

Life That Is Real
“Truth and Error”
I John 4:1-6
Pt. 11

Introduction - The birth marks of a true child of God are:

1. They live righteously.
2. They love sacrificially.
3. They believe biblically.

John turns from the *test of love*; and it's importance to *the doctrinal test of belief*. The life that is real is a life that *believes the truth!*

In chapter 3:24, John mentioned the Holy Spirit, who is given unto us and who abides in us! The Holy Spirit is the spiritual truth and he has come to lead us into all truth.

Christians are not to be spiritually gullible, they are to have a healthy skepticism. We are not to believe every “spirit”, we are to test the spirits to see if they are of God. There are false prophets. The problem in the church today is a lack of discernment. A Christian does not blend their faith.

Our text today starts with:

1. A Command, vs. 1.

The mention of the Holy Spirit in 3:24 prompts John to inform his readers that other spirits exist, such demonic spirits, who produce false prophets and false teachers to propagate their false doctrine.

Since Satan tempted Eve, He has sought to distort and deny God's Word and he is still today the ultimate source behind all false teachers and false doctrine.

Illus. : 2 Cor. 11- Satan comes as an angel of light. It's not the size of a man's church or his or hers popularity.

I Tim. 4:1: “*Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that....*”

II Tim. 4: Paul's final charge to Timothy. So we must “*Be like Bereans*” Acts 17.

Note- John's pastor's heart, vs. 1, “*beloved.*”

A. He gave the command, vs. 1, it's two fold!

1. "Believe not every spirit, vs. 1. It's present imperative, "stop believing". Don't believe every preacher.
2. "Try the spirits." The word test was used for the testing of metals to determine it's genuineness.

Note- Remember love, but don't forget "truth".

B. Why do we test the spirits? To determine their origin, whether they are of God.

C. Why is this needed? Because many false prophets are gone out into the world, vs. 1.

2. He gives an explanation, vv. 2-3.

A. John says, "this is how you can recognize the Spirit of God," vs. 2. The test by which true and false spirits are to be distinguished is the confession that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, vs. 2. Why? Remember the Gnostics. Docetism, "only seemed to have a body. Cerinthus, just a man, the Christ came upon him.

1. In I John "Christ" means more than Messiah.
2. Note that Jesus Christ is "come" so the implied truth of His pre- existence.
3. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God.
4. "Come in flesh" so His real incarnation. Flesh is full humanity and it's in the perfect tense, so the incarnation is not a temporary union, it's permanent.
5. Fully God and fully man, yet one person. So it's the big test, "What think ye of Christ, who's son is he?"

"Much that is said about Jesus in current theological debate is nothing other than the reappearance in modern guise of the old gnostic heresy which John was opposing. The apostle insisted that the eternal divine- human person of Christ is a truth so basic to Christianity that it can never be compromised. "Jesus Christ having come in flesh" is not merely the heart of the Gospel but the whole of it." - Curtis Vaughan

B. In verse 3, typical of John, he states the opposite of verse 2.

Illus.: Jehovah's Witnesses - Who's Jesus?
Mormons - Who's Jesus?
Islam - Who's Jesus? Lesser than Muhammed.
Hinduism - Jesus is not God, but one of many incarnations.
Buddhism - Christ was only a good teacher, but less
important than Buddha.

Get the book, "So What's the Difference?" by Fritz Ridenour.

Note, vs. 3b, the false prophets are "anti-Christ." The state is set for His coming! It is the last time, 2:18.

3. An Assurance, vv. 4-6. Verses four, five and six each begin with an empathic personal pronoun.

1. The assurance of the Christian's victory, vs. 4. "Ye" are of God little children & have overcome them" John 16:33.

The reason for their victory? Because greater...we have the "Spirit of God" and "the Word of God." Illus., see 2:24-27.

2. The worldly character of the false prophets, vs. 5.

- A. "They" are of the world.
- B. "Therefore speak they of the world." Illus., I Tim. 6:5, "Suppose that gain is godliness from such withdrew thyself..."
- C. "And the world heareth them." Illus. - Oprah, Joel Osteen.

3. The divine inspiration of apostolic preachers, vs. 6.

Truth is found in the apostolic message of the Word of God! The test, those who know God, listen and obey. Ask, do you listen to love and obey God's word? The unsaved person does not hear, vs. 6.

- **There is a spirit of truth and there is a spirit of error.**
- **Be deceiving, don't believe every spirit.**
- **The Christ test, what you think of Jesus.**
- **Do have a heart to heard God's word?**