

## “Discerning Truth and Error”

Ralph “Yankee” Arnold

### Lesson 10

Text: I John 4:1-6 Christians must discern between truth/error.

#### 1. The Test of Affirmation 4:1-3

##### A. Need for the Test (there are false teachers) 4:1

- We are told not to believe everything we hear “believe not every spirit”
- There is a spirit behind every preacher/teacher. “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God”
- We are told to put every preacher/teacher to the test. “but try the spirits whether they are of God”. (The example:) **Acts 17:10**
- Many false teachers in the world. “many false prophets are gone out into the world”. **Matt. 7:15, II Cor. 11:13, II Peter 2:1.2**

##### B. Nature of the Test (How to discern false teachers) 4:2

- You can understand the Spirit of God, by the teachings about Jesus Christ. “Hereby know ye the Spirit of God”
- Notice again that a spirit is behind or is the source of one’s teaching, in this case it is the Spirit of God. “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:”

##### C. Results of the Test 4:3

- The key to determine a true or a false teacher is known by what they confess/preach with their mouth.
- Jesus referred to this as their fruit; in **Matthew 7:15,16, Matt. 12:33, also in Isaiah 8:20**

#### II. The Test of Acceptance 4:4-6

##### A. Acceptance by God 4:4

This verse states the believer’s ability to overcome false teachers and false doctrine by the Holy Spirit of God that lives within us.

##### B. Acceptance by the world 4:5

“They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.”

##### C. Acceptance as a Test 4:6

- When John wrote “he that knoweth God heareth us”, he was referring to what he wrote in this letter-God’s Word.
- **John 8:47** “He that is of God heareth God’s words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.”

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