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BlackSDA _ 3ABN _ Testing The Spirits?

Posted by: inga Aug 20 2006, 05:02 PM

It appears to me that there's a bit of confusion over how to "test the spirits" or even what spirits to test ... 

Did God give us the job of "testing the spirits" of **individuals** we know and then deciding whether they are "good Christians" whose words we should believe or agents of the devil whom we should disbelieve?

I'm uncomfortable with that suggestion. It appears to violate Christ's words that we are not to judge. Of course, His words must be taken in the context of Paul's words that we **are** to make judgments regarding open sin in the church. As he reasons, after all, we shall eventually judge angels. (That's also the reason to expose the evil of those who pretend to be godly in high positions.) But, as I understand it, it is not our job to judge another person's relationship with God, whether positive or negative. We **can** judge their actions/fruits and determine wither or not they are good or evil.(Of course there come a point when the cumulative evidence of evil actions demonstrate that the profession of godliness is a sham ...)

It also appears to me that doing this sort of judging has created a lot of problems in regard to 3ABN. Folks have been encouraged to "judge" that Dan Shelton is God's mouthpiece -- no matter how ridiculous the statements he has made.

This sort of judging also creates a problem when we disagree with someone's opinion on a matter: The person with whom we disagree feels personally judged, even when we maintain love and respect.

I believe this ought not to be ..

God **has** given us the job of "testing the spirits," or rather the **messages** put out by "spirits" through whatever medium they might choose. If the messages conform to principles God has already supplied, we are on fairly safe ground in accepting the messages as valid, whether or not they were supernaturally given. (Of course, there's also the phenomenon of individuals claiming divine inspiration and just repeating what has already been revealed in Scripture. It usually take a while to discern that all the flurry is simply a means of gaining attention as a "spiritual" or "elect" or "anointed" individual, and that the claim is false.)

As I see it, we need to make a careful distinction between judging individuals and judging statements by these individuals. Good and honest folks don't always have complete insight on the matter, and rascals can tell the truth.

Of course, we need to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves" and decide for ourselves whether or not a person's testimony is credible. That is the sort of judging we do in everyday life and is unrelated to their condition of being "saved" or "unsaved."

I trust that we can disagree without anyone feeling "judged" or "put down" as a result. And I hope we will maintain enough skepticism regarding supernatural phenomenon that we will not be too easy prey of the deceiver who prefers to cloak himself in garments of light ...

I'd appreciate some feed-back on the matter -- especially from those who feel Barbara Kerr has been "judged" or torn apart or put down by those of us who're not so sure that the dreams she related were supernaturally given by God. In my case that's far from the truth.

As the wise man said, mind sharpens mind as iron sharpens iron ..

Posted by: saharafan Aug 21 2006, 09:46 AM

I responded to someone's question on another thread, and I thought that part of my response would also fit in here. So I just quote that part. The question asked was about examples of false visions and dreams.

QUOTE

Concerning your other question, just go to Google and type in "Jeanine Sautron". She's one of the most striking examples of a recipient of "false dreams and visions" within our Adventist church of the last 20 years. She was an Adventist lady living in France who claimed to be the successor of Ellen White (as many others did before her) and supposedly received many visions. She had a lot of supporters and followers and did a lot of time-setting. She finally was disfellowshipped. Another example would be that famous guy from Waco, Texas.

However, there are plenty of additional lesser known examples. I would recommend you to take a look at the following website: <http://www.ellenwhitedefend.com/Another-Prophet.htm>

By the way, the GC receives every year plenty of reports of "visions and dreams" of Adventists who sincerely believe that God gave them a message for the church. I am not sure which department takes care of that and examines those claims but I would guess either the Biblical Research Institute or the White Estate or the Ministerial Association should at least know about it.

Last year there was the story of Soo that made the round, the Laotian sister who claims that she was miraculously healed of cancer and received several visions of an angel who gave her messages for several leading Adventist evangelists as well as unclear prophecy of future events. She predicted that "the whole world will be reached with the gospel, the Sunday Law will come 'after 2005' and Christ will come soon". Now, I honestly am not really sure what to think about her visions. I certainly do not doubt her love for the Savior and her Christian character. **But I can imagine that Satan, the enemy of the true Spirit of Prophecy, is just trying to imitate this true gift as much as possible, "revealing" messages that either just repeat already well known Bible truths, or are not immediately and easily discerned as not being from God. By this, he wants to discredit and render non-effective any true prophetic gift** like the testimonies of sister White as well as any possible future true prophets or "true" visions and dreams that God might want to send us, including the final fulfillment of Joel 2:28-29.

I also want to recommend you to read the very interesting article by J. R. Spangler, "The Gift of Prophecy and 'Thought Voices,'" in *Ministry* magazine from June 1986. If you have already the DJVU browser plugin installed you can access it directly from:

<http://www.adventistarchives.org/docs/MIN/MIN1986-06/index.djvu>

If not, this link will lead you to the site where you can download the plugin and also access the Ministry issue: http://www.adventistarchives.org/doc_info.asp?DocID=6658

I am just briefly quoting two of his findings:

QUOTE

The phenomenon confronting the church

The current spate of messages seems to be characterized by the following:

1. The individuals I am acquainted with who have been connected with this phenomenon are not wild-eyed fanatics. This may not be true of all who claim to be messengers, but those whom I know are sincere, dedicated Christians.
2. The purported messages come via three major methods of communication: dreams, visions, and "thought voices." (Some claim to have received a message on only one occasion; others

claim multiple communications.)

By the way, in those quotations of Ellen White on "dreams & visions" that I posted before, there was a reference to "Anna Phillips" who had received visions that Ellen White declared as "false". Elder Spangler in his article states the following about her:

QUOTE

The above quotations dealt with the Anna Phillips problem. Anna Phillips was sincerely misguided into believing she was having visions from God. Fortunately, when she received Ellen White's counsel, she accepted it, and her supposed visions immediately stopped. She became a faithful Bible worker and served the church well for many years.

Posted by: Denny Aug 21 2006, 09:53 AM

I would assume the Holy Sprit plus common sense would give us a spirit of discernment but perhaps its not that easy, after all in hindsight we believe that Jonah was sent to Ninevah by God cos that is what is written but if we were living in his day how many of us would assume he was a false prophet cos he prediction did not come true? Or would be able to discern the conditional element in his prediction?

Posted by: Lucyladye Aug 21 2006, 10:26 AM

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Posted by: Rough7Seas Aug 21 2006, 10:32 AM

I think it's official. Christians have finally gone bonkers from trying to spiritualize simple commonsense advice.

Posted by: Clay Aug 22 2006, 01:07 PM

how do you know that God will not via the holy spirit enlighten a person letting them know that everything is not what it seems?

Posted by: justme Aug 22 2006, 01:53 PM

QUOTE(Clay @ Aug 22 2006, 03:07 PM)

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as far as I am concerned that IS the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said tha He had to go bacd to eaven so that the "Comforter" could come to us and to guide us into all truth.

: IS comforting to know there IS a better way than the one we are on.

"Test" the spirits means to "evaluate" according to God's Word. Measure the spirit by God's standard. Look in Galatians to see what the fruits of the spirit are. Love, Joy, Longsuffering, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, are these on the list?

Taste and see that the Lord is Good.

Posted by: saharafan Aug 22 2006, 08:46 PM

Seventh-day Adventist Bible teachers have generally agreed upon that there are at least four basic tests that according to the Bible have to be applied if someone claims to be a prophet or to have received a message from God for the church or for some of its members. I refer especially to the book "Seventh-day Adventists Believe... : A Biblical Exposition of 27 Fundamental Doctrines", Chapter 17, pp. 223-224.

These four fundamental tests of the prophetic gift are:

1) "Does the message agree with the Bible?" Isaiah 8:19-20; Deuteronomy 13:1-4. "This text implies that messages of any prophet ought to be in harmony with God's law and testimony throughout the Bible. A later prophet must not contradict earlier prophets. The Holy Spirit never contradicts His previously given testimony..."

2) "Do the predictions come true?" Deuteronomy 18:21-22; Jeremiah 28:9. However, we need to be aware of the possibility of a conditional prophecy, but in this case, the conditions must also be clearly given as integral part of the message.

3) "Is Christ's incarnation recognized?" 1 John 4:1-3; John 16:13-14. What does the prophet teach about Christ? "This test demands more than a simple acknowledgement that Jesus Christ lived on earth. The true prophet must confess the biblical teaching on Christ's incarnation--must believe in His deity and pre-existence, His virgin birth, true humanity, sinless life, atoning sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, intercessory ministry and second advent." Christ also has to be the center or basis of the message of the prophet.

4) "Does the prophet bear good or bad 'fruit'?" Matthew 7:15-20. The life and actions of the prophet and his influence on others have to be examined and to be compared to biblical standards. "Prophecy comes through the Holy Spirit's inspiring 'holy men of God' (2 Peter 1:21)".

"Any person claiming to have the prophetic gift should be subjected to these Biblical tests. If he or she measures up to these criteria we can have confidence that indeed the Holy Spirit has given that individual the gift of prophecy."

All four of these tests have to be applied, and all of them have to be passed before we can trust the prophetic message. They are all equally important. **If we now consider these four tests, we find that three of them deal only with the message of the prophet, with his teachings. Only one of them actually concerns the person receiving the message or vision himself!** This should not be overlooked. Our main emphasis thus should not be on the "fruits" or "spiritual fruit" of the prophet, although certainly this point is essential, too. But it is only one of four. If this test is passed, there are still three more to be applied directly to the message in question, before we can accept it as being from God and the messenger as being a true prophet.

Posted by: princessdi Aug 22 2006, 09:38 PM

Already, I see that "b" is a problem. A lot of predictions/prophecies as time predictions/prophecies, and it maybe years before you know if they come to past. think of the 2300 day prophecy, Daniel was dead so long when that propheet came to an end. Some wanted

to say that EGW predicted the twin towers being blown up, she was dead 100 years when that happened. Adventist believed her to be a prophet, made doctrine and whole denomination from her words a long time before a lot of her future predictions came to fruition.

I think it is much simpler than all of this. I just think it is within your own relationship with God, does what they say have the ring of truth? Jesus said His sheep know His voice, and I believe they will be able to hear His voice through which ever medium He chooses to speak. The only thing that is key is a personal relationship with Him. The test is on an individual basis, not corporate.

QUOTE(saharafan @ Aug 22 2006, 07:46 PM)

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