

So That You May Know

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

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

158. Testing the Spirits- Part 9

WAOY Wednesday 02/27/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to examine what John taught about "Testing the Spirits". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 4: 1-6**- again 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 just who John was referring to here in verse 1 by looking at the three major heresies that John said that we are supposed to test that attacked the Church during the age of the Apostles. And we were looking at the heresy of the Judaizers- who attacked the sufficiency of Grace early in the first century.

So I was directing you to **The Acts 15** to look at the confrontation that the Apostles had with this heresy. You see, **Acts 15** speaks to us about the very first Church Council – called The Jerusalem Council and that Council was convened precisely to engage the heresy of the

legalists who were ignoring the Grace of God by adding human effort to Salvation.

So we need to check our own hearts today, beloved, to make sure that if Paul and Peter and Barnabas and James had not convened that first Council that we would have. Because we need to view any attack against Biblical Truth in the same light as these men did. I pray that we do.

You see these men did exactly what John commanded in **1John 4:1** and they tested the spirits to see if they were of God and they found that the Judaizers were not of God and so they confronted them and developed Biblical Doctrine which would successfully fight against their false teaching in the future.

We use the very same Doctrine that was developed in this Council today to fight against the modern Judaizers who teach that keeping the Sabbath; or the dietary laws; or the ceremonial laws; or being baptized; or speaking in tongues; or keeping the sacraments; or attending Mass are requirements for Salvation.

So I hope that you can see that because the very same false teachings that plagued the Church 1900 years ago are still alive and well today- we need Sound Doctrine to ward off those attacks- just like they did.

Now it is interesting to note that because the heresy of the legalists was such a widespread attack against Grace- the Apostle Paul wrote the entire Epistle of Galatians to fight against it. Galatians goes into great detail about Grace versus law and it is the “go to” Book today along with parts of Romans which diffuses the arguments of the modern legalists in our day.

Now as Paul and Peter and James were fighting against legalism- another heresy rose up during this same time which also attacked the Grace of God. You will remember from our previous broadcasts that all heresy; all false teaching is along one of three lines:

The Grace of God- which includes Salvation
The Character and Nature of God the Father
The Person of Jesus Christ- which includes both His humanity and His Deity

We find this list of these three areas in **Jude 4**.

Now the second heresy to pop up is called Antinomianism. And I realize that this is a three dollar word- but I didn't name it. I probably would have given it a simpler name. But it is called Antinomianism and Antinomianism is the exact opposite of the heresy of the Judaizers by attacking Grace from the other side.

You see, the Judaizers perverted Grace by *ignoring* it and teaching that men have to *earn* Salvation by what they do. Antinomianism, on the other hand, *abused* Grace by teaching that Grace was everything and so therefore- after we are saved- a believer can do anything we want to and live anyway that we want to.

By ignoring Grace- the Judaizers exalted Law higher than God intended and by abusing Grace- the Antinomians lowered Law below what God intended. And this illustrates an very important concept that we need to know.

The reason that so many people are off base about Law and Grace is because they do not understand the proper Biblical relationship that Law has with Grace.

Grace did not come after the Law. That is not true. Grace was in operation way before God gave His Law to Man. The word, "grace" is mentioned as early as **Genesis 6:8** when the Bible says:

But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

But the *concept* of Grace is found way before that. Look with me at **Genesis 3:17-21**:

17 Then to Adam He said, "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life.

18 "Both thorns and thistles it shall grow for you; And you will eat the plants of the field;

19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

20 Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all *the* living.

21 The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed

them.

Now here we have the scene immediately after the Fall. And God had told Adam back in **Genesis 2:16-&7:**

16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely;

17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."

Now by rights- God would have been perfectly just to end it all right there. He could have killed Adam for what he did and ended the entire human race right then and there. But He didn't do that did he? In spite of Adam's sin- God moved toward Adam by Grace- and did for Adam what Adam could not do for Himself. Look again at verse 21:

The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

God rejected what Man did for himself and God shed blood and God covered the man and woman's nakedness by what He did for them *sovereignly*. Now why did God do this? Because Adam deserved it? No. Was it because Adam was worthy of it? No. Was it because Adam was entitled to it? Not at all. So why did God kill the animals and cover Adam's nakedness? Was God in any way *obligated* to do this? No. So why did God do this? One word. Grace. Remember, brothers and sisters- Grace is unmerited favor; undeserved special treatment; and unearned love. Grace- marvelous Grace; amazing Grace.

Now the Law would say that Adam must die- that he *deserved* to die. But Grace said that because Adam was worthy to die- and precisely because Adam was worthy of eternal damnation- that unless God did something for Adam- that Adam himself could not do- Adam was a goner. So God moved in Grace to give to Adam that which Adam could not provide for himself. That is Grace.

You see, Law is easy for human beings to understand. Law says- if you do good- you get good; but if you do bad- you get bad. That's easy. Everybody understands that concept intuitively. Even pagans

understand Law. But Grace is not easily understood. That is because Grace runs counterintuitive to the human mind and it transcends Law.

That makes Grace to be a mystery and a puzzle and something that we have to teach and something that we have to learn and something that we have to marvel at and meditate upon and wonder over.

And this is why Grace is so easily perverted- and why so many heresies have attacked it from one side or the other. This is why there is so much confusion about just what Grace is. And this is what makes Grace to be so infinitely wonderful to the human race. So as we teach about Grace and as we learn about Grace- we must be careful to teach only what God has revealed about Grace to us in Scripture. By adding anything else to our teaching or by taking anything away from our teaching- Grace is not understood correctly and it quickly becomes warped in our minds and eyes. In the words of **Jude 4**- Grace is turned into lasciviousness.

So as the Apostles were busy fighting off the heresy of the Judaizers – another sinister false teaching about Grace snuck into the Church called Antinomianism. And so primarily Paul fought against this perversion of Grace when he wrote **Romans 5 & 6** and **Ephesians 2**. And I want to look at those verses very carefully. So let's turn in our Bibles and read **Romans 5:1&2**:

1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

2 through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God.

Now in **Romans 4**- Paul has taught that we are justified by faith- not works- which denounced the heresy of the legalists. And here at the beginning of Chapter 5- Paul is giving us insight into the glory of God's Grace. Now let's move into just what Grace really is by looking at verses 6-8:

6 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

7 For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die.

8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet

sinner, Christ died for us.

Now why would Christ die for us while we were yet sinners? Don't we deserve to be punished because we are sinners? Doesn't the Law command that we be punished for being sinful? Yes, it does. That is why no one can be saved by the Law- because no one can perfectly keep the Law and every human being is a sinner- so we are all condemned by the Law. So the Law is accursed to us- not because there is anything wrong with the Law- there isn't- the Law is good and just and holy. The Law is a curse to us because we can't keep it perfectly and therefore we are judged by it. So what is wrong with the Law- is us!

Yet here in these verses, Paul teaches that at the very moment of our greatest failure; at the point of our most ungodly existence- it was then that Christ died to save us. What do you call that? Law? No. You call it Grace. Well, did we deserve for Christ to die for us? No. Were we entitled to Christ's death? No. Was God obligated to die for us? No, He was not.

Well why in the world- if we were guilty of being sinners- did God not simply destroy us all and end our lives right then and there- instead of giving us the greatest and most valuable gift of Heaven? One word- God's Amazing Grace.

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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