



## **“Our Test”**

*The Message*  
I John 4:1-6

*We test for:*

### **I. Counterfeits** - “try the spirits ” (v. 1)

Explore the source – “made in imitation of something else with intent to deceive”

*We are called to:*

- A. Discriminate** - “believe not every spirit”
- B. Discern** - “whether they are of God”
- C. Distinguish** - “because many false prophets”

### **II. Confessions** – “Hereby know ye ” (vs. 2-3)

Exalt the Standard

*We are conscious of :*

- A. Declarations** - “every spirit that confesses”
- B. Denials** - “every spirit that confesses not”
- C. Deception** - “even now already is it in the world”

### **III. Confirmation** - “Here by know we the spirit of truth” (vs. 4-6)

Examine the spirits

*We are characterized by our:*

- A. Victory** – “greater is He that is in you than...in the world”
- B. Verbiage** – “speak they of the world”
- C. Values** – “he that knoweth God heareth us”

## Sentence Sermon:

***“The spirit of deception preys on gullible believers.”***

## Additional Verses

- ***I Corinthians 12:3***
- ***Romans 10:6-10***
- ***I John 2:18-25***
- ***Matthew 24:1-11***
- ***John 16:33***
- ***I Thessalonians 5:21***
- ***Acts 17:11***
- ***I Corinthians 3:13***
- ***I Thessalonians 2:4***
- ***I Peter 1:7***
- ***Luke 14:19***
- ***Romans 12:2***
- ***I Corinthians 11:28***
- ***II Corinthians 8:8, 22; 13:5***
- ***Galatians 6:4***
- ***Ephesians 4:14; 5:10***
- ***I Timothy 3:10***
- ***Hebrews 3:9***

## Questions to Ponder:

1. What are the key words in this passage?
2. What does the repetition of “spirit” & “world” tell us?
3. Why would John start by telling them to believe not?
4. Who is the protagonist in the passage? Who is the antagonist?
5. How important is our view of Jesus compared to other doctrines?
6. What does spirit of antichrist mean? Where do you find it?
7. How do you think God intends us to react to verse 4?
8. How strong is the message of verse 5? Should we adjust?
9. What is the believer to take from the truth of verse 6?
10. How would you rate your ability to try the spirits?

## INTRO:

One thing that has always concerned me is the seeming lack of discernment amongst believers....He is a good Christian boy/man. Its ok if they date nonbelievers....perhaps he will get saved. The church is great and we love it but no I have not ever read their doctrinal statement.

Salvation, Infallibility of Scripture, Eternal Security, Lord's Supper...all these connect to a very important doctrine...the test of false teachers, antichrists, and the spirit of error....Who is Jesus?!?

A Study in Contrasts :

Truth vs. Falshood – 2:18-28

Children of God vs. Children of the Devil – 2:29-3:12

Love vs. Hate – 3:13-24

> The Spirit of Truth vs. The Spirit of Error - 4:1-6

HOW TO IDENTIFY FALSE RELIGION: 1. If they use idols and images. 2. If they teach that hellfire is real. 3. If they teach that the earth will be completely destroyed. 4. If they teach that God created the Devil. 5. If they teach the trinity. 6. if they teach that after death, the soul survives. 7. If they engage in the political system. 8. If they are part of the world. 9. If they engage in pagan holidays. 10. If they use abusive language. 11. If they don't have forgiveness.

v. 1 .

Beloved = 3 times in this chapter 1, 7, 11

- Believe not every spirit = better “Stop believing or being gullible
- But try the spirits = test or prove, like testing a metal with acid or a coin for genuineness or full weight
  - Implies a good or friendly object that is hoped to stand the test ...NT uses another word for the test that implies a sinister purpose
    - Word usage emphasizes that believers need to maintain balance between believing everything and believing nothing....**Superstition verses Suspicion**
      - **Gullible vs. Skeptical**
- Whether they are of God = “ek” out from God...therefore acceptable
- Because many false prophets = “pseudoprophetai”= pseudo prophets ... old recurring story ...many times over and over again
  - Pseudo = not actually but having the appearance of; pretended; false or spurious; sham.
- Are gone out into the world = have been going out into the world...you will always be able to find some

## V. 2

- Hereby know ye = this is how you can tell
- The Spirit of God = the test is found here alone
- Every spirit that confesses = “homologeo”
- That Jesus Christ = the messiah is Jesus of Nazareth
- Is come in the flesh = emphasizes the humanity and actual physical body (test concerning Jesus Deity in I Corinthians 12:3).
- Is of God = “ek” from God

## v. 3.

- And every spirit that confesses not = me homologeo  
...in Latin Vulgate and early church leaders like Tertullian and Augustine substituted the words “solvit luei” meaning that some spirits separate Jesus and Christ...
- That Jesus Christ = the historical Jesus born of Mary is the Messiah that God provided to take away the sins of the world
- Is come in the flesh = “has come in the flesh”  
>>>> perfect tense:
  - Makes clear that when Jesus came into our world to carry out His mission, He took on Himself a real human body
  - Tense also marks the incarnation as an abiding reality. It is a permanent union of the divine and the human

which qualifies Him to be mediator between God and Man

- deity did not come onto Christ at his baptism...no, He was already before the flesh, then took on flesh at birth, and rose bodily and ascended bodily...The messiah has come

- Is not of God = “ek” does not come out from God
- And this is that of the antichrist = (repeat from I John 2:18-25)
- Whereof you have heard it should come = the spirit of antichrist was predicted – Matthew 24:5; I John 2:18
- And even now already is it in the world = fulfillment already at work...before the church had looked for it or fully identified it.

## v. 4

- Ye are of God = “ek” you are out from God
- Little children = teknia – we are born into the family of God and now that is our identity and place of belonging
- And have overcome them = perfect active indicative you are overcoming them...**nike** ...victory assured over the antichrists
- Because = hoti ...here is the reason for the victory over the antichrists...not our superiority but...
- Greater is He =
  - He – used :
    - Not to identify but to stress superior greatness
    - The masculine instead of the neuter making it clear that the contrast is between two 2 personal powers.

- God's Spirit = superior in rank and power—He is greater, bigger, stronger, wiser, better than any other...
- that is in you = and He abides in you ...remember (3:24 – with all the benefits...love, unction, knowledge, the Word, light, confidence, compassion...
- Than he that is in the world = ??? Would have expected the comparison to be: Greater is He that is in You ....than he that is in them !! Instead it says in the world = godless world system in hostility to God and His kingdom
  - John 16:33...who is this he? The antichrist, the devil, those under the delusions of this world system.

v.5.

- They are of the world = they are “ek” out from this world...they identify with this world and find their sense of belonging in this world
  - Note that there is no middle ground...either:
    - From the world
    - From God
  - Note the use of the word “world” 3 times – emphasizing source and character of antichrist and false prophets...
- Therefore speak they of the world = their arguments are from the wisdom of this world and its values without the unction and benefits of God's Word and Light

- And the world hears them = they are understood by this world...they speak the same language...conversely (I John 3:1).

v. 6

- We are of God = (John and the Apostles cp. 1:1-4 ) What a great phrase...We are “ek” sent out
  - The Apostles are in tune with God
  - The Apostles are His chosen and commissioned messengers
  - *The contrast being made is not between true and false Christians BUT*
    - *Between true and false teachers*
- He that knoweth God = present active articular participle....the one who keeps on getting acquainted with God...one who is growing in his knowledge of God...what we might call today....”Seekers”
- hears us = has the ability and desire to “get it” ... can dial to the right frequency ...aptitude and attitude
- He that is not of God =
- hears not us =
- *Hereby know we = this is how we (all believers) can tell*
- *The spirit of truth = (John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13)*
- *And the spirit of error = (only place in NT it occurs) - - speaks of the the relentless activities of the devil and his cohorts to deceive and lead believers astray.*