

Test the spirits whether they are of God.

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- [0 : 00] I'm going to sing from the beginning of Psalm 139, O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou knowest my sitting down.
- O Lord, thou hast me searched and known, thou knowest my sitting down, and rising up ye all my thought, afar to thee are known.
- My foolishness and my lying down, thou come us and always.
- Now all so bold and tiring are, acquainted with all my ways.
- For in my time before I speak, not any word can be, but on together, O Lord, it is well known to thee.
- [2 : 01] Behind me, O Lord, thou hast me set, and laid on me an eye.
- Such knowledge is to sing for me, to hide to other land.
- From thy smith withers shall I go, or from thy present life.
- As hell I have blows up, who are there. There is in heaven I lie.
- Take I the morning which I dwell. That too.
- [3 : 25] Then lies Together. For in me, God hase say I will come along. Yet above I suffer to the game, Not yet above I trials By the flu be.
- We find this ■■■■■■■■ in heaven, but above I and above I trial are. We can for a short while turn to the first epistle of John chapter 4.
- We can read at the beginning of the chapter. 1 John chapter 4. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.
- 1 John chapter 5.
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- [5 : 17] 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5. 1 John chapter 5.
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- that he is the truth of God personified. For example, if we look forward to the way that he concludes his epistle, we have these words.
- We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not, but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.
- [6 : 28] And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son, Jesus Christ.
- And this is the true God and eternal life. That's the conclusion of this epistle.
- He is convinced that those that he writes to, that they are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's go back again to chapter 5. These things have I written unto you, that believe on the name of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may believe in the name of the Son of God.

That is his desire, that is his persuasion. What he believes, that they too may believe the same, and that they may be persuaded that what they believe is true, that it is right.

[7 : 54] Now you might think that's what you would expect, that's what you would hope that John desires. But we have to apply this to ourselves.

We have to understand for ourselves, that the aim of the gospel is to bring men and women to faith in Jesus Christ.

And having come to faith in Jesus Christ, that we are assured of that status, that we are assured of having come to the place where salvation is ours.

But the hard fact of the matter is that those who have such faith, those who have come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, are in a minority.

They are in a minority in a world that does not believe, and have not come to faith in Jesus Christ. And we have to remember that.

[9 : 02] We can't get away from that. If you're oblivious to the influence of an unbelieving world upon you, then there's something wrong.

If you are oblivious to the fact that those who are in the world and of the world, they have no inclination towards the Christ in whom you have put your trust.

In fact, without even beginning to consider the hostility that is in the world that is directed against God's people, the apathy, the disinterest, the disquiet even, on the part of those who are in the world and of the world, with regard to those who are different to themselves, should be obvious to us.

I think, it goes without saying, I hope it goes without saying, if you remember anything that I said to you, I know that I often say that the world that we live in today is the exact same world that our forbearers have lived in.

in the sense that the very same attitude to the faith of the people of God is dominant in the world.

[10 : 49] It is prevalent in the world. It reveals itself in the same way. It is directed in the same manner towards those who hold the truth of God.

we often say unguardedly that our day and our generation is a generation that knows more wickedness and more evil than the previous generation.

the people of God and the people of God but you have to understand that that cannot be the case. There may have been times of gospel blessing in our community here that we can refer to that we have good wanted to know that such days occurred and such experiences were the experience of many within our community unlike the experience that we have today but that doesn't mean that the world has changed and the world that we occupy has changed.

I think we have to be guarded in our speech because it might give the impression that what is true about this world is that in some way God's power has diminished and that instead of his presence in the world continuing as the devil did that we are inclined to believe what the world would have us believe that God is not present in the world because that's really what you're saying you are as if drawing a line in the sand and saying today is a day like no other and because it is a day like no other the influence the influence of God cannot be the influence it once was there's something changed

God has changed now that's what the world wants you to believe it wants you to believe that the Bible is no longer relevant it wants you to believe that the gospel is no longer the power it once was it wants you to believe that we've progressed and because we've progressed there is no more need for the gospel that's what the world would have you believe but that's not the truth let me quote to you the words of Martin Lloyd Jones and I'm glad I came across them because sometimes I think well maybe maybe this is true that the world is more wicked than it once was but if you go back to the days of Noah what kind of day was the day of Noah was it a better day than this was it were the people in the days of Noah more holy than they are today certainly not

[14 : 26] God saw fit to judge the world and bring a flood upon the world so that those who were in the world perished apart from the elect few and the world was evil and many other days from the days of Noah the people that were in the world were wicked this is what Martin Lloyd Jones says half of our troubles arise from the fact that we always seem to think that it is only our world and time that has been difficult but if history and the study of history especially as we find it in the Bible does nothing else for us it should always give us a true perspective when you look back across the story of the church and of the saints you find that the world how often has it been as it is today in a sense we are confronting nothing new at the present time it has all happened before and thank

God there is provision here for us in our perplexities and in our difficulties I know there are people who don't believe that but you should believe it now Martyn Lloyd Jones probably wrote these words during the time of the second world war or just after the second world war and he could well say this world is just suffering because of its wickedness and God is judging it and the destruction that we see around us caused by this wickedness now what has that got to do with what the apostle has to say to us here well that belief that the world is lying in wickedness as ever it did is substantiated by the words of the apostle here what he is dealing with is the existence in the world of those who purport to be speaking the truth from God but are not therefore if we are going to speak about the context in which these words are found we need to believe that in the day of the apostle when he when he presented the truth he did so in a context where

God's people lived but they lived in the midst of a people who were not only wicked but as part of the context in which they labored and professed their faith there was this there were those there were those alongside them who purported to know God and to speak on behalf of God and that was only one element that was true one element amongst many because the apostle means them to understand that they are different to those who are in the world because they believe the truth concerning Jesus Christ those who are in the world and of the world do not believe that truth and they will reveal themselves in many different ways and this is but one that they speak according to themselves the truth of God but they do not believe the truth that they present as fact so at the very moment they needed to hear the apostle speak to them and interestingly if you were to read these words in the original tongue when

John is speaking to them he is not speaking to them as those who could possibly be influenced by that but already are this is the way they are believe not every spirit but try the spirits because you know believe not in the sense that do not continue to believe these these false preachers these false prophets these men who come to you and they are presenting lie as if it was true and John the preacher and commentator says do not believe every spirit because for them what was true and the danger that accompanied that was this that anybody who presented himself as a purveyor of the truth their word was accepted uncritically and they they appeared to them to be inspired because of the manner in which they conducted themselves now I can

I know that we need to understand that we're not just talking about you know false preachers or false prophets but the pervasive influence that the doctrines they present as truth have upon those who are believers of the truth because whether we like it or not the more exposure we have to error the more the danger is that we will imbibe some of these errors into our own thinking we can easily prove that what John is alluding to hear is a difficulty that was in the world from the beginning if you go to the

[21 : 46] Old Testament frequently you find mention the existence of the false prophet alongside the prophet that God had called and equipped and sent with a word from himself to a people who needed to hear what he had to say there's a stranger situation in the first book of Kings and you find it recorded in chapter 22 and you've got Judah on one side and you've got Israel on the other side and they're separated but there is the prospect of an alliance against Syria as Syria is at war with

Israel but God has sent Elijah and he's told Ahab the king of Israel that he's going to perish and between them these two kings Jehoshaphat and Ahab they know the wisdom of going to God and applying to God for information concerning the success or otherwise of any proposed strategy they might have so they look to another prophet and Micaiah is the prophet and we read in verse 13 Behold now the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth Let thy word I pray thee be like the words of one of them and speak that which is good and the prophet said As the Lord liveth and what the Lord saith unto me that will I speak and he goes on to give the message but then we read this

And the Lord said Who shall persuade Ahab that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead And one said on this manner and another said on that manner And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord and said I will persuade him And the Lord said unto him Wherewith?

And he said I will go forth and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets And he said thou shalt persuade him and prevail also Go forth and do so Now therefore behold the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these thy prophets and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee Now there's a mystery attached to how that works out But notwithstanding how it works or the part that God plays in that there is concrete evidence there that there is such a thing as a lying spirit and that it is in the mouth of some false prophets and rather than speaking the truth which is what a prophet should do they speak lies and they do so to further their own ends whatever they may be

If you read through the book of the prophet Jeremiah Jeremiah often refers to those false prophets who are proclaiming the truth supposedly but again they are telling their lies In the book of the prophet Ezekiel the prophet of Ezekiel is also conscious of this fact that that there are such a thing as those who bear the prophet's name but they do not proclaim the truth which is God's word The word of the Lord came unto me saying Son of man prophesy against the prophets of Israel that prophesy and say unto them that prophesy out of their own hearts hear ye the word of the Lord Thus saith the Lord God

[26 : 17] Woe unto the foolish prophets that follow their own spirit and have seen nothing O Israel thy prophets are like the foxes in the deserts and so on So there is within the Old Testament ample evidence that there is this danger in the world at all times that there are alongside those who bear the name of a prophet and are God's servants those who have taken that name to themselves but do not prophesy in the name of the Lord If you go to the New Testament you have no better witness to that fact than the Lord Jesus himself He warns his disciples that there are those in their own day who go out as ravening wolves dressed in sheep's clothing and towards the end of his ministry we read for many shall come in my name saying

I am Christ and shall deceive many Go on into the into the epistles for the book of Acts you find Paul warning the church about them you go into the epistle of Peter and Paul again and John in the book of Revelation there is no question but that they exist now that should not be in any doubt but what John is saying here is that we should exercise discernment that this is what is incumbent upon every one of us whoever the preacher of the gospel is whatever name they have whatever message they come with that we should always be ready to ask is this word from the

Lord or not believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God because many false prophets are gone out into the world and we have to have that understanding that it is the onus is upon each one of us when we hear God's word that it is God's word that we are hearing and not something that is alongside it however attractive it may be however pleasing it might be to our own senses the question that has to be asked is this from God or is it the voice of the false prophet word now we live in the world where not only do such belong and attach to themselves to the church but as in

John's days there are the it's what you would call many speak of what John had to contend with the prevailing force that was in vogue in history was the spirit of Gnosticism where what was elevated was the ability to use reason and so on the power of the human mind belittling at times the part that faith plays in the life of the believer so the Gnostics were a spirit contrary to the spirit of God where the spirit of God is at work and many believed the error the dissemination I think that's the difficulty because we may think that our discernment will allow us to recognize the person who is deliberately telling a lie but what if that person is believing the lie himself what if they believe the lie if they are convinced that what they have to say is the truth there was a well known television star football commentator at one point

David Icke was his name and he started off a sect and he was so convinced of what he believed and what he taught he taught I think he taught I can't remember offhand what his teaching was he certainly believed that the world was going to end at a certain point and he believed himself to have messianic properties or not he was convinced of it and nobody would move him from the position that he had taken up he was just convinced of his own rightness now there are plenty of people and this is the way they are but how do you deal with people who believe themselves to be right even when you know them to be wrong well the test John says there's a test there's a test that you must apply to them and that test is this are they denying the truth about

[32 : 15] Christ at the end of verse two hereby know ye the spirit of God every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God and that's the bottom line if a person is saying something that contradicts God's word then that person cannot be trusted however slightly or however deviant that person may be sometimes the error is so gross that you can't but understand this person is coming with something that is wrong but there are times when it is just a slight deviation from the truth but an adulterated truth is no truth

Jesus is the Christ come in the flesh John says he isn't a phantom which is what many taught in his day that he was like a man not really a man but like a man he was only a temporary apparition and that he would soon be absorbed back into the Godhead and there are variations on that truth his humanity was temporary but what John is speaking of here he has already touched on in chapter 2 and if you know the writings of John you'll know that this is what he does he establishes that truth and he emphasizes that truth and he moves on and he establishes that truth and he moves on but then he'll return and re-emphasize it and in chapter 2 verse 18 little children it is the last time and as ye have heard the antichrist shall come even now is this are there many antichrists whereby we know that it is the last time they went out from us but they were not of us for if they had been of us they would not no doubt have continued with us but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us but you have a nunction from the Holy One and you know all things and so on you have a nunction from you you have the Spirit of God you have the truth of God not only in your mouth but in your heart the truth of Christ the truth of his word and this

John says is how you can recognize the Spirit of God the presence of it the influence of it the effect of it on the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ this is the Christ come in the flesh not to confess that is to betray the Spirit that is in you modern day Gnostics exist they project an elevated position where the truth that the believer possesses is dismissed as an irrelevance dismissed as an irrelevance because we've moved on we've advanced we've increased our knowledge of all kinds of things and we've allowed these truths supposed to be eroded and put to one side but that's not what you and I believe in we believe the teachings of God concerning his Son and we believe the truth that says to us that Jesus Christ the Son of God was born into the world to become a saviour to sinners that he lived and that he died and that he rose again that his death was substitutionary that his death was a death that was needed in order for sin to be dealt with and so on

Michael Easton one of the commentators says this the world is happy with its own ideas dressed up in gospel language modern substitute gospels pagan philosophies rearranged and presented as if it is a gospel but what do you do what question do you ask where is Christ what kind of Christ is he who is he what has he done what is he what is he to you is he the Christ of the world or is he the Christ of the world these questions should be your questions and you should be able to discern which is all that is asked believe not every spirit but try the spirit whether they are of God because this world is full of false prophets false teachings false emphasis and false ideas that are designed in their heart of hearts to lead people away from the

Lord Jesus Christ and put your trust in something other than that Christ well you you and I need to exercise discernment based upon the light that God's word gives to us and we judge what we see in the light of that and nothing else may God encourage us to that end let us pray oh Lord oh God we give thanks that your word is our touchstone as someone said the word of God is either a touchstone or a tombstone and we are amongst those who look to it and trust in it and seek light from it and we pray that the Christ that we have resorted to that we have put our trust in would be the very Christ who is God's son saviour hear our prayers in his name forgive us and all we ask the cleansing that his blood affords amen we're concluding psalm again is psalm 139 we're going to sing the last two verses of this psalm psalm 139 the last two verses tael it is too if it tael it means j 18 months it after time you you anyways ■■■■ down he sounds and

[39 : 53] I have me not you good Who I believe Thank you.

Hcheel the love If prayers were to receive?

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen.