

## Testing The Spirits

"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world...We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (1 Jn. 4:1, 6).

Testing spirits, teachers, is a necessity. God tells us the truth sets us free while error condemns our souls (Jn. 8:32; Matt. 7:21-23; 15:7-9). Therefore, we must discern between good and evil (Heb. 5:14). We must expose error and uphold truth (Eph. 5:11; 1 Tim. 3:15).

We test the spirits by comparing what they teach with what the Word of God says (cf. 1 Pet. 4:11). The Bereans were considered noble for doing this (Acts 17:11). Jesus and the apostles frequently tested the spirits (Mk. 7:1-13; 1 Cor. 15). Therefore, contrary to the attitude of some, it is not unlawful, sinister or mean-spirited to test a man's teaching. Rather, it is righteous.

Steven F. Deaton