

First John 4:1-3
Spirit of Truth and spirit of deceit—part 1

- 1) Every Christian must be careful theologically—4:1
 - a) How does John address his readers?—4:1 ¹ *Beloved*^{pl} [ἀγαπητός],
 - b) What commands must we obey?
 - i) Stated negatively; don't be naïve/gullible—*do not be trusting* [pres. act. impv. πιστεύω] (giving credence to) *each spirit*, (“stop trusting” perhaps?)
 - (1) As the spirit presents itself through a teacher (cf. 1st Thessalonians 5:19-22).
Behind every teacher is a spirit of some kind, good or evil.
 - (2) Satan has always sought to cause doubt or distortion of God's Word
 - ii) Stated positively; evaluate carefully—*but* [ἀλλά] *examine* [pres. act. impv. δοκιμάζω] *the spirit to see if* (whether) *it is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *of* [ἐκ] *God*,
 - (1) Some had the gift of discerning spirits—1st Corinthians 12:10
 - (2) God's grace has transformed the spiritual ignorance of all believers (cf. Ephesians 4:17-19).
 - (a) A healthy skepticism (without being suspicious) of what you hear/read
 - (3) Thus this is not the responsibility of just the pastors.
 - c) Why?
 - i) Plentiful reality —*because* [ὅτι] *many* [πολύς] *false-prophets* [ψευδοπροφήτης] *have gone out* [pf. act. ind. ἐξέρχομαι] *into the world*.
- 2) What standard should we use to distinguish God's Spirit working in someone?—4:2-3 ²
By this [ἐν οὗτος] *you know/recognize* [pres. pass. ind. γινώσκω] *the Spirit of God*:
 - a) Stated positively; sound doctrine—4:2b *each spirit that acknowledges* [pres. act. ind. ὁμολογέω] *Jesus Christ has come* [pf. act. ptc. ἔρχομαι] *in the flesh is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *of* [ἐκ] *God*.
 - i) Does the Biblical teaching of the **genuineness** of His humanity really matter?
 - ii) Does the Biblical teaching of the **permanence** of His humanity really matter?
 - b) Stated negatively; demonic doctrine—4:3 ³ *And each spirit that is not acknowledging* [pres. act. ind. ὁμολογέω] *Jesus has come* [pf. act. ptc. ἔρχομαι] *in the flesh is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *not of* [ἐκ] *God*.
 - i) Observed early on in the history of Christianity in Docetism and Gnosticism.
 - ii) Further explained—*And this* (spirit) *is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *of the anti-Christ, of which you*^{pl} *have heard* [pf. act. ind. ἀκούω]
 - (1) Prophesied—*that it is coming* [pres. dep. ind. ἔρχομαι]
 - (2) Present—*and now is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *in the world already*.
- 3) Application
 - a) Any religious teacher or religious group that denies the **genuineness** of His humanity is anti-Christ.
 - i) Oneness Pentecostals/United Pentecostal Church; Unitarian Universalist Church; Christian Science; Theosophy
 - b) Any religious teacher or religious group that denies the **permanence** of His humanity is anti-Christ.
 - c) No one may dare to place any teaching of the Spirit over against the Word of God.