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Believe Not Every Spirit but Test the Spirits



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VISION: To hear the midnight cry, "The bridegroom comes, go out to meet Him" (Matthew 25:6) and become like Him when I see Him as He is (1 John 3:2).

MISSION: Purify myself even as Christ is pure (1 John 3:3) to be glad, to rejoice, give honor to Christ and be ready for the marriage of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7).

VALUES: Follow the Lamb wherever He goes (Revelation 14:4), be without fault before God (Revelation 14:5), be perfect even as my Father in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), wear the Lamb's fine, clean and white linen (Revelation 19:8) do righteously (1 John 3:10) and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8).

OVERALL AIM: Studies presented here unveil Bible knowledge to inquiring minds to prompt the following inquiries: "Are our feet on the rock of ages? Are we one with Christ as He is one with the Father" (John 10:30 in Evangelism, {Ev} 199.1)? Am I crucified with Christ (Galatians 2:20)?

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26 **PURPOSE/REASON FOR/WHY**

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28 This study aims to awaken studiousness in Christ's disciples.

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31 **OBJECTIVES/WHAT WE WANT TO ACCOMPLISH/THESIS**

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33 At the end of this study, the reader is motivated to examine more
34 deeply the claims of people who allegedly speak for God.

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37 **SIGNIFICANCE: SO WHAT**

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39 Jesus gave His disciples a word picture of the end of the age. From
40 along the slopes of the Mount of Olives, He said to them: "**Many false**
41 **prophets will arise and will mislead many**" (Matthew 24:11, New
42 American Standard Bible). "...See to it that no one misleads you"
43 (Matthew 24:4, NASB). This warning warrants our immediate attention!

44
45 **BACKGROUND CONTEXT**

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47 Face value is superficial; dig deeper than the surface! "Prove all
48 things and hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). God
49 looks beyond the surface and so should we. Lessons from the Bible
50 reinforce the idea that what you see is not always what you get;
51 hence the imperative to prove the veracity of your assumptions
52 because to the unperceiving, untrained mind, brass looks like gold.

53
54 East of Eden, God set up the first experimental laboratory! In the
55 midst of a beautiful garden God planted the tree of life and the tree
56 of knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:9). And to the man who took
57 residence in God's garden, He said: "...Of every tree of the garden
58 [you] may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and
59 evil, [you] shall not eat of it; in the day that [you do you] shall
60 surely die" (Genesis 2:16-17). Sin and its awful consequences
61 testify that Adam's allegiance was not anchored in the Creator.

62 "...At the spring of Harod... (Judges 7:1, NIV) God set up another
 63 experimental laboratory. Personal appeals drew too many unstable
 64 volunteers who required testing or proving. Gideon had called for
 65 and assembled a strike force to launch a counteroffensive against an
 66 eastern coalition camped in the Valley of Jezreel (Judges 6:33-35).
 67 God, being privy to the boastful condition of the human heart (Judges
 68 7:2) set up a test to wean the army of 32,000 men. Level one testing
 69 excluded 22, 000 men who trembled with fear (Judges 7:3). Level two
 70 testing excluded 9,700 men who got down on their knees and drank by
 71 lapping water as a dog. In the end, only 300 men lapped water with
 72 their hands to their mouth (Judges 7:5-6). After 94% of Gideon's
 73 volunteers were excluded, "The Lord said to Gideon, 'With the [300]
 74 men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your
 75 hands...'" (Judges 7:7). This example shows the value of testing.

76
 77 At the end of the age, God sets up a final, experimental laboratory.
 78 It will consist of a time of distress such as never was since there
 79 was a nation (Daniel 12:1, NIV). This laboratory will guarantee that
 80 affliction will not rise a second time (Nahum 1:7). Prior sealing in
 81 the forehead (Revelation 7:3) guarantees that the 144,000 (Revelation
 82 14:1-5) successfully passes through that time of Jacob's trouble
 83 (Jeremiah 30:7) and in the end, wear white robes, signifying they
 84 have washed the [character of their] garments and made them white in
 85 the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:13-14). Their preferred seating
 86 in the temple of God, in His immediate presence near the throne comes
 87 as a result of being proved and found worthy (Revelation 7:15). This
 88 background provided the impetus for the study question that follows.

89

90 **STUDY QUESTION**

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92 "How long [you] simple one, will [you] love simplicity..." (Proverbs
 93 1:22)?

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95 **ANSWER SOURCE: HOLY BIBLE**

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97 1. "The simple believes every word..." (Proverbs 14:15), "...inherits
 98 folly..." (Proverbs 14:18) "...and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3 &
 99 27:12). To protect His children against external threats, God
 100 says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits
 101 whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out
 102 into the world" (1 John 4:1). In the Amplified Bible, 1 John 4:1
 103 reads: "...Do not put faith in every spirit, but prove (**test**) **the**
 104 **spirits to discover whether they proceed from God**; for many false
 105 prophets have gone into the world." But the risk of deception also
 106 arises from internal sources; hence, God offers this counsel:
 107 "Suppose there are prophets **among you** or those who dream dreams
 108 about the future, and they promise you signs or miracles, and the
 109 predicted signs or miracles occur. If they then say, '**Come, let us**
 110 **worship other gods'—gods you have not known before—do not listen to them.**
 111 The Lord your God is testing you to see if you truly love him with
 112 all your heart and soul (Deuteronomy 13:1-3, New Living
 113 Translation). "...Brethren, **mark them** [that] cause divisions and
 114 offences contrary to the doctrine, which you have learned; **and**
 115 **avoid them** for they that are such **serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,**
 116 but their own belly and by good words and fair speeches **deceive the**
 117 **hearts of the simple**" (Romans 16:17-18). False prophets and false
 118 teachers introduce destructive heresies and many will follow their
 119 pernicious ways and the truth shall be evil spoken of (2 Peter 2:1-
 120 2). Don't be a simpleton!

121

122 2. **The simple lives without the Holy Spirit, relying purely on either**
 123 **logic or intuition or both.** The limitation of logic and/or
 124 intuition are these: "The natural man receives not the things of
 125 the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can
 126 he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1
 127 Corinthians 2:14). It is the role of the Holy Spirit to search the

128 deep things of God and make them known to those in whom He resides
 129 (read 1 Corinthians 2:10; John 16:13 & 14:26, & 1 John 2:20). A
 130 sobering example of Holy Spirit revelation follows. Peter was
 131 among the disciples filled with the Holy Spirit from Pentecost
 132 (Acts 2:1-18), and thereafter, when Ananias and Sapphira attempted
 133 a deception, the Holy Spirit unmasked it (Acts 5:1-10). Without
 134 the aid of the Holy Spirit, "Evil men and seducers shall wax worse
 135 and worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Timothy 3:13). But
 136 fear Not! "Set your affections on things above, not on things on
 137 the earth" (Colossians 3:2) and God will keep you in perfect peace
 138 (Isaiah 26:3) and make your heart wise by filling you with the
 139 spirit of wisdom (Exodus 28:3) through the Holy Spirit (Daniel
 140 5:11).

141
 142
 143 3. **The simple fails to recognize that not all Israel are of Israel**
 144 (Romans 9:6). We are to treat everyone within our assemblies as
 145 brethren, while simultaneously remembering that the gospel net
 146 draws a very diverse group so that God's garden has wheat and tares
 147 (Matthew 13:24-30 & 41). John points to the sifting time that
 148 makes manifest the churches' diversity when he said: "They went out
 149 from us, but were not of us..." (1 John 2:19). The lesson here is to
 150 be wise and discerning without being judgmental. The example of
 151 the Gileadites is on record for our admonition. They occupied the
 152 passage of Jordan and intercepted Ephraimites who had escaped their
 153 slaughter. To determine the identity of each traveler, they asked
 154 those attempting to pass through to say: Shibboleth, to which
 155 Ephraimites responded by saying: Sibboleth, for they could not
 156 frame it right (Judges 12:1-6). Therefore, the simple must gain
 157 understanding; they must be like the Bereans, who not only
 158 "...receive the word [of God] with all readiness of mind, [but also
 159 to] search the Scriptures daily [to determine truth]" (Acts 17:10-
 160 11). "The entrance of [God's] words gives... understanding unto the
 161 simple" (Psalm 119:130) that they might keep understanding and find

162 good (Proverbs 19:8). "To the law and to the testimony, if
 163 [prophets] do not speak according to [God's] word, they have no
 164 light of dawn" (Isaiah 8:20, NIV). These things were written for
 165 our learning (Romans 15:4) to "...Be wise as serpents and harmless as
 166 doves" (Matthew 10:16).

167
 168 4. "The simple are slow to learn from the example of young, King
 169 Solomon. He asked God for understanding to exercise judgment that
 170 discerns between good and bad (1 Kings 3:9). And because Solomon
 171 asked for understanding to discern judgment, God gave him a wise
 172 and an understanding heart (1 Kings 3:11-12). "...In the hearts of
 173 all that are wise hearted, [God] puts wisdom..." (Exodus 31:6) so the
 174 "The wise in heart... receives commandments..." (Proverbs 10:8) and
 175 stores knowledge (Proverbs 10:14). The wisdom and understanding of
 176 the simple lie in keeping and doing God's statutes and judgments
 177 (Deuteronomy 4:5-6). "...The Holy Scriptures... make us wise unto
 178 salvation through faith... in Christ Jesus..." (2 Timothy 3:15), hence,
 179 God appeals to the simple in these words: "Hear instruction and be
 180 wise and refuse it not" (Proverbs 8:33) because "The wise shall
 181 inherit glory but shame shall be the promotion of fools" (Proverbs
 182 3:35), those whose ways seem right in their own eyes (Proverbs
 183 12:15 & Isaiah 5:21) and who "...detests turning from evil" (Proverbs
 184 13:19, NIV). God has a book of remembrance for the wise, where He
 185 writes their names because they reverence Him and dwell upon His
 186 name. And those whose names are written in God's book of
 187 remembrance belongs to God; and they are not only spared in the day
 188 when God returns to make up His jewels but they also discern
 189 between the righteous and the wicked, between them that serve God
 190 and them that serve Him not (Malachi 3:16-18). You should be leery
 191 of people, religious and non-religious, who clamor for
 192 unquestioning trust. "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the
 193 son of man, in whom there is no help" (Psalm 146:3; Isaiah 31:1 &
 194 3).

196 **ANSWER SOURCE: SACRED WRITINGS:**

197

198 We are pursuing answers to the question: "How long [you] simple one,
199 will [you] love simplicity..." (Proverbs 1:22)? More answers follow!

200

201 1. **The simple are satisfied with a superficial knowledge of God.**

202 However, "Christ can be best glorified by those who serve Him
203 intelligently" (Mind, Character and Personality, Vol. 1, {1MCP}
204 364.4). "[We must be trained] to be thinkers and not mere
205 reflectors of other men's thought" (1 MCP 361.1). We are living
206 in a time of spiritual AND moral "...Darkness, [which] covers the
207 earth and [the people are in] gross darkness..." (Isaiah 60:2). And
208 like ancient Israel who journeyed toward the earthly Canaan, "We
209 are [near] the borders of the eternal world..." (This Day with God,
210 {TDG} 117.1). "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation
211 through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2
212 Thessalonians 2:13). Those whom God sends to you as prophets, He
213 places His Holy Spirit upon them (Numbers 11:29 & Isaiah 42: 1 &
214 3). Thus, after you have tested the prophets and confirmed them
215 authentic, then it is safe to believe them (2 Chronicles 20:20).
216 "We cannot enjoy the favor of God unless we comply with the
217 conditions upon which His favor is bestowed" (Conflict and Courage,
218 {CC}, 370.2). "Much prayer and the most vigorous exercise of the
219 mind are necessary if we would be prepared to do the work which God
220 would entrust to us. Many never attain to the position which they
221 might occupy, because they wait for God to do for them that which
222 He has given them power to do for themselves. All who are fitted
223 for usefulness in this life must be trained by the severest mental
224 and moral discipline, and then God will assist them by combining
225 divine power with human effort" (CC 370.4). "Study to [show
226 yourself] approved unto God, a workman that needed not to be
227 ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).

228 SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS: In this study, we examined the tendency of the
 229 simple to love simplicity. They believe every word without applying
 230 appropriate tests; they trust to their own judgment and feelings
 231 instead of the Holy Spirit; they fail to recognize that not all
 232 Israel are of Israel; they are slow to learn from the example of
 233 young, King Solomon and are satisfied with a superficial knowledge of
 234 God. It is time for a self-check, a moment of introspection! Do the
 235 characteristics presented here describe you? What should you do to
 236 serve Jesus Christ more intelligently? Because it is of little
 237 redeeming value to engage in Bible Study merely for information,
 238 subsequent paragraphs follow that make a practical application of the
 239 truths set forth here.

240

241 **DISCUSSION: WHAT DO THESE THINGS MEAN?**

242

243 Awake out of slumber! In our day the church has been, to a great
 244 degree, content with the surface truths of revelation, made so plain
 245 and easy to be understood that many have thought these supplied all
 246 that was essential, and in accepting them they have been content. But
 247 the Holy Spirit, working upon the mind, will not allow it to rest in
 248 indolence. [He will] awaken an earnest desire for truth uncorrupted
 249 with error and false doctrines and celestial truth will reward the
 250 diligent seeker" (Ye Shall Receive Power, {YRP} 105.1). "[Just as]
 251 in ancient times... [when] a man [who] hires land to cultivate,
 252 ...[unearths] buried treasure... and sells all that he has, in order to
 253 purchase the field containing the treasure" (Matthew 13:44-46 in
 254 Christ's Object Lessons, {COL} 103.2-3), [similarly], the finder of
 255 heavenly treasure will count no labor too great and no sacrifice too
 256 dear, in order to gain the treasures of truth" (COL 104.1). Spend
 257 time with the word of God; take time to be holy, speak often with
 258 Jesus Christ! Rely NOT on others to eat, digest and assimilate the
 259 Word of God for you.

260 **CONCLUSIONS: WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?**

261

262 In the closing scenes of earth's history, "...The false prophets that
 263 wrought miracles... [will] deceive them that had received the mark of
 264 the beast..." (Revelation 19:20), who did not have the seal of God in
 265 their forehead (Ephesians 1:13 & Revelation 7:3). Sadly, Zion will
 266 have its share of foolish virgins that will exist unto the coming of
 267 Christ (Matthew 25:2). Only take heed that you are not one of them.
 268 God appeals to you in the most earnest of ways, saying: "O ye simple,
 269 understand wisdom; and ye fools, be... of an understanding heart"
 270 (Proverbs 8:5)! "Be very careful then, how you live—not as unwise
 271 but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days
 272 are evil" (Ephesians 5:15). The false prophets will come to you with
 273 a lying spirit in their mouths (1 Kings 22:18-23; 2 Chronicles 18:18-
 274 22; Jeremiah 29:21 & 31 & Lamentations 2:14). But you are NOT a
 275 simpleton! Eat strong meat, which "...Belongs to them that are of full
 276 age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to
 277 discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14). Therefore, let no one
 278 deceive you! God gives you a sound mind (2 Timothy 1:7) and "We have
 279 received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, which is of God
 280 that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (1
 281 Corinthians 2:12); therefore, let the things that we speak not be in
 282 the words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Ghost teaches
 283 (1 Corinthians 2:13) and the things that we accept be what the Spirit
 284 says unto the church of Laodicea (Revelation 3:15-17).

285

286 "Take heed to yourself, that your heart be not deceived and you turn
 287 aside and serve other gods and worship them" (Deuteronomy 11:16).

288 Satan and his servants have the capability to disguise themselves as
 289 servants of righteousness (2 Corinthians 11:14-15). Also, as the day
 290 of Christ's return draws near, "...Take heed that you be not deceived
 291 for many shall come in [Christ's] name, saying, 'I am Christ;' ...go...
 292 not therefore after them" (Luke 21:8). God will take care of you if

293 you hide His words in your heart. His promise to you are these: "The
 294 remnant of Jacob shall be among the Gentiles in the midst of many
 295 people as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion
 296 among the flocks of sheep, who if he goes through, both treads down
 297 and tears in pieces and none can deliver" (Micah 5:8). "[Your] hand
 298 shall be lifted up upon [your] adversaries and all [your] enemies
 299 shall be cut off" (Micah 5:9). "No weapon, [including the deceptions
 300 of false prophets], formed against you shall prosper..." (Isaiah
 301 54:17). Only take heed that you walk in the Holy Spirit (Ezekiel
 302 36:27; Romans 8:1 & Galatians 5:16 & 25).

303

304 **CALL TO ACTION: WHAT SHALL WE DO?**

305

306 Be established in the faith of Jesus Christ (Acts 16:4-5). Feast on
 307 the Word of God; it is a lamp to your feet and a light to your path
 308 (Psalm 119:105). "...The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise
 309 the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
 310 the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes" (Psalm
 311 19:7-8). Have a singular focus on things pertaining to God (Matthew
 312 6:22-23 & Colossians 3:1-2). More importantly; however, ask God for
 313 the gift of discerning of spirits (1 Corinthians 12:1-10) and "...As
 314 the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters..., so let
 315 your eyes wait upon the Lord your God..." (Psalm 123:2), knowing that
 316 "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall
 317 mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they
 318 shall walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).