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1 John 4:1-6 - “The Test of Truth and Error”

Introduction: John is interested that God’s children know that they know that they have eternal life. He wants us to be assured that we know that we have salvation. Reports and statistics talk of overwhelming Christian influence in this world. What many of those that present these statistics include under the umbrella of Christianity make it difficult to get excited about or agree with. It means that we would have to accept 1) Non-virgin birth of Jesus from Mary 2) Infant and sprinkling Baptism 3) revelation of some other book that goes along with the Bible 4) Jesus lacking diety. So we cannot rejoice that thousands or even millions are influenced by what the world includes in Christianity.

How can we know… we have a three-fold test from John. >The first being Obedience. A man says he knows God but walks in darkness, then there is a contradiction. >The second is Love. Is our life characterized by love. If a man says he loves God but does not love the brethren, he lies. If his way of life is one of hostility. Now, the third, is Truth and Error. The ability from God to discern between truth and error. This is not some discerning spirit you are born with or learn through life, it is something that comes directly from knowing God and having God live in you.

**I. Try the spirits whether they are of God.**

A. The teachings of False Prophets.

1. They existed back then and we still have them now.

2. Moses spoke of this and gave specific instructions for this.

a. He said they would speak using his same.

b. He mentioned they would make prophecies.

c. He warned of their polluting the minds and heart of God’s people so they were to be destroyed.

3. They have increased in time as Jesus’ return grows closer.

B. Some people are very gullible about Spiritual things.

1. They hear someone speak about Jesus or the Holy Ghost.

a. they said some good things about God

b. they refer to the Bible and seem sincere

2. Many do not measure what is said about God, Jesus or the Holy Ghost, just that something is said about them.

a. many want to believe that everyone is sincere

b. but the Bible reveals a “red flag”

3. Don’t expect a false prophet to talk down about God or Jesus

a. They are going to appeal to the intellect.

b. They are going to relate to the emotions.

c. They will come as a “wolf in sheep’s clothing.”

C. There is not more preaching against False Prophets because it is not pleasantly received.

1. People are more prone to accept contradictions in the realm of Bible teaching than any other realm of life.

a. Two Doctors give two different prescriptions or opinions

b. We would not believe both doctors.

c. Both have certificates on their wall and both are sincere.

d. You cannot believe two different things to be equally correct.

3. Most would not do that to their body, but would accept contradictions when it comes to their soul.

a. You can apply this to finances and investments.

b. You can apply this to building and construction.

c. You can apply this to relationships.

4. The Word of God says we cannot do this, because truth and error do not mix.

a. No matter how much we want to believe their sincerity

b. No matter how good they sound with reasoning.

D. God’s children are to know the Spirit of God. (John 16:13-14)

1. The Spirit will guide into ALL truth, not some truth.

2. It does not matter if a man is right on a lot of things.

3. The Spirit will not speak of Himself.

a. His function is not to draw attention to the Holy Spirit.

b. The purpose of the Spirit is to glorify Jesus Christ.

4. False Prophets will mix truth with error

a. They deny virgin birth and the deity of Jesus Christ

b. They deny His work on the cross having the power to save

c. They deny His resurrection being a literal resurrection

5. John asks, “What does a man say about Jesus Christ?

a. A person can confess Jesus Christ without believing, but that does not mean that they are of God.

b. You can bribe someone to confess Jesus Christ.

c. More than an intellectual assent, more than an admission with our mouth.

1) The Jesus who was born in Bethlehem of a virgin

2) He who lived a sinless life

3) He who lived to pleased the Father

4) The Jesus who walked among men.

5) He who raised the dead and fed the multitudes.

6) The Jesus who healed the sick and open blind eyes

7) He who died on the cross and paid for our sin.

d. A man who confesses that Jesus is God incarnate and the only Messiah is of God.

6. Anything outside of, above, below that is different from that.

a. Many people are willing to make a profession of knowing God and be going to Heaven.

b. But they never even mention Jesus and cannot tell you what they specifically believe about Jesus.

c. If it different from the Jesus of the Bible, then it is false.

**II. The Spirit of Anti-Christ**

A. There is an ultimate Anti-Christ that will arise someday.

1. We know this to be true from God’s Word.

2. It is part of God’s prophecy of the end-times.

B. There is a spirit that precedes the manifestation of the Anti-Christ to come.

1. We know it was in existence in John’s day.

2. We know it will be stronger the nearer to its manifestation.

a. Knowing this, you cannot believe that every one who speaks about Jesus is of God.

b. The criteria for truth cannot be amount of good present.

c. Truth must be in accordance to the Word of assurance that God has given.

C. There are two kinds of spirits that speak in our world today.

1. The Spirit of God and the spirits not of God.

2. We are to have nothing to do with the other spirits, because we are of another Spirit, we are of God.

a. The ungodly spirits intend to lead you astray, lie to you, destroy you. (verse 3)

b. They are actually not something to fear, but something to be aware of and to void. (verse 4)

4. The spirits of the world actually speak and the world actually hears them. (verse 5)

a. These spiritual entities (enemies of the cross) have pleasant voices to be listened to.

b. The destructive power of these voices is masked by something more attractive (what world wants to hear)

c. The world listens to, absorbs, physically understands and accepts these voices.

D. You that are saved and have embraced Jesus have overcome the attacks that are against Christ.

1. It does not always appear to God’s children that they are greater.

2. It does not always appear that those who hold to the narrow truths of God’s Word have overcome those who are against truth

a. the fact that they hold to truth in the midst of the adversity says that that which is in them is greater

b. It means they are the overcomers because they have not been overcome.

3. The rationale of unbelievers is of the world.

4. We measure what is right and what is wrong by the revealed truth in God’s Word.

E. They who are of the Spirit of God will hear truth.

1. The world, just like false prophets, will not like to hear truth.

2. If a person does not like what the Bible says, then that is because they are not hearing us.

a. They don’t hear us because they are not of us.

b. This is how we know the spirit of truth and of error.

Conclusion:

We know that we are of God because of attachment to, love of and desire for TRUTH.