

1 John 4 – Discerning the Church from the World

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John's writing style is very unique in the Scriptures. Instead of moving in a linear progression of thought, he cycles around specific topics and then later returns to recycle around the topic again.

- 1 John 1:5-10 - *Spiritual light and darkness - confession of sin*
- 1 John 2:3-6 - *Keeping God's commandments*
- 1 John 2:7-11 - *Spiritual light and darkness - loving one another*
- 1 John 2:15-17 - *Love not the world*
- 1 John 2:18-29 - *Deception and the spirit of antichrist*
- 1 John 3:4-10 - *Keeping God's commandments*
- 1 John 3:11-22 - *Loving one another*
- 1 John 3:23-24 - *Keeping God's commandments*
- 1 John 4:1-6 - *Deception and the spirit of antichrist*
- 1 John 4:7-21 - *Loving one another*
- 1 John 5:1-2 - *Loving one another*
- 1 John 5:3 - *Keeping God's commandments*
- 1 John 5:4-12 - *Overcoming the world*

1 John 4:4

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3 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.

4 **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.**

1 John 2:18-27

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22 Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

1 John 4:5-6

5 **THEY ARE OF THE WORLD: THEREFORE SPEAK THEY OF THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD HEARETH THEM.**

6 **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.

John 10:4-5

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

Philippians 1:9-10

9 and this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment (discernment);

10 that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of christ;

THE MESSAGE OF THE WORLD - THE SPIRIT OF ERROR

will always appeal to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life

1 John 2:15-16

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

2 Peter 2:1-3

1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their pernicious (destructive, destroying, injuring, ruin, loss) ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

[NAS "many will follow their sensuality"]

3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise (to use for gain, to traffic, to trade) of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

[NAS "in their greed they will exploit you with false words"]

- false Christians do not love you - they only want to use (exploit) you for their personal gain
- false Christians will appeal (seduce) to you through the lust of the flesh, of the eyes and the pride of life

2 Timothy 4:3-4

3 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

EXAMPLES OF RELIGIOUS SEDUCTION:

- **LUST OF THE FLESH** - prosperity Gospel, seeker-friendly, music, raffles
- **PRIDE OF LIFE** - spiritual elitism, overbearing leadership, dominion theology, religious celebrities, titles & position
- **LUST OF THE EYES** - sensationalism, false signs & wonders, professionalism, buildings

MESSAGE OF GOD - THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH

will always call for holiness, purity, self-denial, crucifixion of the flesh

Titus 2:11-14

11 For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world;

13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ;

14 Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Matthew 16:21-24

21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

TOOLS OF DISCERNMENT

1. Actions

1 John 3:7–8

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

2. Words

Matthew 12:34–37

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

3. Fruit

Matthew 7:15–20

15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

4. Spirit

Matthew 7:21–23

21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.