

Theme: The mark of the Authentic Spirit of God is a biblical confession of Jesus Christ, and those indwelt by the Spirit of God overcome false spirits and confess the Jesus revealed in Scripture.

## I. Intro - Religious vs 'Spiritual'

- A. This is a popular dichotomy today
- B. Religion - external; objective; legalistic; institutional; dead
- C. Spiritual - internal; subjective; free; personal; alive
- D. The spiritual is often accepted untested today
- E. How do we know what is really from the Spirit of God?

## II. The Need to Test the Spirits

- A. John commands us to test the spirits  
Dear friends, **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. 1 John 4:1
  - 1. Some want us to naively believe the 'spiritual'
  - 2. John commands us to test the spirits to determine if it is really God
  - 3. Test - dokimazo - critically examine; used to speak of testing purity of gold; testing pottery for cracks
  - 4. We must critically examine claims of 'spirituality'
- B. We must test because there are many false prophets  
Dear friends, 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**. 1 John 4:1

- 1. John notes many false prophets already in world
- 2. A common theme in NT  
For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. Matthew 24:24
  - a. MANY false prophets and false Christ's
  - b. Will perform convincing signs
  - c. So powerful would deceive elect - if possible

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. <sup>2</sup> Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. 1 Timothy 4:1–2

- a. Last days deceiving spirits, demons
  - b. Speak through false teachers to deceive
  - c. Interestingly, Paul gives Gnostic ideas as their teaching (1 Timothy 4:3-5)
- 3. We must test, because there are many false teachers/prophets!
- C. We must test because the spirit of antichrist is at work  
This is **the spirit of the antichrist**, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 1 Jo4:3  
  
Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. **Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist**. 2 John 1:7
  - 1. These false teachers are inspired by antichrist
  - 2. Followers of Christ must test before they receive!

### III. Authentic Tests To Discern the Authentic Spirit

#### A. Inauthentic tests

1. Jonathan Edwards began his discussion with 9 tests that are not biblical that people used then
2. There are still false 'tests' today
  - a. Personal testimony - this is what must be tested!
  - b. Powerful speech - false prophets are always powerful speakers!
  - c. Miracles - Jesus said false prophets would do miracles (see Matthew 24:24; 7:21-23)
  - d. Popularity - falsehood is usually popular!  
They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 1 John 4:5
3. None of these will help us discern the Spirit of God

#### B. Authentic tests to discern the Authentic Spirit of God

1. The Holy Spirit of God always points to Jesus  
Every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 1 John 4:3
  - a. Any spirit that points to things other than Jesus is not from God
  - b. Paul gave the same basic test - must confess Jesus  
Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:3
  - c. Because the Holy Spirit came to testify of Jesus

When the Counselor comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father, he will testify about me. John 15:26

1. The Spirit is the Parakletos - same role as Jesus (1 John 2:1-2)
  2. Jesus sends the Spirit to us from the Father
  3. The Spirit is here to testify of Jesus
  - d. In 1<sup>st</sup> century many other 'spiritualities' - but they did not point to Christ and were false.
  - e. Today many 'spiritualities' do not point to Jesus, or make Him one among many - these are all false, for the Spirit always points uniquely to Jesus.
  - f. "Spiritualities" apart from Christ are not from God - they are demonic, because there is no access to God except through the Person and work of Jesus Christ.
2. The Holy Spirit confesses the Jesus found in Scripture - not some other Jesus
    - a. The Holy Spirit confesses/acknowledges - speaks the same word as given in Scripture  
This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that **acknowledges** that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God... <sup>6</sup> **We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood.** 1 John 4:2, 6
      1. To confess Jesus - speak the same of Jesus
      2. Apostles are from God; Spirit always speaks the same as He spoke through them
      3. Any 'spirit' that does not have the same Jesus as given through the apostles in Scripture is a false spirit.

- b. Example: the Gnostic Jesus who had no flesh  
This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: **Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God,<sup>3</sup> but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist,** which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. 1 John 4:2–3
  - 1. Gnostics claimed Jesus - but not Jesus of Scripture
  - 2. Their Jesus was not the God-Man, God in flesh
  - 3. Their Jesus was not the Christ - and not real Jesus!
  - 4. John says that this is the antichrist (also 2 John 1:7)
- c. This is a constant problem - people “creating” their own Jesus [Acts 20:28-31]
- d. The Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and many other cults do not confess the Jesus of Scripture, and therefore deny the Gospel. This is the spirit of antichrist.
- e. Many forms of ‘liberal Christianity’ deny the Jesus of Scripture - and are therefore not Christian at all. To deny the Jesus of Scripture - His Person, His work, His words - is to deny the Spirit of God and follow the spirit of antichrist.

### 3. The Spirit will always produce godly fruit

- a. Remember this section is in the middle of a section on love
- b. The Authentic Holy Spirit will make us like Christ - full of righteousness, fighting sin, acting in love.

## IV. The People of the Authentic Spirit

- A. Authentic believers are from God, not the world  
**You, dear children, are from God** and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. <sup>5</sup> **They are from the world** and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. <sup>6</sup> **We are from God,** and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. 1 John 4:4–6
  - 1. We and they are emphatic in the Greek
  - 2. Two different peoples, two different origins
  - 3. Believers find their origin, their source, and their identity in God, not the world. To be authentic people of the Spirit is to be at odds with the world and its wicked ways.
- B. Authentic believers overcome the world by the Spirit  
You, dear children, are from God and **have overcome** them, **because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.** 1 John 4:4  
  
I write to you, young men, because you **have overcome** the evil one. 1 John 2:13
  - 1. We have overcome them - same as 1 John 2:13
  - 2. Both are perfect tenses - accomplished fact
  - 3. But they have slightly different emphases

1 John 2:13	1 John 4:4
Overcome evil one	Overcome false teachers
Overcome sin	Overcome false teaching
Overcome by Christ	Overcome through the Spirit

4. The Holy Spirit of God is far more powerful than the false spirits of this world, and He dwells in us to protect us, keep us, and empower us so that we overcome Satan, sin, and counterfeit philosophies.

## V. Applying the Authentic Word

A. Do I understand I must test the spirits?

1. Don't be deceived - there are MANY false prophets
2. We must always be discerning!
3. Don't believe everything you hear or read - test it!
4. Don't buy into the 'judge not' falsehood - we must be discerning
5. Just because someone sincerely believes something does not make it true!

B. Do I know how to properly test for the Spirit?

1. Our culture tests things by success - if it 'works' it must be right
2. This is utterly false!
3. Success and faithfulness are very different things
4. Do I look to power, success, abilities - or fidelity to the Biblical teaching on Christ?

5. Do I see that everything hinges on Christ?

C. Prayer for the Spirit to keep us

### The Authentic Spirit of God

1 John 4:1-6

July 19, 2015

Prayer

2 Corinthians 13:14

Teaching keywords: Holy Spirit; false teaching and heresy

2 Corinthians 13:14 - May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

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