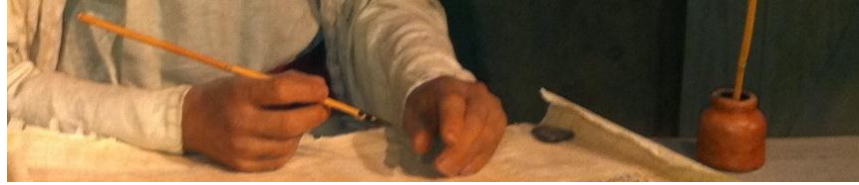


The 1<sup>st</sup> Letter of

# John



## Lesson 4-Having God's Love and the Right Spirit

*Focus: 1 John 4:1-21*

### ➤ Having the Spirit of God or the spirit of error (v.1-6)

- (v.1-3) The Bible says that we should “not believe every spirit” or voice or prophet for there are “many” false prophets who have gone out into the world! Jesus warned about these false prophets as well (See Matthew 24:4,5, 24). The Bible is very clear that we cannot just believe everyone, but we must “**test the spirits**” to see whether they are of God. There were many false prophets who came throughout ancient times and even in the days of Jesus. There are also many false prophets in the world today! Now, **the Bible does not say that there would be no true prophets**. The Bible is clear about that. God does communicate to His people through His word and through prophetic voices. The Bible says that we should “not grieve” or “quench the Holy Spirit” and that we should “not despise prophesying’s” (See Ephesians 4:30; **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21**). God does give spiritual gifts to His church and prophecy is one of them (See 1 Corinthians 12:4-10, 27-31). His church will “come behind in no gift” as we are waiting for the Second Coming (See 1 Corinthians 1:6,7). Those who say that John the Baptist was the last prophet are misapplying the texts of Matthew 11:13 and Luke 16:16. Those texts are simply saying that the major thrust of prophetic proclamation was pointing down to the days of Jesus and of John the Baptist! The prophets of the Old Testament were especially pointing us down to that time so we could behold the Messiah! However, God still sends messengers to His people, even today, absolutely!! Don’t forget that John the Apostle, who also wrote this letter many years after the death of John the Baptist, is also the prophet and writer of the book of Revelation which was given around AD 90. Jesus said, watch out for the false prophets! He did not say there won’t be any true ones. Acts 2:17, 18 tells us that there will be, as also does the rest of the New Testament! Why should Satan send a counterfeit if there were no true ones? Like, why not counterfeit a 3 dollar bill? Well, there isn’t any so don’t try. The Bible says “**Test the Spirits**” to see whether they are of God. “**Test all things and hold fast what is good!**” So, **how can we test them? (1) A true prophet must uplift Jesus as our Savior—the Divine son of God** (1 John 4:1,2). **(2) A true prophet must live by the Bible, agree with, and uplift all of its teachings** (Isaiah 8:20; 1 Corinthians 14:32,33) “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.”—this means a true prophet cannot and will not differ from the true teachings of God’s Word—the Bible! **(3) If a true prophet makes any kind of predictions, we should be able to see those words coming true** (being fulfilled; happening) (Deuteronomy 18:22). However, if their words do come to pass, but they are teaching you to disobey God, do not follow them!! They must pass ALL the tests of a true prophet! A true prophet will teach us to be obedient to all of God’s commandments

(See Deuteronomy 13:1-5). **(4) A true prophet must bear the “fruits” of a true and faithful Christian in their life** (Matthew 7:20). This verse also teaches us that the “fruit” of their ministry will lead souls closer to Jesus!

- (v.2,3) Those who are true should also admit that Christ has come in the flesh! There were some popular heresies floating around in the days when John wrote this letter, such as Docetism. Many believed that the flesh was evil and so Jesus could not truly come in the flesh. They believed that he had to have to have come as a spirit and some people just thought that He was flesh and blood. These Bible verses combat that heresy! Christ came “in the flesh.”
- (v.4-6) Many spoke of their worldly ideas because they were not of God. And the world would hear them. There are many dark things in the world, powers, and ideas that conflict with the teachings of God, but we must remember that God is greater than all the darkness of this world and ultimately His truth will prevail! We must be those who carry His truth to the ends of the earth!
- **Experiencing the Love of God (v.7-13)**
  - The character of God is love. We must live according to this love of God! God has first loved us and showed us His love so that we could know and love Him! By choice we can come to Him and serve Him because He has shown us His heavenly love! Let us learn of this beautiful love and contemplate His eternal goodness! (See Romans 5:5, 8; John 3:16; Jeremiah 31:3).
  - Once we truly begin to experience God’s love then we must share it with others! Love is contagious! Especially God’s love!! We must know Him and His love, and then share that same love with others!
  - (v.13) *See also Romans 8:14-16. Paul speaks about these very same truths.*
  - (v.15, 16) **We can know believe, and confess that Jesus is the Christ by learning of Him and His word.** Then we can believe and accept Him by faith. God’s word reveals what we need to know about God and Christ so that we can believe and be saved (See **John 20:30,21; 21:24,25**). Confession of Christ is not, nor ever should be, a blind confession or belief, but is rooted in the knowledge and evidence of what is true. It should be a belief that is formed based on the evidence that is given to us. After that, we can trust by faith, what we do not yet comprehend, see, know, or understand; simply trust Him!
- **Love which transforms and casts our fear (v.14-21)**
  - We love God **because** He first loved us!! Love transforms our lives and it will transform the lives of others in this world too! We must share this incredible love of God with others! This kind of love casts out fear and brings peace to our hearts!
  - (v.20) We cannot say that we have love for God and then not love our brothers and sisters in this world. No, we must love all. If we have tasted of God’s love truly, the one who loved us while we were still sinners, then we would truly have love for others! Let it be so with us, and let the love of God become ever deeper and brighter in our hearts, as we grow daily in the Lord!

*Question (s) for the Heart:*

**Will you ask God in prayer to reveal His Spirit and love to you more deeply? \_\_\_\_\_**