

The First Epistle of John

(Week 41 – 1John 4:1-6 part3)

I. Review

A. Modern view of the antichrist:

1. A singular world leader who will bring destruction to Christianity, forcing Christ to “rapture” His Church from the Earth.
2. Some say he will be of Jewish origin, others say he will be of Arab-decent.
3. Who is the antichrist?
 - a. By definition, anyone who is against Christ
 - i. Jesus said in Matthew 12:30 (ESV), “*Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters.*”
 1. It is the person who denies Jesus is the Christ
 2. It is the person who denies Jesus coming in the flesh
 3. It is the atheist, the agnostic, etc.

II. Spiritual Discernment (part 3):

A. 1John 4:4, “*Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*”

1. These true disciples refuse to listen to these false teachers (Gnostics):
 - a. Through the preaching of the gospel, they have come to believe that:
 - i. Jesus is the Christ
 - ii. Jesus came in the flesh
 - iii. Jesus is the propitiation for sins, not some secret knowledge!
2. Since these seducers could not win over those who believed the gospel of Christ, they went out from them!
3. That is the nature of false teachers:
 - a. If they cannot overpower the whole Church, they will go out from the flock and start a new movement.
 - b. Consider the warning of Paul to the Ephesians elders:
 - i. Acts 20:28-31 (ESV), “*Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. ²⁹I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears.*”
 1. **Question: From this passage, what do we know of false teachers?**
 - They come in from the outside
 - They rise up from within the flock
 - They speak twisted things
 - a. Their teaching sounds good and pleasing to the ear (2Tim 4:3)
 - b. They impact the naïve with smooth and flattery speech (Rom. 16:17-18)

- c. **Question: What does it mean to be naïve?**
 - i. Unsuspecting; Uninformed; Simple-minded; Credulous; Lacking wisdom; literally it means “natural”
 - ii. The word of God gives wisdom to the simple (Psalm 19:7)
 - d. If you have time, use the example found on third page, under optional
 - Will draw disciples after them
 - a. They are manipulative & influential
 - b. They speak ill of those entrusted with shepherding the flock.
4. A disciple who stores the word of God in his/her heart, being enlightened by it, will be able to recognize truth from error.
5. God (and all that He represents) is much greater than Satan and all that he represents!
 - a. The One who is within you is more powerful than Satan
 - i. Therefore, trust His words and you will not be overpowered by false teachers.
- B. 1John 4:5 (ESV), *“They are from the world; therefore they speak from the world, and the world listens to them.”*
- 1. Here is another characteristic of false teachers:
 - a. They are worldly and are loved by the world
 - i. They draw a big crowd because they speak things the world likes to hear!
 - ii. In other words, they accommodate the world!
 - iii. **Question: What are some modern examples?**
 - 1. Ecumenism (no matter our beliefs, we are all OK before God)
 - 2. Setting aside or compromising unpopular notions like:
 - The doctrine of sin and its consequences.
 - The doctrine of hell
 - The biblical roles of men and women.
 - Marriage, divorce, remarriage.
 - iv. Here is something to ponder: Don’t judge a ministry by its size; judge it by its faithfulness to the Word of God.
- C. 1John 4:6 (ESV), *“We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error.”*
- 1. The “we” – as opposed to the “they,” that is, the false teachers (vs. 5), points to John and the other apostles.
 - 2. Anyone who refuses to listen to the apostle’s teachings does not know God.
 - 3. You can know who is of God and who isn’t of God by seeing whether or not their teaching agrees with the New Testament.
 - 4. The false teacher in a roundabout way says, *“Whoever knows God agrees with me; and only those who are not of God disagree with me”*
 - a. The fact is if a teacher is not teaching what the apostles taught, he is teaching error.

III. Optional

A. Here is an example of false teachers using flattery of speech and twisting the Scriptures:

1. Those who promote woman pastors try to use Galatians 3:28 to support their view:

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:28 ESV)

2. They say that since there is neither male nor female in Christ, there is no gender distinction; therefore, a woman can be a pastor.

3. Rebuttal:

- a. Galatians 3 speaks of salvation (vv. 24-27), not roles in the Church.
- b. In verse 29, it shows us belonging to Christ.
- c. There is nothing in these verses that signify women as pastors.
- d. This passage is merely saying that when it comes to salvation, all are one – there is no distinction.