

So That You May Know

An Expositional Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

Chapter 16- The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error

155. Testing the Spirits- Part 6

WAOY Wednesday 02/20/08

Welcome again, my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing to go over our verse by verse study of the Epistle of **1 John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about testing the Spirits by looking at **1John 4: 1-6**- so let's read those verses 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 you 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; 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 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.**

Now on the last broadcast, we were going over verse 1- so let's read that verse again together:

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.

Now on the last broadcast- I was showing you how that the fourth verse of Jude tells us that the false prophets that John is talking about here in this verse will attack the Christian Faith along three main lines:

1. The Grace of God
2. The Character and Nature of God
3. The Person of Jesus Christ

And throughout the 2,000 year history of the Church- these are the three areas that all heresy fought against and so these are the three areas of Christian Doctrine that are what is called, “essential” to the Christian Faith.

Now over the 2,000 years of Church history, there have been thousands of attacks against these three areas- but when you examine these attacks- you find that they all migrate into one of seven basic roots or groups. So from that we can say that there are seven major heresies or false teachings from which all of the many heresies come from. Here is the list:

1. The heresy of the Judaizers
2. The heresy of the Antinomians
3. The heresy of the Gnostics
4. The heresy of the Modalists
5. Arianism
6. Pelagianism
7. The heresy of the Socinians

Now I have a very detailed teaching about this called The History of Heresy that goes into great detail about all seven of the major groups of historical false teachings that have plagued the Church that I can make available to you if you would like to learn about this- so write or call and I will get you a copy of that study out to you. So, I’m not going to get into too much detail here about this other than to say this: Of the seven major groups of heresy that have attacked the Christian Faith over the last 2,000 years- three of them rose up during the age of the Apostles while the New Testament was being formulated:

1. The heresy of the Judaizers
2. The heresy of the Antinomians
3. The heresy of the Gnostics

And as I mention last time- the Apostle James, Peter, and Paul did battle against the heresy of the Judaizers; the Apostle Paul primarily did battle against the second group- the Antinomians; and the Apostle John waged war against the Gnostics.

So because these three false teachings are recorded for us in Scripture- it is good that we go over them briefly in our study.

The Judaizers were a group for Jews who taught that in order for the Gentile converts to become good Christians- they first had to become good Jews by being circumcised; keeping the Sabbath and the ceremonial and dietary laws that Moses gave the children of Israel.

The reason that this was so bad is that the net affect that this teaching had was to add other requirements to Salvation other than Grace through Faith. So the Judaizers were attacking Salvation by Grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone and were adding human works that men has to do in order to be saved.

So the Judaizers were teaching that Grace was not sufficient for Salvation and that Salvation was the result of what we do for God- rather than what God does for us.

Today we would call the Judaizers legalists- and the requirements that these modern legalists would add are things like baptism; keeping the Sacraments; attending Mass; speaking in tongues, etc. But the net result is the same- anytime anyone for any reason teaches that we have to do something in order to be saved- that is the very same heresy as the Judaizers.

We have small pockets of modern Judaizers all around today. Many of them call themselves Messianic cults- but the name is somewhat misleading. Genuine Messianic Jews are real Jews who have come to faith in Jesus Christ- and that is a good thing. We rejoice anytime that God lifts the blindness off of one of his people and gives them a heart to believe in Jesus- that is a wonderful event.

The groups I am talking about are not real messianic groups. The groups that I am talking about are nothing more than lukewarm and untrained Christians who have abandoned Biblical Christianity and have gone down the mountain and have embraced Judaism. Because they twist the Scriptures- these people renounce the final, full, and completed revelation of God that we find in the New Testament and they embrace the partial and incomplete revelation of the Old Testament. You will see the fruit of their folly as they go back to

Sabbath worship and the ceremonial and dietary laws that are not moral and which are not eternal and which were never meant to be permanent.

I have had many dealings with several of these people and most of them are harmless and sincere- but here is what makes them so dangerous. Many of these people teach the very same thing as do the Muslims and Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Seventh Day Adventists- that the New Testament was corrupted right after the Resurrection and is therefore unreliable. Some even go so far as to teach foolishness like that the concept of the devil is a myth and that the Emperor Constantine established worship on Sunday in 325 A.D. to honor the sun god. Others teach that Sunday worship is tantamount to receiving the mark of the beast and still others teach that if you eat pork- you can't go to Heaven and it goes on and on.

You see, beloved, anytime you ignore the final, full, and completed Revelation of God in the New Testament- suddenly the Old Testament takes on a completely different form. God gave us the New Testament so that we would rightly interpret and understand the Old and God gave us the Old Testament so that the Truth of the New Testament would have a proper foundation.

These people are correct in teaching that much of what goes on in the modern Church is pagan and unfruitful- but they are not solving that problem by throwing the baby out with the bath water. The Church of Jesus Christ is the only game in town and if it is sick- then we have a duty to get her well. If she is off base- we must get her back to the Bible. If she is worldly then we must call her to repentance- but to reject the validity of the New Testament in order to have the stability of the Old is doing nothing but denying the faith.

The Bible is clear from cover to cover - the Law made nothing perfect- but the bringing in of a better hope did (**Hebrews 7:19**). The Law *cannot* save one soul; the Law does not have the capacity or the power to save one single soul. Now that is not because there is anything wrong with the Law- there isn't. The devil didn't give the Law- God did and so the Law is good and holy and just and perfect. What is wrong with the law is us. The Law is good- but there is not one good man on earth. The Law is just- be we are not. The Law is perfect- but we are sinful down to the DNA level of our nature. We are born in sin, and we are shapen

in iniquity. We are sinners- not because we sin- we sin because we are already sinners in our hearts because of the fall of Adam.

Not one sin was ever forgiven under the Law. The blood of animals does not have the ability to take away sin. The only thing that animal sacrifice- which was commanded by the Law- had the power to do was to give the people a *temporary* reprieve against the wrath of God for another day. That is why the priests had to offer a sacrifice every single day. And before they offered one sacrifice for the people- they had to offer one *first for themselves*- because under the Law- even the priests were sinful.

But the superior revelation of God in the New Covenant gave us a better High Priest who was without sin offering a better Sacrifice that brought forth better promises and fulfilled what Jeremiah prophesied would happen in **Jeremiah 31:31** when he thundered:

31 "Behold, days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah,

32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them," declares the Lord.

33 "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the Lord, "I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

34 "They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the Lord, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

So when you meet up with people who try to teach that Grace is not enough; or that Faith is not enough but that you have to be baptized or you have to speak in tongues or you have to attend the Mass or you have to go to confession or you have to eat His flesh and drink His Blood to be saved – run from those people and put all your trust and all your hope and all your confidence for your Salvation in the finished work of Jesus Christ and in His Blood and that you look up and fully trust that His Righteousness makes you fit for Heaven!

So, no sooner did the Church begin when some Jews began to teach that the Gentile converts had to do something else besides believe to

earn or deserve Salvation and this is the heresy of the legalists or the Judaizers and we can read about this great battle in **The Acts 15**.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.