministry. My observations have shown me she is a prayerful and discerning woman of God.

**Discernment** is a vital part of the Christian life and ministry! It works hand in hand with **perception**. Perception is all about seeing things as they really are, whereas discernment teaches us to know what to do with what we perceive. When I look back over many years of observing numbers of men and women desiring to fulfil a vision and ministry in Jesus Christ

– and to see them often “fade away to nothing,” I realise that often it was a lack of discernment in the choice of the personnel they placed in key positions that became their downfall. It is no secret that there are many Christians today looking for an opportunity to become “a somebody” at someone else’s expense! Their agenda is not one that is going to help you fulfil your vision in God! Far too often we have not trusted – nor heeded – that discerning ability within us to guide us in the ways of the Lord. When discernment is not active in a person, people, church or ministry – and therefore not being acted upon – we see those situations become like a ship without a rudder, often drifting aimlessly through life, accepting whatever passes our way. So much time and effort is wasted because the wrong people in the wrong place drain our energy and supplies. We are very unwise to try and get through life successfully without our discovering the importance of developing our ability to perceive and discern in order to achieve things to the glory of God.

May God help us all to be more discerning – much more discerning – in the times that lie before us. I recommend this booklet to you – consider and heed what it has to say.

Rodney W. Francis  
Founder/Director: The Gospel Faith Messenger Ministry.



# *Discernment*

## **A Key To Christian Maturity**

By **Kathy Nunes-Vaz**  
(Hamilton, New Zealand)

**W**e are living in very uncertain times, where we are seeing extreme swings in the political scene, nations rising and others declining, and even within the Body of Christ there are changes and upheavals. It would even seem that the onslaught of hell has increased against Christians in these past few years. But God has given to each of us weapons with which to safely stand and fight Satan and the forces of darkness; weapons to overcome. They are items of armour, i.e., truth, righteousness, the preparation of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, salvation, and the Word of God. These are mentioned in Ephesians Chapter 6 and are essential for every Christian to know and walk in. But there are other protections that God gives to the Church, such as intercessors, and spiritual watchmen; and yet other giftings for us to claim individually, such as knowledge, discernment, and wisdom.

### *Natural Discernment*

**O**ne of God's protective weapons for the Christian is that of discernment. There is a natural discernment as we discover in Matthew 16:1-4, Matthew, the writer of this Gospel, says:

***“Then the Pharisees and Sadducees came and testing Him (Jesus) asked that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered***

**and said to them, 'When it is evening you say, It will be fair weather, for the sky is red; and in the morning, It will be foul weather today, for the sky is red and threatening. Hypocrites! You know how to discern the face of the sky, but you cannot discern the signs of the times. A wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.' And He left them and departed."**

In other Scriptures, we find that Jesus rebuked those same people for not being able to "discern", or judge the times they were living in. They did not **recognize** Jesus for who He was and Jesus called them "**blind guides.**" The Pharisees and the Sadducees had natural discernment but not spiritual discernment.

## *Spiritual Discernment*

**T**he disciple, Peter, exercised spiritual discernment when Jesus had asked him "**Who do men say that I am?**" Peter replied, "**You are the Christ.**" And Jesus then replied to Peter, "**Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father in heaven**" (Matthew 16:17).

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, recognized Jesus as they were fishing (John chapter 21). He recognized Jesus by His voice and the true word that He spoke to them. Jesus told them "**. . . to cast the net on the other side of the boat.**" When Peter obeyed, he caught a very large number of fish. Perhaps there is a lesson in this story for us, that if we hear and discern correctly

the voice of God speaking to us, and then obey Him, we will also see multiplied fruitfulness in our lives.

True spiritual discernment comes to us within our spirit as spiritual knowledge from the Holy Spirit. It does not come through our natural senses, human reasoning, or abilities. If we are men and women who live our lives out of the Spirit, then we should also exercise our ability to discern, for the Bible says this:

***“ . . . the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritually judges ALL THINGS, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one”*** (1 Corinthians 2:13–15).

Just as the Word of Knowledge, the Word of Wisdom, and discernment often link together, and work together in the prophetic, it would appear from this Scripture that spiritual discernment and judging work together.

So, we can see that there is natural discernment, and there is spiritual discernment. Spiritual discernment is different to natural discernment and operates in the spiritual realm, coming from the Holy Spirit to our spirit - whereas natural discernment comes from our natural senses.

It should be said at this point that Paul, in 1 Corinthians 12:10, mentions a gift of Discerning of Spirits, so therefore there must be a gift of discernment which can also operate separately from the ordinary natural and spiritual discernment mentioned above. But this booklet will not concentrate on the gift of discernment, but rather on natural and spiritual discernment.

There are times when natural discernment and spiritual discernment will work together, or flow together. Often the natural discernment we have will activate the spiritual. But true discernment is supernatural in origin, and we need to learn to recognize it and not mix it with, or mistake it for, our natural understanding. We can use our natural discernment when we see someone we know, observing that they look poorly. We can then come to the conclusion that they are not as well as when we saw them on the last occasion. This is our natural discernment in operation.

Just as we can recognize one another by our physical looks, we can also recognize one another in the spirit because “... **Deep calls to deep** ...” Spirit calls to spirit ... spirits recognize one another ... Not only does our spirit recognize God’s Spirit, but there is also recognition by our own spirit towards the spirit of another person. This is where true spiritual discernment begins. I have learned to look for this recognition or discernment in my spirit when someone is speaking, or when I am being introduced to someone new. This is what I watch for; this is what I have learned to look for.

Seeing, discerning, perceiving, hearing – call it what you will – all has to do with seeing into the spirit realm that which the natural eye cannot see. It is the ability to **perceive, and then to understand** what is actually happening in the spirit realm. It is **seeing** what cannot be seen with the natural eye. We use the **eyes of our spirit to see in the spirit**. It is seeing **eternal truth, eternal facts, eternal happenings**, because everything in the spirit realm is **eternal**. And, because one day every one of us will live in eternity, we need to learn to exercise these skills here in this life; this is our training ground. It is also very important that we **see spiritually** in these last days, because vast changes are now occurring (both naturally and spiritually) as we see some



nations rising and others falling. This can also be said of political and spiritual leaders throughout the world today. We simply cannot follow a leader because of their past successes. Things appear to be “speeding up” in the days we are living in. Many times in Scripture we are told to **“Behold.”** (“Look and see; see and understand”). Many times, Jesus said, **“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”**

## *A Powerful Lesson*

**S**ome years ago, we were living in the small town of Waitara in New Zealand. At that time my husband (John) was in the process of planting a new church in the town. About nine months into that planting, he heard about a group of evangelists who were coming through the district. They worked in an itinerant ministry to the Aboriginal communities in the outback of Australia. So John invited them to come and speak to the new church. It was agreed that they would spend a weekend with us, and, amongst other ministry, do some teaching on spiritual warfare. They arrived on a Friday evening, and I went to the church to meet them. They seemed like any other Christian group that I had ever met and I was looking forward to hearing them speak. There was a good attendance of people on the Saturday morning. But not long after the meeting started I became very restless, and found I wanted to get up and walk out. As this restlessness within me became steadily worse, I had to leave the meeting, so I went outside to walk around the carpark. Some time later I returned and sat at the back of the gathering, only to find that I was just as restless and agitated inwardly as before in a way that I had not previously experienced. So once again I paced the car park; asking God to reveal to me what was wrong.

I settled down and went back into the meeting. Soon it was lunchtime, and I felt a rush of relief, as I was able to leave the building.

Later in the afternoon, as I prepared for the afternoon session, the same restless agitation arose again within me, and I just could not sit in the meeting. Again and again I slipped out and paced the car park, praying with each step that God would show me what was wrong in my life. The evening meeting came and I just could not face any more, so excused myself and stayed home. By now I was feeling very condemned, and wondered why I was not able to sit in "God's house" without feeling like I wanted to get up and run away.

The Sunday morning service was a trial as I forced myself to sit right through the meeting. Then, when it was time for the evening service, I again excused myself and stayed home. By now, my husband was becoming impatient with me, not understanding why I was acting this way. I went to bed tearful, restless and feeling heavy.

Monday morning dawned, and I felt no better. "Was this another nervous breakdown that I was facing? Was I losing my salvation? Had I committed some dreadful sin that had separated me from the love and peace of God?" I searched for answers. John left the house early to say goodbye to our visitors, and as he drove out the driveway, I sat down in a crumpled heap and began to sob. After a short time I phoned him and asked him to come home, as I needed his help. He did so, and brought with him the assistant Pastor, who was also a good friend of ours. As they walked into the room, I felt the urgency and danger of the whole situation overwhelm me, yet I knew that somehow, God was also in the room as I began to share how I had struggled all weekend. The assistant Pastor prayed for me, and I felt a measure

of relief. At this point John began to share how he had been having his own private battle during the weekend. He mentioned how one of the young women who was a part of the visiting group (and who was a newly saved Christian) had come from Christchurch, his childhood home, and had been involved in the same spiritualist psychic circle (or group) that he had been a part of many years earlier. John went on to share how he had battled all weekend with unexpected, strong thoughts of running away with her; of leaving behind his family and his work just to be with her. And suddenly, I **saw** what had been happening. There had been a “check” in my spirit all along, but I had not recognized the “warning” signals that the Holy Spirit was giving me. Even though my husband had been freed from his entanglement with all psychic connections, the moment he was introduced to this woman, there was an instant recognition and a connection in the spirit realm between their spirits. One spirit had recognized the other, and her spirit was calling and wooing John away from where he should be. What a struggle that must have been for him! And how devastating the outcome would have been, if he had followed through on that avenue of temptation! At this point, the assistant Pastor prayed for both of us, breaking the spiritual control over my husband, and I felt the light arise over us again! I felt the heaviness lift, and the peace of God come flooding into my heart!

That day I realized I had been tapping in to a discernment that had come totally from outside of my own understanding; I could never have known any of that information. Yet God knew, and He was revealing to me that not everything **was** as it appeared to be on the surface. I look back on that incident with a thankful heart, knowing that God has taught me much through the experiences of that weekend.

It was a supernatural experience – something that came totally from a realm outside of my own understanding. It was not something that my mind had arrived at through my natural eyes having seen, nor that which my natural ears had heard. My level of discernment had to rise. I had to begin to trust what I was feeling on the inside. I had to learn to discern what my spirit was telling me instead of thinking (or presuming) that there was something wrong with me, or that I “had sinned and was out of the will of God”.

- **We all need spiritual discernment. We need it in our own lives to keep us from being deceived, or getting side-tracked by the enemy.**
- **We need it in the Body of Christ, because the Church is often the battleground where Satan tries to knock us out, and we need to recognize his tactics before they have any sway over our lives, individually or corporately.**
- **We need to discern just exactly what is happening at any given moment in a meeting or service, so we do not destroy or hinder what God is doing.**

## *Discernment and Maturity*

**G**od is preparing a Bride – a perfect, spotless, wise, able to rule Bride – not a baby, not a child bride: but one who will rule and reign with Him in eternity – one who knows what He knows, and can discern and judge accordingly.

One way that we grow to maturity is to be exercised in the area of discernment, for Hebrews 5:14 says this:

***“But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who have had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”***

- **Therefore, discernment comes, and is deepened, through being experienced and exercised.**

The word **“discern”** means:

1. To separate or divide up, hence, to examine carefully, investigate, then, to determine, judge, estimate. (Used in 1 Corinthians 2:14-15).
2. To separate throughout, i.e., wholly, completely, hence, to distinguish, make a distinction. (Used in Matthew 16:3 and 1 Corinthians 11:20).
3. Towards, for a distinguishing, discriminating, for discriminating. (Used in Hebrews 5:14).
4. To assay, examine, prove or test metals to see if they are pure, hence, to scrutinize. (Used in Luke 12:56) – (Bullinger’s).

The word **“discerning”** means:

**“A distinguishing, discerning clearly, discriminating.”**  
(Used in 1 Corinthians 12:10 – Bullinger’s).

The word **“assay”** means – (a) The testing of a metal or ore to determine its ingredients or quality (the content and concentration of a substance). (b) A method of analysis of rare metals (silver and gold) based on separation and extraction collections, often by heat – (Strong’s). (A further breakdown of the word “discern” – or “test” – is found on Page 33).

## *Discernment And Fearing The Lord*

**D**iscernment also has to do with fearing the Lord:

***“Then those who feared the Lord spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name. They shall be Mine, says the LORD of Hosts, on the day that I make them My jewels. And I will spare them as a man spares his son who serves him. Then you shall again discern between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him”*** (Malachi 3:16-18).

So, then, we can have accurate discernment, and learn to trust it – if we fear the Lord and meditate on Him.

When we read Hebrews 4:12, we find that the Word of God is ***“a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart”***.

### *Three Examples Of Discernment From The Scriptures*

**L**et us look at some Scriptural examples of discernment operating in the lives of ordinary people like you and me:

## 1. 2 Kings 9:14–21:

Jehu had just been anointed by one of the sons of the prophets under Elisha to be the next king of Israel. It seems that Jehu was very eager to take up this position of kingship and, in fact, he was actually scheming as to how he could make it come to pass. We read in verse 14:

***“So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram had been defending Ramoth Gilead, he and all Israel, against Hazael king of Syria.”***

King Joram had been wounded during his battle with Hazael, the king of Syria, and was now resting and recovering back in his home in Jezreel, a city in the south of Judah. While in this state of recovery, the king of Judah had come to visit him. At the same time Jehu also went down to Jezreel, with the intention of killing Joram so he could take on the position of king.

Reading on in verse 17:

***“Now a watchman stood on the tower in Jezreel, and he saw the company of Jehu as he came, and said, ‘I see a company of men.’ And Joram said, ‘Get a horseman and send him to meet them, and let him say, Is it peace?’***

***So the horseman went to meet him, and said, ‘Thus says the king: Is it peace?’ And Jehu said, ‘What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me.’ And the watchman reported, saying, ‘The messenger went to them, but is not coming back.’”***

Jehu certainly did not want his arrival advertised to Joram. I think he wanted to sneak in and murder the man before anyone knew what he was up to.

This situation is repeated a second time in verse 19:

***“Then he sent out a second horseman who came to them, and said, ‘Thus says the king: Is it peace?’ And Jehu answered, ‘What have you to do with peace? Turn around and follow me.’”***

Now we read in verse 20 what the watchman reports to Joram:

***“And the watchman reported, saying, ‘He went up to them and is not coming back; and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously!’”***

The watchman recognizes the way the chariot is being driven, for he says, “. . . ***the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi, for he drives furiously.***”

The watchman could **see** clearly; he could discern what he saw. He could **interpret**, that is, put into words **what he saw**, so that people would understand. He **knew** who it was by the way, or movement, the driver made.

**What sort of message do we give out by our actions, the way we move through life, both in the natural, and in the spiritual realms?**

Not only could this watchman **see**, but he could also **recognize who** was driving the chariot by the style or way in which it was driven. Because he could see and recognize accurately – he was able to convey the right



message to the king. Can people recognize us by the way we live or operate our lives as righteous, godly people?

The story continues, telling us that Joram, along with Ahaziah, gets into a chariot and goes out to meet Jehu and they make contact with him on the property of Naboth, the Jezreelite, where Jehu shoots and kills Joram. Ahaziah is also shot as he escapes, but later dies.

Another example from Scripture:

## **2. 2 Samuel 18:19–32:**

We read in this story of two men running; one bringing news of Absalom's death to King David, and the other, wanting to get there first, (perhaps to give a different story to the king).

***“Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, ‘Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the LORD has avenged him of his enemies.’***

***And Joab said to him, ‘You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king’s son is dead.’***

***Then Joab said to the Cushite, ‘Go, tell the king what you have seen.’ So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.***

***And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, ‘But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite.’ And Joab said, ‘Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?’***

***But whatever happens, he said, 'Let me run.' So he said to him, 'Run.' Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.***

***Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone.***

***Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, 'If he is alone, there is news in his mouth.' And he came rapidly and drew near.***

***Then the watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, 'There is another man running alone!' And the king said, 'He also brings news.'"***

This watchman was aware first of one man running, and then a second one coming towards the city. Both runners were coming separately and the watchman conveys what he sees to the gatekeeper, and to King David.

***"So the watchman said, 'I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok.' And the king said, 'He is a good man, and comes with good news.'***

***And Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, 'All is well!' Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, 'Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!'***

***The king said, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' And Ahimaaz answered, 'When Joab sent the king's servant and me your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was about.'***

***And the king said, 'Turn aside and stand here.' So he turned aside and stood still.***

***Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, 'There is good news, my lord the king! For the LORD has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you.'***

***And the king said to the Cushite, 'Is the young man Absalom safe?' And the Cushite answered, 'May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!'***

In verse 27 of 2 Samuel Chapter 18 we are told that the watchman thinks the first man runs like Ahimaaz. This watchman is able to recognize the man Ahimaaz, who is the son of Zadok (of a priestly line) by the way he moves. **The watchman recognized the actions of a godly man.** The Bible does not record him recognizing the other runner, a Cushite (a descendent of Cush who was descended from Ham, and not one of God's covenant people)!

**We, too, need to be able to recognize which spirit is working in any given situation. Can we discern whether it is the Spirit of God, or some other spirit that may be active at any given moment during a meeting, or within another person's life? To do so, we need discernment.**

**3.** A third example from Scripture comes from 2 Kings Chapter 2. It is the story of Elijah's imminent departure from earth into heaven, and the passing on of his ministry to Elisha.

Elijah was a man of the Spirit. He lived in the realm of the Holy Spirit (not the fleshly, nor demonic). He could **see** clearly in the Spirit. Elisha was a younger man who was being trained by Elijah. At certain stages along the journey, Elijah tested Elisha to see if he would be able to carry his (Elijah's) ministry with the anointing, wisdom, endurance, and responsibility that was required. We take up the story in verse 1 of 2 Kings Chapter 2:

***“And it came to pass, when the LORD was about to take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind, that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal.”***

Elijah and Elisha leave Gilgal, which is the place where Israel circumcised all the males who had come out of Egypt. This place signifies the separation of the flesh-life in us. Elisha would not stay, but went with Elijah.

***“Then Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel.’ But Elisha said, ‘As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!’ So they went down to Bethel.***

***Now the sons of the prophets who were at Bethel came out to Elisha, and said to him, ‘Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?’ But he said, ‘Yes, I know; keep silent!’”***

Elijah says to Elisha, ***“Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel.”*** Bethel means “house of

God". It signifies the place of God's daily indwelling Presence. There was a group of prophets living in Bethel, in God's Presence, and it would certainly be a very pleasant place to dwell. These prophets were able to see prophetically that Elijah was going to be taken away, and they told Elijah and Elisha so. But Elisha replied that he would not stay, but would go on with Elijah.

***"Then Elijah said to him, 'Elisha, stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho.' And he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!' So they came to Jericho.***

***Now the sons of the prophets who were at Jericho came to Elisha and said to him, 'Do you know that the LORD will take away your master from over you today?' So he answered, 'Yes, I know; keep silent!'"***

Elijah again tests Elisha by saying to him, ***"Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho."*** Jericho was the city where the Israelites encountered opposition, but where, when they obeyed God, they saw the opposition collapse. It signifies that place within our own lives where we come up against demonic strongholds and where they are broken through by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. It is the place of anointed power, and a very powerful place to be! There was another group of prophets living at Jericho. Perhaps they had a deliverance ministry that was activated out of the prophetic. This is also a strongly attractive place to be. But Elisha was not content to stay there either.

***"Then Elijah said to him, 'Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan.' But he said, 'As the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!' So the two of them went on."***

Now we hear Elijah again telling Elisha, ***“Stay here please, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan.”*** Jordan is the place where Israel crossed over into the Promised Land; it is the place of baptism, and a watering place. It signifies total separation from the old life through baptism. And it is the place where the old life is buried. But Elisha again refused to stay.

***“And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood by the Jordan.”***

There were fifty prophets standing facing them at a distance. What are they doing? They are watching! And because they are prophets, I am sure they were seeing (or discerning) that something was about to happen. They may have seen a prophetic picture of the forthcoming occurrence, or perhaps they had Words of Knowledge as to what was about to happen.

***“Now Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up, and struck the water; and it was divided this way and that, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground.***

***And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, ‘Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?’ Elisha said, ‘Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.’”***

Finally, in verse 9 of 2 Kings Chapter 2, Elijah is satisfied that Elisha really wants to move on in God. He has tested Elisha this far, and is now quite sure that Elisha will not count or stumble at the cost, nor look back. Now Elijah knows that Elisha is not content to stay at any one of those places along the way in his walk with God, but

wants to move on and go wherever the Holy Spirit will lead him.

Only now when Elijah is quite sure that Elisha is ready, he asks him, ***“What may I do for you?”*** ***Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.”***

***“So he said, ‘You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.’***

***Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.***

***And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces.***

***He also took up the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and went back and stood by the bank of the Jordan.***

***Then he took the mantle of Elijah that had fallen from him, and struck the water, and said, ‘Where is the LORD God of Elijah?’ And when he also had struck the water, it was divided this way and that; and Elisha crossed over.***

***Now when the sons of the prophets who were from Jericho saw him, they said, ‘The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.’ And they came to meet him, and bowed to the ground before him.”***

Elisha had moved on from his salvation, and had grown strong by being planted in the house of God (Bethel). He had overcome demonic influences in his life (Jericho), and had totally allowed himself to be separated from the old life, the old desires, the old dreams and hopes (Jordan).

**Elisha wanted a double portion of what Elijah had! He wanted all of the ability, the authority and anointing to do what Elijah had done! He wanted the fullness of Elijah's ministry, and even asked for a double portion of it!**

What was Elijah's reply? ***"You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you SEE me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so"*** (2 Kings 2:10).

Elisha's request – that of receiving the double portion of Elijah's ministry – hinged upon him **seeing**. He **needed to see** Elijah being taken by God if he was to receive the double portion. **He had to be spiritually discerning, and aware of what was happening in the spirit realm if he was to ever carry the double anointing.** This was Elijah's ultimate "test" of Elisha – would he be able to **see**, ("to behold, consider, discern, gaze, take heed, perceive, view, visions" – Strong's) what was about to happen in the spirit?

Then suddenly the chariot of fire and horses of fire arrived! (Verse 12) The fire came between them and separated them. Fire separated flesh and spirit! The fiery trials that we go through in life are designed to do that for us too.

***"Now Elisha saw it"*** (same word as in verse 10). **He saw with his spirit! He saw into the spirit realm!** I am sure that there was a natural manifestation, as well as a spiritual one. Elisha **saw** it, and he passed the final test!



Elijah would have been overjoyed to see Elisha's desire to complete the ministry and not settle anywhere along the way. Now Elijah knew that his disciple was ready to carry the ministry with **all** the fullness of the Holy Spirit. So, we also need to seek for the full mature ministry of the Holy Spirit in our own life, because the Lord Jesus is not seeking a fragmented Bride, but rather a full and complete one; one who is spotless (sinless), and without wrinkle (a timeless Bride).

And what did Elisha say? ***"My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!"*** Can you hear the excitement in his voice? Can you imagine Elijah's joy at that moment? Now Elijah **knew** his servant was ready to continue on in the ministry. Now he could depart in peace! Now he could go to his God, knowing that the ministry would be carried on through Elisha.

Then the Bible records:

***"So he saw him no more. And Elisha took his own clothes and tore them into two pieces, and picked up the mantle of Elijah."***

Before he could reach this point in his walk with God, Elisha needed a level of discernment that comes only through growth, maturity, and then revelation.

He left behind his old authority, his old covering, his old anointing; in fact, he ***". . . tore them into two pieces . . ."*** thereby signifying that he would not – and could not – go back to living as he had previously done. Only when he had done this, did he step into the full anointing of the Holy Spirit. Only then did he take up the mantle and authority of Elijah.

All of Elisha's future and destiny was dependent upon his ability to spiritually **see** at that moment. Elijah **knew**

that Elisha needed to be a man of the Holy Spirit – **living** in the Spirit; **seeing** in the Spirit; **acting out** of the Spirit – if he was to carry Elijah’s anointing and more, to its fullest capacity.

We see from Scripture that Elisha did indeed receive a double portion of Elijah’s anointing, as the Bible records that Elisha performed twice as many miracles as his master and mentor, Elijah.

## *Discernment In Our Meetings*

**N**ow, let us look at discernment from a different angle and apply it to the present. In the natural realm there is a country called Israel. Within Israel is the City of Jerusalem. Within Jerusalem stands Mount Zion; a high place; a place of worship; a place where people worship God (The Temple Mount).

In the Bible, Israel is a type of God’s people, and Jerusalem is a type of the assembling of God’s people (the Church), while Mount Zion – also called the Church of the First-Born – is a type or picture of overcoming Christians in communion with God. These overcoming ones are situated within the confines of the Church, just as natural Mount Zion is situated within the natural city of Jerusalem.

Over the centuries there has been a battle by Muslims, Christians, and Jews for the natural city of Jerusalem: each group professing the territory as their own for the purpose of worshipping God. But what spirit is behind each one?

Mount Zion has always been, and still is, the “prize” they all fight over. Each faction wants to **possess it, own it, and control** its future.

Now, let us apply this spiritually to our present day circumstances. In the spirit – the high place of worship, that is, the place of entering right into the throne room and bowing down in adoration before the Eternal One, the Ancient of Days – there is often a battle each time we choose to go there; an on-going battle to keep us earthbound so that we do not enter the throne room, nor inherit what is rightfully ours.

In a meeting setting, when the musicians start to play, they begin to call the people into unity, calling them to start moving together. Then they under-gird the congregation, and take us up level by level until we come to the entrance to the Throne of God. It is a vulnerable time in the spirit as we all begin to open up to the Spirit realm. It is a time to be especially watchful. We need to **see and recognize** which spirit is operating. We should be testing, judging all that is being said or done. Not everything that is done in church is of the Holy Spirit. Often there is a mixture. We should not just “take for granted” that everything that is said or done is of the Holy Spirit. **We need to see, discern, test, judge, and prove all that is happening.** Everything should be tested; every prophetic word, every song, every “act of the Holy Spirit” against the Word of God, and against the witness of the Holy Spirit within us.

There are times when the flow of the Holy Spirit over a meeting is like a wide river flowing, drawing many of the congregation into the river. At other times, it can be like many streams (or rivers) all flowing beside one another – all flowing in one direction. They are rivers of living water, rivers of life, rivers of prophecy, and rivers of healing power. On one occasion I perceived the Holy

Spirit moving in this way during a meeting, but there came another “river” that cut across the others. It came forth as a prophetic word, yet I knew instantly that it was not a part of the Holy Spirit’s flow, but rather it came from the human spirit of the person bringing that word. It had an effect of diverting and sidetracking the whole flow of worship. It was a distraction, taking hearts and eyes off the Lord.

The opposite of Mount Zion (the Church of the First-Born) is Mount Sinai. The book of Galatians talks about it. In the Old Testament, Mount Sinai was the place where God gave the law to Moses for the Israelites. In the New Testament it signifies the place where law controls through the flesh, and where emotion ministers to emotion – soul power. It is the place where we feel comfortable, where we’ve been before, and where we can function in our own strength, vision, and actions. It is in this area that a counterfeit or religious spirit works. It masquerades as the Holy Spirit. It looks, acts, and sounds like the Holy Spirit, but it is religious, traditional, over-zealous, and excessive. It is often unteachable, arrogant and harsh.

People who minister from a religious spirit can sound very Christian or “born again,” often quoting Scripture, prophesying, and speaking in tongues, but they leave a trail of hurting, confused people behind them. They also attract others with the same spirit, or a leaning towards religious activities.

## *What, Then, Is The Answer?*

**We need to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.**

**We need to know – really know – the voice of the Holy Spirit.**

**We need to exercise our discernment and only follow the Holy Spirit. To do that, we need to recognize His voice. If we have a “check” in our spirit about what is being said, or what is happening, then we need to ask the Holy Spirit to show us why we are experiencing such a “check”.**

## *Discernment Accompanied By Physical Sensations*

**W**hen we are learning to use our discernment, God often gives us physical feelings to get our attention, and I can remember such sensations as a prickling on the back of my head when spiritual truth was being revealed. Another experience was a tingling down my back when the Holy Spirit was present. And yet another time, I experienced dizziness when an acquaintance was speaking. I did not like this sensation, and when I asked my mentor about it, I was told that maybe it was the Holy Spirit's way of warning me that what was being said was not the whole truth. I later discovered that this acquaintance was exaggerating, or stretching the truth as he spoke.

The Holy Spirit gives us these “feelings” or “checks” to help us discern what is truth, and what is untruth. **He is the Spirit of Truth, and will always witness to the truth.**

Sometimes I have experienced a “non” witness when the truth has not been spoken. Because spirit speaks to spirit, and spirit recognizes spirit, there is no recognition from my spirit towards the person speaking.

In one fellowship I was once a part of, I had an experience with a particular person with whom I had had some difficulty in relating to. This was a person who was often very vocal in meetings, giving prophetic words, singing spiritual songs, and giving tongues messages. But each time they vocalized, I felt a check in my spirit so strongly that I wanted to get up and walk out of the meeting. One Sunday morning, I went and sat beside this person at the end of the meeting, because I felt that if I was carrying a bad attitude toward them then I needed to do something about it. Without asking for my agreement, the person turned to me and began to pray for me, even anointing me with oil. I was feeling very agitated within, but allowed them to continue as I did not wish to offend them. Every word that was prayed sounded right, yet the result was that I left that meeting feeling as though a blanket had been thrown over me. I felt numb, confused, and “shut down”. I found I could not pray, I could not read my Bible, and I could not sing in the Spirit. After two days, when I could stand it no longer, I went to a friend for prayer. As the prayer washed over me, I felt the breakthrough come, and I knew then that I had been bound up by that person’s prayer. They had sounded so spiritual, and had done all the “right” things, but the spirit working through them was not the Holy Spirit. I began to search the Scriptures for an answer, and I discovered that there is a very good Scriptural way of

judging or proving a situation. It is found in 2 Corinthians 3:17:

***“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.”***

Therefore, if the Spirit of the Lord is working, we should feel liberty and be free to move with Him. But if we feel “shut down,” or “bound up” by what happens to us in a meeting, then we can be sure that it is not the Spirit of the Lord Who is controlling or operating in that meeting. If we come away from a meeting feeling that we have not met with Jesus, then we need to **look and see** why. What was it that robbed us, hindered us, or stopped us?

## *We Need To Grow In Our Discernment*

**T**he level of discernment in the Body of Christ needs to rise to a higher and stronger level if we are to move on and possess our inheritance. I believe that, while on earth, the Body of Christ will always be in warfare, having to face and fight demonic forces. God leads us there to train and equip His Bride, and it is imperative that we learn to discern what is happening. I believe that God Himself allows the counterfeit to come in amongst His people, so that we might learn to distinguish between the true and the false, between the holy and the profane. Sadly, because there is very little instruction or guidance in this area, many people are caught up by the counterfeit and are left hurt and discouraged when the excitement has died down. We have not been taught to test or discern what is happening around about us. Rather, we

have been encouraged to accept and love everything and everyone, because it is “not Christian” to criticize or judge. Perhaps, in some cases, we even confuse discernment with criticism.

Somehow, the Body of Christ has been taught to believe that all that happens in a Christian meeting is good and comes from God. We have been taught that it is wrong to judge or evaluate a meeting, a service, or a speaker, as to what has been said; that we are not to weigh up or critique the content of a meeting. That way, we accept everything, receive nothing, and remain in ignorance. I believe this is a lie of the devil over the Christian Church, which lulls us into believing that everything in our Christian meetings is of God, and therefore shuts our spiritual eyes to discerning what the devil is up to.

But wait! We are not to judge with condemnation in mind, nor out of a critical mindset, but we are to judge, discern, assess, sift, and prove, to decide what is behind the different things that happen. I have discovered that natural discernment can often be negative, whereas spiritual discernment, although initially revealing the negative side of a situation, also brings release and peace.

### **A counterfeit (religious) spirit –**

- Looks right;
- Sounds right;
- Will **do** all the right things;
- Prays a lot;
- Even prophesies;
- Strives to excess;
- Disrupts the flow of the Holy Spirit;
- Seeks to draw attention to itself;
- Often overplays itself;
- ALWAYS AIMS TO HAVE CONTROL.



But “. . . **where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty**” (and peace, and truth).

Let us do what 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 tells us: **“Test (or PROVE) all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.”**

Other versions use the word “prove” instead of “test”.

That word **test**, means “to think, **to seem (truthful or otherwise)**, to be accounted, to be of reputation, seem (good)” – (Strong’s).

That word **test** (or **discern**) is found in Luke 12:56 where Luke also records that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees saying: **“Hypocrites! You can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it you do not discern this time?”**

The word **“discern”** here comes from the Greek word “dokimazo” and means “to prove, try, approve after examination and trial, to assay metals” – (Strong’s).

**The Pharisees were rebuked by Jesus for their lack of spiritual discernment. They could understand the signs in the weather, but could not recognize the Son of God, even though He stood before them.**

**What do we “test” or “prove” against?**

The Word of God.

Our inner witness (or gut feeling).

A reliable mentor (by sharing with our Pastor, a spiritual parent, or someone we know is hearing from God).

## *Inaccurate Discernment*

**H**ere are two examples from the Bible where people did not discern accurately.

- (a) Joshua Chapter 9 covers the story of the children of Israel coming into contact with the Gibeonites (one of the nations God had commanded that they not make any alliances with). The Israelites did not see through the deceptive behaviour of the Gibeonites, and made a treaty with them. They failed to discern who the Gibeonites were. God was not pleased that His command had been broken. This subsequently brought trouble to the Israelites. I think that God **expects** you and I to be able to discern which people are God's people, and which ones are not!
- (b) God said there were more than 120,000 inhabitants of Nineveh "**. . . who could not discern between their right hand and their left . . .**" (Jonah 4:11). God showed His great mercy for the people of Nineveh by sending Jonah to preach to them.

## *The Right To Judge*

**E**zekiel Chapter 44 talks about the privileges and authority of the priests who are the true sons of Zadok. That is you and me, if we have truly been born again by the Spirit of God, know and obey the voice of God, and live constantly in the Kingdom of God.

Verse 23 and 24 say this:

***“And they shall teach My people the difference between the holy and the unholy, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean.”***

***“In controversy they shall stand as judges and judge it according to My judgments. They shall keep My laws and My statutes in all My appointed meetings and they shall hallow My Sabbaths.”***

**True spiritual discernment therefore gives us the right to judge.**

Let us all grow in discernment, learning to judge righteously, and then let us move on into the fullness of Christ’s ministry, even as Elisha did.

### *A Prayer that you can pray:*

*“Dear God, I come to You in the All Powerful Name of Jesus Christ Your Son. Please build into my life the wisdom and understanding that I need to go on in my walk with You. I ask that Your Holy Spirit would guide me, and teach me to recognize what is truth, and what is error; what is of You, and what is not of You. Please lead me through many experiences where my discernment might be exercised, so that I may come to maturity in all things. In Jesus’ Name, from this day, I look to You to lead, teach, and guide me, Amen.”*

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