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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

1 John 4:1-6
Lesson #15
Testing the spirits
04/10/2022

LIVE UPDATES

A Biblical Christian Perspective?

1

1 John 4

“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; and 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. 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.”

2

1 John 4

“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.”

There are many voices in this world.

Matthew 11:15

“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Test the spirits

3

As aliens in this world, we should expect to face the “headwinds” of many antichrist spirits.

1 Peter 2:11

“I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”

expect, test, resist, abstain

4

1 Peter 4:12

“Beloved, **do not be surprised** at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;”

1 Peter 5

“8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But **resist him, firm in your faith**, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.”

5

1 John 4

“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; and **this is the spirit of the antichrist**, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.”

Jesus (a man of flesh) is the Christ (Son of God) who died on the Cross.

The antichrist spirit rejects **THAT Jesus and the Word and Way of his Cross.**

The spirit of “antichrist”

- ✓ **“It” is a “spirit”** a wind that shapes a person or culture’s behavior.
- ✓ **It displaces God’s Spirit**, as revealed in Jesus’ words and deeds.
- ✓ **It discards the Word and Way of the Cross** as it defines the human dilemma and its solution in worldly terms.
- ✓ **It is “lawless” (2 Thess. 2:3-4)** in that it displaces God’s command to worship God and love one another.
- ✓ **The beast of Rev.13** embodies the antichrist spirit.



ANTICHRIST



Can mean: **“against Christ”** or **“in place of Christ”**

A sign of the Spirit of Christ is faith in Jesus and love for all those God loves.

A sign of the antichrist spirit is just the opposite.



1 John 4

“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. 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.”

Be a Berean
Test the spirits.

Satan as an antichrist spirit



Matthew 4:1-11



Satan tempted Christ to respond to the human dilemma **by and through things other than the Word and Way of the Cross.**

Satan appeals to Scripture but:

1. Reduces life to material issues.
2. Abuses human liberty.
3. Separates “ends” from “means”.

Jeremiah 2:13

“For My people have committed two evils. They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water.”



Test the spirits.

Who are we listening to?

Worldliness is seeking hope in all the wrong places.

The spirit of a worldly mindset

Romans 12:2

“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”



12

The spirit of fleshly pride

Worldliness is not only a displaced faith, hope, & love

but also a **worldly wisdom**, making sense of that displacement.



13

Ephesians 6:12

“For **our struggle is not against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.”

Forces behind the politics, and people are the challenge.

The Word & Way of the Cross

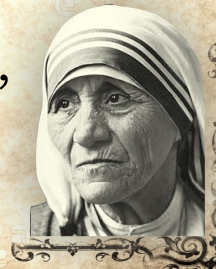


Fascism
Pantheism
Communism

14

“In the end, dear friend, it is always between us and God, not between us and them.”

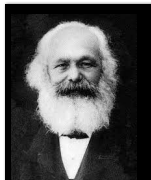
Mother Teresa



15

It is too easy to target political systems and figures rather than the **spirits behind them.**

Test the spirits.



Marxism
(class struggle materialism)

Social equality



Fascism
(strongman nationalism)

Superior entitlement

16



Genesis 11:4

Apr. 8, 2022

“Come, let’s build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let’s make a name for ourselves;”

17

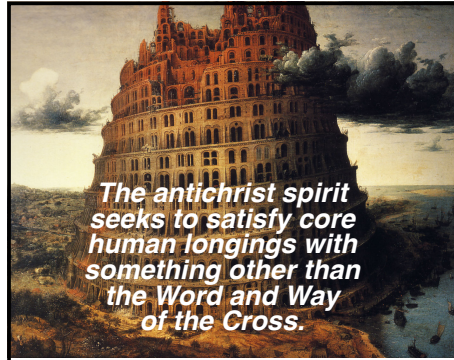
The spirit of material utopia

Signs of a fertile soil for Marxism:

- ✓ **“reduce life to goods and services”** - that are indexed to social class and income.
- ✓ **“confusing self worth with net worth”** - score-keeping by material status.
- ✓ **“large income gap”** - the have lots & have nots.
 - ✓ **“irrational fear”** - seeing self sacrifice for the “common good” as dangerous.
 - ✓ **“unchecked liberty”** - we can't legislate the heart but we may need to control the heartless.



18



May 7, 2018

Genesis 11:4

“Come, let's build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top *will reach* into heaven, and let's make a name for ourselves;”

19

The spirit of worldly power

Signs of a “strongman” spirit - putting self in the place of God:

- ✓ **“fear mongering”** - the sky is falling.
- ✓ **“faultless arrogance”** - messianic complex.
- ✓ **“fracture institutions”** - divide and disarm.
- ✓ **“fabricated facts”** - the truth is relative.
- ✓ **“false hopes”** - only I can save you.
- ✓ **“fake news”** - only I have the truth.
- ✓ **“forced compliance”** - follow me or I will destroy you.



20

Test the spirits by first facing in the right direction.

- Take our baptism seriously.
- When our goals and values are clear it is easier to make good decisions.



21

1 John 4:1-6

tells us how Christians are to respond to an antichrist spirit.

- ✓ **We are called to IDENTIFY and EXPECT an antichrist spirit.**
- ✓ **We are to resist the TEMPTATION TO FOSTER an antichrist spirit in our church and country.**
- ✓ **We are called to FOREBEAR and OVERCOME an antichrist spirit as we WITNESS in and to this world.**

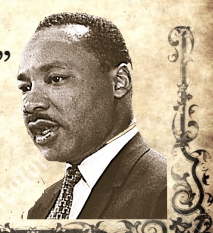
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1 Corinthians 1

“23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling block, and to Gentiles foolishness, 24 but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. . . . 27 but God has chosen the foolish things of the world **to shame the wise**, and God has chosen the weak things of the world **to shame the things which are strong**, 28 and the base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might **nullify the things that are,**”

23

“I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant.”



Martin Luther King Jr.

24

My pastoral concern for the evangelical Christian community is that:

1. **We divide the Body of Christ** in our confusion over *what to fear and who to blame*.
2. **We expect to eradicate** an antichrist spirit before its time and without our Lord, as apposed to overcome and bear witness to a broken world via faith, hope, love as we mock its spirit.
3. **We may expose “antichrist spirits” by unwittingly EXPRESSING them.**

25

When you leave this class, respond to the circumstances of life, speak to and about one another, and invest your time & resources -

Show your ID

Give the Spirit something to work with

and test the spirits.

26

1 John

Next week 4:6-14

Tested and Testifying

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APT TOTEACH
A bishop then must be ... apt to teach 1 Timothy 3:2

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