

Spirit of Truth or Error?

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1 John 3:23-24 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

1 John 4:1-6 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

- I. Believe not every spirit...
 - A. Because there are spirits pretending to be the Holy Spirit.
 - B. They speak to your mind directly, or they can speak to you through some other person who is under their influence.
 - C. We are not to regard, trust, or follow any counsel or knowledge that is coming from a spirit other than the Spirit of God.
 - D. We can see an example of what the Bible is warning us about in the spammers and thieves who are rampant now through the electronic media.
 - E. The difference is that the spirits of evil are much more clever and deceptive than these who are simply stealing money from other people.
 - F. So it is a matter of the most importance that we have discernment to identify the Spirit of God and the spirits of devils.
 - G. It has been a great failing of the past few generations.
 1. The failure to heed this warning has allowed the churches to be filled with spiritual blindness, evil, and confusion.
- II. Truth is the foundation of counterfeits.
 - A. The counterfeiter studies the genuine diligently in order to make his worthless copy.
 - B. His success depends upon how close he can make it to looking and feeling like the real thing.
 - C. The object is to get people to accept his counterfeit without question.
 1. His goal is to keep you from stopping to notice, or question it.
 - D. So in order to keep from being sold a spiritual counterfeit we must stop and pay attention, take notice, examine the matter closely, and ask questions.
- III. Now God HAS given his Spirit to those who have truly believed in Christ and been born again in this age.
 - A. The Holy Spirit of God IS certainly speaking and communicating with people in this world now.

- B. He is certainly working in the lives of his people, and also working to lift up Christ through his people now.
- C. So not everything we see or hear is from a spirit of a devil; God IS speaking, and teaching, and leading his people now.
 - 1. God has his people who are filled with his Spirit who are speaking truth and wisdom from God, so not everyone is to be ignored or doubted.
 - 2. But, "...many false prophets are gone out into the world."
- D. Therefore, the devil is hard at work trying to imitate the voice and the work of the Holy Spirit.
 - 1. His goal is the same as the counterfeiter; to get us to accept something that is not real without even stopping to check it out.
 - 2. The merchant who accepts the counterfeit bill as payment for his merchandise has lost his merchandise and now has nothing but a worthless piece of paper.
- E. Likewise, the person who accepts a lie disguised as the truth of God has suffered great loss.
 - 1. For the sinner it might be the loss of his soul; for the child of God it might be his reward in heaven or the destruction of his life here on earth.
- F. So again, the important thing about this matter is that we be able to discern between the Spirit of God and the spirits of devils.
 - 1. All is at stake and it is a very real and great danger to our soul and our life, as well as the souls and lives of those we influence.

IV. So here we are given the defining mark that identifies whether the spirit is of God or not:

1 John 4:2-3 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

- A. This does not mean that a person says these words, or agrees that this statement is true.
- B. The truth contained here is much more profound than just a mental assent or verbal agreement that Jesus was the Son of God.
- C. First of all, these are not statements of men, but of spirits.
 - 1. He is not talking about what men say, but what the spirits are saying.
 - 2. We can determine what the spirits are saying by paying attention to what the prevailing views of the people are.
 - 3. The prevailing views of the people will be the result of the spirits they are listening to.
- D. The Spirit of God will affirm the humanity of Christ without not denying his deity.
 - 1. He was God "made flesh" and dwelling among us.
 - 2. He left his high state in heaven to become a man and live on this earth, subject to all that every person who ever lived has been subject to.

Hebrews 4:15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Hebrews 2:14-18 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his

brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

- E. What do most people really believe about the humanity of Christ? The fact that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us?
 - 1. Most people believe that Jesus Christ was different than all the rest of us and did not sin because He was God.
- F. The spirits of devils will take away from the humanity of Christ in some way or another while majoring on his deity.
 - 1. With such notions as Christ had the “blood of God” and that is why He did not sin.
 - 2. This is a direct attack and denial of the humanity of Christ.

John 4:24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

Hebrews 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

- 3. When the Atonement for sin is made into a physical element we have actually denied both Christ's deity and his humanity.
 - 4. He gave his LIFE an Atonement for sin.
 - 5. And God could not die unless He became a man.
 - 6. And He could not have risen from the dead if He had not been God.
- G. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh, for the purpose of revealing the heart and mind of God to the world, and to make the Atonement for sin so that all men can be saved.

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

- 1. Not all men will be saved because of the spirits of devils who deceive most of the world by distorting the humanity or the deity of Christ.
 - 2. It is the easiest way to deceive people about their sin and their true standing before God.
- H. Jesus could command the wind and the waves because He WAS God; He could heal blind eyes because He WAS God.
 - 1. But Jesus did not overcome sin because He was God and was above being tempted.
 - 2. Jesus overcame temptation and did not sin by the Word of God, the Spirit of God, and prayer, which is exactly what we all have now for our help.
 - 3. He did not overcome sin with divine power that is not available to every one of us right now.
 - 4. To deny this truth is to deny the humanity of Christ and it is the spirit of antichrist that promotes the idea that we are sinners that cannot help it because we are human while Christ was not.
- V. The Spirit of God will never lead us to believe that we cannot overcome sin and the world, or that we cannot be like Christ.

John 14:19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

John 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

Romans 8:29 For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

John 17:17-23 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

- VI. So the Spirit that confirms these things is the Spirit of God, and the spirits that deny or ignore, or distort these truths is not of God.
- A. Any idea or notion that leads to these perceptions of Christ and his work of Atonement for sin and the reconciliation of sinners to God identify the spirit that it is coming from.
 - B. We must THINK and PAY ATTENTION and study the Word of God so that we are not misled by the many false prophets that are entered into the world,
 - C. We must always question the spirits behind the ideas presented to us.
 - D. We must always look for these identifying marks of Spirit of truth or the spirit of error.
 - E. The Holy Spirit will always lead us in the way of true holiness, with eternal life in view.
 - F. The spirit of error will always lead us in the way of the flesh with a false view of holiness and a counterfeit notion of God, which is either irreverent or extremely focused on his attributes of sovereignty, power, foreknowledge, providence, etc., which is simply a smoke screen to keep us from noticing or questioning their intent.
 - G. All roads lead to somewhere, so be careful.
 - H. All spirits are trying to lead us, so be careful to make sure that it is the Spirit of God who is speaking and leading you.
 - I. Not by how you feel about it right now, but by where it will lead you.
 - J. There is a witness between the people of God and it is the Spirit of God.

1 John 4:4-6 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

1. Those who are led by the Spirit of God speak the same language.
2. Those who are not speak another language, and they do not hear us.
3. This is just another advantage that God has given us to try the spirits.