

Identifying the Antichrist Spirit

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Have I ever told you before that God really really likes you? He deeply deeply loves you because you're in his Son. It's just a marvelous thought. It's just a marvelous thought. Everything is built on Jesus. Have you, have you ever thought about that? Everything centers in him. That's what John is talking about. 1 John 4, if you would, turn there, going through 1 John on Sunday nights most of the time. Uh, 1 John 4:1-6 about testing the spirit. He's been talking so much about the antichrist spirit. There's only two spirits, there's only the Holy Spirit and the antichrist spirit. There's no in-between and, um, unfortunately from the moment of the inception of the church in the earth up to today, the antichrist spirit has been working and raging and waging war to thwart the church, to warp her doctrine, to pull her away from devotion to the one true Christ, and John's warning of this in 1 John 4:1-6. Let's read it 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 we 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 [that's all the antichrist and all his false prophets]; 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 [the children of God that is, I know, I think in this context it's the apostles] 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.

Let's get right to the outline. Identifying the antichrist spirit.

I. We're to test them as to their regard for the living Word, our Lord Jesus Christ. Test them as to their regard for the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. You see, you cannot believe everyone who confesses to be God's preacher, God's apostle sometimes they call themselves, God's prophet, and you cannot even believe everyone who confesses to be a Christian. I'm 100% convinced that at the judgment bar of God there will be more there who profess to know Christ who did not, than who professed to know Christ who really

did know him and really were his. So John says we need to be very careful. Now he's, he's speaking to church leaders but this is for all Christians. I, I say he's speaking to church leaders, certainly church leaders take a prime responsibility here but that's not the point of the text. The text is to the church in general. All of us are to be astute in discernment. John MacArthur says that's the great need of the church today is discernment. I would agree with that with one caveat and that is the great need of the church today is the preaching of the word in the power of the Spirit which gives you discernment. You're not gonna have discernment if you don't know the word.

So John says we're to test these spirits. So many may appear at first glance to be from God but under the acid test of the word of God their true identity is revealed. He says here in verse 1 there are many false prophets. Not a few, there are many false prophets that have gone out into the world and you're going to encounter them. Now listen to me, you're gonna encounter them outside of the church and you're going to encounter them inside the church, even inside the local church. That's my conviction because it's my experience that as a church matures, that becomes less and less a problem for a local church but as we deal with, uh, guys who are trying to reform and revitalize their churches to be biblically healthy, or true churches we'd call it, or guys who are trying to plant churches, there are years and years of difficult warfare as impostors and false brethren seem to be drawn to these works. It's just part of the process. No wonder John or Paul said to the Corinthians, "It's necessary that there be divisions among you, that those who are proved of God might be evident among you." So he says even though these false teachers and false prophets cause trouble and divisions, in the long run if you'll hang in there it's helpful because it begins to expose whose are God's and whose are not, who are the sheep and who are the goats.

Go to Acts right quick. Would you turn over there just to get a, an emphasis again of, uh, the weightiness of this teaching in the New Testament. Acts 20. Paul calls to himself the Ephesian elders and you'll remember this, I'm sure, but let's look at it again. Acts 20:17, "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called to him the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, 'You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and with trials which came upon me through the plots of the Jews.'" So Paul says, "When I was here helping your local church, you know how they attacked me all the time." Verse 20 he's saying but in light of this, "how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." Amen on that.

Now here's an interesting truth here, this is just a side note but is it not interesting that we have the repetition of something that occurs in Acts 20 in verse 20 here, "I taught you publicly," that's the congregation, "and from house to house," that's small groups. I've never seen that in chapter 20 before. I know it's in the Bible but I've never seen it in Acts 20. Why didn't y'all tell me it was there, that God generally organizes people into congregational settings but also small groups? Interesting. Now probably this was the

result of the difficulties and the persecution and it just happened to work out that way but we do know small groups is a principle in the Scriptures.

Verse, well, uh, verse 22, "And now, behold, bound by the Spirit, I am on my way to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there, except that the Holy Spirit solemnly testifies to me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions await me. But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, so that I may finish my course and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that all of you, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, will no longer see my face. Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men." And boy, what a verse, verse 27. May all pastors be able to say this at the end of their pastorate, "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God." Oh, my goodness. I sometimes ask, have people ask me, "How do you do that?" And I'm at, and I just, I honestly I think, "How do you not do it?" You just, you just start and you just preach the text. It's just not hard. It's just right there. It's really not.

"I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God," and here it is, the point of our discussion this evening, verse 28, "Be on guard for yourselves," now these are elders of the church at Ephesus. Paul says, "You guys be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you the overseers," you could say pastors, "to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you," that's inside in the church, "not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one of you with tears." So there we have Paul's exhortation to the Ephesian elders saying basically the same thing that John is saying in this circular letter that he's writing, "You guys have got to be alert and you've got to be careful and discern the spirit."

Now we're talking about testing these teachers in this context as to their regard for the living Word, Jesus Christ. Jude says they'll come in and be like hidden reefs in your love feasts. A hidden reef is dangerous. If a ship's stuck on it, it'll tear the ship apart, but you can't see them, they're, they're hidden there. It looks just like good water to sail through but it's not. "Test the spirits," John says here. A, a man who tests metals, uh, often does that with, with fire. He'll, a silversmith will put the silver in a fire and let the heat burn the dross off and expose what's true silver and what is dross and what is not true. So we're to test these people by their view of Christ. What is their view of Christ?

Now in verses 2 and 3 of our text, he says you will know the, the, you will know by this, rather you will "know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." Now the Gnostic heresy of the day that Jesus was just a spirit animation, he was not, he did not have a literal actual body, and from time immemorial false teachers have always attacked the divine human nature of Jesus Christ. They've, they've either attacked that Jesus wasn't really a human being, or they attack that he's not really fully deity. Uh, uh, all the false religions and all the cults have

that concept. They usually add Jesus in there somewhere but not that he is God come in the flesh. The theologians would say that he is God of very God. He's 100% God as if he were not man at all, and he's 100% man as if he were not God at all. There's a mystery in that. It's the Incarnation. He's the God-man and I think that's one of the foundational issues, one of the foundational tests we should say, of 1, if he is really of God, does he embrace the truth, full humanity and deity of Christ. I think that's at least implied in verse 2 when he says that Jesus Christ has come. Come from where? Come from heaven, that he's God come from heaven and he's come in the flesh. Now I know it's not the clearest statement, there's many others we're gonna look at in a moment, but I think it certainly is implied.

Verse 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." I'm convinced the false teacher and the antichrist spirit will take, will, will, how shall I say it? They will teach as much error as they can get away with but they're aiming for denying fully the deity of Jesus Christ. My friend, Jesus is as much God as God the Father is God, and God the Father is equal God with God the Son, and God the Son is equal God with God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit is equal God with God the Son and God the Father. We've had all these illustrations through the years of what is this like. Well, it's like water. Water can be, uh, water in a liquid form, water can be a vapor and then water can be ice. Well, not really. Look, have, I've learned through the years there's just no illustration that does the Godhead justice. You either receive the truth from the truth of Scripture by the power of the Spirit or you just don't get it. Here's the point: why would Satan no matter where he starts, why, why is he always gunning for denying that Jesus is truly God come in flesh? Here's why, are you listening? Because if God comes to save you, it's over. If God comes to save you, you don't need anything else. You don't need anyone else. You don't need ceremonies or sacraments or ritual or works or morality or ethics or to follow any wise guru Gnostic's teaching or anybody else. If God came to save you, it's over. It's just over. So see, there's nothing for them to grab ahold of. They want, they want to bring a system out and charge you \$29.95 for it. "Here it is. Get my seminar and then you'll really know how to know God, then you'll really have the full gospel." I, I get, well, these silly things, "We're a full gospel church." What in the world does that mean? Have you got more God in there than the gospel's got that I know? Because if you've got God, you don't need the rest of their paraphernalia and all of their gimmicks and all of their snake oils. So see, it undermines everything. It, they lose everything.

I've told you this so many times but I'm telling you it's my heart of hearts, I want to so preach Jesus that you don't need me but you love me because I preach Jesus and he's the one you need. That's a great way to live. That way if I'm gone, you're still okay if somebody preaches it straight, and if they don't, I'm just gonna ask God to burn this whole thing down. If this place ever goes liberal, you young, Matt, you guys are in trouble but I trust they wouldn't let that happen. I'm confident they wouldn't let that happen.

The antichrist is always out to deny that the Christ has come, including that he's God come in the flesh. Just go through the list of them: the Mormons; the Jehovah's Witnesses; some time ago there was the Moonies; there are the Unitarians; uh, the, the Unification Church; but let's don't forget the liberal Baptists and the liberal Presbyterians and the liberal Methodists and Roman Catholicism, all in their teaching begin to chip away at the foundation stone that Christ is God in human flesh. Brothers and sisters, if the Roman Catholic, now I'm not talking about our Roman Catholic friends, we love them, I'm talking about Roman Catholic theology and doctrine, if Roman Catholic doctrine held to the deity of Christ, they would never need to call Mary a co-Redemptrix. Do you see what I'm saying? If he's God now then your salvation, we don't need Mary's help if he's God. If God came and died on the cross to pay my debt, how can you pay it better than that? Who's getting paid the Father? If God the Son pays God the Father, you're taken care of completely. I don't need Mary to be some sort of demigod up there helping Jesus save me or anybody else. It always gets out down to the deity of Christ. All of these movements, and I, I believe in the sovereignty of God and the goodness of God, there's gonna be some really born again saints of God in some of these liberal Baptist churches and some of these liberal Presbyterian churches and some of these liberal Methodist churches. They turned on the radio and they got Anchored in Truth and they heard the gospel, or Grace to You or whatever it may be. And some of our Catholic friends, I, I have, I've never talked to a Catholic person that really embraced their church's doctrine. When you get to talking to them about it, "I just don't know about that, you know?" But it's just, it's just a, a family tradition more or less. But brothers and sisters, it is serious that we discern where are they going and what are they teaching and it all centers on the person of Jesus Christ.

Let me just give you a brief theology on the deity of Christ. Can we do that for just a moment? There's so so much more to say than I'll take time to say but a brief theology on the deity of Christ. In the New Testament, occasionally a person will speak of Christ and give him the name that is used for God the Father, if you will, in the Old Testament. For example, in Hebrews 1:8 the writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 45:6, "Thy throne, O God," referring to Jesus, "is forever." Now here's the way this is: the writer of Hebrews is quoting the Psalmist and the Psalmist is quoting God the Father saying to God the Son, "Thy throne, O God, is forever." That's pretty good stuff right there. Here's my point: it wasn't a question in the, the writers of the New Testament and in, in the apostolic doctrine. We'll talk about more of that in a moment. It wasn't a question to them about his deity. They, it, it was just settled. They accepted that glorious truth. So in the New Testament, Jesus is giving the name that they would give for God. Why? Because they believed he was God.

Um, in John 1:1, in John 1:14, the same man that wrote this epistle wrote the gospel of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Now John said, you know, "Can I make it any plainer than that?" Jesus, the Logos, God's speak, God's truth to us, he is God. He's not kinda God. He's not sorta God. He's not close to God. He's not near to God. He is God in human form. Um, in John 20:28 Thomas bows at the feet of Jesus and what does he say? "My Lord and my God!" In Romans 9:5, "who is over all," referring to Jesus, "God blessed forever." In 1 John 5:20,

"and we are in Him who is true even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." And on and on and on we could go.

Well, another area, not only the names, the titles that they attributed to Jesus but let's think about the divine attributes the Bible speaks about him. First of all, Micah 5:2, Matthew 2:6, John 17:5, we see, uh, the teaching of Jesus' eternity, that he had glory with the Father before the world was. It was from everlasting the text says.

Not only the divine attribute of eternity but the divine attribute of omniscience. He knows all things. John 21:17, "Lord, thou knowest all things." Matthew 11:27, "neither knoweth anyone the Father save the Son." If you know the Father like the Son knows the Father, then you know everything because the Father knows everything.

His eternity, his omniscience, his omnipresence. In Matthew 18:20, "Where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in their midst." And he said also, "I want you to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit," that means from local churches, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I've commanded you and, lo, I am with you." I'm omnipresent. Only God can be omnipresent. Only God can be omniscient. Only God can have eternity. And Jesus is all of these things.

John 5:29, his omnipotence, whatever the Father does, the Son does in like manner. If the Father can do it, the Son can do it. God the Father has all power, all authority. God the Son has all power and all authority.

Immutability, in other words, he stays the same, he changeth not. He cannot change and why would we want him to change? He's perfect. He's God. Hebrews 13:8 says he's the same yesterday, today, and yes, forever. That's Jesus.

Well, not only some of the names that are given to him point to him as God, not only do these divine attributes described of him in the Bible refer to him as God, but the divine works that he's done. In John 1:3, he created everything. "All things came into being by Him," that's Jesus, "and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." Colossians 1:16, "For by Him were all things created." He's the Creator of all things. In the beginning Jesus created everything.

He is the preserver, or he has, or he holds the preservation of all things in his hands. Colossians 1:17, by him all things hold together. Won't you just, uh, imagine for a moment the vast limitless spans of space, the Milky Way galaxy. I don't have the figures in front of me but the massive size of our solar system and it's a tiny tiny speck in the Milky Way galaxy, and then there are galaxies upon galaxies upon galaxies and every tiny bit of it is held in place by the present, personal, persistent power of Jesus Christ. If for one moment he withdrew his continuous control, you'd fly out of your seats and this whole world would fly into chaos. He's God and he's our Savior.

He's the object of worship. Not only, uh, well, I didn't talk about raising the dead. That's pretty good, isn't it? John 5:28-29, Jesus said an hour coming, an hour is coming in which all who are in the tombs shall hear his voice and shall come forth. Only God can do that. So not only his divine names, the divine attributes, the divine works, but he is also, fourthly, the object of worship. In John 5:23 the Bible says that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. Wow. Equal plane. God the Son, Jesus, and God the Father. Hebrews 1:6 says let all the angels worship him. And let's be mindful that Peter would not let Cornelius worship him. Remember Peter said to Cornelius, "Stand up. I myself am also a man. Don't worship me." Paul and Barnabas, remember when the pagans decided they were gonna worship them, Paul and Barnabas tear their clothes and, uh, reject any notion that they should be worshiped. An angel showed John on the isle of Patmos those glorious visions and John fell down to worship and the angel rebuked John and said, "Don't do that. I'm a fellow servant of yours."

Now go to Revelation 5, just a few pages over to the right there. You get past Jude, get to Revelation, go to Revelation 5. Let's just begin in verse 1. "I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a book written inside and on the back, sealed up with seven seals. And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the book and to break its seals?'" We heard some singing about that this morning. Verse 3, "And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth," no other creature, no other creature, "was able to open the book or to look into it." Verse 4, "Then I began to weep greatly because no one was found worthy to open the book or to look into it; and one of the elders said to me, 'Stop weeping; behold, the Lion that is from the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has overcome,' he's conquered, prevailed, "so as to open the book and its seven seals." Someone said that these seven seals are the title deeds to everything that is. Verse 6, "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb," that's Jesus, "standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb," this is worship, folks, and "each one holding a harp and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song." Thank God we're not of the old song, that's the, the old works covenant. We're of a new song. "Saying, 'Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and purchased,' past tense verb, "purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." That's why we do missions because God's already purchased some among all the nations. They're just out there waiting to hear the gospel. Verse 10, "You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." Verse 11, "Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice," this is worship, "'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.' And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb,' that's Jesus, "be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.' And the four living creatures kept saying, 'Amen.' And the elders fell down and

worshiped." Nobody else in the Bible but God gets that kind of worship, that kind of honor, that kind of praise. Jesus is God.

Test the spirits. They'll come at it from all kinda ways and say that, the point is that Jesus is not sufficient by himself but if he's God, he has to be sufficient for our salvation by himself. That's why always the antichrist spirit starts chipping away at the foundation that he's God and anytime you run into someone who talks about works salvation and you've gotta do this and you've gotta do that, then basically what they're saying is that God did not come and God did not secure your redemption. But if God has come and he obeyed the mandates of divine justice and won our freedom, then we are free indeed.

Well, 2, we'll be quicker on this one. First of all, test their regard concerning the living Word, Jesus Christ our Lord. Secondly, test their response to the written word. To the written word. I've told you many times before the local church, now let me, let me put a modifier on that, a biblically healthy local church is the great clarifier. You just drop anybody and let them stay a few months and pretty soon it becomes clear whether they're one of us or not one of us. It just gets clear. And anybody that sits under faithful preacher of the word will either receive it and rejoice or repelled by it and be removed. The same guy who wrote this, John, said they went out from us because they never were really of us. If they had, were of us they would have undoubtedly stayed with us, but they went out that it might be shown that all are not really of us. They don't respond to the truth we hold to and the truths we stand on. It doesn't do anything for them.

Look all the way down in verse 6 for just a moment. Go back to 1 John 4, look at verse 6. "We are from God." Now in this case the "we" of verse 6 means John and the apostles. "We are from God; he who knows God," three important words, "listens to us," he who does not know God or "he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." What's he saying? They listen to us. They'll listen to the apostolic voice. They listen to the apostolic doctrine. You see, the New Testament was written by God's apostles. They listen to this word. That's what cranks their tractor. That's what excites them. That's what draws them, the faithful preaching of the apostolic doctrine. Listen brothers and sisters, that has been once for all handed down to the saints. We have it as our New Testament. That's the apostolic voice.

Now back up to verse 4, he says, um, "You are from God, little children." Now the personal pronoun "you" of verse 4 is talking about the readers or the churches. The personal pronoun of verse 5, "they," is talking about the antichrist. And the personal pronoun of verse 6, "we," is talking about the apostles. So we can go up to verse 4 and the "you" is the readers. He says, "You," you true Christians, "my children" he keeps calling them, "You are from God, little children, and you have overcome them." Why? "Because greater is He who is in you than he that is in the world." You might be fooled for awhile and they might seduce you for a moment but give it some time and the word of God will come through and you'll begin to see through their arguments and their false teaching and know this is not of the Holy Spirit, this is of the antichrist spirit. You overcome them. It may take a little time but you overcome them.

I'll never forget when I was first converted, I, I just loved every preacher on tv. Oh, me. Oh, me. Oh, me, oh, me. I, don't tell nobody. Will you not tell anybody if I tell you this? I sent some of them some money but I'm not gonna tell you who it was. I was just drawn in but you know what? I got in the word and I sat under faithful preaching verse by verse, chapter by chapter through books of the Bible and pretty soon I thought, "Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I don't think they're of God." It took awhile but you begin to see it. You overcome them. It's the Holy Spirit that is in you that gives you discernment based on the teaching of the word of God that the Spirit uses to inform you so that their evil heresies are exposed.

He that is in you, that's the Holy Spirit, is greater than he who is in them, that's Satan or the antichrist spirit. As he says in, uh, uh, verse, um 5, "They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them." Notice what he's saying here. People just kinda gravitate to them that belong to the world because they belong to the world and their wisdom's from the world and by God's divine miraculous doing, those who are born again by his mighty Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel, they are just naturally drawn to the preaching of the true word of God because it came from heaven where the Spirit that lives in you came from.

So what's their response to the written word? Test them by that. The truly saved respond positively to the apostle's doctrine. Remember it was the Apostle Paul that said as he preached around, he said, "I found that I'm an aroma of death to some, and then I find that I'm an aroma of life to others." What an interesting truth that is. Some will reject the truth of God's word because they don't think it's God's revelation but 2 Timothy 3:16 says it's God-breathed, it's inspired of God. Matter of fact, just for a moment go back to John 10. This is the same John that wrote the epistle we're looking at but he wrote this gospel. Look at John 10. What an insight this gives us.

John 10, beginning in verse 8. Are you there? We don't turn in our Bibles much anymore because we always put it on the screen. John 10, verse 18, no verse 8, I'm sorry. John 10:8. John is writing again and he's quoting our Lord now and Jesus says, "All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them." Huh. It didn't mean they covered their ears and ran, it means as they heard them, they didn't, they weren't drawn to them. The sheep, the sheep didn't hear them. Hm. The sheep were not drawn to them. Interesting.

Verse 9, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief," those of the antichrist spirit, those with the false heretical doctrine, they "come only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." Verse 11, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep." For who? The sheep. Verse 12, "He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hired hand and is not concerned about the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me." My, my, my. Give me a door to go run through. Goodness gracious.

Verse 15, "even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father," there's no knowledge and unity and unison and oneness like that but God the Father and God the Son. He said, "and I lay down My life for the sheep. I have other sheep, that are not of this fold," not of the Jewish fold, and "I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again." He said, "My sheep will hear My voice."

Brothers and sisters, when this book is faithfully preached, the voice of Jesus goes out. You can test those by are they drawn to this doctrine, the doctrine of this book, the apostolic voice. I'm not an apostle. The apostles were the human authors superintended by the Holy Spirit to write for us the perfect word of God and deliver unto us once for all the doctrines of the church. Test them by their response with the truth of the word of God. Well, a lot of them were rejected because they just don't think it's basically, "It's not God's revelation. We don't think it's inspired. We need something else. We need signs and wonders and miracles and prophecies and insights." No, you don't, not if you're a sheep. This is plenty. If you're a sheep, you start nibbling on this and you never get done. You just start, you just eat it and eat it and eat it and eat it, and it's, this right, this sheep food. It's not goat fodder, it's sheep food.

You just, you just, you know, and I'll be honest, I, I get weary preaching. I don't get weary of you. I don't get weary of God. I don't get weary of the truth but I do get weary of preaching sometimes but you know, it doesn't take me just a few days and I want to get right back to it again. Some of you get tired of me yelling at you. You do, you get weary. "I think I'm gonna go hear Brother Jeff tonight." Doggone. Well, I'm sorry. I told a man I wouldn't say that anymore. I didn't mean to. I'm sorry. "I, I'm just, I just don't don't think I wanna hear him again." Well, then turn on Benny Hinn and Kenneth Copeland for a couple times, you'll be ready to hear me again. You'll say, "I need some sheep food. No, I need some sheep food."

"My sheep hear My voice." They're drawn to the truth of the word of God. Some say, "Well, it's not relevant. The Bible don't have any relevance." They reject revelation. They reject its relevance but the Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16 it's profitable for all things. All things. Brothers and sisters, listen to me, God's church full of God's sheep do not need additives to keep God's sheep content and happy and satisfied and fulfilled. All this stuff churches are doing to keep people coming, all they're doing is entertaining goats. The sheep, all the sheep need is the sheep food.

"My sheep hear My voice." Some say, "Well, it's too rigid." What does Paul say in 2 Timothy, uh, 4:3 and 4? There'll come a time when they will not endure sound doctrine, that's just too, that's just too strong for us, and they'll, they'll, uh, heap up teachers, they'll get teachers in accordance to their own desires who, in an amplified sense, will furnish them with the latest fad, Paul says, and certainly they will all reject its rebuke. You know, that's one of the things about sheep food, it's constantly challenging the false fodder you put in your heart and mind. It's constantly calling you to repent of what you've taken in that doesn't align with God and get your thinking and your heart back aligned with God.

Once you're a true sheep, boy, I don't wanna, I don't need to go here. I don't need to really say this but the way the Lord words this, you weren't a goat that became a sheep, you were a sheep that found your shepherd. That's the way Jesus. You, you, you can't exegete this chapter and make it mean they were goats who became sheep, you can only understand it that the sheep responded, were drawn to, found their shepherd. Kinda like the doctrine of predestination and election and choosing, not kinda like it, just like it. Just like it.

Now let me balance this thing out. I hadn't said this. Brother, listen to me, we're not hyper-Calvinist, we believe with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength that we must appeal to every man everywhere to repent and believe on Jesus, and if they will God will save them. Are you with me? Look, there's some things down here in time and space history we just can't put our little brains around but yet God gives us divine truth that's just bigger than our brains. We rejoice in it but we also have the commandment to preach the gospel to everyone, promising everyone who will receive it will be saved.

What I'm giving you right now is what Paul told the Ephesian elders. I'm giving you the whole purpose of God, the whole counsel of God, but it's always gonna have rebukes in it and some of them just reject it because of the rebukes, but when you run into these guys and they, they're kinda sketchy on that it's God's divine word, they're kinda sketchy on it's Christ and Christ alone that saves us, they kind of push away the word and the preaching of the word, they want, they want gimmicks and shows and lights and smoke, and I heard the other day that there's a church in our area that they had, they did movies for church services and their whole staff dressed up in costumes like Captain America movie, whatever that is. I don't even know how to say it. What? I mean, listen to me, have you so exhausted the truth in this book, you finished with this, you've so exhausted the truth in this glorious, divine, holy, wondrous, authoritative, inerrant, sufficient word of God, you've so exhausted this that you had to take a step up to put on costumes and act like silly fools and call it a church service? Come on, folks! I'm in trouble now but somebody needs to say this. Think about it for a moment. Think about it for a moment. I can get any pagan, whoremongering, adultering, lying, scheming, cheating fool to go watch a silly show on Sunday morning but they're not gonna come hear this blessed book preached straight and true unless the Spirit of God draws them to it.

Well, I've chased a few rabbits tonight, forgive me for that. John says test them, test them in regard to their view of the living Word of God, Jesus Christ, and test them in regard to their response to the written word of God, the Bible, the apostolic doctrine.