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1 JOHN

Chapter 04
TEST THE SPIRITS

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Last week from 1 John chapter 3 – we talked about love and hate, and what love really looks like.

1. Of course **1Jn 3:16a** says: **By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us....**
 - a) Isn't it interesting that **John 3:16** says, **Joh 3:16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**
 - b) And the rest of **1Jn 3:16** says: **By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.**
 - (1) Both speak of Jesus as our example of love!
 - (a) So, real love is sacrificial and not self-absorbed.

B. And in the last ½ of the last verse of **Chapter 3** John mentions the Holy Spirit.

1. **1Jn 3:24 ...And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**
 - a) That is his segue to return to his topic in **Chapter 2** – which was - that there were many antichrists even in his time and to be cautious of them.
 - (1) He will return to the subject of love after this brief warning about the false prophets.
 - (2) Let's take a look.

II. 1JN 4:1 BELOVED, DO NOT BELIEVE EVERY SPIRIT, BUT TEST THE SPIRITS, WHETHER THEY ARE OF GOD; BECAUSE MANY FALSE PROPHETS HAVE GONE OUT INTO THE WORLD.

A. 1st – There ARE spirits in this world!

1. 2nd – Not all of them are from the Lord or “Godly” - if you will.
2. 3rd – We are responsible for “testing” those spirits rather than just trusting that everything spiritual is from the Lord!

B. There are lots of folks out there these days claiming to know God - isn't there?

1. There are even a lot of them telling us how to get to know God or at least “the God within”.
2. The Apostle John is going to give us a check list - if you will - on how we can know whether a prophet is false or not.
 - a) Remember - we ARE NOT supposed to believe every spirit and WE ARE to test them, because there are many false ones out there.

III. **1JN 4:2-3 BY THIS YOU KNOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD: EVERY SPIRIT THAT CONFESSES THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME IN THE FLESH IS OF GOD, 3 AND EVERY SPIRIT THAT DOES NOT CONFESS THAT JESUS CHRIST HAS COME IN THE FLESH IS NOT OF GOD. AND THIS IS THE *SPIRIT* OF THE ANTICHRIST, WHICH YOU HAVE HEARD WAS COMING, AND IS NOW ALREADY IN THE WORLD.**

- A. It is important for us to understand that Jesus Christ is not a first and last name – like Bob Smith or Bill Jones!
1. Jesus Christ is a description of who He is.
 - a) He is Yeshua or *Jehoshua* the Christ = Christos = the Anointed One!
 2. John also said in **Joh 1:10-14 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**
 - a) So, you see **confessing that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh** is much more than just saying that a man named Jesus was a real man and a great prophet!
 - b) Kinda messes us the New Agers' point of view that many roads lead to God doesn't it?
 - (1) ANY person who claims to be of God and doesn't believe that Jesus Christ is the Holy and Anointed Son of God – killed and risen again for the sins of mankind – **IS NOT OF GOD!**
 - (a) Pretty simple litmus test isn't it?
 - (2) John even goes so far as to say that they are **the *spirit* of the Antichrist** - already in the world.
 - (a) **Mat 24:4-5 And Jesus answered and said to them: "Take heed that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many.**

IV. **1JN 4:4 YOU ARE OF GOD, LITTLE CHILDREN, AND HAVE OVERCOME THEM, BECAUSE HE WHO IS IN YOU IS GREATER THAN HE WHO IS IN THE WORLD.**

- A. Dedicated disciples of Jesus Christ – you need not fear the false prophets of our time because the Holy Spirit will guide you in the truth!
1. **Rom 8:9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.**
 2. With the Spirit of the Living God in us – we can overcome!
 - a) I love Jon Courson's illustration regarding this passage of scripture: *"The walls of the submarines that descend two miles into the Mariana Trench of the Pacific Ocean are constructed of thick steel plates to withstand the tremendous pressure placed upon them. But the pictures taken from such heavily protected submarines reveal fish swimming two miles below the surface of the water with scales no thicker than that of any other fish. How*

can this be? The answer is simple: The pressure on the inside of those fish is equal to the pressure of the water around them. That's the beauty of Christianity. Some people erect massive walls to insulate themselves from the attacks of the Enemy—only to find themselves filled with the frustration of isolation. The key is not to put up massive walls to protect you from the Enemy—but to realize the One inside you is greater than whatever pressure threatens to attack you. When we understand that He that is in us is greater than any temptation, problem, trauma, or difficulty that could come against us, we can move through life freely.”

- b) Pretty cool huh? This is what the Apostle John is trying to tell us believers – we need not worry – we will be able to tell the truth from the lie and it will all be centered on who they say Jesus is!

V. 1JN 4:5-6 THEY ARE OF THE WORLD. THEREFORE THEY SPEAK AS OF THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD HEARS THEM. 6 WE ARE OF GOD. HE WHO KNOWS GOD HEARS US; HE WHO IS NOT OF GOD DOES NOT HEAR US. BY THIS WE KNOW THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH AND THE SPIRIT OF ERROR.

A. With what John has just said, He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us - let me ask you a question:

1. Shouldn't it make us a little uncomfortable if Christianity suddenly became popular?
2. Let me put it a different way because I think that maybe the word "christian" had been altered and changed from what it is supposed to mean.
 - a) Shouldn't it make us a little uncomfortable if all of a sudden the world began to say that Jesus was the only way to heaven and that we must follow Him to be saved?
 - (1) What we will hear more and more of is that there are many paths.

VI. 1JN 4:7 BELOVED, LET US LOVE ONE ANOTHER, FOR LOVE IS OF GOD; AND EVERYONE WHO LOVES IS BORN OF GOD AND KNOWS GOD. 8 HE WHO DOES NOT LOVE DOES NOT KNOW GOD, FOR GOD IS LOVE. 9 IN THIS THE LOVE OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED TOWARD US, THAT GOD HAS SENT HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON INTO THE WORLD, THAT WE MIGHT LIVE THROUGH HIM. 10 IN THIS IS LOVE, NOT THAT WE LOVED GOD, BUT THAT HE LOVED US AND SENT HIS SON *TO BE* THE PROPITIATION FOR OUR SINS. 11 BELOVED, IF GOD SO LOVED US, WE ALSO OUGHT TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

A. John is telling us that we cannot chose between God and Love because they are inseparable!

1. And once again he tells what God's love looks like, as he points us back to the cross.
2. And there is that word again: propitiation. We owed a debt we couldn't pay and Jesus loved us so much that he died to pay a debt he didn't owe!

VII. CONCLUSION

A. **1Jn 4:12 No one has seen God at any time. If we love one another, God abides in us, and His love has been perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in**

Him, and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. **14** And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son *as* Savior of the world. **15** Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. **16** And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. **17** Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world. **18** There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. **19** We love Him because He first loved us. **20** If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? **21** And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.

1. Please understand that loving someone doesn't mean that we accept everything they say or believe in.
 - a) If that were the case - then we would let our children believe and act any way they wanted.
 - b) It is because we love them, that we teach them right from wrong, and do our best to keep them from evil!
 - (1) That is what John is doing for us!
2. **Galatians 5:22** tells us that the fruit of the Spirit is love.
 - a) Since we cannot separate God and love – neither can we separate His Holy Spirit and love. So it would seem that love for His children is a good test of our relationship with God.