

1 John 4

1 John 4.1-6

V1 – Use of “beloved”? Shows the urgency of the message – we can feel the urgency in John’s voice

-**Have there always been false teachers among God’s people? Read Deuteronomy 13.1-5** -

They were to receive the death penalty

-Sometimes people are really surprised when they see false teachers and false doctrines in the church

-It really shouldn’t be that shocking

-Old Testament: Balaam and other false prophets in *1-2 Kings* and *1-2 Chronicles*

-**What are we to do concerning prophets or teachers who may come our way?** Test them!

-**Meaning?** Ask them questions about their beliefs

-The faithful ones will not mind (they will be happy to answer); the false teachers are the ones who will get upset

-**How many false prophets should we expect?** Many

-**Who was to test teachers?** Everyone (not just elders, deacons, preachers, etc.)

V2 – What specific test did John recommend? “Did Jesus come in the flesh?”

-**What false doctrine was John searching for in v 2?** Gnostics

-John didn’t beat around the bush

-He went straight after the major false doctrine of his day

-The Gnostics would be quickly identified

-Today, we should ask about the major false doctrines of our day (marriage-divorce-remarriage, authority of elders (Heb. 13.17), instrumental music in worship, etc.)

V3 – If a person could not state that Jesus came in the flesh, what about that person? He was an “Anti-Christ”

-Notice again that anti-Christ’s were in the world then

-All false teachers are anti-Christ’s

-They may teach some doctrines that are true, but if they believe in a false doctrine, they are still anti-Christ’s

V4 – Why did John say, “You are from God...”? To build up their confidence and to indicate that the Gnostics were not from God

-**If the Gnostics were not from God, who were they from?** Satan

-It was the saints vs. the false teachers (no middle ground)

-**Why the second part of v 4?** The church can survive

-It is not written in stone that false teachers will take over church – but if we are faithful, God will be on our side

V5 – How do false teachers speak? As the world speaks

-**How does world speak?** Smooth things, exciting things, politically correct words, etc.

-**Is it the same today or different?** The same

-TV evangelists say what people want to hear and then beg for money

-Elijah in *1 Kings 18.17* – Ahab: “*Is this you, you troubler of Israel?*”

V 6 – Who would godly people listen to? John, etc. **Read 1 Kings 22.8** (Micaiah)

1 John 4.7-14 – The love of God

V 7-11 – Notice how John continues to interweave the two concepts of opposing false doctrine and loving our fellow Christians and God
-Our generation has overlooked that relationship

V 7 – One Bible commentator said: “Love is like the wind – we can’t see it, but we can see its effects”
-**Where did the concept of love come from?** God
-Guy N. Woods: “Love is the one characteristic of the Christian religion which it is impossible to counterfeit”
-Wicked people do not have love

V 8 – Is "God" simply the concept of love? No, this is just one of God’s characteristics (God is light – 1.5)
-**How did God show his love before Christ came to earth?** The beautiful creation, the Old Testament
-He gave free will and his providence to all humans

V 9 – In New Testament, how was love of God shown? In sacrifice of God’s son
-**Explain “his only begotten son”?** Only literal son of God to be born in the flesh (another attack on the Gnostics)

V 10 – Who loved first – us or God? God
-Even before we are born, God saw us in the womb (*Psalm 139*)
-**Greatest sign of his love?** Sending his son to be sacrifice for our sins

V 11 – Conclusion based on God’s love? We should love one another
-**Why?** God loved us while we were imperfect – we can love one another with our imperfections

V 12 – Explain? No one has beheld God (the Father) – no one can fathom his divine nature
-Jesus has revealed the will of God (and his nature)
-**When does God abide in us?** When we love one another

V 13 – Read Galatians 5.22-23 - Fruit of the spirit
-**The first fruit of spirit?** Love
(The Gnostics must have said a lot about love, but they twisted its meaning)

V 14 – John reaffirms his testimony that Jesus did come into the world

1 John 4.15-21

V 15 – Lest we misunderstand John

-All this talk about loving one another might make some think that we can ignore false doctrine and just “love” one another – Not so

-**Who abides in God?** Only those who confess that Jesus is the Son of God (another attack on the Gnostics)

V 16 – Notice we come to know John’s thoughts that God is love

V 17 – John: If we have the proper understanding of love, then the Day of Judgment will be no problem for us

-Some people (even Christians) are terrified of Day of Judgment

-Love will dispel that terror

V 18 – **What does perfect love do?** Casts out fear

-Many, many times people obey out of fear of being lost - **Read 2 Corinthians 5.11**

-A legitimate fear

-**But what should happen to us as we mature as Christians?** The fear of God changes to love of God

-**We do this with our earthly parents, don’t we?**

-First is fear, but later love

-A great principle is set forth here

V 19 – **Our love is a response to _____?** God’s love

V 20 – **What is wrong with loving God and hating your brother or sister?** We can’t see God, but we can see our brothers and sisters

Notice that John uses word “liar” again

V 21 – A commandment that we love one another in the church

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