

Spiritually Discerned

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Into:

Last time we studied the book of 1 Corinthians we learned that they were having divisions and factions among them because they had neglected to grow spiritually. They were still baby in the faith when they were supposed to more mature in the experience. The strife among them was only a symptom of a deeper problem—a lack of personal experience with the true God.

In 1 Corinthians, Paul presents two extremes that prevent people from knowing/experiencing God. He suggests that the Church in Corinth is facing the same two problems, as a result they are facing divisions among themselves. What are they?

Body:

1. According to Paul, what are the two problems that can prevent people from knowing and experiencing God?

“For the Jews **require a sign**, and the Greeks **seek after wisdom**.” 1 Corinthians 1:22

2. Signs are not God’s primary way of operating.

- a. In fact, the devil and his angels use signs to deceive people even within Christianity.
- b. God uses miracles to authenticate His movement on Earth.
 - i. We see that in the deliverance of God’s people from Egypt all the way to their establishment in the Promised Land.
 - ii. We see it in the ministry of Jesus.
 - iii. We see it in the rise of the apostolic church.

“Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, ‘Teacher, we want to see a sign from You.’ But He answered and said to them, ‘An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.’” Matthew 12:38, 39

“Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’” Matthew 7:22–23

“He performs great signs, so that he even makes fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men. And he deceives those who dwell on the earth by those signs which he was granted to do in the sight of the beast...” Revelation 13:13, 14

“And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *coming* out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are spirits of demons, performing signs, *which* go out to the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.” Revelation 16:13, 14

“For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand.” Matthew 24:24

3. The other extreme that people tend to go is relying on human reasoning.

- a. The Greeks represented those that would rely on reason, as opposed to signs, for the bases of their beliefs.

“For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks **seek after wisdom**.” 1 Corinthians 1:22

“The civilization of ancient Greece has been immensely influential on subsequent world history. [...] It produced radical innovations in a wide range of fields – philosophy, science, art, architecture, government and politics, and more.” Ancient Greek Civilization, TimeMaps

4. Neither those who look for signs nor those that rely on human wisdom can understand the things of God because they are discerned by the Holy Spirit.

“But 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.” 1 Corinthians 2:14

5. God tries to reveal Himself to both groups primarily through the writings of the prophets.

- a. God’s Word can supply the needs of both sides of the spectrum.

“For he [Jesus] received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. We have also a **more sure word of prophecy**; whereunto **ye do well that ye take heed**, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:” 2 Peter 1:17-19, KJV

“But those things which God **foretold by the mouth of all His prophets**, that the Christ would suffer, **He has thus fulfilled**. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out...” Acts 3:18, 19

“For I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, **declaring the end from the beginning**, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done...” Isaiah 46:9, 10

6. However, being convinced that the Scriptures are reliable is not enough—we must receive the insight of the Holy Spirit.

“But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, **the hidden wisdom** which **God ordained before the ages** for our glory, which **none of the rulers of this age knew**; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written: ‘Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.’ But **God has revealed them to us through His Spirit**. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God.” 1 Corinthians 2:7-10

7. We should be seeking for the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

“If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit **to those who ask Him!**” Luke 11:13

“Pray that the mighty energies of the Holy Spirit, with all their quickening, recuperative, and transforming power, may fall like an electric shock on the palsy-stricken soul, causing every nerve to thrill with new life, restoring the whole man from his dead, earthly, sensual state to spiritual soundness.” Testimonies for the Church, Vol. 5, p. 267

Reflection/Appeal:

Do I ask for the Holy Spirit to come into my heart daily?

Do I ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten my mind when I am reading the Scriptures?

Do I allow the Holy Spirit to guide me into all truth?

Do I use the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given me for God’s glory?

Do I ask for the Holy Spirit’s power so I can witness for Jesus?