



“Beware the Spirit of Antichrist”

1 John 4:1-6

Perfect Love: The Book of 1 John

Introduction: The apostle John is known as The Apostle of Love, but don't think that means he's a push-over. 1 John has been a “tough love” epistle.

- Tough love requires us to take responsibility for our actions.
- Tough love puts principles before popularity.
- Tough love is protective and direct.
- Tough love doesn't mince words.

1 John 4:1-6 “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. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 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. 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. They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 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.

I. DEFINING THE RELATIONSHIP

“Beloved...” (1 John 2:7; 3:2, 21; 4:1, 7, 11; 3 John 1:1, 2, 5, 11)

II. HIS PROTECTIVE COUNSEL

1 John 4:1 “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.”

Tough Love Statement #1: “Beloved, do not believe everything you hear!”

In the Book of Proverbs, we are warned about the danger of being naive (The Hebrew word: *pethi* = open-minded)

1 John 4:1 “...do not believe every spirit...”

1 Timothy 4:1-2 “But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron...”

Tough Love Statement #2: “Beloved, test what you hear!”

1 John 4:1 “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...”

1 Thessalonians 5:21-22 “...examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil.”

We are to be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11 who “...received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.”

“Learn what’s real and you will always be able to identify the false.”

Philippians 4:8 “Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.”

Tough Love Statement #3: “Beloved, watch out for false teachers!”

1 John 4:1 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.

Deuteronomy 11:16 “Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away...”

Matthew 7: 15 “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”

Tough Love Statement #4: Apply the Proper Tests

1 John 4:2-3 “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 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.”

The Spirit of God (The Spirit of Truth) vs. The Spirit of Antichrist (The Spirit of Error)

1 John 4:6 “By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”

Apply the Doctrinal Test

Does it present a proper view of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ?

1 John 4:2 “...every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God...”

- Does it teach that Jesus is the Fully Human Son of Man?
- Does it teach that Christ is the Fully Divine Son of God?
- Does it teach the full-atoning work of Jesus Christ on the cross?
- Does it teach that salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone?
- Does it teach that Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father?

1 John 2:22 “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, the one who denies the Father and the Son.”

2 John 1:7 “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.”

Earlier he wrote 1 John 2:18 “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist (i.e. The Man of Lawlessness) is coming, even now many antichrists (who teach the spirit of antichrist) have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour.”

- Antichrist (The Spirit of Error) has come in the past.
 - Antichrist (The Spirit of Error) is coming in the present.
 - Antichrist (The False Christ) is coming in the future.
- cf. Revelation 13:1-8 regarding the Final World Ruler who will oppose God and exalts himself as god, declaring himself worthy to be worshiped (cf. 2 Thess. 2:3-4)

- **The spirit of lawlessness** in the world today prepares the world for **The Man of Lawlessness** who will come at the end of the age.
- **The spirit of destruction** in the world today prepares the world for **The Son of Destruction** who will come at the end of the age.
- **The spirit of opposition** in the world today prepares the way for **The One Who Opposes Christ** who will come at the end of the age.
- **The spirit of human exaltation** in the world today prepares the way for **The One who Exalts Himself Above Every So-Called God** who will come at the end of the age.
- **The spirit of false worship** in the world today prepares the way for **The One Who Will Become the Object of the World's Worship** who will come at the end of the age.
- **The spirit of false teaching** in the world today prepares the way for **the One Who Will Take His Seat in the Temple of God** when he comes at the end of the age.
- **The spirit of antichrists** in the world today prepares the way for the **One Who Will Display Himself as God** when he comes as the end of the age.

III. THE IMPACT OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD

1 John 4:4 "You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He (i.e. the Holy Spirit) who is in you than he (i.e. the evil spirit of antichrist) who is in the world."

2 Thessalonians 2:5-7 "Do you not remember that while I was still with you, I was telling you these things? And you know what restrains him now, so that in his time he will be revealed. For the mystery of lawlessness is already at work; only he who now restrains will do so until he is taken out of the way."

(cf. 2 Chronicles 32:7-8 "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. With him is only an arm of flesh, but with us is the Lord our God to help us and to fight our battles.")

IV. THE GREAT DIVIDE BETWEEN THE FOLLOWERS OF ANTICHRIST AND THE PEOPLE OF GOD

1 John 4:5-6 "They (the followers of false-teaching antichrists) are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. We (true believers) 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."

THE GREAT DIVIDE

Unbelievers

The Followers of Antichrist
From the world
Do not know God
Children of the devil (Jn 8)
Listen to fellow unbelievers
Know the spirit of error
Spirit of antichrist indwells them
Deceived by the spirit of error
Wrong view of Jesus
Wrong view of salvation by grace
Jesus is not 100% God; 100% man

Greatest Need: Salvation

True believers

The People of God
From God
Know God
Beloved children of God
Listen to fellow believers
Know the Spirit of Truth (Holy Spirit)
Spirit of Christ indwells them
Led by the Spirit of Truth
Right view of Jesus
Right view of salvation by grace
Jesus is 100% God; 100% man

Greatest Need: Sanctification

Conclusion:

Tough words for tough people living in tough times.

2 Corinthians 10:5 “We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God....”

cf. Ephesians 6:10-17 “Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand firm therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What does it mean to be the beloved child of God?
2. How do you “test the spirits” (i.e., the many opinions)
3. How will you now prepare the next generation to face the many spirits of antichrist in their day?
4. What did you get most out of this message?
5. What specific questions or issues do you have that you would like our pastors to help answer? (Please send them to us).