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**BIBLE STUDY**

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**THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (CHRIST) AND**

**THE SPIRIT OF ERROR (ANTI-CHRIST)**

**1 John 4:1-21**

***I John 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."***

"Beloved", of course, is speaking to Christians then and now. There has never been a time in history when there were more strange doctrines being taught than right now. It is the obligation of believers to determine for themselves, whether the message being taught is of God or not. The only way for us to be qualified to judge the message is to know the Bible. We must search the Scriptures diligently to know the truth. The devil is a counterfeit. The false messages being brought forth are very close to truth. They just change a word here and there and change the meaning. The evil one cannot sever your relationship with God, but he can disrupt your fellowship with him. Thus, John warns, Do not believe every spirit. In other words, be able to discern truth from error. You need to determine which spiritual claims are from God, for the world is full of false prophets. There are those who will deceive you, offering an unbiblical spiritual experience. They may even come in the name of Jesus.

***2 Corinthians 11:13-15***

***13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.***

***14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.***

***15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.***

One of the most recent tricks being brought forth by the devil in the church, is a watering down of Jesus to where He is not God. Another terrible teaching that is making the rounds, is that Jesus did not become God, until He rose from the grave. This is blasphemy. Jesus was the Word of God in heaven. He was there from the beginning. He is the Eternal One. He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. He is Eternal God the Word. To teach that the devil, or his demons, ever had any control over Jesus is also a lie. Jesus was not forced to die on the cross. He gave His life willingly. His flesh was the only thing that died on the cross. From the cross, He {Jesus} dismissed His Spirit from His body and commanded it to go to the Father. Jesus was Eternal Spirit in the body of flesh. Anyone who believes Jesus to be less than God, is teaching a false doctrine.

***I John 4:2 "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:"***

How do you test the spirits? Well, every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. To confess Jesus as the Christ {Messiah}, the Anointed One, is to have Him as your Saviour. This, to me, is saying, we must believe that the Word of God took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us. He was not a man. He was just housed in the body of a man here on the earth. Inside that flesh, dwelt the Spirit of God. He was Emmanuel {God with us}. Notice, also, that people like you and me are spirits, as well. The part of us that contains life is our spirit. God had made a clay doll in the beginning from the dust of the earth. We were mere vacant houses of flesh. God breathed the breath of life in us, and we were alive. He then gave us the ability to choose good and evil when He made us living souls. We must know who Jesus is, before we can have faith in Him for salvation. Man's blood {or an animal's blood} cannot cleanse you from all unrighteousness. The blood of God cleanses us from our sins. The blood of a child comes from the Father. God the Holy Spirit hovered over Mary, and she conceived of God. Mary furnished the body. It was not Mary's blood that flowed through that body, but God's. We must believe Jesus to be God manifest in the flesh to be saved.

***I John 4:3 "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."***

The terrible thing is that many churches teach that Jesus was nothing more than a man when He walked on the earth. You can easily see this is a dangerous message to bring. We cannot think of Jesus as just another man. He is divine in nature. The divinity of Christ has been a question for years. That is what separates the true believers from those who would be against Christ. The true believers believe Jesus was God manifest in the flesh. Even to believe He became God at resurrection, would be classified as those opposed to God.

***Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"***

This alone, makes you know He is deity. The one who denies this is the spirit of the antichrist.

***1 John 2:18-23***

***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: he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.***

According to early Christian tradition, a heresy circulated in John’s day that distinguished between Jesus (a man) and Christ (a supernatural being). Proponents taught that Christ descended on Jesus at his baptism and departed at the crucifixion. To this lie John says, “No.” Jesus is the Christ, and Jesus Christ came “in the flesh.” He is the unique, eternal Son of God who offers salvation from sin only by grace through faith in him. He is the God-Man. He limited himself because he has a human body, but he is limitless because he’s God. His mother gave birth to him because he’s man, but he created her because he’s God. He went to sleep because he’s a man, but he commanded the wind and waves to go to sleep because he’s God. The truth about the uniqueness of Jesus must be your spiritual foundation.

***I John 4:4 "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."***

***I John 4:5 "They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them."***

***I John 4:6 "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 is writing this to true Christians {children of God}. The He that is in us is Christ.

***Galatians 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."***

With Christ in me, I can do all things. It is Christ in me that overcomes the enemy. The they, spoken of here, are those who follow after the flesh. They are caught up in the world. They have no hope, because they base everything, they believe on what they can see with their eyes. They have eyes to see, and they do not see, and ears to hear, and they hear not. They place their faith in this world and its trappings. Christians will receive this message that John and the other true apostles are bringing. Christians have ears to hear, and they hear. What resources are available to you? First, you have the Holy Spirit whom God gave you. The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. Do not fear the devil and his false prophets, for you have “the Spirit of truth.”

***John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”***

When Christians go into the world, they will experience extreme pressure especially as they go deeper. We can’t prevent it. But have no fear. The pressure inside of you is greater than the pressure on you. Second, John tells his readers, we are from God. Anyone who knows God listens to us. The apostles were Jesus’s chosen representatives. They witnessed his resurrection, and they composed the New Testament under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Read and know what they wrote. This is how we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception. If someone teaches contrary to the objective truth of Scripture, he or she is a false prophet.

***I John 4:7 "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."***

***I John 4:8 "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."***

Since the importance of love is the subject here, He says beloved. We Christians are the beloved of God. One of the main things that separates the Christians from the world, is the great love that we have for our brothers and sisters in Christ. Fellowship with God is demonstrated and attained when Christians love each other. God not only loves but is love itself. When we are born of God, we are born of His love. To explain the love of God for us would be like trying to explain life itself. The word "loveth" means continues to love. One of the great things I believe about the United States, is the fact that we are concerned about the problems of people of every race. When there is famine, we try to help. When there is a devastating earthquake, we try to help. We are a loving caring nation. That makes me believe there is still hope for our nation to come back to God and be the Christian nation we started out to be. When you find a person filled with hate, you know that he, or she, has never experienced that great unselfish love that God has for each of us. There is a need in every person to be loved. Some have never realized that anyone loves them. When you find a person in this condition, if you can make them understand that God loves them, they will change.

***I John 4:9 "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him."***

***I John 4:10 "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son [to be] the propitiation for our sins."***

In these verses, John gives us one of the clearest definitions of love in the Bible. First, love is visible: God’s love was revealed. Invisible love is no love at all. Second, love is an act of the will: God sent his Son. To love someone requires a decision to act on his behalf. Third, love is sacrificial. It cost God his one and only Son. He didn’t throw you, his leftovers; he provided his best. Why? So that we might live through him. God loved all of mankind, one at a time from the very beginning. If He did not, why would He have bothered to create us in the first place? The greatest love ever shown was the love of God for us, when He sent His only begotten Son to save us from our sin and from ourselves. Truly our life is hidden in Jesus. Jesus is eternal Life. If we have Jesus, we have eternal Life. The strangest and most wonderful part of this is that He loved us when we were totally unlovable. We were yet in sin, when God sent His Son to save us. He did not wait until we had cleaned up our lives to save us. He saved us, and then helped us clean up our lives. We not only did not love God we did not know that He loved us. Propitiation, in this verse, means atonement. In other words, He paid the penalty for our sins in full. We have no debt to pay. Our bill is marked paid in full. The great love of God for man is made real to us in this.

***I John 4:11 "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."***

***I John 4:12 "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us."***

***I John 4:13 "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."***

God taught us by example the unselfish love that we need to have for each other. If the world today needs one thing, it is love. Take the time to hug someone and say you love them today. Let the love that God has showed you shine through you and make someone else's life a little brighter. Do not confuse love with lust. When you hug someone, make sure it is love, and not lust, you are feeling. We know that no one can look upon the face of God and live. Moses came the closest, when he saw the back side of God as He passed by. We see God by looking at Jesus, who is the image of the Father. Jesus told the disciples, if they had seen Him, they had seen the Father. This just meant that the Spirit of God dwelled within Him. Jesus was the manifestation of the Godhead on the earth. When we are full of God's love, we are full of Jesus. The fuller of Jesus we are, the more love we have for others. When Jesus went to heaven to sit at the right hand of the Father, He promised to send the Holy Spirit to dwell within each of us. The fact that we have the Spirit within us, tells us that He has never left us.

***Romans 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."***

***I John 4:14 "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son [to be] the Saviour of the world."***

***I John 4:15 "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God."***

***I John 4:16 "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."***

The purpose of the presence of God in the form of flesh on the earth, was for the salvation of all mankind. Jesus, who was the Word of God in heaven, took on the form of flesh as the Son of God to save us. He took on the name, Jesus, because it means Saviour. He is our Saviour and our Lord.

***Matthew 10:32 "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."***

This is in the very words of Jesus Himself. There is no question, when we confess. Confess is to tell a truth. We know in our heart and confess with our mouth as verification that we are full of Jesus. Our families and friends may turn against us, but we know that God loves us. We need never be lonely or blue, we have the love of God filling us. This is not just an occasional love, but a love that is forever. If we are filled with God's love to this extent, it should spring forth from us to others we are in contact with. There is such a peace and comfort that comes, knowing that God's love is always there.

***I John 4:17 "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world."***

***I John 4:18 "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."***

***I John 4:19 "We love him, because he first loved us."***

To know this love gives us perfect confidence to stand before the Judge of the world on judgement day. Perfect love knows no fear. Fear is the opposite of faith. When this love and faith becomes more and more, we become more like Jesus every day. The world will be able to see Jesus in us, when this happens. It is impossible to please God, if we fear. Fear is of the devil. Faith is of God. When we are overwhelmed by the love of God for us and our love for God, there is no place for fear. If God loves us, He will take care of us. We have nothing to fear. Those who are overcome with fear, have not experienced that perfect peace that comes from the perfection of our love for God and His love for us. He taught us how to love when He showed us by example. He loved us and showed us how to love Him.

***I John 4:20 "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"***

***I John 4:21 "And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also."***

We cannot express our love for God directly, except in praise. We cannot buy dinner for Jesus. We can, however, buy dinner for someone who is hungry in the name of Jesus. To express our love for God, we must express it through His children. When we love our brothers on the earth, we are in turn loving Jesus who made them. When we are filled with the love of God, it proceeds from us.Whoever we are near, gets the blessings of that overflowing love. Loveand hate are opposites and cannot dwell in the same place. It isimpossible to hate, when we are consumed with God's love. We love allof God's creation, and that includes the brothers.

**QUESTIONS**

1. Beloved, believe not every \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
2. Try the spirits whether they are of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
3. Who are the "beloved" in verse 1?
4. Who is the obligation on to determine whether the message is of God, or not?
5. What makes us qualified to judge the message?
6. What are some of the names that let us know the eternity of Jesus?
7. What, about Jesus, died on the cross?
8. Jesus was Eternal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of flesh.
9. What name makes us know He was God with us?
10. Whose blood flowed through Jesus' body.
11. What is the spirit that denies Christ called?
12. What are the Christians called in verse 4?
13. What do the people of the world believe?
14. Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of \_\_\_\_\_\_.
15. How was God's love manifested to mankind?
16. Do not confuse love with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
17. \_\_ \_\_\_\_ hath seen God at any time.
18. The Father sent the Son to be the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the world.
19. What does the name Jesus mean?
20. What gives us perfect confidence on judgement day?
21. There is no \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in love.
22. What is the opposite of fear?
23. Why do we love Him?
24. If a man say he love God and hate his brother, he is a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
25. It is impossible to hate, when we are consumed with God's \_\_\_\_\_\_\_.