

## Testing the Spirits I John 4:1-6

Spiritual children might see the world as a playground, but spiritual fathers know better. Just as every responsible human parent would teach their children that not every offer they hear comes from someone with their best interest in mind, so it must be taught in the church that not every voice, not every teacher, not every "spirit" behind those teaching voices comes from God. As a spiritual father, John must remind his "beloved children" to remember certain things in order not to be deceived by antichrist spirits.

First, they must remember that they, themselves, "are from God." Their life comes out of God and belongs to God. His Spirit of Truth who abides in them will always point them to Christ and His Supply - nothing more, nothing less. He is not going to direct them to set their minds on sin, on the world, on the devil, on themselves, or on any novel teaching that supplants the pre-eminence and sufficiency of Christ alone. There is no room in Christ to tolerate or accept any voice that says otherwise.

Secondly, they must remember that not every voice, not every teaching, not every spirit is "out of God." There can be a "spirit of error" from "out of the world" that is at work even in the church. These "spirits" are very religious and their goal is to get you to focus on anything that is not Christ (thus, they are "anti-Christ" spirits). In fact, they may be "tested" by listening carefully to what they say about Jesus Christ the Lord. Many of them don't say anything about Him at all, they talk mostly about you - your needs, your character, your success, your completion. Some may deny His humanity, others may reject His Divinity. Some try to keep Him in heaven ("He couldn't really come into a sinner like you!"). Others want to confine Him to the world ("He was a great example and wise teacher!"). No matter the ploy, these spirits will always seek to put a deceptive wedge between you and the Source of everything you need for life, to keep you from saying anything but, "For me, living means Christ." (Phil 1:21)

Thirdly, they must remember that greater is the spirit of Truth in them than any spirit out of the world. As a self in union with Christ, the Overcomer of all things "not God" lives in you. The Truth who defeats every lie, the Lover who casts out all fear, the Life who conquers death forever abides in you. You share His victory in common with Him and with each other. All the authority to recognize and resist these counterfeit voices, to expose and overcome these lying spirits resides in us because of Who lives in us. Antichrist voices do not really care how often you study the Bible, how many times you go to church, how hard you try to live like Jesus... just as long as you do not believe in and come to know Jesus Christ as your indwelling life. Only in abiding in and abandoning to Christ as your Saving Life will you lay hold of the discernment and the authority to recognize and overcome any lie with the Truth Himself.

And yes, never forget, the burden of proof is on the hearer. (I Jo 3:7; 4:1; Matt 24:4-5). Don't let anyone talk you out of the Truth!

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## Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

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# Greetings

After a 14 month hiatus, we do have a "Calendar" again! All dates are still open to change due to Covid considerations, but the ones posted seem to be a "go" at the moment. We will keep you informed along the way. If you have questions, please call me at 352-672-1275 or the contact numbers listed for each event. I am looking forward to seeing some of you face to face!

For all of us in Christ this is a great time to step into our salt and light capabilities for the world's sake. The invisible character of God displayed through our visible lives will have an impact on those around us. Though not always appreciated, the witness of the One Who preserves and brings out the best, Who reveals and turns on the lights is sorely needed in a particularly corrupt and darkened day.

Salt and light is not what we have, it's who we are, "You ARE the salt of the earth... you ARE the light of the world." (Matt 5:13-14) It is who we are because of The One living in us, ever ready to be released through us. Salt in the shaker or light under a basket is of little use. This is no time to go into hiding, but an opportunity to "redeem the time" (Eph 5:16) This is no admonition to try hard to be salty or enlightening, its simply a reminder to allow Jesus to be Himself in and through and as you... out in the world... where He is needed.

# CALENDAR

## MAY

2,9,16,23,30 Parkview Baptist Church, Gainesville, FL

## JUNE/JULY

29-July 1 Sebring, FL (863-382-1085)

## JULY

9-11 Waymart, PA (607-239-5006)

## SEPTEMBER

13-15 Sebring, FL (863-385-55140)

19-24 South Fork, CO

## *Praise & Prayer*



The indwelling Spirit of Truth



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Our church families to grow up in the Truth



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