



MESSAGE

STUDY GUIDE

GROUP MATERIAL

SONGS

Warning: False Prophets! Antichrist's Spirit!

SUMMARY:

- John warns against false prophets, cautioning that not all spirit-inspired preaching comes from God. Preachers are driven either by God's Spirit or the spirit of the Antichrist. In this context, naivety is dangerous. To help believers discern true prophets from false ones, John offers a Christ-centered test: the confession that "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh." Rejecting those who deny this truth lays the foundation for later Church Creeds.
- John's second test focuses on the audience's response. A preacher endorsed by the secular world is a false prophet working with the Spirit of Deception. The world opposes God and rejects John's message, while those who know God listen to John. The preacher fitting this pattern – modelled by John — exhibits the Spirit of Truth.
- Today, pseudo-prophets and deceiving spirits still infiltrate churches, seminaries, and Christian media. Heresy and deception flourish on the Internet, worsened by declining biblical literacy and superficial preaching. At CIT, we must strengthen our theological foundations, cultivate a deep hunger for Christ-centered preaching, and sharpen our discernment to distinguish God's Spirit from the spirit of the Antichrist, true from false prophets.
- **The Believers have God's Spirit; test Preachers' spirits (3:24; 4:1)**
 - Believers have God's Spirit (1 Jn. 3:24b)
 - Don't be gullible; test the spirits of prophets/preachers (4:1)
 - "Test the spirits. Don't go by how large of a crowd the teacher is able to attract. Don't be impressed by titles, degrees, & letters after names. Don't be enamored by the beauty of the robe, the sheen of the suit, or the eloquence of the voice. Our standard is the Word of God, the gospel of the person & work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the essential truths of the historic Christian faith." –Charles Swindoll
 - 'The spirits' – "*behind every prophet is a spirit...*" – John Stott
 - The Need – "Many False Prophets...in the World" (4:1b)
 - Applications:
 - Be Aware that False Teachings are Circulating
 - Testing the spirits behind teachings of false prophets is a Church-matter
- **Two Tests of the Preacher's/Prophet's spirit**
 - Two Spirits active in the World
 - "*One essential idea...: Two spirits are active in this world, 'the Spirit of Truth' & 'the spirit of [deception]'* ...John provides two tests so Christians ...[can] discern the difference." –Gary Burge
 - Two Tests for Believers to apply to Preachers (spirits)
 - Test #1: what do the spirits/preachers say about Jesus? (4:1-3)
 - Test #2: What does the world think about the spirits/preachers? (4:4-6)
- **Preachers' Test #1: Do they 'confesses... Jesus Christ has come in the flesh'? (4:2-3)**

- What does the Preacher teach about Jesus?
- What is John's theology about Jesus Christ?
- Applying John's Test to the World's Major Abrahamic Religions
- The Church's Response – to Receive or Not Receive? (2 Jn. 7, 10)
- **Can Non-Christian Religions experience God's Spirit apart from confessing Jesus Christ?**
 - Modern Scholars who argue God's Spirit is independent of Christ: Two Examples:
 - Clark Pinnock (1937-2010); "Post-conservative Christian;" Prof. McMaster Divinity College.
 - Amos Yong (1965-) Pentecostal; Dean of Theology, Fuller Seminary, CA., USA
 - Dr. Amos Yong's position runs counter to most Pentecostal & Evangelical Christians
- **Test #2: *Who listens to John & who does not?* (1 Jn. 4:4-6)**
 - Test #2: John's audacious assertions (4:6)
 - John & his Message are the basis for Test #2
- **Test #2: Audience's Response: Who's listening – the world or those who know God?**