



# *First Epistle of John*

## *1 John 4:1-3 - Spirit of Truth vs. the Spirit of Error Part 1*

- Summary of *1 John 3:23-24 – Union with Christ*
  - What is *His commandment*?
    - We *believe in His name*.
  - How does this occur?
    - By *abiding in Him and He in us*.
  - How do we know we are keeping *His commandments*?
    - By the *Spirit, He has given us*.
- ***1 John 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.***
  - *Beloved* or better yet *Dearly beloved ones*.
  - Let's return to *1 John 3:24* from Andrew's lesson last week.
    - » *1 John 3:24 - Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.*
  - *believe not* is imperative - stop believing every spirit!
  - So how do we *test or try the spirits whether they are of God*?



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- This is the process we need to use to examine, prove, and scrutinize to see whether a thing is genuine or not.
- *Spirit* and *spirits* – *pneuma*, a broad term.
  - The KJV translates Strong's G4151 in the following manner: Spirit (111x), Holy Ghost (89x), Spirit (of God) (13x), Spirit (of the Lord) (5x), (My) Spirit (3x), Spirit (of truth) (3x), Spirit (of Christ) (2x), human (spirit) (49x), (evil) spirit (47x), spirit (general) (26x), spirit (8x), (Jesus' own) spirit (6x), (Jesus' own) ghost (2x), miscellaneous (21x).
- Why - *because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*
  - These *false prophets have already gone out (perfect tense)*
  - Are these really *prophets* in that sense of foretellers and/or whatever, what are their messages?
    - » *2 Peter 2:1 - But there were also **false prophets** among the people, even as there will be **false teachers** among you, who will secretly bring in **destructive heresies**, even **denying the Lord** who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.*
- So back to the question, on what basis do we *test* or *try* the *spirit(s)*?



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- Constable Westcott– “The test of the presence of the Divine Spirit is the confession of the Incarnation, or, more exactly, of the Incarnate Savior. The Gospel centres in a Person and not in any truth, even the greatest, about the Person.”

» *2 John 1:7 - For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.*

– Thus, all other *spirits* are manifested in this world system (*kosmos*) are *anti-Christ*.

- Just ponder where the *kosmos* is right now and in fact always has been.
  - » *1 John 4:5 - They are of the world. Therefore, they speak as of the world, and the world hears them.*
  - » *Matt 7:15 - Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.*

• ***1 John 4:2 - By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,***

– *By this you know (ginōskō) the Spirit of God”*



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- *Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,*
  - *confess* means to declare openly, speak out freely and hereto agree with scripture.
    - The truth is taken for granted as established. We are encouraged to *confess* it, that is, in His teaching to profess it openly.
      - » *1 Cor 12:3 - Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*
      - » *Rom 10:9 - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*
  - *has or is come* – perfect participle
  - What's necessary for us to correctly interpret this verse; and why is this important?
    - Wasn't Jesus a great teacher?
    - Was it enough for Him to just *come in the flesh*?
      - » *1 Tim 3:16 - And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.*
      - » *Gal 2:21 - "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."*



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*1 John 4:3 - and every spirit that does not confess 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.*

- Notice *every spirit that does not confess* what?
  - *that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh* is implied and is in some translations.
  - Implies that these spirits destroy, set aside, or do away with
- *And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you (emphatic ye) have heard was coming and is now already in the world.*
  - This spirit was present then, today, and tomorrow.
  - And how does this spirit of Antichrist mislead?
    - From outward and obvious evil, to modernism and world system political misguidance, to law, and self-righteousness – be on guard!
    - All denying the truth of the incarnate and resurrected Jesus Christ and the comfort and guidance of the Holy Spirit.
      - » *1 John 4:6 - 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.*