

INTRO: Last week, Time did not allow me to comment on (verses 22-23), the Profit of Abiding: which mentioned Answered Prayer and the Benefit of Believing (i.e., Loving relationships! - Expound)

I. THE SPIRIT IN US (3:24): The benefit of Love is the **Abiding Presence** of the Holy Spirit. – (Rom 8:16) *The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.* (KNOW THIS!)

But this...

A. Requires Abiding IN Jesus (24a) – All Believers (Jew and Gentile) now possess the surpassing riches of **Jesus dwelling in them personally.** (John 14:23; Gal 2:20; Eph 1:7, 17-18; 3:8-10, 16-19). – Here, John reminds all believers once again the importance of **Keeping His Commandments = Abiding in Him!** – WHY? Because our Father desires **Continual Uninterrupted Fellowship (1:3).** (He LOVES us, and He always wants to hang out with us! Striking the balance can be difficult as we live in this world)

We KNOW that Jesus ABIDES in us because the Spirit...

B. Was Given "TO US" (24b) – John declares that believers are to **KNOW THIS**, "...by this we know..." – It was God's plan from the beginning, to be with us... but also reside within us! Jesus made this clear in (John 14:16-17), *And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.*

1. Upon Belief in Jesus, we are **SEALED with the Spirit: (Eph 1:13-14)** *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

2. He **helps us UNDERSTAND** the Teachings of Jesus Christ: (John 14:26) *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.* (cf. 1 Cor 2:13)

- He helps us **Abound in Hope** by His Power (Rom 15:13), and brings **Comfort to the church** (Acts 9:31). The Holy Spirit was given to us to: **Direct Us** (Acts 8:29, 10:19-20), **Reprove us** (John 16:8), **Sanctify Us** (Rom 15:16, 1 Cor 6:11), as well as many other mentions as to **His person, His Role,** and **His work** in the world and in our lives individually!

3. Many DO NOT understand the **Indwelling Presence of the Holy Spirit!** READ (Acts 19:1-8)

Thus, He was given

C. As PROMISED By the Father for POWER (Acts 1:8) *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.* – And not many days after Jesus told this to His disciple's, they were **Endowed with Power from on high at Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).** **AND THE CHURCH AGE BEGAN!**

CLOSING THOUGHT: Church family, here we are approximately 2,000 years later! *It seems as if the church has become distracted from or even forgotten that the Holy Spirit was given to us!* – Many of us are still walking about with just head knowledge of the holy Ghost...trying to make ends meet or just getting by. What this church needs is a Fresh outpouring of the Spirit! **We need Your POWER!** (Ask...Have you been baptized in the Spirit? Do you desire that now? (Pray for all who acknowledge it)

Moving from the Understanding our need for God's Spirit in us, John now turns to explain how...

II. THE SPIRIT WARNS US (4:1-3): READ TEXT – You may recall that back in (1 John 2:18), John was concerned about "*antichrists*" **who have already come**. John now *Distinctly Provides* two ways to *Discern* those who are not of God. *First, he says...*

A. Don't "BELIEVE" Every Spirit (1a) – It's strange that *so many people are gullible* when it comes to comprehending spiritual truth. The cause may be rooted in ignorance or even tainted by Satan's elusive lies, which ultimately leads to deception and even greater...destruction. (*Sadly, this happens to many who are new to the faith*).

- In John's day and even now, *many rise claiming to be accredited or inspired by God*, but in truth they are False teachers and Spiritual Charlatans, empowered by demons: (2 Cor 11:13-14) *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ.* ¹⁴ *And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light.* (*Even in the church, it is sometimes difficult to know the motives of all who attend*).

- **So as not to fall prey to these:** *impostors, these fakes and frauds, these imitators and impersonators, these pretenders and masqueraders, these deceivers... we must learn to ...*

1. "TEST" The Spirits (1b) – {Grk. Dokimazo} to test... examine, prove, or scrutinize to see whether a thing is genuine or not. – Even in John's day, the church was bombarded with an abundance of demonic doctrines (1 Tim 4:1-2; 2 Pet 2:1-3). **Discernment was needed!**

2. Are They "OF GOD" (1c) – In context, believers are to examine the claims of any "spirits," who claim to have inspiration from God with a new word, prophecy or revelation. This scrutiny was demonstrated by *the Bereans* who, after hearing Paul and Silas in the Synagogue, *"received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."* (Acts 17:11b) – *P/A: Are you a Gullible Christian? Or do your Test everything?*

B. How To KNOW the Spirit of God (2-3) – John provides *a way to measure* if a teacher is of a demonic spirit or the Holy spirit...

1. By "Confession" of Jesus' Incarnation (2a) – Does the teacher *publicly acknowledge* that Jesus Christ is God, who became flesh as a human being with a physical body? (*Not just a phantom visit to earth*). – *If a teaching, suggestion, or thought is of the spirit of God, it will affirm both the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ!* – **Jon Courson**

2. Confessing /Affirming God's Spirit (2b) – What we say stems from what we believe!

- Paul's Conclusion (1 Cor 12:3) *Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*

- Re: Peter's Confession (Matt 16:17) *Jesus answered and said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.*

3. Denial or Avoidance Confirms Antichrist Spirit (3) – Anyone who does not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Bible presents Him **is inspired by the spirit of the antichrist. (NOT OF GOD!)**

*“Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the **Antichrist** is coming, even now many **antichrists** have come, by which we know that it is the last hour.” (1 John 2:18)*

CLOSING THOUGHT: The apostle John wrote these instructions as he was *Inspired by the Holy Spirit*. Thus, **THE SPIRIT WARNS US of the spirit of antichrist!** – As did Jesus (Matt 24:24), *For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.* – So did the apostle Peter (2 Peter 2:1-2), and the apostle Paul, who simply said: *Test all things...Hold fast to what is good.* (1 Thess 5:21)

III. THE SPIRIT SHOWS US (4:4-6): READ TEXT – He Discloses The Right Answer...Truth!

He shows us..

A. “YOU” Belong to God (4) – This is a popular verse amid Christendom, often quoting the latter half and skipping the 1st half... which is equally important. It *identifies* and *reassures* us of *our relationship* and *reminds us* that **we are overcomers!** (someone many need to hear that today!)

1. Every (C.O.G.) is able to Overcome the spirits of this world! – (Isa 54:17) *No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the Lord.*

2. **We can Overcome every spirit and every battle because The Great One Dwells In Us!** The *Spirit of Truth* provides protection from the antichrist spirits: *“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).* – He is Greater than the Devil (*who is in the world*) *He is greater than his minions!*

He shows us..

B. “THEY” Belong to this World (5) – John identifies the origin these spirits! *They are of the world* and the world is in *IN them*. You may recall back in (1 John 2:15) that John exhorted the (C.O.G.) to *HATE the world and the things IN the world.*

1. Because they are from the World, and *they speak as of the world* (cf. John 3:31b), and the world embraces these spirits... *“hears them.”* (i.e, destructive doctrines exist, [2 Peter 2:1-2] expound!

2. These don’t understand spiritual things because they don’t have the right spirit.

READ (tt. 1 Cor 2:12-16) *Expound - The spirit of worldliness is their concern! This is the wrong spirit.*

He shows us..

C. “WE” Have the RIGHT Spirit (6) – The mention of *“WE”* here directly refers to *the apostles* of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those who (cf. 1:1-3) walked and talked with Jesus...who were directly taught by Jesus! Those who knew that **Jesus Only** was *“the Way, the Truth, and the Life...”*

1. These **Approved Teachers** were hand-selected by Jesus and were commissioned to Make Disciples using the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *(This is what we will adhere to at CC Venice! We will not drift!)*

2. **He who KNOWS God, hears us** – This is *the second test* that John provides: If they adhere to the apostle’s doctrine (*not false teachings*) then they are of God. **But those who Reject God, will Reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ...they are antichrist!**

- **This is how we KNOW:** He who “hears” is able to discern truth. After teaching many Parables Jesus often said, *He who has ears to hear, let him hear!*” (cf. Matt 13:19)

- **Do you want to know Truth?** Then read and study His word. **Do you want to identify error?** Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the erroneous spirits and be sure to expose them!

* **Call Worship Team Up**

CLOSING THOUGHTS: Our task in this current age then is to **accurately test the spirits (1 John 4:1)**. But we are to be *"Wise as serpents and harmless as doves"* (Matthew 10:16, ESV). We must **carefully consider** each preacher's or teacher's Christology **rather than accepting it without question** just because of their reputation or credentials. **It is crucial to listen to what they have to say about Jesus!**

- As a **Child of God, are you Spiritually Aware** of the **Spirit IN US**, and that the **Spirit WARNS US** and that He desires to **SHOW US** the spirit of truth and the spirit of error?
- **Two final questions to ask is...**
 - **Who do you SAY that Jesus is?**
 - **Do you have the Holy Spirit?**

* **Let's Pray**