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| **Testing the Spirits** **1 John 4:1-6**  **"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."**   |  | | --- | |  | |  | | |  | | | [http://www.gmodules.com/ig/images/plus_google.gif](http://fusion.google.com/ig/add?synd=open&source=ggyp&moduleurl=http://www.google.com/ig/modules/translatemypage.xml) | [Gadgets](http://www.google.com/webmasters/gadgets.html) powered by Google | |

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**stop the false teachers and religious con artists on the radio and TV. They cover the whole spectrum of religious idolatry from Robert Schuller, smiling like a Cheshire cat in his crystal cathedral to dozens of Charismatic health and wealth gospel preachers hawking their con proclaiming in the name of God if you send him money God will heal you and make you wealthy.   By the way I hope none of you fell for their lies and sent them any money. You might ask how do you know they are false teachers. It is really very simple: First God's program for this age is the local church which is an assembly of believers who meet together. They are to follow the New Testament present His truth, preach the Gospel and edify believers. To use a good southern term, "If it ain't out of the local church....beware!" God is not in it. Why? Because the local assembly of believers is what the Lord instituted and it is His program for believers. Why would He give us the ekklesia, give His life for it as Ephesians 5:12 says, and then go and use programs and institutions men have set up? Second you can simply compare their teaching with the Word of God and third you can tell them by their fruit.**

**I. God tells us in these first verses in 1 John 4 to try or test the spirits because many false prophets are gone out into the world.**

**ILLUS: While I was working a our youth camp here in Utah one summer a man came up and began going from person to person and carrying on a conversation. I finished teaching my class and watched as he came over to the shelter where I held classes. He began boldly proclaim how much he love the Lord and what a great thing it was to be saved. He used all the Christian buss words, like praise the Lord, Hallelueia, etc. He said he was an ex-catholic and had traveled all over the world reaching people for Christ others were not interested in. He then began to tell me about this woman preacher who was the greatest teacher who he said had taught him most of what he knew. I listened as he talked about working in a Billy Graham crusade and with many doctrinally unsound churches and especially the Pentecostals and Charismatics. He said he was staying with a wonderful pastor in the town near the camp. He said God had given him the mission to go around to churches and Christians and encourage them to all come together to and set aside our differences and just serve the Lord.**

**He finally stopped talking and I was able to tactfully respond. I asked him should we as Bible believing Christians join with Billy Graham. He reply yes so I continued and ask him did he know that Billy Graham had Roman Catholic workers in his crusades. I asked him did he know that when people responded to Graham's message they would be asked what was their church affiliation and if they were Catholic there would be directed to a Catholic worker who would channel them into the Roman church. I asked him as a ex-Catholic who God had saved, how he felt about that.   
           He was silent. I then began to show him the many passages of Scripture where God says to avoid, be separated from, and have nothing to do with false teachers. I asked him did he know that the Bible tells to rebuke false doctrine and contend for the faith. How then could he be directed by God to bring people and churches together without regard for what they practiced and believed when they was clearly in doctrinal error. For the rest of his time at camp he began to practice separation and would not have anything to do with me. Seems like he was neglecting the ecumenical ministry he said God had given him. It was clear to me why he did not want to "come together" with me? God's word is to be followed because it is truth. When it is believed and taught it rebukes, and reproves the false teachings of men. He said he loved Jesus Christ, who is the Word (John 1:1), but did not believe or practice His word.**

**2. The false teachers that John is talking about are energized by demonic spirits and not the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit does not lead one to doctrinal error and false unbiblical practices. It was a problem in John's day and remains so today as well.**

**3. Look at Paul's warning to Timothy in 1 Tim. 4:1-5 saying *"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron"* (1 Timothy 4:1-2)**

**Paul in his second letter to Timothy, 2 Tim. 3:1-9 warned about the coming of time when me would as verse seven said, *"Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth."* (2 Timothy 3:7)**

**He continued his warning if 4:1-5 and verse 3-4 state, *"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."* (2 Timothy 4:3-4)**

**4. Peter's also was inspired of God to warn believers in 2 Peter 3:3-4. *"Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."* (2 Peter 3:3-4)**

**5. John implores believers of his day to stop believing the smooth speaking Gnostics that were so prevalent in the churches. He was saying that all that glitters is not gold and all who claim to speak for the Lord are not God's men.**

**6. How then do we determine who is doctrinally sound and who is in error. John says to test them teachers. Greek word for test is "*dokimadzo*" and was applied in secular Greek to such areas as detecting counterfeit coins and examining candidates for public office.**

**The New Testament tells us to prove several things;**

**a. The season. *"Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?"* (Luke 12:56)**

**b. Ourselves. *"But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of [that] cup."* (1 Corinthians 11:28)**

***"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"* (2 Corinthians 13:5)**

**c. The will of God. *"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what [is] that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."* (Romans 12:2)**

***"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*" (Ephesians 5:10)**

**d. Our work. *"But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."* (Galatians 6:4)**

**e. Our fellow workers. *"And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless."* (1 Timothy 3:10)**

**f. All things. *"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."* (1 Thessalonians 5:21)**

**It is very clear we are too test and prove all that is within the scope of our lives.**

**7. Here is the picture: Here comes a teacher who has a earned doctorate, vast experience and authoritative bearing, wonderful personality, great speaking ability. It is the solemn and responsibility of even the lowest of laymen to determine whether this teacher is of God!**

**He is fails to measure up to the Word of God, he is to be rejected. "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:" (Revelation 2:2 To the church at Ephesus)**

**Even if he is a Charismatic who alleges angelic revelation.**

***The devil has not changed his ways and has always had false prophets. Note what the false prophet told the true prophet who God had sent to rebuke King Jeroboam for his sins. God told the prophet that while he was in Israel he was not to eat or drink till he was back in Judah. Yet along the way home God's prophet was met the devil's false prophet who tempted God's true prophet to disobey God's instructions. "He said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."* (1 Kings 13:18)**

**The false prophet claimed God has spoken to him and told him the opposite of what God told the true prophet. God's prophet believed the lie and ignored what God had told him. The result was as he returned to Judah and lion attacked and killed him. This prophet had God's word, but ignored it and rather turned from what God has said to him. It sin cost him his life.**

**8. We are to honor the man of God, whom God sends to preach and teach us, but we accept nothing he says just because he said it, rather we take what he says and compare it to the Word of God see whether these things be true. The Bible is the final authority on all matters.**

**9. We are to study God's truth and that makes us able to discern error when we hear it. God's answer to knowing false teaching is having full Bible knowledge. As Ephesians 6:12, tells us to put on the whole armor of God so we can stand against the wiles of the devil. Verse 16 says to put on the shield of faith that we might quench the fiery darts of satan. Faith is believing God's word and living by it.**

**ILLUS: Dr. J. Vernon McGee, tells the story of how a man, came to him after a service and wanted him to show him how to be saved. Dr. McGee read him verses and the man would read them aloud himself. He made a profession of faith with tears. Dr. McGee then ask how he was doing and the man told him not so good. He needed $7 to pay a hotel bill and get his luggage back they were holding for security. Dr. McGee gave him the money. A few days later it was in the paper the man was arrested. He said he had been in the Los Angles area for six months and had been living off preachers. He said they were the biggest saps in the world. Dr. McGee called a pastor friend of his and ask had the man conned him too. The preacher said no! The preacher had lived in Los Angeles a long time and had lots of experience.**

**10. A.T. Robertson said there are many Christians who go for the latest fads and spiritualistic humbuggery. They fall for every new program or movement that the devil sends down the road. These new fads look good and are appealing and even use scripture. However, most of them are simply modern psychology rapped up with a few Bible passages.**

**II. The Test. (1 John 4:2-3)**

**A. The test of orthodoxy is the incarnation of Christ. Orthodoxy simply means that which is adhering to the established faith based correctly on the Word of God.**

**1. If its wrong when compared to God's word, it does not matter if it is right anywhere else.**

**2. Five times the NT speaks of the anti-Christ. "Anti" means against or instead of.**

**a. 2 Thess. 2:4, Anti-christ is against or opposed to Christ. Revelation 13 depicts him as a "wild beast out of the sea."**

**b. 2 Thess. 2:1-12. The Thessalonian believers were being exploited by false teachers. These false teachers were saying they were living in the Tribulation and had missed the Rapture. Paul told them to "let no man deceive you." He then explained that before the Tribulation there would be a "falling away" meaning a time of apostasy. In other words, once sound churches would turn from the word of God to false teachings and practices. Dear Friends...clearly we are in that period of apostasy.**

**c. Paul said the "mystery of iniquity was already at work through various means including false teachers.**

**d. Satan has been called the "ape of God." He cannot originate, but he can copy. He does not appreciate the right use of God's gifts, but he knows how to made people think for the moment they are having a "good time." Satan is a liar and the father of all liars, yet he tries to make true preacher and teachers out to be phony.**

***"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10)**

**B. The incarnation of Christ clear the heart of God's plan of salvation.**

**1. As God Christ knew all things. *"Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."* (John 16:30)**

**Yet as a man He learned more each day. *"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."* (Luke 2:52)**

**2. On the Cross, Jesus cried out to God, "*My God, My God, why has thou forsaken me."***

**C. John 1:1 The Word is God. Read Verse 14!**

**D. Can you be a Christian and deny the deity of Christ? Emphatically the answer is NO. No you can not! When you destroy the virgin birth you destroy the deity of Christ. Can you claim to be a child of God and live continually for the devil? Again...no, the child of God who is saved by faith has believed God and follows His word.**

**Interesting note: Several professors at some Southern Baptist Cconvention universities state that believing the virgin birth is not important! They go on to says we should just receive Christ as our Savior and guide. The second does not exist without the first.**

**God makes it very clear that if a person denies the deity of Jesus Christ, and does not accept Him as who he is...that is Jehovah God, they that person does not believe in the Jesus Christ our Creator and they are not saved. Salvation comes from believing in our real God and Creator Jesus Christ, not in some false anti-christ invented in the minds of sinful man.**

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**You are Charismatic if…**

1. Most of the sermons you hear are about money – getting more of it.
2. Most sermons are based on Old Testament texts, or single verses plucked out of the New Testament, particularly [III John 1:2](http://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=3%20John%201:2%20;&version=50;).
3. You think it’s normal to give a pastor a standing ovation.
4. You think the “Gospel” is mostly about the good things God will do for you on this earth, right now.
5. You keep hearing “just wait there is a huge end-times revival right around the corner.”
6. You’ve been taught that, in conjunction with this “end-times” revival, Christians are going to get richer and richer.
7. You believe that the best way to receive a miracle is to “sow a seed,” which means give a large offering you can’t afford.
8. You believe certain people – your pastor, and other leaders with large ministries – are specially “anointed” and hear directly from God.
9. You don’t bat an eye when you hear your pastor say, “God told me…”
10. Your pastor has bodyguards.
11. Your pastor drives a car worth more than most people’s houses.
12. Your Pastor [calls himself “Doctor.”](http://charismania.wordpress.com/2007/08/25/is-there-a-fake-doctor-in-the-house/)
13. Your pastor’s wife is also a pastor and goes by the title of “First Lady.”
14. Anyone related to your pastor is also “anointed.”  And this “anointing” is transferrable by marriage, so that your pastor’s kids’ spouses begin sporting the title of “Pastor.”
15. Your pastor calls himself “Apostle.”
16. Your pastor calls himself “Prophet.”
17. Your pastor preaches that prophecy is for today…but only HE is allowed to prophesy.
18. You’ve been going to your church for more than a year, but you still don’t really know anyone there very well.
19. You do, however, feel like you know your pastor pretty well.
20. **Although you’d never be able to guess from your church’s official statement of faith, the practical reality is that everybody puts more stock in “The Anointing” (particularly as it exists within your pastor) than they do in the message of salvation.  Salvation is your ticket to heaven, but “The Anointing” is where all the “good stuff” comes from.**
21. Your church talks a LOT about physical healing.  They even hold “Healing Services” and have healing lines.  But nobody ever jumps out of a wheelchair.  Rather, a few people get healed from stuff like back pain and migraines.
22. There is a lot more prestige associated with volunteer positions like washing the pastor’s car or opening the door for him than there is with working in the children’s ministry.
23. You find yourself aspiring to dress and live like the pastor and his family, although you don’t have the money to do so.
24. You are encouraged NOT to think.  Analytical thought is scorned.  “The Anointing” trumps all need for theology, education, or anything else that would involve the logical part of your brain.
25. Your pastor dreams of being famous and expends much effort (and cash) to buddy up to already-famous ministries…regardless of whether or not they agree on key doctrines like the trinity.
26. Your church’s offering envelopes have a place for giving by credit card.  You are also taught that the best way to become financially stable is to “give your way out of debt.”
27. You are taught all the time that you are “blessed,” which generally means that you will live in financial “overflow” and have “favor” over all areas of your life.  Sometimes this “favor” seems to mean that you expect people to bend the rules for you…as evidenced by prayer requests like, “Pray for my nephew as he faces drug charges, pray that he will find favor with the judge, and if anyone knows anyone in the D.A.’s office, please call us.”