DISCERNING THE TRUTH FROM MODERN DECEPTION

1 John 4:1-6

Eyanrin, Sunday (Evang.)

INTRODUCTION

There are variety of teachings today in the world about God and his will. People teach that Jesus was a created god, and not the eternal God. People teach the Holy Spirit is not a person but just a force of God's activity. There are a variety of teachings about the Holy Spirit.

People teach that baptism is not necessary. People come along teaching the freedom for remarriage even if the divorce was not for sexual immorality. There are hundreds of denominations and religious groups teach different aspects concerning God. So how are we to know what is right?

How are we to know what is the truth? The Christians in the days of apostle John were confronted with the same problem. It is on this basis Apostle John In ***1 John 4:1-6*** address how to deal with these teachings and how to determine the truth.

OUR TEXT - *1 JOHN 4:1 – 6*

Beloved, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit who confesses that esus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit who doesn't confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God; and this is the spirit of the Antichrist, of whom you have heard that it comes. Now it is in the world
already.

You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world. They are of the world. Therefore, they speak of the world, and the world hears them. We are of God. He who knows God listens to us. He who is not of God doesn't listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

TEACHING OUT LINE:

- The Command To Test (*4:vs 1*)
- The Testing Procedure (*4: vs 2-6*)
- Test By What The Teacher Says.
- The teachings that appeals to the world - (*4: vs 5*).
- Teachers does listen to the Apostles (4:vs 6).
- Conclusion

THE COMMAND TO TEST (4: vs1)

John's first command is to recognize that you cannot accept every person who claims to have the spirit of God. At that time, people would claim to have the Holy Spirit, claim to have

godly wisdom, or the gift of prophecy. People were claiming the authority of God which had not been given to them.

John says that you cannot accept their words at face value. He says that we must test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Even though people may claim to have the spirit of God the Christian needed to test them to see if their teaching and their authority were from God.

The reason for testing is stated in verse 1. There are many false prophets who have gone out into the world. There are many false teachers claiming authority from God. The same disposition is required today. We do not simply accept any teaching. Just because a person uses the scriptures, claims to be a Christian, or has a good reputation does not mean that they are bringing the truth.

THE TESTING PROCEDURE (4:2-6)
Test By What The Teacher Says.
The first test is an obvious test. Listen to what they have to say. Do not accept or reject a person by appearance, charisma, or other externals.

In verse 2, the apostle John says that we can know the Spirit of God if they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. We must remember that John is fighting these Gnostic false teachers claiming that Christ did not come in the flesh.

John tells the Christians that they need to listen to what a teacher has to say and see if they declare that Jesus is not the Christ who came in the flesh. John is establishing an important principle for all time about how we are to test every spirit.

The apostles declared that Jesus is the Christ who came in the flesh. Therefore, any teacher who comes along later declaring something contrary to the first revelation is false. We see this principle explicitly stated in ***Deuteronomy 13:1-5***.

One test was to see if the teacher claiming prophetic utterance had his words come to pass. If not, he was to be rejected. There are many of these false teachers today that people still listen to. For Example, there is this prediction from one of the Religious groups repeatedly that the world will end in 1874 & 1914 which never happened.

Therefore, everything about their words are to be rejected. Because they are false prophet and teachers. For us Christians, this means that when we hear teaching, we compare that teaching to all of God's word. We ask ourselves if the teaching fits in with the scriptures or does it violate the scriptures. The Bereans were praised for doing so. *"They received the word with all eagerness, to see if these things were so."* (***Acts 17:11***)

THE TEACHINGS THAT APPEALS TO THE WORLD (4:5).
The second test to observe is if a message proclaimed is appealing to the world. The apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians in his first letter and told them that the message of the

gospel is foolishness to the world (***1 Corinthians 1:23).***

If there is a teaching that appeals to the world, then we know that there must be a problem. The message of Jesus got him killed. The message the apostles proclaimed got them killed. The message of the prophets got them persecuted and killed. Today in the worldly Churches you can marry as many as you can care for, women functioning as preachers and lders in the church, and the like, you know these things are not from God. John says these false teachers *"are from the world; therefore, they speak from the world, and the world listens to them"* (4:5). Teaching that is popular with the world is not from God.

TEACHER DOES LISTEN TO THE APOSTLES (4:6)

The final test John gives is that the teacher listens to the apostles. John states a truth that carries for all teachings. The apostles are from God. Therefore, whoever knows God listens to the apostles.

A teacher who teaches a message in accordance to the Apostles doctrines is from God. The teachings that says, thus says the Lord, are from God. A false teacher is a person who is not swayed by the word of God. When presenting a message, they present messages that appeals to the world, and not from God's word.

In ***Matthew 15:8-9***, Brother Matthew declared, 8 *"These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.*
9 And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'" NKJV

All Christians must always listen to God's word and reconsider our beliefs and positions on the basis of what the word of God reveals. If the reaction is, "I don't care what the scriptures say" or the person twists the scriptures to make it work for his personal interest, that person is a false teacher.

CONCLUSION

We have been given an important task to test the spirits today. We cannot accept every teaching or teacher that claims to be from God. The three tests John teaches Christians to apply are these: (1) Does the message of the teacher conform or conflict with previous revelations from God?

(2) Does the message appeal to the passions and desires of the world? (3) Does the teacher listen to the word of God? Does the teacher make his appeal from the word of God? With these tests we must search the scriptures frequently and regularly to continue in this part of righteousness in Jesus Name .

MAY GOD BLESS HIS WORD IN JESUS NAME