

The world hears and follows false teachers because they avoid addressing sin and warning of hell.

### b. The Holy Spirit speaks through the Word of God

- 1) The apostles preached the Word of God. The Bible is the authority, the guide, and the message of those led by the Holy Spirit.
- 2) Rather than using worldly appeal, the Holy Spirit uses the Bible to convict men of sin and point them to Jesus Christ the Saviour. To the world this seems foolish, but not to God. (1 Corinthians 1:21) *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”*
- 3) True Christians hear and obey the Bible. The Word of God challenges and edifies them. (2 Timothy 3:16) *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:”* (Hebrews 4:12) *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”* The Bible is the Spirit’s offensive weapon. (Ephesians 6:17) *“And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”*

#### 📖 What are the spirit’s methods?

**Conclusion:** Cults and false teachers often appear to be spiritual, but if you apply these four tests, you can identify their true spirit. Let’s review them again. (1) Test their representatives. Do they have godly changed lives? (2) Test their words. Do they agree that Jesus is God? (3) Test their power. Do they defend godly Christians? (4) Test their methods. Do they rely on the Bible to convict rather than worldly appeal?

If a preacher, teacher or religion fails any of these four tests, the spirit behind him is a satanic spirit not the Spirit of God. He or she may say many good things, but do not be deceived! Remember, like rat bait, they may be 98% good but it is that 2% of bad that is deadly. We are in a serious spiritual battle for truth. Do not take it lightly.

**Song:** Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord, **337**

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# Testing Spirits

16 June 2019 PM – 1John 4:1-6 – 1Jn2019 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** The word *try* in our text means to test, examine, prove, or approve. God tells us to test spirits and only accept what passes God’s test.

When I am pickling olives, I first approve them. I look at each one and those with bad spots I discard and the good ones I keep.

God wants every Christian to know how to accurately test and discern the spirit of teachers. The spirit of a teacher is the supernatural being behind his message. It is either the Holy Spirit or a satanic spirit.

**Transition:** John gives us four criteria that we must use when testing a spirit to identify him.

## 1. Test each spirit by his representatives (v.1)

### a. Satanic spirits work through false prophets, v.1

- 1) These prophets are deceivers. They proclaim teaching that is contrary to the Bible. They claim to follow the Bible but they add to it, subtract from it, or misinterpret it.
- 2) They lack evidence of a godly changed life. They may be nice people, but they lack the fruit of the Spirit.

### b. The Holy Spirit works through true Christians (3:24)

- 1) The Holy Spirit that God gave them indwells them.
- 2) The Holy Spirit produces fruit in their lives. (Galatians 5:22-23) *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”*
- 3) The Holy Spirit changes their lives. (Titus 3:5) *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;”* (2 Corinthians 5:17) *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”*

#### 📖 What are the spirit’s representatives like?

## 2. Test each spirit by his words, v.2-3

### a. Satanic spirits will not confess Jesus Christ, v.3

- 1) To “*confess*” means to agree with. “*Jesus*” means Jehovah

is salvation. “*Christ*” means Messiah. This is his divine name. He is God the Son and the Son of God. “*Came in the flesh,*” means that God the Son came to earth and took on human flesh. (Matthew 1:23) “*Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*”

- 2) Thus, to confess Jesus Christ came in the flesh means to agree that this Bible teaching is true.
- 3) Jesus is coequal with the Father. A spirit that says that Jesus is just a god but not the God is a satanic spirit.

#### **b. The Holy Spirit confesses Jesus Christ, v.2**

- 1) The Holy Spirit agrees that the man Jesus is the divine Christ, God the Son who came in the flesh. (1 Timothy 3:16) “*And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*” (John 1:1) “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” (John 1:14) “*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*”
- 2) As author of the Bible, the Holy Spirit frequently calls Jesus the Christ (see 1Jn 2:22).
- 3) Jesus himself proclaimed His deity and oneness with the Father. (John 8:58) “*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*” (John 8:24) “*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.*”

*Note: Not all who believe in the deity of Christ are doctrinally sound, but this separates them from cults and false religions that deny Christ's deity.*

📖 *What are the spirit's words like?*

### **3. Test each spirit by his power (1Jn 4:4)**

#### **a. Satanic spirits use their power to oppose Christians**

- 1) They condemn those who live by the Bible and believe in a literal hell, a literal heaven for all Christians, and a divine Christ. They try to get Christians to join in false religions.

They claim Baptists are not true Christians.

- 2) These spirits have great power. Do you remember all that Satan did to Job? He killed all his animals and all his children and gave Job boils. The NT stories about demon-possessed people are frightful. Demons are far more powerful than you and me.
- 3) Christians must stay away from all that is satanic (witchcraft, demonic games, cartoons, toys, books, and music). Satanic spirits or demons are real and powerful, but are weak compared to the Holy Spirit.

#### **b. The Holy Spirit uses His power to defend Christians**

- 1) He overcame Satan on the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15) “*Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.*” That is a past event with present affects.
- 2) He enables us to overcome the lures of false teachers and demonic oppression (Galatians 5:16).
- 3) The Holy Spirit is greater than the satanic spirits in the world because the Holy Spirit is God and demons are fallen, created angels. **Memorise and quote this verse when the devil attacks you with doubt and fears.**

📖 *What does the spirit do with his power?*

### **4. Test each spirit by his methods, v.5-6**

#### **a. Satanic spirits use worldly appeal**

- 1) Here the term “*world*” is the world system that opposes God. False teachers speak things that the world enjoys hearing. They use sensual appeal, logical appeal, materialistic appeal, and emotional appeal. Their methods are worldly and appeal to the world.
- 2) It is tragic when Christians stoop to use the world's methods to attract a crowd. The use of **rock music, worldly dress, nightclub atmospheres, and showy performances** are the world's methods and ought never to be adopted by God's people.
- 3) False teachers refuse to hear the truth from God's Word.