

# Discernment:

critical for last days survival



by  
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## Author's Preface

The predicament this cliff climber (cover) has gotten himself into seems grim indeed. People also get stuck in the most awful predicaments. A lot of it

would be unnecessary with discernment! These precarious times we live in make the need for a stronger ability to discern of critical importance. People are distinguished in various ways. In truth only one distinction really matters. Our Lord spoke indirectly of discernment in John 3:3 while making the following distinction: “*Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” You could substitute discern for the word see above. Further in verse 5-6 he said: “*...Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*” With these particular remarks Jesus made clear one group is ruled by the flesh and have no ability to discern concerning matters of the spirit. The Bible talks about those who are blind, but can see; and those who see but are blind. This seems a mystery to most. Look how much of the world live out their lives in moral bankruptcy. Most are clueless as to how much the spiritual realm influences what happens naturally. The thrust of this book is to emphasize how important the gift of discerning really is. Those with access to this gift are blessed. Accepting God's gift of salvation through Jesus Christ opens a door into another, better world. It gives access to the Holy Spirit, the giver of all spiritual gifts. No wonder believers see with brand new eyes. The world can't understand it. Gifts are received throughout life by believers and non believers alike. Many put aside gifts and never use them. God gives natural gifts to all. We know many are never used. Those who are born again receive various spiritual gifts as he wills. One such gift is the discerning of spirits. To be given such a valuable gift never to be used is very sad. Do you have this gift? If so are you using it to the full? Your life may depend upon it.

David Winecoff  
Author

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# 1.

## Importance of Discernment

What is discernment? In my way of thinking it is the ability to see and walk righteously in the moral darkness surrounding us. It is the capacity to look at a person and see or sense what is going on inside. Such a knowing is very valuable. Many just pretend, game you, and tell lies. To know when someone is speaking the truth or not is quite valuable in decision making. Believers in our society are increasingly vexed by those who lie as a way of life. Truth is critical to survival. More and more it is evident many believers are not discerning between a lie, the truth or a mixture of the two.

### **Words can be helpful**

Synonyms can be helpful in getting a grasp on a word's meaning. Words like: intelligence, perception, comprehension, logic, foresight, insight and understanding give us further insight into what discernment might mean.

Antonyms convey an opposite meaning. Discernment's antonyms are words like: mindless, senseless, confusion, dullness, simple, dense and certainly folly.

The word discern is found twenty three times in the Bible. Here is a listing of their locations:

### **Bible verses containing the word discern**

Genesis 37:23	Ezra 3:13	Matthew 16:3
31:32	Job 4:16	Luke 12:56
38:25	6:30	I Corin. 2:14
II Sam. 14:17	Prov. 2:7	11:29
19:35	Ecc. 8:5	12:10
I Kings 3:9	Ezek 44:23	Hebrews 4:12
3:11	Jonah 4:11	5:14
20:41	Mal 3:18	

Much can be learned from studying each one of these verses and others with similar or opposite meaning words. How God uses words is important. It

sharpens one's understanding of the truth. For the sake of brevity I will use just enough of these verses to highlight their importance. I did this study to increase my understanding of discernment and its importance.

## **How frail I am**

The next verse makes a great short prayer. Worth saying often! It reminds me of the brevity of my life. How precious time really is. Why allow others who are not sincere in Christ to rob you of precious time if they are not serious about spiritual things?

*“LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days. What it is, that I may know how frail I am.”*

*Psalm 39:4*

It is wise to understand how quickly life passes us by. Making precious use of the little time we have each day is wisdom. God's word is absolute truth. He will not lie. This verse and others like it teach us many importance truths. One such truth is how precious is the gift of discernment.

## **Two kinds of discernment**

There is both a natural and a spiritual discernment. It is great to be naturally aware. In my retirement I drive a school bus to keep active. There is a kindergärtner who rides the route I am presently driving. He notices and hears everything going on and can't sit still. He wants to get involved in all that is going on around him. He is a handful. A major distraction when I am driving if I am not careful to discipline him. On a typical day I can have as many as 57 students at one time on this particular route, all below 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He has great natural discernment, but has not learned to channel it to make himself a blessing to others. And at his age his spiritual discernment is nil. His attention span is very short. He demands the attention of other students.

Some have strong natural discernment like this little boy. But it is largely wasted. Others learn to channel their natural discernment so it becomes a

benefit for them and others. A policeman must have such awareness. Many who look to such protectors seem to float through life almost totally unaware of the many potential dangers that surround them depending on others.

We also need spiritual discernment to avoid trouble, but few have it and fewer develop it fully who do have access to it. One who has developed this wonderful gift through directed prayer can short circuit many potential problems. Many things are being intentionally and deceptively hidden from us that we need to know to make good decisions and avoid Satan's devices and traps.

### **The very first place**

The very first place we find the word *discern* is in Genesis. We see a vital truth displayed in this story.

*“and he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy, as his brother Esau's hands: so he blessed him.”*

*Genesis 27:23*

How many times have you blessed someone only to learn later you poured your grace down a black hole of ingratitude? This is just one sentence out of a famous Bible story. The outcome of this family story greatly affects life throughout our world to this present day. The story shows one whose bias is overcome by trickery. The things that go on inside families can have a lasting effect. God is working in the lives of each of us to effect his purposes. The world according to the Bible is full of liars and deceivers, even inside one's own family. The words one speaks have a lasting effect. Only when one is born again into God's family can certain harmful effects be reversed.

How does one receive the gift of discerning of spirits to detect when God or Satan is working in someone's life or situation? How does one sharpen this gift once received? Who do we look to to teach us about such matters? These are all important questions to be answered in this book. The following verse shows that discernment is both taught and learned.

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

*Ezekiel 44:23*

The Holy Spirit is our primary teacher in these times when right is wrong and wrong is right (Isaiah 5: 20). Only he can guide you through such dangerous times. Chapter 44 of Ezekiel speaks of the corruption that can and does go on inside of the religious institution that should be bringing discernment to the people of God. Discernment should grow with age, but we clearly see by looking at the world that it dims for most as they age. The evidence is clear that our American society lacks discernment. It is being overcome by surrounding pagan societies that are not of God just as occurred to Israel in the Old Testament days.

*“But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”*

*Hebrews 5:14*

We need discernment to detect between good and evil, right and wrong. That is how important discernment is.

## 2

# Life without Discernment

A few antonyms for discern were listed in chapter one. They provided a brief summary of what life might be like for one lacking in this important gift.

Think of an embarrassing or troubling situation you have experienced. We

occasionally all have been in a bind of our own making. Can you see where one or more of these words could have applied to you?

Looking back over my life I can truthfully say yes. I can think back to a few awkward predicaments where I too felt like that mountain goat. It was more than likely a lack of discernment that got me into such a fix.

How often does one find himself in tough, embarrassing spots? Those of his own making due to personal carelessness or stupidity? It depends on how lacking he is in the area of discernment. Not being careful enough with something as simple as who we hang around with often has unintended consequences. How often do we stay in unequal friendships before we figure it out and leave?

Those who lack character or are up to something that is unwise, seem to love company. They have an uncanny ability to zero in on the simple minded who lack the will power or discernment to say no. Haven't we all experienced the folly of being pulled into something we don't really want to do? Praise God for his mercy that I have gotten past some of the errors in my own judgment in the past. I am now much the wiser for such miscalculations.

Can you identify with what I am saying? If not you are certainly a more discerning person than I have been. Or maybe you are just not being honest. Am I not talking about the human condition here? Because of human nature it seems we have a propensity to get into trouble without much thought.

I am still far from perfect. But at 75 I can say I have survived many setbacks from a lack of discernment.

I would certainly be further ahead in life now, if I had better understood that inner voice of both natural and supernatural discernment, making more good decisions along the way. Without the grace of God in my life (common grace falls on both the just and the unjust), who knows how far I could have fallen. You can have discernment in a situation but not have the willpower or self discipline to take advantage of it. It takes obedience to profit from

discernment. We all deep down know right from wrong.

Lets review the six antonyms previously mentioned in terms of my own life, and also consider the folly that waits for us outside our front doors.

### **mindless**

Looking back I can see that my actions and behavior could at times be described as mindless, especially in my younger days. I loved my parents. I wanted to please them by being good. I was not a Dennis, the Menace for sure. I have known some however who could be characterized as such.

My dad could bring me to tears when my behavior was wrong. He would calmly ask me a question or two. The answers that came to my own mind would show me clearly I had been selfish or had mistreated my second brother who could be quite a bother when I was younger.

My life before Christ was not characterized by getting into frequent trouble. I was raised by an honorable, decent father who had his three sons in church on Sundays where I seemed to learn "*the fear of the Lord.*" My mother was not a church goer, but adored my dad and loved us dearly. She was a stay at home mom and loved that role.

The Bible says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of all wisdom. This desire to please others and God has served me well my whole life. It was an important gift of God, but it can keep one inside a religious box that will eventually not be good if not tempered by increasing discernment.

I think I was more compliant than my other two brothers. But false loyalty is not good. People can and will take advantage of it. You need to develop an awareness of the inner character of others in order to keep from being unduly out smarted or out foxed by the "*takers*" of this world who hate to give an inch.

The fear of the Lord should eventually lead many into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ; gaining them access to the mind of Christ in matters where they otherwise would be led astray by early life assumptions, opinions, habits or life long relationships that are distorted or a bit skewed off the path of righteousness.

We should all know that using one's mind and developing mental skills is important in achieving life goals. It is surprising though how many seem not to make rational decisions who the world crowns as the intelligent ones. Underlying assumptions that are wrong keep many from the narrow path. Many are not open to God's wisdom.

The word, *mind*, is used 133 times in scripture. Thirteen times we find this word linked in the same verse with the name, Christ. Below are references to three of these thirteen verses. There is much to learn from following the word through the Bible which we won't do in this work.

*“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”*

*I Corinthians 2:16 (also Philippians 2:5 and I Peter 4:1)*

Have I been mindless at times? Looking back over my life I can see that the answer is yes. I am not pleased with past seemingly mindless decisions. Some of these decisions have turned out very badly. Based on the available facts at the time and my assumptions I thought I was deciding right on things that later proved to be very wrong. Of course we do learn from our mistakes, but it is better to learn from watching others make mistakes.

Sometimes I ignored that “still small voice” inside to my detriment. Certainly I can say that some of my decisions were clearly not based on the mind of Christ. The flesh is very strong. It always wants to have its own way. I expect readers find this to be true also. We all must overcome temptations, desires and habits to make long term gains.

I can truthfully say I have tried to establish good habits in my life, not bad ones. I have never smoked though both my parents were smokers. I am not a drinker though they both were in a drinking culture, the military, and had liquor and wine in their home. I have worked hard to keep my eyes as did Job while friends around me were giving in to things that were not of the Lord.

I have personally found from looking back at some of my actions after getting myself into jams, that a lot of our daily life is governed not so much by the use of the mind, but by the course one walks out daily based on established personal habits, relationships, situations and the strength of our own flesh that can carry us forward in an often mindless fashion. Though good established habits can lead one innocently a little way down a wrong path, if one isn't quickly discerning, good habits, at best, lessen the strife we all experience keeping us from continually slowing our life down because of a ponderous habit of second guessing everything we do.

Do all habits result in good decision making? Based on the life habits of many adults that I observe daily I certainly know this isn't the case. The answer is that many adults, some who are leaders who effect our lives, clearly have less than effective habits that become obvious when we study them from a distance. A drinking problem! Laziness! A problem with lust or profanity! Some are too quick to judge due to impatience. There are a host of problems that are easy to spot in others if one has natural discernment. Some of these problems, leaders learn to camouflage. Spiritual discernment is needed to quickly detect them. Why should we care? Because some of these people's actions can hurt you if you don't take care to avoid the repercussions of their behaviors.

Look at our society! How messed up it is. Take just one indicator: the average time most adults spend watching television. It seems to me that much that is described as entertainment could be labeled mindless distraction. Is it just me that feels this way? My wife and I don't have television in our home. She feels the same way about it I do. Too many just fritter away their lives because of mindless activity.

## Senseless

Senseless is another word that shows what people are like who lack discernment. We all have heard the phrase: common sense. We know what it means. But we see that many quite clearly seem to lack common sense based on where they end up in life. Beyond common sense is supernatural sense. Has using your common sense ever gotten you into trouble? Mine has! The trouble that many find themselves in can't be all bad luck. There has to be personal responsibility and accountability for much of what people experience.

Many seem to need leaders who have common sense to keep them out of trouble and help them lead a meaningful life. They just can't be responsible on their own. So many are in trouble these days and lead lives that seem meaningless because they lack sense.

Why is this so? It is often blamed on faulty leadership. People do follow and are influenced by leaders who are senseless. Who comes to mind? Certainly some political figures. Few in the liberal press would blame some leadees I am thinking of. Many who seem to be picked for high office prove unfit. There is certainly an obvious bias against conservatives like me. In my earlier life I was interviewed by the Seattle Times when running for a statewide office. In my naiveté I thought they would be fair and balanced. They weren't. It is a sad state of affairs, politics and the media.

A verse clearly explains to me why we are in the trouble as a nation that we are in.

*“Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.”*

*Matthew 15:14*

In the passage we find this above verse in Jesus explains a lot about human nature. He explains why our nation is in the pickle it is in right now. We have turned our backs on God and his son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. We

are trying to go it alone without God's divine help. A senseless action for sure! We don't want to obey the commandments and precepts clearly laid out in the Bible. We deserve the leaders we have and the mess they have created.

Much of the nation has become senseless and so we are headed in the wrong direction. It won't end well for America.

## Dull

The next word that describes those without discernment is dull. We find this word only used three times in scripture; all in the New Testament: Matthew 13:15, Acts 28:27 and Hebrews 5:11. In all three verses it describes people who are hard of hearing. The truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ is being ignored making us dull of mind. How many do you know that fit this category?

## Simple

We find this word 24 times in scripture in six books of the Bible beginning with **II Samuel 15:11**. Here we see two hundred men following Absalom in their simplicity. We know what happened to Absalom, King David's oldest son. Life did not end well for him, nor for the men who followed him. All were simple minded. We find this word used fourteen times in the book of Proverbs. This book is all about wise living. When we are converted and start living for Christ it is really a simple life, not complicated at all. This is good.

Psalm 19:7 makes this point clearly: *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.”*

Psalms 116:6 and Psalm 119:130 show a few of the many benefits to be found in the lives of those who accept Christ as Lord.

## Dense

There are some people that when I say something to a person I thought was born again concerning the gospel they might look at me with a blank stare. I then see they are not comprehending. They have no understanding because they are not born again. If an educated person spoke to me concerning some application of quantum physics because he thought I was a peer he would see a similar dense look on my face. I could not discern what he was telling me or talking about.

## **Folly**

We find this word 44 times in scripture. The phrase that comes to my mind when I think of this word is “gross stupidity.” We find this word fifteen times in the Book of Proverbs. What a curse it is to live a life of folly. This word is mostly in my mind hooked up with the word, fool. We see such people on the front covers of the nations tabloids as we go through the check out stand of the nation's chain stores. Such fools though they have their adoring fans for sure; also fools.

These six words we have discussed in this chapter tell us what it is like to lack discernment. When these traits become extreme in an individual we see why we all need the precious gift of discernment.

A life can quickly go from uncomfortable to terrible as sin gets a deeper and deeper gripe. At some point the pain of remaining the same becomes so unbearable that some become willing to ask for help and get treatment. Others just end their life through some reckless action like suicide.

Many by the time they reach the stage of desperation have such a hardened heart they will never turn to God for redemption and restoration. Such people unfortunately often greatly impact the lives of those around and under them who do not have the discernment to flee the area of their negative impact.

When such people reach high office and others who think as they do grow strong enough as they are placed in office around them, they can take down a nation with them, even a nation like ours where many are quite innocent of

their wrong doing. It is so sad when a people turn away from God and elect those who have also turned away from God. It is the ultimate folly.

## **Discontentment**

Many Christians live lives of discontentment. Deep down they are unhappy. Why? Could it be lack discernment? Many seem to be unhappy inside their own skin. They haven't come to terms with who they are and where they are going in life. They haven't figured life out lacking discernment, also lacking key character traits that assure success. Life without discernment ends in disaster. Then there are those whose lives seem blessed who are on their way to hell. They lack spiritual discernment.

# 3

## discerning the Holy Spirit

For the born again believer the Holy Spirit in our lives is such a comfort and blessing. As I have gotten to know this third person of the blessed trinity I have experienced peace and joy as I had never known it before. Now I can't imagine life without his presence, wisdom, companionship and guidance. He is a treasure..

For too many years I lived the life of a natural man. For each natural accomplishment that I pursued and obtained, during and afterwards I failed to experience the peace and joy I had expected while pursuing and accomplishing a given achievement. I have found that any happiness from natural accomplishments are fleeting at best.

To my regret because of a lack of discernment it wasn't until my early 40s that I really surrendered to Christ and experienced for the very first time that

flood of peace that passes beyond all understanding. I thought I knew God growing up, but that knowledge was only head knowledge. I had not experienced that conversion of heart which is so essential to a fuller life.

I see now that like that little boy on my bus who is falling prey to his natural desires, I was in real ignorance about what would bring me contentment. My personal actions before my full conversion often interfered with what God wanted to accomplish in my life. I moved from distraction to distraction hoping for the satisfaction that never really came.

*“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”*

*I Corinthians 2:14*

### ***I and II Corinthians***

I have heard so many sermons over my life, and have noticed something. Other than the Love Chapter I don't remember ever hearing a text scripture being used from first or second Corinthians as the basis for a sermon. There are so many great truths and insights in these two books that are so often overlooked by believers. I suppose it is because most just depend on and look to the passages in scripture where they have received past revelation or blessing. Preachers like the rest of us can by pass and overlook many sections of God's word due to a lack of spiritual discernment. Many sermons I expect are developed from head knowledge and don't flow from one's converted heart.

The Apostle Paul writes about a veil over the eyes of Israel because of their rejection of Christ at his first coming. I think there is also a veil that has come over much of Christianity. So many who confess Christ seem to be rejecting the Holy Spirit these days. There is much picking and choosing when one

reads the Bible. Most of us seem to believe what we want from the written word and reject what we don't want to believe; mixing truth and error.

I used to think that the gift of “*discerning of spirits*” spoken of in I Corinthians 2:14 and 12:10 had only to do with the discerning of evil spirits in or around people or places. As I have matured I have noticed that, except for small children and animals, many adults who seem intelligent can't sense the Holy Spirit's presence when he is operating through a person. In fact many seem to reject and resist the efforts of such believers. Have you noticed how quickly small children and animals seem to warm up to some and avoid others? This is a real example of discerning of spirits in operation.

### **We are complete in him**

I love this verse:

*“And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power.”*

*Colossians 2:10*

Why do I like this verse so much? Personally it gives me great comfort. “*I am complete in him.*” Wow! He is capable of working through my imperfections. I don't have to do it perfectly to serve him. I just need to pray and move out where I am properly prompted.

If I thought I hear him correctly, but the results lead me to believe I didn't, I can expect that he will correct the situation and work through my shortcomings because I am complete in him. He is the head of all principality and power. He can provide angelic assistance and stop any demon interference. So he alone is responsible for accomplishing what he wants to accomplish and will not be stopped by my short comings or the faults of others. Certainly I do have to do due diligence in serving him; But, wow!

There is a lot of lying going on in America by people who should know better. Politicians, teachers, celebrities, etc! I find it discouraging. I love this country and try to make a difference in my smaller circle of influence. It is hard not to take up an offense against those who are making all our lives more difficult. But scripture warns us to be patient with others.

*“With lies have you made the heart of the righteous sad.”*  
*Ezekiel 13:22*

God described through his prophet long ago how I often feel. But its OK because I am complete in him. He is the head of all principality and power.

### **A very important word**

We find the word, Spirit or spirit, 561 times in scripture. It is a very important word. We find it first mentioned early in Genesis.

*“And the earth was without form, and void; and the darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”*  
*Genesis 1:2*

Now the more I can discern when God is moving in or around my life, the more it makes sense that I will be able to cooperate with him and please him and be like Jesus in this world. The less I discern when God is moving, the more I could become a distraction; mudding the waters. My wife, Karen, loves the verse: *“Be still and know I am God.”*

Did you know you can grieve God? I don't want to grieve God. It can happen. Look at the way the majority of Israeli grieved him for 40 years in the Wilderness after their miraculous Exodus out of Egypt.

Do you know anyone who murmurs a lot?

*“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err*

*in their heart; and they have not known my ways.”*

*Hebrews 3:10*

I don't want to short circuit what God is trying to do in my life through unbelief, fear or doubt.

My website where I post books like this one ([www.waragoodwarfare.com](http://www.waragoodwarfare.com)) could be described as being all about trying to discern the times we are living in right now. I don't want to be described as dense, senseless, or simple minded when it comes to seeing what God is doing and is about to do. I don't want to be among those who miss it as badly, as did most Jews at the first coming of Christ to this earth.

*“And in the morning it will be foul weather today: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times.”*

*Matthew 16:3*

I believe that as a head of an extended family that the most important thing I can do is to live my life as a watching one before my family and friends as scripture exhorts me to do.

I don't want to miss anything that God has for me to do or be.

# 4

## intelligence is vital

God sent his only begotten Son to earth 2,000 years ago. While on earth he kindled a holy fire. Look at the words of the fore runner of Jesus, John the Baptist:

*“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.”*

*Matthew 3:11*

Luke also records these words of John because of their importance (Luke 3:16). So what is this fire about? What did Jesus have to say about this fire:

*“I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?”*

*Luke 12:49*

### ***Fire is coming***

Further on in the epistles we get a little more intelligence concerning what this fire might be about:

*“And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ...”*

*II Thessalonians 1:7-8*

We need intelligence about what is coming on the earth. We won't learn much about what is coming in the evening news; maybe a little from analyzing world news in light of biblical prophecy. Certainly we won't learn much about what is coming in churches preaching false doctrine.

We need to study the Word of God for ourselves to find out what is coming because Satan is doing a good job snuffing out truth. Most of the world will be caught flat footed when God suddenly moves against the developing evil we all should be seeing, but many aren't seeing. We should be greatly vexed and grieved about the state of this world. But few are paying any attention at all just as was true at Christ's first coming.

*“For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.”*  
*I Thessalonians 5:3*

But, we will escape for we have the biblical intelligence and have not been left orphaned with Christ's departure 2,000 years ago, but have been given a comforter, the Holy Ghost, so that we can; live in victory and properly prepare for what is coming. The problem is that just as Christ was rejected by most of Israel at his first coming, so too has the Holy Ghost been rejected by many who call themselves Christian in our day. So this is the reality for most Christians: they have little or no victory in this life. Sad!

### **This word intelligence**

We only find the word intelligence used one time in the Bible. In our competitive society, especially in the military, it is a very important term. It has to do with gaining information on the enemy, his movements and capabilities to ensure that an offensive or a defense is more likely to be successful in achieving its objectives in spite of his plans to the contrary.

The one time this term is found in my King James Bible is in Daniel 11:30. I find it interesting that it is in reference to the Antichrist. God certainly knew how we would use this English word in our generation today. This one use is about an understanding the Antichrist has with the people who reject the holy covenant of God with Israel. Would that be Islam?

Quite frankly I hope not to be here after the rapture. I try to remain alert and watching for his coming, prayed up and occupying until he comes. We know from scripture there is a grand deception coming on the earth. It has many people around me fooled. That I can observe first hand though I am not privy to the dark secrets of the elites of this world unless God gives me revelation which he does. They live their lives as if nothing will ever change in folly.

Wouldn't it be nice to have the intelligence to know who it is that the

Antichrist, who is still hidden from the world, is working with to bring in and perpetuate this great deception Jesus warned us to be wary of? Could it be many of the manmade systems of this present world that are seemingly benign and appear to most to be working in our best interests?

I can tell you as one who was an infantry officer in sustained combat, experienced in three overseas tours, that the military operations that achieved the most success were those operations where we had specific information (intelligence or discernment) on where the enemy would be and what he planned to do.

Being deceptive in what an organization plans to do in a competitive environment is key in achieving surprise over the competition, enemy or not; and vice versa. The powers, or force, that achieves surprise gain an important advantage over their competitors. Surprise enhances one's chances of victory!

Those who have the gift of discerning of spirits can pick up on a person or organization that is not being truthful. It might not tell us exactly what is coming down, but even so we can be prepared in a way that no unsuspecting people can. They won't be able to react properly when surprised. Preparation lessens the element of surprise and motivates us who know the value of watching to remain alert. One can avoid certain people and places at a time when something harmful is more likely to happen.

*“And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”*

*II Timothy 4:18*

I want to review six synonyms for the word discernment (intelligence). These six words are insight, understanding, foresight, perception, logic, and comprehension. Every believer should understand what a blessing it is to have the Holy Spirit in your life to reveal things you need to know.

There are a number of potential gifts that come with asking the Holy Spirit into one's life. These gifts are listed in the Bible and become evident in those

who love God and are open to his wisdom. God's people who are written about in the Bible are meant to serve as examples. We see the absence of these gifts in the lives of unbelievers named in the Bible who have unprofitable outcomes. They too are examples.

Of the six English words I listed only two are found in my Bible. *Understanding* which is used 292 times, and *foresight* found six times. What a blessing it is when we have understanding of a situation we are in, or that is coming. *Foresight* helps us avoid or prepare for an upcoming event.

## **understanding**

The first place we see the word understanding used is in Genesis. To understand what God is doing here on earth is to radically awaken to the true reality of life on earth. No one can have a full understanding who does not read and study scripture on their own. We live in a combat zone. So many don't understand this, and so are indeed dull of mind and dense in understanding.

*“Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.*

*Genesis 11:7*

In this way through division God slowed down Satan's man, Nimrod, who built the first city in the world and was building the Tower of Babel. This set back Satan and the fallen angels who couldn't bring in the destruction and corruption of the human race as fast as he otherwise would have been able to do so.

God has everything under control. But if you don't trust in him and live your life for God; and if you don't know that demons are real and working through mankind to our harm; and if you don't believe that some humans are not fully human (DNA corruption); then you will be duped as are most. God is for us, not against us. It is folly to live like the unbelievers as if He can't help us in this life.

## **foresight**

Look at the blessing of one who has foresight.

*“A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on and are punished.”*

*Proverbs 22:3*

God does give us insight and warning of things to come. He is a good God.

# 5

## **the world is blind**

My wife loves the late author, A.W. Tozer's writings. He once wrote that  
*“Error never looks so innocent as when it is found in the sanctuary.”*

Tozer was a giant in his day. He saw clearly while most lived their lives in the fog. Religious blindness is especially devious when it is found in those we trust, who make their living, pointing us to God. Most pastors are very sincere. Sincerity is not the issue. Is there any spiritual blindness operating in the sanctuary and if so are we giving it a pass? Many do a wonderful job in the area of their expertise. Its just that they shouldn't be expected to be expert in all areas. Yet many who look to them for truth take everything they say as gospel.

We are to act like the Bereans! We should take all we hear from the so called experts to scripture to see if it be so. It is your soul and your family's that are in jeopardy when any and all blinders they have are transferred from the pulpit to the brain without any discernment. Matthew 15:14 is a warning to the rest of us to be careful who we listen to.

The Bible actually talks a lot about spiritual blindness. It refers to pastors who teach error as hirelings, false shepherds, false pastors and blind guides. We see God warning us of such men in many places in the Bible. The entirety of chapter 34 of the book of Ezekiel is a warning against the false shepherds, religious and secular.

We find the words, false and prophet, linked together twenty five times in the Bible. The first time in Jeremiah. When people look to a man they trust and admire to point them to God they don't expect to find error in their words. Most don't even expect that such a possibility exists. God warns us otherwise.

*“The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”*

*Jeremiah 5:31*

*“For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them everyone is given unto covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely. They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying Peace, peace when there is no peace.”*

*Jeremiah 6:13-14*

In eight verses in Jeremiah God speaks this way against those who set themselves up to represent him warning us to be very careful of those who want to help us by acting as a mediator for us in our approach to God. The end of all the people Jeremiah so faithfully warned was the destruction of the nation and captivity.

None other than Jesus Christ himself warns us about the time we live in, the latter days, concerning the dangers of listening to false prophets.

*“Beware of false prophets which come to you in sheep's clothing , but inwardly they are ravening wolves.”*

*Matthew 7:15*

Further on he says this:

*“And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.”*

*Matthew 24:11*

And look what he further says in verse 24.

*“For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.”*

The Bible talks a lot about spiritual blindness past and future. Don't think it isn't happening inside Christianity in our generation. If those of us who call ourselves Christians can be blinded what about the world beyond our front doors?

### **blindness & truth**

This word, *blindness*, is used in one of its forms 90 times. God talks a lot about blindness in regards to another important word, *truth*. God has much to

say about truth using this word 353 times. Discernment is all about getting at the truth and seeing through the lying that will overcome us if we don't discern correctly.

## **truth**

To summarize briefly what the Bible has to say about truth is not easy. But I'll take a shot: Life is not what it seems...truth is not easy to find...Jesus told us we need to hunger and thirst after truth or we will miss it... the world doesn't have this truth Jesus and the prophets spoke of. Most telling...Jesus said: "I do not pray for the world."

## **reality**

Jesus went on to say about truth or reality that it is very different from what the world considers reality...He pointed out that the world's moral credibility was lacking... Who can trust what this world is promising or telling us? The Bible clearly tells us to trust no man. (Psalm 40:4, 118:8)

## **Nineveh**

In our collective blindness America today is much like the wicked city of Nineveh in Jonah's day.

Can we learn any lessons from a careful review of that story?

*“And should I not spare Nineveh, where in are more than six score thousand persons that can not discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?*

*Jonah 4:11*

What has God told us in this verse. What can we glean here? The people in this wicked city are so blind to truth, they can not even discern between their right hand and their left. That is blindness for sure. Nineveh is a Gentile city.

God sends a Hebrew prophet, Jonah, to this city to warn it that destruction is coming. Nineveh must be warned. God is righteous and just. Jonah doesn't want to do it. He despises this city and its people. God must get extreme with his prophet. He uses a ship wreck and a whale to turn the prophet around.

Even today orthodox Jews want nothing to do with Gentiles. They see us the way they saw Nineveh in ancient times. Yet for the last 2000 years God has showered his mercy on a blind people, Gentiles, as he showed mercy to Nineveh. Few Christians I know seem aware of the nearness of our generation's visitation. If we learn nothing else from history, we should learn the King of Nineveh and the city heeded the warning and lived. Israel listened to false teachings and missed the signs of their visitation. They rejected Christ and suffer greatly to this very day for that rejection.

As the rapture of the church nears, once again most will miss it badly, and in their desperation will accept a man, the Anti-Christ, to save them, and will suffer Great Tribulation. Who will be left behind because of blindness?

*“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.”*

*Matthew 7:13-*

# 6

## *deceived leadership*

God hates lying. He is very clear about this. All unredeemed liars are thrown into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). Lying therefore is a very serious matter. One could say that Isaiah chapter thirteen shows God's attitude with respect to lying prophets. In verse 22 God says this:

*“With lies have you made the heart of the Righteous sad.”*

*Ezekiel 13:22*

### **Who are the righteous?**

*Who are the righteous in this verse?* The answer is God's people. I for one am feeling a great sadness as I see the increasing blindness in our generation due to all the lying that is going on in our nation. Can you see what is coming upon the earth? Judgment is coming! But few I know personally seem to see what I am seeing. The spiritual reality is this. Most of the world is blind. The coming judgment foretold in the Bible is picking up speed and they see it not.

How does one know when someone is lying if his lies are still being accepted by most people? There is no absolute truth anymore that sets a standard for our society by which they can judge how far off the standard we have drifted except the Bible which is rejected by so many. So increasing numbers no longer believe in absolute truth. There is their truth, and our truth, and someone else's truth; but a growing intolerance for biblical truth. Who is right? As long as no one is hurt they say: who cares. That is the prevailing attitude these days.

The truth is this: Some one is always hurt when a lie is told for the benefit of others. Truth can not be relative and still maintain a society that works. Our society is finished! There is no longer any fixed moral standards the nation adheres too with the rejection of the Ten Commandments and their author, Jesus Christ. The immoral genie has escaped from the bottle, and there is no putting him back in.

It makes me very sad to see so many firmly planted on the broad path headed toward the coming judgment. The lying that going on here in America continues to increase. The highest offices in the land are full of hypocrisy and it is growing worse.

### **The word liar**

The word *liar* is found 59 times in scripture. The word lie (s) is found many more times, but sometimes it is not referring to liars lying, but to laying down in a bed, etc. Inherent in the hypocrisy that goes on today is the act of lying. All liars end up in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 21:8). So lying is a very serious matter as we have said. Unfortunately here in America it seems to have become a sport among many of our politicians to see how much they can get away with. Former politicians make millions of dollars from books and speeches as they feed their fables to the gullible ones who seem to adore them. Their example encourages many with less power to emulate their actions.

There is much to be learned from the Bible. King Solomon was revered for his wisdom. It came upon him as a gift from God. He asked for it at the beginning of his reign as King over Israel to ease his rule. He reigned for 40 years.

*“Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people. That I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?”*

*I Kings 3:9*

Here we see the King's prayer for an understanding heart. History records the result of this gift of wisdom. Peace reigned during his rule until near the end of his life. Unparalleled peace! And with this wisdom came the ability to mass a great fortune!

One thing national leaders must have is the ability to judge wisely as did King Solomon until his many foreign wives who were unbelievers from the surrounding pagan nations began to lead him astray spiritually. To be able to see clearly what is good and what is bad is a great blessing.

It is very clear this trait is missing in many of our politicians today. Many who have been seduced by unbelief. We are ruled by what could be described as a very deceived leadership.

Look closely at what is going on in our nation. Is righteousness on the decline? The statistics are conclusive we are on an increasing slide morally.

If we placed our nation's enemies over us I doubt they could have made the situation much worse than it is. Look at just our massive and growing debt. America is headed for a crash unlike any seen in history I fear. There is now no way possible out of the massive hole we have dug ourselves into. The only option we have is to go to war against most of our creditors to eliminate them so we won't have to pay to them what we owe. Can a holy God bless such an unholy action?

I don't think anyone, even conservatives like myself, who didn't vote for President Obama wanted to see him fail. When a president fails we all fail. But it seems by every indicator he has failed. He has even made race relations worse.

### **The rapidly shrinking middle class**

I consider myself part of America's rapidly shrinking middle class. It can't be good for any country when the President of their nation fails, especially for what used to be called the moral majority.

That is why the Bible tells us to pray for our leaders good and bad.

I do pray for our President as scripture exhorts us to do:

*“And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the LORD for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace.”*

*Jeremiah 29:7*

*“But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you;”*

*Matthew 5:44*

At this point unless God turns our nation around in a miraculous way I don't see it being turned around by anything good men can do in the political and economic arenas . I hate to be saying this right after the Republicans have recaptured the Senate.

I see a few in the chambers who seem to understand the terrible predicament we are in based on what they are being quoted as saying. But to me they seem like John the Baptist, the forerunner who heralded the first coming of Jesus. The voice of one crying in the desert. They have the attention of an audience, but in the end I hope they won't lose their heads as did John, the Baptist. Not enough in the House and Senate seem willing to following their example and stand against the president. And if their were enough would enough citizens even be willing to allow the austere measures that would be needed to turn this nation around. It will have to be a massive and sustained belt tightening.

The opposite of the truth is the lie. It seems here in America we are being given a choice of what to believe. Too many seem to be choosing to believe the lie. It grieves me that so many of us are turning our collective backs on Jesus Christ who alone can save us.

I still believe many in this nation believe Jesus Christ is Lord. But we have been trained to be politically correct as a people. So we have trouble confronting the law breakers and irresponsible ones who can't discipline themselves. Most of us with biblical views remain quiet about our faith and views when we do have a chance to express them publicly. Few of us speak out, or testify on Jesus Christs' behalf when we have the chance. We have been trained it is not right to share our personal faith openly for fear of offending others.

Few of us still realize this Christian faith of ours is the reason we rose to such a great height among the nations of the world in the first place. They take our spectacular achievements on the world scene for granted. Now we are rapidly

falling, and most don't seem to understand it is because we are no longer being blessed by God as a nation.

Could it be God's overall plan to draw world history to a close? America is absent in last days prophecies. There could be some obscure reference to America. Some debate this. But there is nothing obvious. Certainly God knew the heights to which we would climb as a nation, so what didn't he make America obvious in the Bible?

Israel must be all alone against the nations in the end times and we see this line up now occurring. Israel must become so desperate their only alternative will be to cry out to the one whom they rejected to save them. Scripture tells us they will do just that and that will trigger Christ's return and God said this would be so.

America will not save them. But Christ will.....

# 7

## discerning the approach

The approach of what you might say? Many of us have calendars. On these calendars we make note of upcoming key events. Birthdays! Anniversaries! Important events or visits! A home calendar would record different events than a mayor or a president of a nation's calendar at the office for sure.

The visit of an important dignitary to your town might not make it on to your calendar, But the town mayor would certainly want to be reminded and have

it on his, so he could prepare as that important date neared.

## Visitation

*Visitation* is an important word in the Bible . It means a formal, official visit. It also means a coming divine retribution. Those who are expecting the visit will prepare so things will go well. Those who are shocked because they were not informed of the visit will suffer the consequences of their lack of preparation.

This word is worth following through the Bible. It is only used fifteen times. We first find it in **Numbers 16:29**. There we learn there is a common visitation for all men. Death is what is referred to here. This is probably what the prophet of God is referring to in **Job 10:12** which is also about a visitation from God. **Isaiah 10:3** refers to a coming regional or national judgment. The prophet **Jeremiah in 8:12** also is speaking of a coming judgment.

Jeremiah uses this word the most. Most of us know the story of his warnings to Israel prior to the destruction of the first Temple. He also warned of the carrying away of God's people into Babylonian captivity. **Hosea in 9:7** also talks of the days of visitation and recompense for all of the wickedness of his day. **Micah 7:4** gives some details of the tribulation experienced by God's people who had turned their back on God.

Finally, Jesus Christ uses this term:

*“And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.”*

*Luke 19:44*

The use of this word *visitation* in scripture describes a time when The King comes to judge. He will not be pleased with the people who have ignored his coming who will then experience his wrath.

We also know that those whom God is pleased with in times of visitation will avoid his displeasure and be hidden from his wrath because they heeded the warnings of the men sent ahead by the King. He protected the life of Jeremiah who was faithful to warn the king of Israel and the people.

The watchmen are protected who are faithful to sound the alarm. (Ezekiel 33:6)

*“Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.”*

*I Peter 2:12*

### **A critical upcoming visitation**

Although the phrase second coming is not in the Bible, we believers know from the promise of Jesus in John 14 and by other things God said that he is certainly coming to earth again. This next coming will not be as a new born baby, but as a fully grown adult coming back from heaven as King of Kings. We who pay attention to scripture know that it will be a very formal visit. It will be a time unlike any before in history.

In **Revelation 19:11-16** we see that His Coming will be in great power. There will be terrible judgment for those who have rejected him. It certainly will be the visitation of all visitations. Much like prior visitations mentioned in the Bible, but vastly more terrible and grand in scope and effect.

### **A Thief in the Night**

Before the final visitation where *“every eye will see him”* there will be a secret visitation where only those who have been waiting for him will experience his coming. Much like the private gatherings of local dignitaries when say the President comes to town.

Certainly those who are surprised by this visitation will experience its shocking after effects. For it will kick off the Great Tribulation where those left behind will experience much hardship, destruction, death and disease. It will be a time unlike any other time in history.

What will trigger the start of this time? I believe it will be the rapture of the church.

### **Scoffers dismiss the significance of this watch**

If you are a watcher like me I expect you have heard someone you love dearly tell you when you bring up the rapture: “*No one knows the day or hour.*” People whose main focus is the world (fun, entertainment, etc.), or life, or a loved one, or a different aspect of our faith; such people don't seem excited about watching for his coming, as a bride for the coming of the groom. They seem to dismiss such discussions using this biblical passage above.

### **Is this watch important?**

Probably the most gifted man of the 17<sup>th</sup> century thought so.

*About the Time of the End, a body of men will be raised up who will turn their attention to the Prophecies, and insist upon their literal interpretation, in the midst of much clamor and opposition.*

*Isaac Newton.....1642 - 1727*

Much of Christendom believes that the birth of the nation of Israel in 1948 and their recapture of Jerusalem in 1967 is just happenstance. Not important biblically! Many believers replace Israel in scripture with the church. Israel rejected Christ seems to be their reasoning. So Christ has permanently rejected them is their state of mind in effect.

I don't believe this. I believe that Israel and the church are two separate entities. God is about to bring the Age of the Gentiles to a close. Israel was temporarily blinded for the sake of the Gentiles which make up the majority of the church on earth today. Though there are Jews who have come to Christ they are a small number among us. But blindness is about to come off all of Israel.

It is the enemies of Israel who are to be blindsided.

Things are about to change in a supernaturally, dramatic way. It takes biblical discernment to be a part of the blessing, so as not to experience the curse. (Genesis 12:3) Are your eyes open? Or are they shut to the darkness that is coming on the earth?

## **Jesus said something important at his first coming**

*“And in the morning, It will be foul weather to day: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”*

*Matthew 16:3*

*“Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?”*

*Luke 12:56*

## **The last Book**

Malachi is the last book of the Old Testament. Chapter Three is full of last days prophecy followed by 400 years of silence until His Birth.

*“Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.”*

*Malachi 3:18*

Who is Malachi talking about here? Who will return? Who will do this final discerning?

What visitation was Jesus Christ talking about with the scoffers of his day? Wasn't he most likely talking about his first visitation? The religious leaders and experts of that day and their followers all missed that important first visitation. Truth was standing before them and they discerned him not.

## **Could we miss it too?**

Will most of the world miss it badly His Second Time around? “*Yes we can!*” This was the famous cry to the crowd during the last two U.S. Presidential elections of the man who became our president. Certainly a lot of deception was on display then and still is. Some U.S. establishment politicians and most who voted would probably like to go back in time and change their vote, but it is now too late.

Here we are at the beginning of 2015 as I complete this study. Frankly I am surprised at God's mercy and slowness of judgment at this time in history. The election campaigns for 2016 are gearing up for those thinking of running for high office. The news is starting in earnest to focus on them. Who will win the 2016 presidency? Things and people are now in motion. Something big is approaching. But most are not aware!

The LORD of Heaven and earth is in motion. Certainly if the Father chooses to send His Son back to earth to snatch up His Bride many in America whose major focus is the upcoming 2016 elections will miss it badly. But so many don't even follow politics. Their focus is more local: sports, entertainment, hobbies, work, family; you name it. But only a very few focus on Christ.

## **don't plan to be one of them**

I don't plan to be one of those lacking critical end time discernment during

these incredibly interesting times. Don't get distracted. Those with discernment will be looking up. Our redemption draws nigh. Become a watcher and live....