

Bible Study Series: How to Detect False Teachers

“Overcoming False Teachers” Parts 1 and 2

1 John 4:1-6

In our text, we see four key principles in overcoming false teachers.

I. First, believe not every *spirit*. vs. 1

A. It's very evident from verse 1 that there are *lying* spirits in the world.

- *“Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.”*

1 Timothy 4:1

- Another term we would use for those lying spirits would be **demons**.
- This is who we are battling against.
- *“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:12*

B. Just as we are ambassadors for Christ, Satan and his demons have their ambassadors called false **prophets**.

- *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 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.” 2 Corinthians 11:13-15*

II. Second, test every spirit by the indwelling Holy Spirit. vs. 1, 4

A. *“And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment.” Philippians 1:9*

- This word “**judgment**” means perception, discernment.

B. *“But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.”*

1 Corinthians 2:15

- The Holy Spirit is your **teacher**. John 14:26, 16:13

III. Third, examine their *beliefs* concerning Jesus Christ. vs. 2-3

A. Here in our text, John gives us three good questions to ask when wondering if someone is a true or false teacher.

B. Question #1 – Is he ***talking*** about Jesus Christ?

- Does Jesus Christ saturate his preaching and teaching? Is his main business proclaiming Him and His work? Is he magnifying and exalting Christ?
- If he is not doing this, then he is not of **God**.
- *“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. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” John 16:13-14*

C. Question #2 – What is he ***teaching*** about Jesus Christ?

- John says if someone does not teach that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, then he is not of God. John is referring to the fact that Jesus Christ was **God** manifested in a body of flesh.
- *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, **and the Word was God.**” John 1:1*
- *“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.” John 1:14*
- *“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.”
1 Timothy 3:16*

D. Question #3 – Is he substituting other things in ***place*** of Christ?

IV. Fourth, feed yourself on the *truth* of God’s Word. vs. 5-6

- If you feed yourself on the truth, then you will be able to discern **error**.