

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 16- The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

153. Testing the Spirits- Part 4

WAOY Friday- Monday 02/15-18/08

Welcome again, my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about testing the Spirits by looking at **1John 4: 1-6**- so let's read those verses together:

- 1 Beloved, 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.**
- 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God;**
- 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.**
- 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.**
- 5 They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them.**
- 6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

Now we are continuing to learn what John taught here about spiritual discernment and testing the spirits. And I want to look again at verse 1:

Beloved, 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.

Now John was saying here that we are not to believe every spirit because of the harsh reality that everybody is not trying to serve the

Lord. Some people are in the Church because they love Jesus and they are truly trying to follow Him. But John teaches over and over in this Epistle that there are some in the Church who do not want to follow Jesus at all. These evil men; these ungodly men; these wolves in sheep's clothing want to change Christianity into something else. They want to alter the Words of God; they want to emphasize one part of Scripture over another; they want to dull the edge of the sword and portray a "god" that is not the God of the Bible and preach another "gospel" which is not the Gospel of God. Let's read **Galatians 1:6-10:**

6 I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

7 which is *really* not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

8 But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

9 As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!

10 For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.

So we can see that John was not the only one who was troubled over this issue. In fact- most all of the warnings of the New Testament about danger and trouble- is not what we might think. The Apostles did not warn us about many of the things that we pay a lot of attention to today. For example- the Apostles didn't spend much time organizing boycotts of Roman shops. They didn't get the Church people to write letters to Caesar protesting unfair treatment or campaigning for politicians or judges. No, their concern was on a different level than that. Let's read **2Timothy 3:1:**

But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.

Now when we use the word, "**difficult**"- we think of something that is dangerous; life threatening; or deadly. Well what in the world was Paul referring to make him use that word? What was so dangerous; what was so life threatening? Surely it must have been something massive

like global warming or the latest primaries or world-wide terrorism? No, it wasn't any of that. Let's look and see what Paul called "difficult" by reading the very next verse.

2Timothy 3:2

For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,

These are the things that Paul said were perilous; life threatening; and deadly. Paul say when men begin to love themselves; when covetousness becomes common; when children disobey parents- we are living in the last days and these are days that are deadly. But let's look even closer by examining the next verse:

2Timothy 3:3

unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good,

Without natural affection- When men lose their interest in women; when women lose their interest in men. When fathers lose their interest in their children; when mothers can kill their babies and then go eat lunch. When goodness is mocked and despised and reviled and young people feel out of place by trying to stay pure. Paul said that when this happens- we will know that we are living in the last days and that these are dangerous times. Let's go on:

2Timothy 3:4

treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,

Paul says when you see men who love pleasure more than God- you will know that we are living in dangerous deadly times. When recreation and entertainment fills the Church; When Churches cancel their services so that the men can watch the Super Bowl; when men believe that God exists to help them fulfill their desires- then know- Paul says that these are difficult times.

2Timothy 3:5

holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

The greatest Power of God is not demonstrated through physical healing nor is it manifested through casting out demons- those are great and notable miracles- but the greatest demonstration of God's power that the world has ever known is when God takes a black heart and washes it with red Blood and makes it whiter than snow. When wicked sinful men begin to love and serve God- that is true supernatural miraculous power! And when people began to teach contrary to that- when men begin to teach another Gospel that says that that God doesn't save us from sin- but that He saves us from low expectations or saves us from unfulfilled dreams- that is a *denying* of the Power of God- and when you see that happening- know that you are living in difficult times.

2Timothy 3:6&7

**6 For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses,
7 always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

More books about the Bible than you can shake a stick at; more teachings about temporal and earthly things than ever before and yet today fewer people actually know the Bible than at any time in the 2,000 year history of the Church.

2Timothy 3:8

Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these *men* also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected in regard to the faith.

Divine Truth is more opposed today and less studied today than at any time in history.

2Timothy 3:9

But they will not make further progress; for their folly will be obvious to all, just as Jannes's and Jambres's folly was also.

All of this wicked behavior put together is what Paul said was perilous- it is deadly; it is dangerous and it is all going to happen- Paul said- in the last days and it all stems from false teachers who lead people astray. All of the modern phenomenon of broken marriages and

illegitimate births and rampant pornography and scandal after scandal inside the Church is all attributed to the Gospel not being preached in all its glory and power.

So John says that we are to try the spirits- we are to put what is being taught and believed to a test so that we may know if what we are hearing and what we believe is of God. This is the great issue of spiritual discernment.

Now some believe that only certain people in the Church have what they call the “gift of discernment” which they describe as being a special anointing; a special gift; a special ability that no one else has that allows them to read people’s minds and to know people’s hearts. Beloved- that is not true. What John instructs here in **1John 4:1** is for every single believer to accomplish. All believers are responsible to hold what they are being taught to the authority of Scripture and to fail to do that is to abdicate our obligation to God.

But how do we do that? By what standard do we test or try the Spirits? By the one single standard of Scripture. Why Scripture? Because it is the Word of God and the only existing source of inspired Truth. Everything that is contrary to Scripture is a lie and is false and should be rejected by the believer. Any teaching that alters what Scripture teaches to any degree is not *from* God and is not *of* God and is therefore- by definition a lie- regardless of how popular the teacher may be or how many followers he has.

Now read with me **Jude 4:**

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Here is the great test of all teaching. Notice here that Jude says that these ungodly men will attack Christianity on three fronts:

... turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

These are the three areas that all heresy and false teaching attacks:

1. The Grace of God
2. The Character and Nature of God

3. The Person of Jesus Christ

Throughout the 2,000 year history of the Church- these are the three areas that all heresy fought against and so it is these three areas that we need to know and understand so that we might be successful in fighting off what the false prophets teach.

Since the Resurrection- there have been thousands of heresies that have risen up to deceive the simple. But when you examine all of these false teachings- you will find that there are only seven major roots to all the heresies that have attacked the Church since the beginning:

1. The heresy of the Judaizers
2. The heresy of the Antinomians
3. The heresy of the Modalists
4. The heresy of the Gnostics
5. Arianism
6. Pelagianism
7. The heresy of the Socinians

So, Lord willing over the next several broadcasts- we will look at each one of these seven major heresies and learn how to test them Biblically and how to successfully combat them with Truth.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.