

1st, 2nd & 3rd John

#6, testing the spirits, I Jn 4:1-21

When we entertain the idea of testing the spirits we might conjure up thoughts of grading on the curve or the old 70-percent or better is passing. However in these verses the test is to see whether the spirit is from God. John states the problem when he wrote that many false prophets (teachers) are out there. As one listened to the professional speakers they sounded good. They had the right collection of letters in front of their name, they were well schooled and really looked good. Therefore one could only determine if they were of the right stuff by the content of their message!

That being said, nothing has changed in the last 2,500-years. In fact, there are many more charlatans and they are much more palatable.

1 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

4 You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

[1.] v:1, many false prophets, **During the time that we live, where might one hear these prophets?**

[2.] v:2-3, every spirit that confesses, **Suppose some speaker is hesitant about stating their belief, what would you conclude?**

[3.] v:2-3 again, confess Jesus is not from God, **We know that there is a nation that is still looking for the Messiah. What do these verses say to you about them?**

[4.] v:4, and have overcome them, **This verse states why this is true. Why is it?**

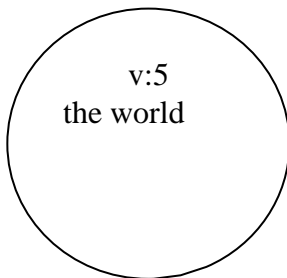
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At the beginning of this lesson, v:1 instructed believers to test the spirits. However, we were not instructed as to “how” the test was to be performed. Here in v:5-6 we see how God wants the test to be done.

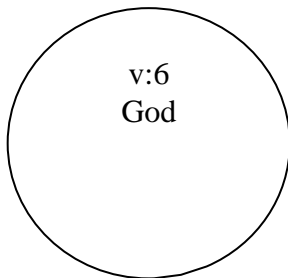
5 They are from the world; therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them.

6 We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.



“they”
from the world
speak as from world

result:
the world listens to them



“we”
from God
any knows God ----listens
any not know God ----not listen

[5.] v:5-6, We are from God, If someone professes that they know God, yet do not listen to the truth of Christ. Of which spirit are they?

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7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. 10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

[6.] v:7, let us love one another, **What three facts does this verse state regarding loving?**

[7.] v:8, love, **What two facts does this verse state regarding God?**

[9.] v:7-8, Using these two verses, how can you separate people?

[10.] v:9, that we might live through Him, **List some examples that show that one is living through Christ.**

GK definition, **propitiation**, NT:2434 (*hil-as-mos'*); atonement, i.e. (concretely) an expiator: KJV - propitiation.

Strong's Numbers and Concordance

propitiation verses:

Rom 3:25, whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

I John 2:2, and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

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12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

[11.] v:10, He loved us, How does this verse show God's love for us?

[12.] v:10 again, Something to think about. Before the propitiation, how were people saved?

[13.] v:12-14, No one has seen God at any time, What reasons do these verses give us for paying close attention to the Holy Spirit?

[14.] v:13-14, We have not seen God but according to this verse, who have we seen?

[15.] v:15-16, God abides in him, and he in God, This described position could not be more secure! From the list below choose why you feel believers are still burdened with fears of tomorrow?

- a) Only know what the media tells them!
- b) Can't trust God's word!
- c) Don't know what God's word promises.
- d) The chaos we live in, is greater than God!

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17 By this, (v:-16) love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.

18, There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

19 We love, because He first loved us.

20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

[16.] v:17, as He is, Referring back to the previous verse, what does v:16 say that God is?

[17.] v:17 again, so also are we, Now, referring to question [17.], since we are God's children, then how are we to conduct ourselves in the world?

[18.] v:18, There is no fear in love, What is our reward for working hard toward being perfected in love?

[19.] v:19, We love, This kind of pops our bubble but, what's the cold hard fact as to why we, as Christians, love?

[20.] v:20-21, hates his brother, If we hate our brother, what do we know about ourselves?

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NOTES