



11 OCTOBER 2026 AM

1 John 4:1-6

TRIBE-15

= a close-knit community with shared identity

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1 John 4:1

INTRODUCTION

A DEFINITIVE TOUCHSTONE 4:1-6

= a standard or test used to evaluate truth

- in chapters one and two, John instructed us concerning the **FELLOWSHIP** of the family of God
- in chapter three, John went further and explained the **SONSHIP** of the believer...his personal responsibility in the family
- now, in chapter four, John challenges us in our **SCHOLARSHIP** concerning the faith of every believer

know is used 6x in this chapter

- religions, denominations, philosophies, cultures...with over eight billion people in the world, plenty of ideas and opinions abound

this generates **CONFUSION** and **DOUBT** in the minds of so many...including Christians

Colossians 2:8

Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Colossians 2:20

Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances...

spoil = to carry away; to capture

rudiments = elements; systems; governments

- God is not the author of confusion...there is an organization to His Word and to His world

1 Corinthians 14:33

and yet, how often do we wonder about various doctrines and practices in churches ('religions')

why don't we speak in tongues?

why don't we keep the Sabbath?

what's wrong with the teaching of ____?

- in **1 John 3:24**, John mentioned the Holy Spirit

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

and then immediately gave us this stern warning concerning false spiritual matters

1. THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST

= in the flesh (carnal, carnation)

TRYING THE SPIRITS **verse 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.

spirit = spirit of the age; of antichrist

John is challenging us to think critically about everything around us...to discern right from wrong teaching

try = tested and found true

John 5:39 Search the scriptures...

Acts 17:11 ...they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

2 Timothy 2:15 ...rightly dividing the word of truth

in our culture, the word *spiritual* is a code-word for religious...it does not necessarily mark one as being correct with the Word of God

even among the *scriptural* people,
we must **DEFINE OUR TERMS**

Philippians 1:9

And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment [discernment]

Galatians 1:6-7

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

2 Peter 1:19

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

TEST OF FAITH **verses 2-3**

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 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.

as he has done so often in this letter, John gives us a test, or standard, by which to measure our walk with the Lord

Jesus Christ is come in the flesh

this is a **FOUNDATIONAL** doctrine in scripture

you can't be saved without it **verse 15**

yet, consider the religions of the world that do not hold Jesus as the Son of God in the flesh

Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Islam

Modalism, Docetism, Gnosticism

consider the following scriptures:

Matthew 1:18-20

John 1:1, 14 (10:30-39) 14:1-11 (16:28)

2 Corinthians 5:19

Galatians 4:4

1 Timothy 3:16

2 John 7

For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

of course, this is not the **ONLY** test of our faith
the doctrine of salvation (soteriology)
the doctrine of the church (ecclesiology)
the doctrine of scripture (bibliology)

2. THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT

CHILDREN OF GOD verse 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.

of God is used **7x** in seven verses

John goes back to our *fellowship* and *sonship*...we should be concerned with spiritual heritage, living and thinking like children born out of God

overcome = to conquer

them refers to the false prophets
and spirits in the world

are you living as a conqueror in the world, or are you being hindered and attacked mentally and spiritually in your walk with the Lord?

1 John 3:2, 24

CONTAINING THE SPIRIT **verse 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.

...he that is in you refers to the Holy Spirit

Ephesians 1:13

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise...

Ephesians 4:30

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

...he that is in the world refers to the spirit of the age; the spirit of antichrist

Ephesians 6:12

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.

3. THE INCONGRUITY OF THE WORLD

incongruous = not equal

WORLDLY ACCEPTANCE **verse 5**

They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

the world will always ridicule the man who puts his faith in an unseen God

human wisdom above spiritual wisdom

COEXIST

1 Corinthians 1:18

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Ephesians 2:2-3

Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Ephesians 4:17-19

This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

WISDOM'S ANCHOR verse 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.

in Catholic dogma, *us* is considered to be a reference to the RCC

John says there is no need for extra-biblical sources

*Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price,
New World Translation, Science And
Health With Key To The Scriptures, Koran*

also, if we are truly of God, John says we won't have trouble hearing and obeying the Word of God

Psalms 119:165

Great peace have they which love thy law:
and nothing shall offend them.

knowing the difference between right and wrong

Ephesians 5:6

Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.