

TITLE: TESTING THE SPIRITS

TEXT: I John 4:1-6

We want to continue our study of the doctrine of Assurance. How we might know without a shadow of a doubt that we have eternal life. Would you turn, please, to I John chapter 4 reading verses 1 thru 6 on the subject: "TESTING THE SPIRITS.",, There is probable no other section of I John as important in this day of deception and apostacy, as I John chapter 4 verses 1 thru 6. Will you follow along as we share the scripture together.

(Read I John 4:1-6)

Prayer

Our Father in heaven, we pray that you would again speak to our hearts from your Word. And that your Holy Spirit might teach us its truth. We pray for those here, today, who have never come to believe that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. We pray that they might make the greatest decision in their lives and come to that place of rependence and acceptance. Father we thank you that salvation is a matter of faith in Jesus Christ. And now we pray that people might believe that, and accept Him for what He has already done for us. And Father, we pray that you might strengthen those of us who already know you and help us to understand what it means to test the spirits. To understand the world in which we live and what God says about it. And we thank you for this in Jesus name and for his sake...Amen.

TESTING THE SPIRITS...Now, when some people think of "spirits" they think of a certain kind of beverage....Others, when they think of "spirits" they think of a hunted house with ghosts. But, my friends, we need to understand what the Bible teaches about "spirits". Because they are ~~mentioned~~ mentioned some 540 times in the Bible

(1B) Do you believe in a spirit world?....The Bible has much to say about "a spirit world." And in a brife summary, let me outline for you what the Bible has to say about the Spirit world.....

(1C) Number one..there are two worlds according to the Bible. There is the material world. And there is the spiritual world. Two worlds of existence. The material world which we know has three dimensions. But, outside of this material world and inside the material world, in fact, all the way through the material world there is another world..a spiritual world.

(2C) Secondly, there are two kinds of Spirits in the Bible. Good and evil spirit..... ^{Good - Angels} ^{Bad - Demons}

(3C) Third, the Bible teaches us that the whole spirit world begins with God. John 4:24 tells us that God is a spirit. And they that worship Him must do so in spirit and in truth. God is a spirit by His very nature.

(4C) Fourth, the Bible teaches that ^{people have} ~~man~~ has a spirit, but he is not a spirit. Man is not merely a spirit. But he does possess a spirit. I am not referring, here, to the Holy Spirit of God. All christians have the Holy Spirit dwelling within them. But, ^{each of us} ~~man~~ has a spirit apart from the Holy Spirit. The Bible says in Gen 2:7 that the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath...The word "breath" is the word "spirit"....Breathed into man the spirit of life. In Job it says that "the spirit ^{is} life." God is life. And that life was breathed into ^{us} ~~man~~. And ^{we} ~~man~~ became a living soul...~~The~~....

(5C) Fiveth, We learn in the Bible that God created the spirit world. He created it. Thus he is above it.

(6C) Sixth, we learn in the Bible that spirits have emotions. They have apitites. They have angry. They have lust, desires, intelligence, patience and the abilities to speak languages....The Bible teaches this..

(7C) Seventh, in the Bible we are told that they are powerful, immortal, ~~and~~ ^{but} they are limited in knowledge and location, ~~but~~.

The Bible teaches that the good spirits are called angels or messengers. And they have God as their king.

and On the other hand, the Bible uses the word "demon" to distinguish between a good spirit and an evil sprit. The evil spirits are called demons. They are really just angels who have fallen because they followed Satan in

his original intentions to be like God. In Isaiah chapter 14 and Ezeiel chapter 28, we learn about the great fall of Satan. Satan was an angel. A spirit being that God created. And One day he desired to be like God. He wanted to have the authority and dominion that God had; and because of this, God cast Him out-off heaven. According to the book of Revelation 1/3 of the angels were cast-out with him.....You ask: how many angels were cast-out with Satan?...No one knows. The Bible says a great host/.... So, the good spirits are called angels....The evil spirits are called domons.

(84) Eighth, the Bible tells us that the angels of God minister to christians and watch over them and serve God in that copassity.

(90) Ninth, according to the Bible the demons of Satan, the evil spirits, are carrying out Satan's purposes which involves two things: (a) Deception, and (b) opposing the truth of God. The main purposes of Satan are deception and opposing the truth of God.....And demons are carrying out these two purposes..

(100) And number 10, the Bible tells us that these angels are higher than man in power, right now. They have more power than you and I have. And yet, they are equal in terms of service to God. Their service to God is no more important than yours or mine. But, in the future we will be higher than the angels because we will someday judge the angels.....

(104) And finally, the Bible tells us that angels or spirits are not to be worshipped.....

(108) With this in mind we want to look at this whole area of testing the spirits....

(109) First of all, in Vs 1 John begins with a little remainder. He reminds us that there is more than one kind of spirit. Vs 1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit."

In other words there are more than one kind of spirit. And John brings this word of caution to us out-off love....He uses the word "beloeved." It is because God loves us that I am telling you not to believe every spirit, writes John.....

(2C) Then, secondly, John gives us a reason for testing the Spirits. He says, Vs 1, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God;...Why?... because many false prophets have gone out into the world."

In other words, there are people who are being influenced by false spirits. People who claim to be prophets, but they are false prophets. We live in an age of false prophets. If you are doing any reading and you are keeping up with what is going on in our world concerning the occult, *New-Age Religion, New age movement* you will agree that we are living in a world of false prophets. And I am sure you realize that what John is talking about is in our day.

(3C) Now, if this is true and there are false prophets, how can we tell the difference....Well, John gave us a test here in Vs 2 and 3. A basic principle for testing the Spirits....Look at it very carefully... Vs 2."By this you know the spirit of God; every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is ~~..what?~~....from God; and, Vs 3 every spirit that does not....what?....confess Jesus as coming in the flesh is not from God; and this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that is coming, and now is already in the world."

So what is the one requirement where by christians are to test the Spirits?....What is it?...You hear people speak all over the world. You hear them on T.V., on the Radio. They stand before you and many even ~~you~~ proclaim their miracles are a result of God. So, what is the one requirement of testing the Spirits? It is whether or not they confess that Jesus is God in human flesh.

You see, Jesus was not just a great teacher or a great prophet. And those who say that he was...even if they used words like "christian" and they perform miracles, they are a false prophet in the spirit of Antichrist.

Oh, my friends, the Bible teaches us that Jesus is God. And he was not simply a man who went about doing good and being kind. *Jesus* ~~It was~~ is God in human flesh; and he came to redeem us. And if there is one message that Satan doesn't want us to teach and believe ..it is that Jesus is God.

You know, there is a movement in the United States, today, trying to convince people that this is not true. This movement says you can be a christian without believing in the deity of Christ. Just believe in God. Their slogan: GOD YES....JESUS WELLLLLL

And it is amazing to me to see every day of the week in papers, on T.V. this concept; and how it is slowly corrupting the foundation of true faith. There is one basic principle in knowing a true prophet from a false prophet. The true prophet will confess that Jesus is God in human flesh.....

(1C) Now, what ~~are~~^{are} the results of this test?..... Vs 2 says: "By this you know the spirit of God."

(1) So, the first result is that you will know the spirit of God... And secondly, ^{result} in Vs 3, you will know that the false prophet is in the spirit of Antichrist, if they don't confess that Jesus is God in the flesh.

Am

Every single teaching, every single philosophy that does not center in Jesus as God in human flesh is part of the great spirit of deception. And it will find its conclusion in a literal individual who is coming to appear on the scene of world history. And all this philosophy that is breaking down the belief that Jesus is God is building up an attitude in this world that will center in a world political leader. John says that you have heard that He is coming, and now He is already in the world through this influence, or attitude of denying that Jesus is God.....

Oh, christian, do not be deceived... Test the spirits.....

(3B) Now, coming to Vs 4 ~~the~~, John gives to us some principles relating to victory, ^{the Father and the Son} ~~over the spirits...~~ ^{of the children of God prophets}

Many christians ask: How can I oppose this false attitude...this spirit of Antichrist? In what way can I have victory over false spirits and not be led astray?.....Well, John tells us how.

Vs 4..."You are from God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world."

Oh, what a precious verse....A precious verse of assurance... (I would like to point out three things that brings us this confidence or assurance of victory over the false prophets.....

(1) First, remember the family we belong to This brings assurance.

John writes: "You are from God, little children." All Christians have been removed out-off the dominion and power and control of Satan. You are now... in the family of God. The Bible says in John 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."

And the moment you receive Christ into your life, you come out-Off the realm of Satan's control into the realm of God's control. You are now in the family of God. And because of that position you have victory. *A.S. Assurance*

(2) Secondly, victory comes through faith in Christ.

Notice what it says. Vs 4... "you are from God, little children, and have overcome them.".... You see, it has already happened.... It happened in the past.

Now, let me show you ^{*when this happens*} ~~this~~... Turn over to chapter 5 and verse 4... Chapter 5:4 says "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world, as a habit of life, and this is the victory that has overcome the world."... What is it? "OUR FAITH..... Our faith..... in what?..... In what Jesus did for us when he died on the cross.... He defeated Satan...."

And so John is saying in Chapter 4 verse 4 "You are from God, little children, and you have.... meaning it has already happened, you have overcome the ~~spirits~~..... *Man, I am glad of that.... Do you know why?..... Because when I look at what is going on in this world, I get a little nervous... And that is why we need this assurance that is found in I John. We have overcome the world.*

Do you realize that the day you put your faith in Jesus Christ, God gave you victory over Satan and the whole spirit world? Complete victory thru the blood of the cross says the book of Revelation. We have overcome them.

(3) Then, the third thing I notice about victory over the ^{*False prophet*} spirits is the fact of God's power in us. John writes: "Greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world."... Tremendous assurance thru the Holy Spirit.

Did you know that the Holy Spirit living within me and living within you is greater than the whole Spirit world? That makes me kind of ~~off~~-off happy. God the Holy Spirit lives in us, the moment we accept Christ. And he is greater than he that is in the world.

And I remind you that Satan was created an Angelic being. He is not God. He is ^{Not} ~~now~~ all-powerful. He is now omnipresent. He is not ~~omnipotent~~ Omnipotent. ^{Yes!} He is very powerful. And through his evil spirits he can appear to be in a number of places at once. *But He is not God*

You know many Christians think of Satan as being like God. He can be every where at once. But that is not true. Satan is just one of the created Angelic beings. And He (the Holy Spirit) who is within you is greater than Satan. ~~//////////~~

And you know, if you are ^{listen} here, today, and you have never become a Christian, you are in the family of Satan. You are under his control. That is right. It is not something I want to bring upon you. It is already true, according to the Bible. And he can influence you and guide you according to his own desires, and you don't even know it.

But, the moment you accept Christ, you have a power ~~within~~ within you, greater than Satan, himself. THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD.

And you can accept Christ, today, Simple, by asking him to come into your life.

BB The final thing I want to point out is found in Verses 5 and 6. It is the truth we gain from the Holy Spirit. He says: "They" -- that is these ^{False} spirits. "They are of the world;" This world system ^{is} under the control of Satan. "Therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them." Every person who is a part of the ^{general} world, is listening to this ^{False movement} ~~movement~~ whether he knows the ^{movement} ~~moment~~ or not. Whether he understands it or not. He is listening to it because he is a part of the world.

Let me give you one example. You meet a person at work or school who says: "I believe we ought to get all we can, and can all we get."

Now, that is a common every day philosophy. That is the philosophy of the world. The world system. If we have this philosophy, where did we get it? You might have heard it all of your life. But it is part of the world's thinking. Who controls the world's thinking?....Stantan.... So, whoses philosophy is it than? It is Satan's philosophy if it is not God

Another person comes along and says: "I think it is alright to do wrong, if you get another chance to do right"....You know, the means justify the ends. But, that viloates God's word, also.

So, where did he get that philosophy? Again, it is part of the world's thinking. And the world, according to the Bible, is under the control of Satan....You see....."They are from the world, therefore, they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them."

Now, look at Vs 6: "We are from God; he who knows God listens to us." That is the Apostle John speaking. And in its extended meaning it would refer to the total Word of God as given by the Apostles. "He who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

How do we know the difference? By whether or not you are listening, in this case to John, the Apostle, the ~~Word of God~~ ^{Word of God}. If you are listening to the Word of God, you will know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. You see, there is only one way to know whether or not God is speaking to you Does it check out with the Word.....

OK. ~~Example~~ ^{Example}, you are hearing and listening to me this morrowing. How do you know that what I have said is the Word of God?....How?....Only one way.... If you are following along in your Bibles....You take what the Bible says and what the Bible teaches because we are living in a day of deception. And the Bible says that Faith comes by what?.....HEARING.....And hearing comes by what?.....THE WORD OF GOD.

How does a person come to Christ?....Through the Word of God. The Bible says that there is a mystery of ^{sin} iniquity that is working and will reach its height in a ^{person} man - The Antichrist - That is exactly what this is all about. The spirit of error and the spirit of deception. You can study it for yourself in 2 Thessalonians chapter 2.

In I Timothy 3:16 God has a mystery. It is called the mystery of Goliness. And what is it? God manifested in the flesh. That is God's mystery. The greatest mystery God ever revealed to the world is that He became man. And notice, please, in I Jhnn 4:3 that which makes a person in the spirit of Antichrist is denying the fact that Jesus is God in human flesh. And if you denie that, you are part of the great movement of the Antichrist.

So, which camp are you in? As people we live in the material world. But we are also a part of the spiritual world. We have a spirit which God put into us when we were born. We have a spirit that is life ~~and we are able to communicate with God.~~ And according to the Bible our spirit is dead. It is inactive and inoperative towards God because of sin. We are born into sin because of our nature. And we will prove that ^{FACT} by way of our acts. We are dead in our trespasses and sins. [But the moment we accept Christ who died for us and took our place on the cross, paying for our sin, taking all of our sin upon himself, The moment we ask ^{Jesus} to come into our life, the Bible says, the Holy Spirit quickeneth our spirit. The word "Quickeneth" means "to make alive." And all of a sudden you have life towards God.....WHY?...Because the Holy Spirit of God comes into your life through faith and trust in Christ. And he makes alive your spirit and your ability to fellowship with God.

That is what this is all about. "But as many as received Him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name....

Let us close in prayer

~~Why? Because the holy Spirit of God came into your life through faith and trust in Christ, and he made alive your spirit, and your ability to fellowship with God.~~

~~THAT IS WHAT IET IS ALL ABOUT. "But as many as receive Him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name."~~

LET US CLOSE IN PRAYER

Our Father in heaven, we realize that this portion of your Word is here for our benefit. We pray, that we may never forget your Word. You tell us to test the spirits to see whether they are of God. And when we see the spirit of this age and the constant influence against believing that Jesus is God in human flesh. Our Father, we pray that you would help us to stand firm upon the word of God. To be established in the faith. To test and ~~examine~~ ^{examine} the spirits, to see whether or not they do teach and preach and confess that Jesus is God in human flesh.

For we know that only A God who is personal can save us and meet our needs. God who fills the universe, yet cared enough for us that he ~~became~~ ^{became} man so that we might know Him. And to know him is to have salvation and eternal life. To receive Him as our saviour and Lord.

God, we pray for those here, today, who have never made that great decision of life. Perhaps they are church members, but have never come to accept Jesus Christ from a personal standpoint. Help them, Father, to put pride aside and to make that decision, today, to become a member of Your Family.

We pray, Lord, ^{For Those of us} ~~we all of us~~ who are Christians ^{That} might be sensitive to the World. And the philosophies of the World that deceive and led astray.

We pray these things in the precious name of Jesus and for his sake.

Amen