



Test The Spirits

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (I John 4:1).

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“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. 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” (I John 4:1-6).

Romans 6:16 gives a stark revelation that we ought to ponder over, in that, depending on who we chose to obey, we can easily become servants to:

- 1) Sin or righteousness
- 2) Satan or God
- 3) Evil Spirits or the Holy Spirit.

As obedience stems from the dominating thoughts in our mind which could be either good or bad, originating from either God or Satan, it becomes easy to recognise the wise admonition from our text not to believe every spirit but test them to determine their origin. The reason for this is simply because obedience is obedience, and does not matter how it came about - in ignorance or with full knowledge; happily or grudgingly. It is for this reason that the devil tries to beguile people with subtlety in order to weaken their resolve or arouse their passions so as to get them to co-operate in using their will to do what ordinarily they would not want to do. Falsehood and deception therefore become the primary channels through which the devil carries out his operations; and we must guard ourselves

“Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey” (Romans 6:16).

against being taken in its traps. We note from our text that:

- 1) It is our responsibility to “try the spirits whether they are of God” (vs 1). This is why God gave us all of the natural, physical and spiritual senses that we have. When the Gibeonites presented themselves to the Israelites, it was the Israelites responsibility to test and discern the genuineness of their stories. Failure to do so led them into a covenant that later came back to haunt them.
- 2) “many” (not few) “false prophets are gone out into the world” (vs. 1) implies that their methods and strategies will be so many and varied that a single solution will not fit all scenarios.
- 3) “Hereby know we the spirit of God....” (vs 2-3). God has provided clear criteria, a spiritual ‘litmus test’ for discerning the spirit. We cannot judge the things of the spirit by our physical senses alone when God has given us spiritual weapons.
- 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” (vs 4). Our victory is guaranteed through our sonship. We already know the end of the battle before we commence engagement. We must therefore retain these attributes for continued victory.
- 5) Knowing and accepting our identity should free us from the pressure from the world. Not everybody in the world is a child of God, and it should not be a surprise if they do not all respond in the same fashion to scriptural truths (vs 5,6). Their negative responses should not deter us from the truth.