

**Articles and Sermons :: Practical tips for the End-time church by Andrew Strom****Practical tips for the End-time church by Andrew Strom - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2010/3/17 17:47****Practical tips for the End-time church***by Andrew Strom*

Some people say that knowing Scripture is the only real key to discernment that we need. And yes - Scripture is very important - especially in exposing false doctrine. But it is not only doctrines or teachings that are the greatest danger today. It is just as likely to be false 'anointings' or spirits - perhaps even "lying signs and wonders". And we may need more than just a good understanding of Scripture to spot these things. Remember, a lot of the people caught up in the "manifestations mania" that we described in the last chapter actually know their Bible quite well. And yet they could still be deceived. So what are the things that can help us avoid deception in similar situations?

Some of the most basic keys to discernment that God has shown me are as follows:

- (1) Know your HOLY GOD intimately. (When you have seen His glory, His holiness and His love - by drawing close to Him in prayer - then you can usually see through any counterfeits because you know the "real thing" so well).
- (2) Know your Bible. It is very important to be able to spot teachings that are either extra-biblical or directly opposed to what the Scriptures teach. However, it is important to remember that the Scribes and Pharisees were extremely learned in the Scriptures and yet they missed the very Messiah that was prophesied! So knowing the Bible is important - especially for doctrinal issues - but we need to be able to "discern the spirits" also.
- (3) Be a "lover of truth". This is very crucial. Are you someone who will actually stand up for Truth - even against the crowd? Or do you remain silent even when you are convinced something is very wrong?
- (4) Purity of heart and Humility. Many deceptions only appeal to us because there is something inside us that "wants" to believe them. They are seductive because of darkness and wrong motives in our own lives. We must search our hearts and root these out.
- (5) The 'inner witness' of the Holy Spirit. We must learn to never over-ride this "still small voice", as it will save us from deception again and again. (More on this below).

Did you know that even an unbeliever can often spot a con-man or a snake-oil salesman? They get a kind-of "gut feeling" about such things. And they are often right! In fact, they are often less gullible than the Christians! (Because we are told in the church- "Do not judge", 'Touch not the Lord's anointed', "You have a critical spirit if you do not join in", etc, etc. This is the very reason why Christians are often the most gullible and easily deceived). We need to realize that the Bible says to "test the spirits" and warns very strongly that the Last Days will be a time of "seducing spirits" and great deception. So how can we become more alert to these things?

I believe that God has placed within every human being at least a measure of an inner "warning system" to protect us from being easily deceived - just as He has given us all a conscience. It is something that He has built into every one of us, in His mercy. (I guess a lot of it is simply 'common sense'). However, Christians should have an even greater advantage in this area, because we have the "inner witness" of the Holy Spirit, and the 'still small voice' of the Lord speaking to us every day.

But what I have found again and again with people who give themselves over to some form of deception is that they often "override" these inner alarms. They go against their 'better judgment'. They ignore the little voice deep inside them that is telling them that there is something wrong. Christians today do this all the time. That is how they get themselves involved in such foolish deceptions.

This may all sound very obvious, but I am telling you, this one basic area alone could wipe out half the deception in the church right now. If only people would listen to these internal 'alarm bells' and act with common sense, half of it would be gone overnight.

The Bible is very clear that the Last Days are a time of such widespread deception that it would "deceive if possible the very elect". It also shows that much of this deception will arise from WITHIN the church - luring believers who have "itching ears". Do we see evidence of this kind of thing taking place today? Absolutely! In fact, some of it is at a level that is truly shocking. And yet it is all accepted as perfectly "normal" by many Christians.

One of the problems, of course, is that those who bring in these deceptions are 'trusted' by the congregation. They have a reputation and they put across some very convincing-sounding arguments and surround the whole thing with Biblical terminology. And thus the deception is harder to spot. (After all, if it were not "deceptive" then it would not be called 'deception'!) People see spiritual power operating and assume that it "must be God". But this is a very dangerous assumption to make in these days.

As I said in a previous chapter, there is also a lot of "peer pressure" involved as well. For if everyone in the church is getting into something, then shouldn't you just ignore those little 'alarm bells' and jump right in? This is what is happening all the time in the church right now. And some preachers are very good at making people feel that they are 'hindering the Spirit' if they do not get involved.

So how do you avoid being deceived in this way?

Very simply, you do not go along to these meetings in a "gullible" frame of mind. And you do not allow yourself to be carried along with the crowd. You listen carefully to the preaching and make sure that it truly is Biblical. Then you watch the ministry happening down the front of the meeting and discern whether it really is of God or not. You do not "override" any feelings of unease or any 'alarm bells' going off inside you. And you do not allow yourself to be swayed by 'peer pressure'. Even if the whole church is getting into something, it does not mean that you have to. If you do not feel quite "right" about it then DO NOT GET INVOLVED. If you need to, make some excuse and get out of there! You do not have to get involved in things that do not feel spiritually "right" to you.

A lot of people today will go to the front to get something "imparted" to them by almost every visiting speaker - almost as a matter of course. I tell you, in today's climate this can be a very dangerous thing to do. In fact, some of this 'impartation' business has very flimsy backing in Scripture. Who knows what on earth these preachers are imparting? And who knows where they picked it up? I tell you, deceiving spirits are commonplace today, and I believe they are being imparted to Christians on a large scale.

Let me give you an example. I received the following account from a preacher in England not too long ago: "There were about 20 fellow ministers all gathered together in one large room at a local minister's house. We were introduced to the special guest... The next 3 hours were the weirdest three hours I have ever had to endure. We started listening to testimony which seemed very powerful, next she spoke of the times that she meets with the Angel Gabriel and other spiritual beings, next we moved on to portals between this world and the next and then finally to how she was going to open up a portal to Heaven in the room that we were all in. Now things started to happen, really crazy things and strange noises... As moved around the room ministering to individual people they were crashing to the ground, bouncing up and down, running around as if on fire and making all sorts of sounds. When she came to me she had no prophetic words for me and nothing happened to me so she just moved on. My Vineyard friend was the first to crash to the floor. Since that day his church has taken on a different guise, it is not the same church any more."

Now, you should know that this 'guest speaker' is a woman who is very high up in the Prophetic Movement - well known and highly regarded (except by people with discernment). This is typical of the kind of thing that happens in a lot of the more "powerful" prophetic meetings today. People are so desperate for a 'touch' or a spiritual experience that they will fall for anything. I myself have been in one of her meetings and what I saw was people making involuntary "bat"-like movements all over the building and an eerie 'wailing' noise filling the air. It was truly awful.

Now, it should not surprise us that there are strong deceptions or "powerful delusions" around today, for this is exactly what the Scriptures predict will happen. All the way through the New Testament we are warned of these days - over and over again.

However, one of the problems we have is that God actually does 'strange and unusual' things Himself. (Especially in Revivals). So we cannot simply throw out everything unusual. Just think about the Book of Acts for a moment. Not only are there healings and miracles and demons being cast out right through the whole book, but there are also occasionally angels appearing with instructions from the Lord, and an abundance of dreams, visions and prophecies, etc. So we see that God is definitely a SUPERNATURAL GOD. He does "unusual" things. Angelic visitations DO HAPPEN. Prophetic signs DO OCCUR. But please notice that all of these things have a certain holy "character" about them. And that is the key right there. They have a holy character, because they come from a holy God.

Being a strong Pentecostal-type Christian myself, I expect to see believers speaking in tongues and moving in the gifts of the Holy Spirit - just like in the New Testament. But as I stated earlier, God never goes against His own holy character.

Or against Scripture. And as I often say, we may see Him do 'unusual' things but I believe we need to draw the line at "weird" or ugly. Some of the deception that is around right now has a 'touchy-feely' New Age sense about it. Remember that at the New Age movement majors on "inner healing" and unusual spiritual experiences. I do not believe in 'guided visualization' or anything of that kind. And neither am I very fond of the writings of Catholic mystics or the like.

However, I have personally found it very helpful to immerse myself in the writings of past Revivalists and the accounts of great moves of God. A lot of the men and women involved in these Revivals lived very close to God and knew Him intimately. They knew His holiness, they knew His glory, and they knew His love. And it is enormously helpful to one's discernment to immerse oneself in these writings, I have found. I would recommend this to all Christians everywhere.

If you have been touched or involved in any way with manifestations or experiences that you think may not have been from God, then I urge you to utterly RENOUNCE (with your mouth, but also from the depths of your very being in Jesus' name) any links or involvement with that experience or 'anointing'. Please do not put this off, my friends. Some of this stuff is extremely dangerous. RENOUNCE it today.

**Re: Practical tips for the End-time church by Andrew Strom - posted by Ceri (), on: 2010/3/18 9:36**

Absolutely spot on!

This mirrors our experiences.

My husband and I suffered such pain and hatred when the Toronto 'blessing' hit our previous church.

My husband was a deacon and I was on the worship team and took bible studies, we were also house group leaders.

We made a stand against the manifestations that suddenly started up which were demonic - people were having epileptic fits on the floor, animal noises, screaming, mocking screeching laughter that sent us cold, 'drunken' behaviour - the pastor's wife regularly with her legs in the air having an 'orgasm' then 'giving birth' (to a new ministry we were told!) In front of children!! The pastor saying how much of a 'turn on' for him her manifestations were! then to top it all the heresies of the teachings.

As you mention in the article, it wasn't our church anymore - these people who were once like family to us became strangers, turning their backs on us as we entered church and saying such hateful things in the street.

We were 'prophesied' against from the pulpit, the church being told to stay away from us as we would steal their joy, we were called 'pharisees' among other names and told that it was a wonder we didn't drop dead before them as did Ananias & Saphira!

The leadership would come around our house lead my hubby into the kitchen and shut the door on me so I couldn't get to him, they would have my husband cornered up against the wall and I would hear them shouting in his face, I would run in panic to a call box to phone my parents friend who was a Pastor, sobbing to him to pray for us.

During one meeting we were called to the front as the leadership and wives queued up determined to try and 'zap' us and get us on the floor.

God was protecting us that night and no one could touch us, all were pushed away from us, the pastor's wife screamed at us in frustration "does God have to break your legs before you fall to the floor!"

As we stood together surrounded by the manifesting 'bodies' of the leadership, I felt a strong comforting hand on my shoulder from behind, I turned but no one was there - unknown to me then my husband at the same time felt a strong hand on his head! We were both filled with such peace and calmness in the storm, we knew God was protecting us.

After a year of fighting, as my husband couldn't bring himself to leave them as he cared so much, the pastor came to see us and told us he was breaking fellowship as we had nothing in common and advised that we left. I was heartbroken, I felt that we'd failed, we couldn't make them see the errors of their ways, we were worn out from the fight.

Now, I am so thankful that God brought us out and 3 years ago moved us back to my home town and to the church who supported us during that painful time.

I thank God for my home church Pastor who also had a tough time for his support of us and for refusing to allow this move in his church. He also made a stand and protected his flock. Thank God he too had support from true men of God.

I thank God for those such as Andrew Strom, who are prepared to speak out at this time and sound a warning alarm, prepared to face the flack that follows. I've never experienced such hatred, such venom from 'christians' we were even sent death threats!

As you say these people can know their bibles and yet are still taken in by the lying, deceiving signs and wonders and manifestations, and even use scripture to attack and to defend their actions.

Having suffered this form of attack, with scriptures and 'prophecy' being used to tear me up and cause us such pain from the pulpit in front of our church, this is what caused my strong response towards the man who used scriptures to attack me on the 'do aborted babies go to hell' thread. This man's methods triggered within me a weakspot of such pain that caused me to pour my heart out at that moment.

Andrew you are so right, these manifestations are so dangerous, one of the leadership that was most venomous towards us and regularly went into a 'fit' on the floor, was later hit with such agonising pain in his head for over a week that he was rushed into hospital and was thought by medical staff and family to be dying.

The pastor now has lost his leadership and some members.

I was so shocked seeing him recently and my husband didn't even recognise him!! He has aged drastically and looks as all men most miserable, he has such a dark shadow over his face. Another young lady we knew that was affected by serious manifestations, went so off the rails that she terrorised her mother and ended up so tragically committing suicide and hanged herself in her bedroom.

God spoke to me so clearly about two weeks ago and has brought me such comfort and release through a passage of scripture many have read many times before - but have never noticed this verse; 1 Corinthians 11 v 19 'for there must be factions among you in order that those who are genuine among you may be recognised.'

Amazing! God knows it all and sees it all!

Thank you Andrew - God bless you, I hope many heed your warnings.

**Re: , on: 2010/3/18 13:28**

Amen Ceri

I do believe that it is worse in Britain than it is in America when it comes to the issues that you raised. I myself am a "Pentecostal," who had to watch a great church go down this path. Here in Kansas City, there used to be a church called Full Faith Church of Love, a big church, but totally sold out to soul winning. Every week for the longest time souls were won, radically transformed souls. Then this Toronto "blessing," occurred and caused a major rift in the church. I was part of a home group for about three years. I went of, at the leading of the Spirit, back to Scotland for a year to share the Gospel. When I came back to Kansas and back to my home-group, I could not believe what had happened. The first time I was there they put on this video from the Toronto movement and it was all about "laughing." As the video progressed, all in the room started laughing, yet it was beyond laughter. To me, it was truly demonic, it was a mocking laughter. I got out of there as soon as possible. No amount of persuasion could change their minds. I was looked upon as a quencher of the Spirit. That church, which was 5000 strong, no longer exists, neither does the home-group. I have watched the home-group leaders lives go down and down. Now they are not recognizable as Christians.

Just before I went to Greenock a couple of years ago for the revival conference, I became aware that most of the local Pentecostal movement had been taken up by Todd Bentley and the signs and wonders movement. I sent two particular letters to leaders pleading with them to, even if just this once, listen to me and reject Todd Bentley and that movement. Very sad. I have found that the Pentecostal movement in Britain lacks discernment in this critical area. I see it as a major strategy of the enemy to bring down the Pentecostal movement around the world. In the last 100 years, in a time of dying denominations, much of the pentecostal movement was excellent. Unfortunately the enemy has been very successful in bringing it down.

I do believe though, that the way is now clear to see and amalgam of the very best of the Pentecostals, or classic pentecostals and the very best of the evangelicals. In this "New thing," as David Legge put it, that is coming, this reformation or new wineskin will be made up of people who are totally sold out to Jesus Christ and His word and full of the Holy Spirit. If God had to allow the old structure to be dismantled in order to bring about this new structure, then praise God for it.....  
...brother Frank

**Re: Practical tips for the End-time church by Andrew Strom - posted by browny, on: 2011/11/11 3:16**

I was reading this article from Andrew Strom today ( Practical tips for the End-time church)

It was posted a long time ago by sermonindex on 2010/3/17

I strongly have the impression the Lord want to bring this to our attention again.

If you never read this article before, please take time do it now.

Bless you dear saints,  
Browny.

**Re: - posted by Joyful\_Heart, on: 2011/11/11 4:21**

Amen to this.

This article speaks the Truth. Thank you so much for bringing it up again. Something to reread as the Day draws closer. All glory to God! Main point is what I have been saying lately. So much out there, I just want to stay close to Him, in His protection. Not to the left or to the right but at His feet surrounded by His care.

May we long to stay close to Him and may we all be able to discern and have the love of God flowing though us and take many to Him.