

## Test the Spirits

### 1 John 4:1-6

1. Summary of our time in the Epistle
  - a. Written from the Apostle John's pastoral heart to first- and second-generation Christians 2,000 years ago
    - The "darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining" (2:8)
    - It is the "last hour" because "many antichrists have come" (2:18)
  - b. Many of those antichrists came from within the assembly of the original audience (2:19)
  - c. John's purpose is to assure his readers that they have eternal life (5:13)
2. 4:1-6 as it relates to the whole Epistle
  - a. John's audience needed a *proper response* to the manifestation of false prophets (4:1)
    - Test the spirits
  - b. John's audience needed a *proper test* to discern the truth from error (4:2-3, 6)
    - Confessing Christ (what they *say*)
    - Listening to us (what they *hear*)
  - c. John's audience needed a *proper attitude* to endure the onslaught of false teachers (4:4-5)
    - You have overcome them for God is greater!
3. "Test the spirits" - a call for *all* Christians to exercise discernment
  - a. "Many false prophets" have multiplied over the centuries.
  - b. Jesus Christ remains the standard of truth.
    - *Your* confession of Christ is a work of the Spirit!
    - Listen to the voice of your Shepherd and those who proclaim the faith once for all delivered.
    - If you do not have Christ, you do not have God - repent and believe!
  - c. Adopt a disposition of *being on guard against error and faith in God and his truth*.
    - To be unbalanced in this area is to be open to various errors.
    - Be assured - the *doctrine* of Christ is the *reality* that Christ is Lord of all!