

Testing Spirits

Arthur Barry

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 John 1:1

In our age of political correctness and tolerance the idea of testing the spirits is unpopular and the modern trend would be to fellowship first and ask questions later. The goal is to have as big a group as possible with as little fuss as possible. Sometimes there is an equally sinister version of this distortion that would seem to change the words of John to “test their wallets”. There are those who would assess a prospective new member by how rich they are not by how true they are. The book of Acts records events that help us get a glimpse into the process of testing the spirits. Just as in our day there were those who appeared to be on God’s side but who, when exposed to the truth, showed their true colors. It is important to clarify some of the terms used.

1. God-fearer:
 - a. Acts 2:5. There were God-fearing Jews from every nation who came to Jerusalem for Pentecost. 3000 of them were baptized into Christ that day. (Acts 2:41)
 - b. The gentile, Cornelius, was described with this term (Acts 10:2, 22), and after Peter preached to him, he was baptized into Christ. God-fearing gentiles are also mentioned in Acts 13:26.
 - c. God-fearing women were involved in driving Paul out of Antioch in Pisidia. (Acts 13:50)

Conclusion: There were God-fearing people among the Jews and the gentiles when the gospel was going into the world. Both Jewish and gentile God-fearers needed to be baptized into Christ to be saved. Many today would insist that we accept God-fearing people as they are. Peter and Paul did not feel that way.

2. Spirit:
 - a. This word occurs 61 times in the book of Acts and is usually referring to the *Holy Spirit*. (E.G. Acts 13:52)
 - b. There are also *evil* spirits. In Acts 19:15 an evil spirit tells some would-be exorcists that he knows Jesus and Paul, and then proceeds to give them all a good beating.
 - c. In Acts 16:16 we read of a girl who had a *spirit of divination* and the spirit caused her to cry out that Paul was a messenger from God. Paul ended up casting the spirit out of this girl. Why? How did he know that this spirit did not pass the test? It was probably because he knew that this girl’s spirit was a money-maker for her owners, and that is not consistent with the truth.

Conclusion: How many people today would accept the spirit of this slave girl? The last reference to the Holy Spirit in Acts 28:25 says the Holy Spirit spoke the truth through Isaiah, but the people rejected it. He always speaks the truth on all matters, not just the ones we think are true. For too many people the testing of a spirit amounts to “Do you agree with me?” instead of “Do you agree with the Holy Spirit?”



That meets at 701 South Wilbur, Sayre, PA 18840
(570) 886-1838

Arthur Barry, Evangelist- (607) 280-1732

November 22, 2020

WELCOME!

Sunday

Bible Class- 9:30 a.m.

Worship- 10:30 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Study-6:30 p.m.

All the churches of Christ greet you.

Romans 16:16

Today’s Sermon: *We Live by the Spirit, Let Us Also Walk by the Spirit*

Sermons are recorded and are available for listening on the church website.

Bulletins are archived on the website.

valleycitieschurchofchrist.org

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Headphones are available for the hearing impaired.

Scripture Reading: Acts 4:17-20

ANNOUNCEMENTS / UPCOMING EVENTS...

- **Sunday Morning Bible Class:** We are studying through the Book of Acts.
- **Wednesday Evening Bible Class:** will be postponed **this week because of Thanksgiving. We will meet again on Wednesday, December 2nd.**
- **Sojourners: Mike and Nadine Huddleston, Larry and Kay Little and two other couples** hope to be here the last week in June and the first two weeks in July.



NEWS

- **There will be a short congregational meeting next Sunday, 11/29 following worship.**
- **Rhonda Washburn, Jerry's daughter, has tested positive for Covid 19. Gail Westerhold, Jerry's friend, has also been tested and is awaiting results. Meanwhile, they will be quarantining at home.**
- Darlene and Doug plan to leave for FL tomorrow, returning in February. We pray they have a safe trip and enjoyable stay.
- Paul will be preaching today.

PRAYERS

- **Pray for our country! Pray that we have our priorities right and that we know who our King is.**
- **Pray for Paul's sister Linda** as she will be placed under hospice care. Pray for comfort and peace for Linda and for her family.
- **Pray for Ted** as he mourns the loss of his brother John. Also pray for John's family for comfort.
- Pray for **Jennifer**, who has been diagnosed with diverticulitis, and for **Ted** that he no longer has any cancer cells in his kidneys.
- Pray for **G.K. Pennington** and his wife Jo as they deal with his aggressive esophageal cancer. The doctors were not able to get all the cancer when they did his surgery, so he is undergoing more chemotherapy.
- **Doug Kashorek has asked for prayers for himself and his wife Lori who has lung cancer.** Lori is on hospice care now. Their son Tim and his wife Rachel have also announced they are expecting a baby in June 2021.
- **Bob Wilkinson** who has done work on our building is quite sick with the flu. We pray that he recovers quickly.

If you have any PRAYERS or NEWS that you would like included in the bulletin, please contact Sandy at barncat7237@gmail.com or text or call (607) 261-0911.