

# Testing the spirits

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[ 0 : 00 ] Let's turn this evening now to 1st John, the first letter of John, chapter 4, looking at the verses from the beginning, verses 1 to 6.

Let's just read through these verses first of all. 1st John, chapter 4, at the beginning. Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.

By this you know the Spirit of God. Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. And every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God.

This is the Spirit of the Antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already. Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

They are from the world, therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us. Whoever is not from God does not listen to us.

[ 1 : 07 ] By this we know the Spirit of truth and the Spirit of error. People are always drawn to something new in the way of teaching or ideas or religions.

It's true of us all that that's what we find naturally, that our minds are drawn and we give attention to things which seem to be very new and very exciting and very different to the kind of teachings that we're used to, the kind of practices that we follow.

But we must never assume that something new, that seems very authentic, that it is in fact reliable. That's really why John is writing in these terms against those that are heretics, that are trying to lead people away from the teaching that John the Apostle himself has consistently given them. And that is true even though we might find that certain things are happening which you could call spectacular. Things which people would say are miraculous even.

Wherever a kind of new thing appears where that sort of spectacular or miraculous or somebody might even say aspects of the supernatural actually accompanied or being part of it, that does not necessarily mean that it is genuinely truth and truthful and from God.

[ 2 : 34 ] Remember that the supernatural, if you use that word, does not always mean divine in the sense of from God or having God's approval.

There are two kinds of supernatural, of supernatural power. There is God and there is the devil. And no others.

Nothing in between. No third category of the supernatural. What is not of God is of error or of the devil.

That's what John in his writings is so insistent upon. Not that he is the only New Testament writer that speaks in this way. And that's why he calls here in verse 6 the spirit of truth and the spirit of error as two opposing aspects of the supernatural or of teaching that reaches us in terms of what is set for our lives and for us to live our lives by.

What John is writing here about is our need to discern between that which is from God and that which is not. Now this is important for every Christian at every stage.

[ 3 : 59 ] For every one of us at every stage of life indeed. That's particularly important as we set out on the Christian way. And I hope that tonight those who are young in the faith, whether they're young in years or otherwise, but young in the faith, will actually see that this is something that is essential for themselves, whatever other opinions they may have.

This is something that God himself is setting before us. That as people of God, we actually need to discern between true and false. We need to discriminate between that which is of God and its origin and that which is of the devil or of darkness.

Because these, as we said, are the only two forms of teaching that we're going to receive in a spiritual sense. Every Christian is a believer.

Every person who really knows the Lord savingly is a believer. The moment we come to know the Lord for ourselves savingly, the Bible tells us that we can call ourselves then believers in that sense of the word.

But what John is telling us is that there's another sense in which every Christian has to be an unbeliever. Because there are things that every Christian must not believe and must not accede to in their thinking.

[ 5 : 24 ] There are opinions that will be presented to them of which they will say, I am not going to believe that it's against what my Lord teaches me. It's against the plain teaching of his word.

And that's really where the discrimination comes about and where decisions have to be made. As you go through life as a Christian, it's so important more and more to discern right from wrong, error from truth, the spirit of God, the spirit of Antichrist.

And as we look at the passage, you can see that it has to do with testing the spirits. That's why John is saying, don't believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God. By spirits there, he really means the agents, the way in which either God or on the other hand, the devil, because this is really what John says in regard to the spirit of Antichrist, which is from the devil, it's utterly opposed to God.

What he's saying is that we test the teachings that come to us, the kind of teachings, the spirits, in other words, that come to us with a message, and we test them as to whether they are from God or not.

[ 6 : 44 ] If they are from God, then you're safe in following them. If they are not of God, we reject them. They're not good for you. They're from a power that seeks that you will come away from God and follow something else.

What's the reason for the testing? Well, he says, there are many false prophets that have gone out into the world. The fact that he calls them prophets tells us that they had a message, that they proclaimed a message, that they went about with something that was similar to the message that the apostle himself had, the message of the gospel.

And here you have false prophets. They too have a message. In many ways, it sounded like the gospel. It looked genuine. It had elements of the gospel in it, as we'll see in a minute, the reason for that.

There were things in it that were very familiar to these Christians that John was writing to. But, he says, they are false prophets. And the reason that you must test the spirits is that such prophets exist in the world who are false.

Who have a message that may seem to be authentic, to be Christian, to be honoring to God. But actually, when you look into it, he says, you can see things in it that show that it is false.

[ 8 : 08 ] That it is not reliable and not from God. And you can see the fact that he mentions they have gone out into the world. Now, that's the language that Jesus used in sending his disciples into the world.

It's the language that God, in fact, used of sending his own son into the world. In other words, it's language that tells us about mission.

Not only were these false prophets setting forth a message, not only were they announcing a message, preaching a message, and not only was that true, but they were doing it with a missionary purpose.

They were doing it with their minds set on winning disciples, unwilling followers. Unwilling followers. Just as the Lord sends people to preach the gospel with the purpose of bringing disciples to the Lord.

Not that we do it in our own power, but the Lord uses agents to bring disciples to himself, to bring people to be his disciples. So do the false prophets, John is saying.

[ 9 : 16 ] They have gone out into the world. They are on a mission. They actually have as their purpose the aim of producing disciples. You have the same today.

You have many different types of teachings that will confront you. And some of these are obviously different to Christianity. Some have a close affinity with Christianity.

And use Christian expressions. Use passages of the Bible, or indeed the whole Bible, with some significant alterations.

Jehovah's Witnesses. They have a message. They have a mission. Mormons. They have a message. They have a mission. Just because they look Christian. Just because they use Christian words. Just because they speak in a way that seems to speak like Christians. And speak. And have teachings that are like Christian teachings. Doesn't mean you can rely on them.

[10:21] They are actually false prophets. Avoid them. Don't give any space to their teachings. Because they are a spirit of the Antichrist.

The spirit that is against the truth. As it is in Jesus Christ. They will destroy people. Because following them means going away from the true source of salvation. And the true teaching on salvation that the Bible actually gives us. In other words, the Christian needs to be discriminatory.

That is to say, something that is not very fashionable nowadays at all. Because we are told that in religious things especially. You must not really discriminate. You must not give the suggestion. That somehow Christian teaching is superior to any other kind of teaching. Is to be placed above other kinds of teaching. Is to be given number one spot. Well, Jesus is not saying, you have to give my teachings number one spot.

[11:23] Jesus is saying, you have to give my teachings exclusive place. To the exclusion of all others that claim to be teachings on salvation.

Ecumenism is a word you may come across. Where you have the idea that different denominations with different teachings. And even different religions outside the Christian religion.

Are actually to be regarded on the same level. And given the same place and the same level of importance. Because the idea is that each of them has their own way of doing it.

But it is a way to God. It is a way into the relationship that we need to have with God or a God. In order to have either personal fulfillment.

Or something that will stand you for the future. All you need to go is to Christ's teaching about himself. And you will soon be able to say cheerio to all of these.

[12:35] I am the way. The truth. And the life. No one comes to the Father. But by me. Not fashionable.

Not really up to date. In human thinking nowadays. Doesn't actually accord with liberal theology. That regards the Bible as something not quite the word of God.

Doesn't quite at all accord with ecumenism. But it's the truth. Hereby we know the spirit of truth. And the spirit of error.

That's what Jesus set out. And that's what John is doing and following. The teachings of Christ. That's why we have to be discriminatory people. People who will distinguish between right and wrong.

Truth and error. And be able to say. Like a psalmist. We were singing in Psalm 16 there. Talking about the different kind of people. That he was familiar with in the world.

[13:33] There are he says those people. God's holy people. And there are also worship false gods. I will give no place to them. I will to the way that these holy people.

Live their lives. That's the company he says. That I belong to. And I repudiate. I reject he was saying. All worship of false gods.

Everything that is untrue to God. He rejected. That's what we have to do. That's what God expects us to do. Requires us to do.

To be discerning discriminatory Christians. That means that for all of us. And for young folks especially. We have to train our minds to discern.

To know the difference between what is true and false. We have to test the teachings that we receive. Including the teaching that I give. As a minister preaching the gospel.

[14:32] See it doesn't mean that just because. I've been preaching the gospel for over 20 years. It doesn't mean that inevitably everything. That you're going to hear from me is the truth. What happens if I change my mind next week.

About some essential doctrine of the gospel. If I start doing that. Then you've got to raise an objection to it. You've got to say you're not doing. What you actually were called to do. You're not preaching the truth.

You're actually in error on something fundamental. That's going to lead people astray from the Lord. That's why you have to always.

Look to what you're being taught. Take it to the word of God. Take it to the plain teaching of scripture. And then measure it against that. If it doesn't fit with it.

Then it's not of God. The reason is that many prophets have gone out into the world. But he says something else about them. And if you turn to chapter 2.

[15:28] You can see something else he says about them there. Little children he says in chapter 2 verse 18. It is the last hour. And as you have heard that Antichrist is coming.

So now many Antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us. But they were not of us. But if they had been of us. They would have continued with us.

But they went out. That it might be complained. That they are all. That they all are not of us. But you have been anointed. Or have anointing from the Holy One.

And you all have knowledge. And that's an interesting thing. These heretics were not always outside of the church.

Not even outside of the body of disciples. That followed the apostles and their teaching. Disciples in the sense of being pupils. He is saying there that they went out from us.

[16:26] From us the apostles. And from the church that we teach. They went out from us. But they were not of us. They went out from us. So that it would be seen.

That they were not of us. That they might become plain. It might become plain. That they are not of us. In other words. They were once within the church. Broadly speaking. But not only did they leave.

The church. They went out. And founded this other form of teaching. That then presented itself as the truth. And as the alternative. To the teaching of the apostle John.

It isn't simply that they left the church. This is not something like. A person deciding to go from. One congregation to another. Or from one denomination to another. Which happens all the time.

Or from time to time. And by and large. There needs to be nothing wrong with that. It's just a personal choice. But. This is not like somebody.

[17:21] Just going from one denomination to another. This is somebody leaving the church. Where the truth is proclaimed. And setting up an alternative. Where the truth is not found. And actually coming to oppose.

Directly the truth. That the apostles were teaching. They went out from us. But they were not of us. Which is why in chapter 4.

Again this passage we're looking at. John is saying that. Those who listen. Are in many ways also. An indicator of. The kind of message that it is.

He's saying there that. They are not of us. They are. They went out from us. They are from the world. Whereas you little children. Are from God.

A person that is genuinely born again. Will want the teaching. That is from God. A person that is not. And that sets themselves up.

[18:18] As far as alternatives. Are he says from the world. And the world. Listens. To them. That's where you have to have. The discernment.

So put on. Your thinking caps. Think through. What you are hearing. And as you read your Bible. Fill your minds. With the truth. That you find there.

As it is. In Jesus. And. Make sure that. You study the truth of God. With every help you can. So that you are well.

Grounded. In your knowledge. Not only of scripture. And what it contains. But the meaning of it. The theology of the teaching of it. With regard to your salvation. The greatest danger.

Always comes. From inside the church. The greatest danger. To yourselves. Would not be from someone out there. Who is obviously not a Christian.

[19:17] Who is obviously always opposed. To the church. And tries. To draw you away. From the truth. They find in the gospel. The greatest danger is. If someone like me. Would start preaching something.

Other than the truth. Because that's when it becomes. So very deceptive. So very subtle. So very easily manageable.

By Satan. By the spirit of error. That which works from within. From inside. Is always the most dangerous. Whether you're thinking of.

An army at war. Thinking of anything like that. Somebody who's a traitor inside. And is undetected for a long time. It's always more dangerous.

Than anything you can see. Obviously is the case with the enemy outside. It's the enemy inside. That you've really got to guard yourself against. And that's true.

[ 20 : 12 ] In respect to. This in John's day as well. Because they began. With them. They began. As part of the church. And they went out from them. In other words. That's suggestive.

That. They took much of the teaching. Of John with them. But they twisted it. And turned it. In a way that suited. Their own philosophy. As we mentioned this morning. Fitting it into the likes of.

Greek philosophy. And Greek ideas. So that you end up without. The gospel really at all. But you see. There are elements in it. That are very familiar. Terms that are used.

Words that are used. Ideas that are used. The name of Jesus. All of these things are still there. But they're not used properly. They're used deceptively.

That's why we. Have always got to make sure that. We have. The teachings. That we receive. Examined. Because they may very well.

[ 21 : 10 ] Be defective. So that's why. I'll just finish this point with this. That's why it's so important. It's not in any way. Promoting ourselves. As preachers of the gospel.

Nothing like that. It's so important. That you always give yourself. Regularly. To be under. The sound teaching. Of the gospel. Because that is really.

What builds up your knowledge. Your store of truth. But also builds up. Your defense mechanism. In your ability. To discern. Between truth and error. Right and wrong.

What is of God. And what is of the antichrist. The reason for testing them. There are all these false prophets. That have gone out into the world.

It's no different today. There are many false prophets. Out there. That are waiting for you. They're waiting for you especially. Because. Satan. Who is. In charge of the spirit of error. And the spirit of antichrist.

[ 22 : 06 ] He knows. That his best opportunities. Are if he gets those. Who belong to the church. To turn. To his side. That's why he's always lying. In wait. That's why you need the armor of God.

As Paul tells us in Ephesians. That's why we need the spirit. That. Is able to discern. Between. What is right and wrong. But how do you. How do you go about.

That testing. What's the nature. Of the testing. What is it really about. Well. First of all. It's a matter of. Confessing. Jesus Christ. Because. Our view of Jesus.

Our view of Christ. Our opinion of him. The place that we give to him. Really tells a lot about. Whether we are of the truth. Or of error. Whether we are of God. Or not.

And you notice what he says here. Every spirit. That confesses. That Jesus Christ. Has come in the flesh. Is from God. God. And every spirit.

[ 23 : 02 ] That does not. Confess Jesus. That's Jesus. As in the flesh. Is from God. Now what is he really saying here. Well it's important. How we would.

Translate. What's in the Greek text. And here. The translation is. Confessing. That Jesus Christ. Has come. In the flesh. But many. Translators.

Many. Would. Believe. The best. Translation. Would be something like this. That every spirit. That confesses. That Jesus. Is. The Christ.

Come. In the flesh. In other words. The Christ. Is the promised Messiah. Jesus. Is the individual. From Nazareth. Whom they recognized.

And knew. In human terms. And what this is really saying. Is that when we confess. Who Jesus is. This is what we confess. We confess. We confess.

[ 23 : 56 ] That Jesus. This individual. Is. The Christ. The promised. Saviour. The promised. Son of God. As the King.

And Messiah King. That he is. That person. Come. In the flesh. In our human nature. In other words. Error.

Always focuses. On something. That will get. At Christ's person. And that's why. We give such a lot. Of place. In our teaching. To the person.

Of Christ. To who he is. To what is true. About him. And to his work. Because by and large. If you have. A correct view.

Of Christ. And you maintain. That. It will guard you. Against many other errors. For example. The death of Christ. That we remembered. This morning. If we are actually.

[ 24 : 52 ] Thinking of the death. Of Christ. As something. Other than. A propitiation. Or a satisfaction. For sin. Or that the punishment.

Of God. On sin. Was actually. Laid upon Christ. If we think. That it's less. Than that. What we're doing. In fact. Is lessening sin. We're lessening. Our view. Of sin. So in other words. If you begin. With Jesus. And say. I accept. The teaching. Of the Bible. Regarding the kind. Of death. That he died. Then you've got. A correct view. Of sin. As well. Because you have. To then say. Well. If Jesus died. This death. Then sin. Must be a terribly. Serious thing. It must be the very thing. That the Bible. Tells me it is. So the person. Of Christ. Is so important. In our thinking. In our opinion. In our. Theology. And what it's saying.

[ 25 : 47 ] Here. Is that. This person. This Jesus. This human Jesus. Jesus. Of Nazareth. This is actually.

Christ. Come. In the flesh. This is the son of God. Taking human nature. To himself. And coming to do. What was necessary.

For our salvation. Because you see. The heretics. In following. That kind of. Greek philosophy. This is something. Like they thought. God. They regarded. The Christ.

As. A kind of. Projection. From God. Or of God. Something that came out. From God. Without. Spending too much time. On it. Or trying to define it.

It's a kind of. Aeon. Or emanation. From God. And that this. Emanation. From God. Came down. Upon the human. Jesus. At his baptism.

[ 26 : 42 ] And stayed. With that human. Jesus. All the way through. To his death. On the cross. And then left him. At that point. See. He became.

Sort of. Divine. By virtue of a. A projection. Or an emanation. Or a force. If you like. That came out. From God. To rest on him. Until. The time that he reached.

Calvary. On the cross. And then it left him. And that's why he died. That's why John is saying. This is what you must confess. This. Every spirit that confesses.

That Jesus is the Christ. In the flesh. Ha. Is from. God. That Jesus is the Christ. Come in the flesh. Is from God. No other spirit will confess. That. Because that is. Truth. And of course that means that.

[ 27 : 38 ] You have to take account there of. Christ being God. As well as man. Because if Jesus. The human Jesus. Is the Christ.

Come in the flesh. Then. It means that the son of God. Took this to himself. That he became human. And you find that two. Aspects of Christ.

Person. His divinity. Or deity. His being God. And his being man. Together. In this teaching. And every spirit.

That confesses that. Is of God. Every spirit. That does not. Confess this. Is not. Of God. God. You have someone.

Coming to you. And everything else. Is in place. In regard to what you understand. Salvation to be. Forgiveness of sin. Faith. Repentance. Confession.

[ 28 : 32 ] All of these things. If they are in the right place. In the way that is presented to you. And then that person. Says to you. Well. That is all in Jesus Christ. You know. But I just can't accept.

That this Jesus. Was God. Well. You say to him. Well. Your spirit. Is not. Of God. You have not. Received. That teaching.

From God. The origin. Of that teaching. Is not. With God. It is. With Antichrist. Because. You are taking. From. Christ.

Something. Absolutely. Vital. To his. Person. And therefore. To the basis. On which. You are saved. And you see.

Sometimes. This is why. We have to be. On our guard. So much. Sometimes. What you really. Have to look out for. Is not.

[ 29 : 27 ] What is said. But what is not said. You can have a book. Written about salvation. And everything. That is in it.

Is fine. But it is what is not. In it. That is significant. You can have a book. About the person. Of Christ.

Where everything. In it. Is fine. But there is nothing. Whatsoever. In it. About his resurrection. From the dead. It is not fine. It is not reliable.

It is not of God. It does not say. Something that must be said. And that is. That he rose from the dead. And if it does not say.

What must be said. What ought to be said. Then it is defective. So that is why it is important. To be discerning. To be careful. To actually look at every aspect.

[ 30 : 22 ] Of what we are being taught. So that. This true confession. Then. Includes the deity. The humanity. Of Jesus. And the way it is put here.

That Jesus is the Christ. Come in the flesh. And the come there is. In an ongoing sense.

It is not like the heretics were saying. Some would say that. His humanity wasn't really. A proper humanity. He didn't have a real human nature. It seemed like that.

That is what some heretics taught. People like Augustine. And others. Countered that. In their teaching. Others said that. Well. He was.

Divine in a sense. For a while. But that is only between. His baptism. And his death. Some people say.

[ 31 : 19 ] Well. His humanity. Was a real humanity. But when he died. His body still remains. In the ground. There is no such thing. As resurrection.

John is saying. Jesus. Is the Christ. Come. In the flesh. That means. He remains human. He ever will be human. The humanity.

That he took to himself. Will always be his. He will always be both. God. And man. You take away. Any aspect of that. You interfere.

Very. Very. Vitally. With the basis. Of your salvation. Because your salvation. Is all. In many respects. It is all summarized.

In who. And what. Jesus is. Beloved. Don't believe. Every spirit. Test the spirits.

[ 32 : 16 ] Whether they are of God. Many false prophets. Have gone out. Into the world. And then he speaks about. Overcoming. The antichrist. This is the spirit.

Of the antichrist. Which you have heard. Which is now. In the world. Already. Little children. You are. From God. And have overcome them. For he who is in you.

Is greater than he. Who is in the world. There is a sense. In which all of this stuff. Is very frightening. Maybe especially. To young believers. Setting out.

On that Christian way. Just beginning. To follow Christ. And. The fact that. There are possibilities. They might be wrong. About certain things. It scares them.

Perhaps. And they wonder. Well. How am I going to keep. On the right path. How am I going to actually. Have. The mind. That is able to. Make the difference.

[ 33 : 13 ] And distinction. Between what is right. And wrong. How do I know. That I will be able. To do that. Because he that is. In you. And that is God. The spirit of God.

Is greater than he. Who is in the world. If you come to him. To God. Every day. And Lord. Say to him. Lord. Here is my life.

Please. Direct me. In the right way. Today. Grant me. Obedience. To your ways. Help me. To live. To live. True. To you. That is what he. Is going to do. For you.

There is no point. In praying. If we do not believe. That God is going to do. What we ask. If we do not believe. That this God. Is faithful. And true. To maintain us.

And to guide us. That is why. The psalmist. In Psalm 25. That we sang. Put it that way. Show me. Thy ways. O Lord. Teach me. Thy paths. And goes on.

[ 34 : 09 ] To speak about. The Lord. Being gracious. And kind. And will lead us. In the right path. That is why. David's. Great psalm. Psalm 23.

Is. Such a dynamic psalm. For us. In all of Christian experience. Down through the ages. The Lord is. My shepherd. What does a shepherd do?

He looks after his flock. He guides them. He gives them direction. He feeds them. He protects them. He keeps them. I shall not.

Be in want. Makes me lie down. Beside still waters. He leads me. In the path. Of righteousness. And even though I walk.

In the valley. Of the shadow of death. I will fear no evil. Because. You are with me. And you. Your rod and staff. They comfort me.

[ 35 : 05 ] Every single person. Who comes to know God. As their shepherd. Are putting their lives. Into one. Who guarantees.

To keep them safe. And the way. The only way. That. You can depart. From that. Is to. Give ear. To the. To the.

The spirit. Of antichrist. Instead of the voice. Of you. God. Speaking in the scriptures. Now you see. That's. Really in terms of origins.

That's what he's saying. They are from the world. Therefore they speak from the world. And the world listens to them. We are from God. Whoever knows God. Listens to us. Whoever is not from God. Does not.

Listen. To us. You have. Overcome them. He says. Because greater. Is he that is in you. Than he that is in the world. In other words. This is. This is really what John is doing.

[ 35 : 59 ] He's giving us. Connections. We. He says. Are of God. By that he means. Himself. And the other apostles. Sent by God. To teach his church.

And in a sense. We're not apostles. But we are sent from God. And called by God. As preachers of the gospel. And it's not giving ourselves. A platform to say.

We are of God. God. We know that God. Has sent us. And it's. Our responsibility. To be true to God. And to his word. In the teaching. That we convey.

But you see. This is the connect. These are the connections. That John is saying. You. Little children. Have overcome them. Why? Because you are of God. Just as we are of God.

And those who are of God. Listen to us. Your concern. Is to listen to God. Through. Those that God has sent to teach. On the other hand.

[ 36 : 55 ] The spirit of Antichrist. These false teachers. These false prophets. They are of the world. Therefore. They speak from the world. And the world.

Listens to them. What is the world? The world is human society. Opposed to God. That is what John's. The world is.

And that is what tells you. As well. Where a person's teaching is from. If it is something. That the world. Is concerned to listen to.

And gives place to. If it is something. That fills the world. With excitement. To actually. Feed this worldliness. One thing you can be sure of. It is not of God.

It is of Antichrist. But if it is. Of God. It will be of interest. To the people. Who are of God. The people who want.

[ 37 : 58 ] The truth. And who want to be fed. From the truth. Now there is one other thing. In terms of overcoming. The Antichrist. Christ. And. Testing out the spirits.

In chapter 5. He says. Everyone who believes. That Jesus is the Christ. Same sort of idea again. Has been born of God. And everyone who loves. The father. Loves. Whoever has been born of. And by this. We know. That we love. The children of God. When we love. God. And obey. His commandments. And. Then he goes on. To speak in verse 4. For everyone who has been born of God.

Overcomes the world. And this is the victory. That has overcome the world. Even our faith. Your faith. Your belief. And with it.

Your trust. In God. The God of truth. You overcome the world. And you overcome the Antichrist. In your faith. Or by your faith.

[ 38 : 55 ] And that is a reminder to us too. That. Faith is not something. That. Accepts things without investigation. When we receive teaching of whatever kind.

God has given us a mind. A mind that examines that teaching. A mind that investigates that teaching. A mind that asks ourselves. Is this teaching really true to what I aspire to or not?

Is it what I am seeking for myself or not? If I am of the world. And the teaching is the gospel. Then I will say that is not for me. If I am of God.

If I am a Christian. And the teaching is of the world. That is designed for my. That is said to be designed for my soul. Then I will say. That is not what I need. True faith investigates.

People will tell you. See. As Christians. You are just acting blindly. If only you stop to think. Of what atheists believe.

[ 39 : 58 ] Of what humanists believe. Of what liberal theologians believe. About the Bible. And about all other things. That have to do with religion. If only you Christians. Who believe the Bible literally. If only you stop to think.

Please tell them. I have done my thinking. When I came to believe in Christ. Stand up for. What faith really is.

Faith comes. To investigate. And lives by investigation. It is not a leap in the dark. It is not something that says.

I accept this. Though I understand. Absolutely nothing about it. You understand. Who Jesus is. You understand. Why he came into the world. You understand.

What he did on the cross. Not in terms of. Understanding every aspect of it. What I mean is. You understand. What it is about. That is why. You have put your trust in him.

[ 40 : 56 ] You do not put your trust in him. Because you know nothing about him. Or because you are absolutely uncertain. About any of these things. It is because you are sure. Of who he is. And what he did. That you have come to believe.

In him. And that is the victory. That overcomes the world. Even our faith. Hence tonight. Let us. Always. Go on with. This. Testing the spirits. Whether they are of God or not. Be careful what you believe.

Be careful what you do not believe. Be careful with every teaching you receive. Ask yourself. Where is it from?

How do I know where it is from? Is it of God? Is it of the Antichrist? Is it true to Jesus? As the Bible tells me.

[ 41 : 55 ] Or is it not? If it is. You are safe. Enjoy it. If it is not. Put it away from you. Don't accept it.

Don't live by it. You are putting your soul. In danger. Let's pray. Oh Lord.

Oh God. We give thanks. That you have revealed to us. In your word. That you are the way. The truth. And the life. And you have given your people. Who know you.

And who. Hold precious. Their relationship to you. You have given them that conviction. That. You alone have the right. To their allegiance. And that all other gods.

And false. Idols. Will be placed. Away from them. We give thanks Lord. That. Not only are you true. Are you the truth.

[ 42 : 55 ] But that you are also. True to your word. You are consistent. In all aspects. Of the way that you relate. To your people. We pray your blessing.

To be with. Our study of your word. This evening. We pray that you would. Guard our minds. So Lord. And give to us. That discerning. That ability.

To distinguish. Between that which is. Healthy for us. And that which is not. Help us day by day. Whatever age we are at. Whatever stage. Of Christian experience.

We may be at. That we are indeed. As your word tells us. To guard ourselves. So that we do not. Give place to error. But rather that we follow.

The ways of the truth. Here is we pray. For Jesus sake. Amen. Amen.