

1 John

Will the True Christian Please Stand Up?

Knowing the Spirit of Truth and The Spirit of Error

November 22, 2020

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Scripture Reference: 1 John 4:1-21

Overall Thoughts Regarding the Sermon Series – What is the Word of the Lord?

- Joshua and Caleb wholly followed the Lord
- God told Abraham your inheritance is the privilege of a relationship with me
- Will the real Christians please stand up?

Background of the Chapter

In an era of so many voices, opinions and biases, the follower of Christ must test every spirit to ensure that they are not being deceived. The key is to always walk in love but also to discern between God, good and evil.

Test the Spirits

1 John 4:1-6

¹Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. ⁴You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world. ⁵They are of the world. Therefore, they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶We 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.

The Passage Breakdown

1John 4:1

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.

- False prophets speak on behalf of spirits – what is the source of these spirits?
 - We must be able to make a distinction and discern between people and the spirits behind movements (i.e. BLM)
- False prophets appear to be from God, but they speak a different message that is contrary to the Kingdom of God
 - They speak error but they reveal it with some sort of truth
 - Getting a prophecy wrong does not make you a false prophet
 - False prophets:
 - Intentionally mislead, mis-inform and misdirect people away from God and His purpose/will
 - They say that God has spoken but in fact He has not
 - They appear to speak truth and give revelation, but it is rooted in deception
 - i.e. False prophet Hananiah arose to speak against the word of the Lord to Jeremiah
 - Examples of false prophets today:
 - The media
 - Lying spirits
 - Deceiving spirits.

1John 4:2

²By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, ³ and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.

- The acid test is that the spirit must declare that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh and that He is the Son of God
- The spirit of antichrist has been released in the world
 - The objective of this demonic spirit is to resist, subvert and replace the spirit of Christ
 - The term “Christ” means the anointed one, therefore the anti-Christ spirit resists the anointing and Christ Himself
- We confess to salvation through our mouth and believe in our hearts (Romans 10:9).

1John 4:4

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

- The first power that God has given us is the power to become the children of God
- We overcome because:
 - We are God’s children; therefore, we have His Spirit within us
 - The Greater One lives in us
 - Our DNA is wired to overcome
 - The victory has been won for us by Christ.

1John 4:5-6

⁵They are of the world. Therefore, they speak as of the world, and the world hears them. ⁶We 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.

Ephesians 5:1

Therefore, be imitators of God as dear children. ² And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma.

- There is a clear distinction between God’s children and those that are in the world
- Jesus was not afraid to test the spirits:
 - Jesus called Herod a fox, religious people He called snakes, fools, and brood of vipers; He even called a woman a dog. Paul called people brutes, liars, beasts and dogs.

John 8:44

You are of *your* father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own *resources*, for he is a liar and the father of it.

Quotes

- “God is the spirit of truth, everything else is error”
- “If the world promotes that, God is not in it”
- “Just because it is a noble cause does not mean that God approves of it or that He is backing it up”.

Main Points

“Will the real Christians please stand up”

1. Real Christians test every spirit to determine if they come from God

- a. We must walk in love and yet be able to test the spirits of people
- b. The spirits are in people and work through them
- c. Every movement of power has a spirit behind it
- d. When James and John were trying to call down fire and consume those that were standing against them, Jesus said to them, “You do not know what spirit you are of”.
- e. Who is a spirit?
 - God is a spirit
 - Angels are spirits
 - Demons are spirits
 - People are spirits.

2. Real Christians overcome because the Greater One lives in them

- a. Christ provides the believer with the spirit of the overcomer
- b. We overcome in Jesus powerful name
- c. To overcome is the trademark of the believer and the child of God.

3. Real Christians are the legitimate children of God

- a. Christians are born again of the Spirit of God – it is not something we do of ourselves

John 1:12

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

4. Real Christians overcome the world with the love of God

- a. Faith and grace work by love

1John 4:9

⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Main Points from The Chapter

1. The Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error
2. Knowing God through love
3. Seeing God through love
4. The consummation of love
5. Obedience by faith.

Group Questions

- 1) What is the biblical definition of a false prophet? How do false prophets speak today? Name three.
- 2) Explain the difference between the spirit of error and the Spirit of Truth.
- 3) How can Christians test the spirits today? What does this look like in real life?
- 4) Who is the antichrist spirit and what does he do?
- 5) Who is the greater one that lives within the believer and who is the one that is in the world?
- 6) Who are the true children of God? Is every human being that is made in the image of God a child of God? Explain and give biblical context.
- 7) Is love really the overpowering force to overcome the world? Give some examples.