

First John 4:4-6
Spirit of Truth and spirit of deceit—part 2

- 1) Who are these readers that John encourages?—4:4a ⁴ *little children* [τεκνίον],
 - a) He encourages them as to their SOURCE—**You^{pl}** (emphatic) *are* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *of* [ἐκ] *God*, (cf. 4:1, 3)
 - b) He encourages them as to their VICTORY—*and you^{pl} have conquered* [pf. act. ind. νικάω] *them* (the false prophets of 2:19; 4:1, 3),
 - i) They have tested these false teachers, identified the true nature of their teaching, and have rejected them.
 - ii) Knowledge of sound doctrine is important to Christian maturity; it also protects the believer from error.
- 2) Why are these two things true?—4:4b *because* [ὅτι] ...
 - a) Holy Spirit—*greater* [μέγας] *is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *the One in you^{pl}* (cf. 3:24)
 - i) The Spirit enables you to overcome false teachers/false prophets
 - b) Satan—*than the one in the world* (unsaved people, worldlings). (cf. 5:19)
- 3) Remember that there are two types of teachers—4:5-6b
 - a) Who are the false teachers/false prophets?—4:5-6
 - i) Their source—4:5a ⁵ **They** (emphatic) *are of* [ἐκ] *the world*, (cf. John 8:23)
 - ii) Their communication—4:5b *therefore* [διὰ οὗτος] ...
 - (1) The source of their teaching—*they are speaking* [pres. act. ind. λαλέω] *from* [ἐκ] *the world* (the sinful, anti-God principles and philosophy),
 - (2) The allegiance to their teaching—*and the world* (unsaved people, worldlings) *is listening* [pres. act. ind. ἀκούω] *to them*.
 - iii) The world recognizes its own people and welcomes a message originating in its own circle. This explains their popularity. (cf. 2nd Corinthians 4:2)
 - b) Who are God's teachers?—4:6ab
 - i) Our source—4:6a ⁶ **We** (emphatic) *are of* [ἐκ] *God*.
 - ii) Our communication—4:6b
 - (1) The allegiance stated positively; genuine believers—*The one characterized by knowing* [pres. act. ptc. γινώσκω] *God is listening* [pres. act. ind. ἀκούω] *to us*;
 - (2) The allegiance stated negatively; unbelievers—*the one who is* [pres. act. ind. εἰμί] *not of* [ἐκ] *God is not listening* [pres. act. ind. ἀκούω] *to us*.
 - c) The Spirit-empowered preaching of the Word not only confirms the true nature of the speaker but also serves to lay bare the spiritual state of listener. (Hiebert)
- 4) Summary: make a clear distinction—4:6c *From* [ἐκ] *this* (4:1-6) *we know* [pres. act. ind. γινώσκω] *the Spirit of truth* [ἀλήθεια] (Holy Spirit) *and the spirit of deceit* [πλάνη] (Satan).

Tests of a false teacher/false prophet:

- Content test—What do they teach about the person of Christ?
- Hearing test—What type of audience listens to them?