

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

162. Testing the Spirits- Part 13

WAOY Wednesday 03/05/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "Testing the Spirits". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4: 1-6**- again 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 on the last broadcast, we were looking at the fact that John wrote this passage to deal with the Gnostic heresy that had attacked the Church late in the first century over the issue of the Person of Jesus Christ. Unlike many other false religions- the Gnostics- you will remember- fully accepted the Deity of Jesus Christ- but they rejected His Humanity. The Gnostics believed that Christ was a spiritual *concept*- but not a literal human being. These heretics believed that God only *appeared* to be human- but that it was only an illusion.

God the Holy Ghost moved upon the Apostle John to write many things in his Gospel account and his Epistles and his prophecy that

taught that what the Gnostics were saying was wrong. For example- the Epistle that we are studying now- **1John** begins with this declaration by John in **1John 1:1**:

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life —

So John is declaring here that not only was Jesus the Divine Word of Life- but that he and the other Apostles actually and literally and physically saw Jesus with their natural eyes; they spent time with Him; and they actually touched the God- Man.

John was not writing these things so that people would think that this meant that John was something special- no, John was trying to teach the Church here that the Gnostics were wrong- and that Jesus was both God and human.

Now it gets even more serious than an argument about Christ's person. Remember that Jude wrote in verse 4 of his Epistle that all heresy will attack the Christian Faith along one of three lines:

1. A Perversion of Grace
2. The Character and Nature of God the Father
3. The Person of Jesus Christ

So the issue of Who Jesus is – is not a matter of opinion. This is not a subject about which we can differ and still be in right standing with God. No, the issue of Who Jesus is – is a hill on which we must fight and if necessary die on. Over and over in Scripture- the Apostles taught very clearly that a person cannot be saved; a person will not go to Heaven; a person is not a child of God if he denies either the Deity or the Humanity of Jesus Christ. This is the cornerstone of Christianity itself, dear friends, and it not up for debate. You either accept what God says about Jesus or you are yet in your sins- period- end of statement.

Now before you bow your back up at me for saying this- please read with me what God the Holy Ghost inspired various writers to write. For example- read a familiar passage in **Romans 10:9 & 10**:

9 that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved;

10 for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.

Nowhere in all of Scripture does it ever say anything about anyone ever being saved by another way other than by believing and acknowledging or confessing two unarguable truths:

1. Jesus is Lord
2. God raised Jesus Christ from the dead

Now the word that was translated here in **Romans 10:9** as “Lord” is the Greek word, “*kurios*” and that word *can* mean a human lord like that man who owns great tracts of land. But if you study the Greek- you will understand that based upon the predicate of the verbs used here- that Paul was clearly teaching that to be saved meant that we must believe and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God manifested in the flesh and that He is the fulfillment of the over 400 Old Testament prophecies concerning both the Jewish Messiah and the Greek Christ.

Because Jesus Christ is God- it is fitting and proper to worship Him. That is why Paul said that he bowed his knees to Jesus and this is why when we pray – God Almighty will not even hear us or answer us unless we pray to God in the Name of or by the authority of Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus Christ is God- the day will come when every knee will bow before Him and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

In **John 20:28** Thomas was confronted with the Resurrected Jesus and he cried out:

“My lord, and my God”.

Now you can say that Thomas was just overcome with emotion when he said this- but we can’t find anywhere where Jesus corrected Thomas or rebuked him for addressing Him as “God”.

Yet in **Revelation 22**- the Apostle John *was* emotionally overcome with all that God had shown him and he began to fall on his knees to worship what he thought was angel and look how this heavenly being quickly rebuked John for doing so:

The Revelation 22:8&9

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things.

9 But he said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. Worship God."

And John records for us an exchange that Jesus had with His disciples at the Last supper in **John 13:13** when Jesus made this statement:

You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am.

But probably the most telling remark that Jesus ever made about His Own Divinity was done to unsaved Pharisees in the exchange recorded for us in **John 8:58**, when Jesus said:

Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

Now Jesus was not using bad grammar here- He was telling the Jews two things by saying these words in this way. First of all – Jesus was confirming that He was not a created being but was with God in the beginning and was personally there when Abraham lived. But secondly and even more important- Jesus as using the very same words here that God Himself used with Moses in the burning bush when He told Moses, "I AM that I AM".

Now many people are confused about this issue today- but the Jews that Jesus spoke to here were not one bit confused. They knew exactly what Jesus was saying and what he meant by what He said because the very next verse tells us how they reacted to these red letter words of Jesus:

John 8:59

Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

Now the *reason* that these Jews took up stones to stone Jesus to death was not because they were just mad at Him. No, in their lost

unconverted minds- Jesus had just blasphemed by what He had just spoken and had made Himself to be equal with God and Moses commanded the Jews to stone to death *anyone* who blasphemed like that.

So these unbelieving Jews made a large circle around Jesus and they picked up large rocks to throw at Him. They planned right there and then to stone Jesus until He died precisely because Jesus had made Himself equal with God by saying, “**Before Abraham was- I am**”.

But an amazing thing happened. Jesus said in **John 10:18** that no man had the power to take His Life from Him but that He alone had the power to lay down His life when He was ready to and he alone had the Power to take up His Life again. So because Jesus was God and because it was not time for Him to die- the Bible says here that Jesus simply hid Himself and walked right through the midst of them.

Now I could go on and on but I pray that you can see that believing and confessing that Jesus Christ is God was not something that was developed by other people several hundred years after Jesus ascended into Heaven- but the Deity of Jesus Christ was believed and taught by all of those who had physically walked with Jesus while He was on earth and those who were used by God to pen down the inspired New Testament. Accepting the Lordship of Jesus Christ is a Biblical requirement for anyone to go to Heaven.

Now I fully realize that there are some people within various groups who do not believe what those organizations teach- and I praise God for that. But nevertheless- we need to know and it needs to matter to us that Mormon Doctrine denies the full deity of Jesus Christ. We need to remember that the Jehovah’s Witness organization officially teaches that Jesus was an angel- but not God. We need to remember that the scientologist and the Unitarian and the Muslim and the Buddhist and the Hindu rejects the Deity of Jesus Christ.

So whereas we are to be kind to these people and we are to love them and witness to them- and pray for them- we must understand that they are not Christians; and they are not believers; and they are not saved; and they are not our brothers and sisters.

And neither are the Gnostics. And just in case you think that I am being too hard about this- please read with me what God the Holy Spirit inspired John to write about those who reject the humanity of Jesus by reading **1John 4:2-6**:

- 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.

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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