

I John 4:1-6

- Intro.**
- After reading these verses, can you identify a theme or primary topic of this paragraph?
 - Is there a connecting word in the previous paragraph that provides transition to this paragraph?
 - Is it possible to subdivide the thoughts of this paragraph?
- 4:1**
- Is John implying that “the Spirit which He has given us” (3:24) is not the only spirit active in proclamation and human behavior?
 - In the imperative to “not believe every spirit” is John referring to...
 - hearing and believing spiritual voices in our minds?
 - believing and accepting statements and pronouncements of spiritual things?
 - believing or receiving persons who allege they are speaking in the spirit?
 - believing or receiving persons who inevitably derive the character of what they do from one spirit or the other?
 - By referring to “many false prophets have gone out into the world,” is John indicating...
 - that many will falsely predict what is going to happen in the future?
 - that the heretical infiltrators have defected and departed from the church? cf. 2:19
 - that many preacher/teachers have been sent on a mission by the wrong spirit?
 - that many religious teachers are operative within the world-system?
 - How is it possible to distinguish, differentiate, discern, discriminate which spirit is operative in those who claim to speak for God?
 - to observe if they are blessed by God with numerical success?
 - to listen and ascertain whether their message sounds sensible and spiritual?
 - to determine whether they confess Jesus as Deity incarnated?
 - to evaluate whether the character of righteousness (cf. 3:10) and love (cf. 4:7) is evident in their behavior?
- 4:2**
- Does John’s “by this..” provide explanation of what it means to “test the spirits” (vs.1)?
 - What does it mean to “confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh”?
 - to accept the historical, incarnational advent of Jesus?
 - to assent to the theological explanations of how Jesus was God and man at the same time?
 - to affirm, in particular, that Jesus Christ was human?
 - to agree with the gospel proclamation that Jesus Christ has come to reinvest humanity with the life of God?
- 4:3**
- How does a “spirit” (cf. vss 2,3) “confess”, or “not confess” Jesus?
 - What does it mean to “not confess Jesus”?
 - to deny the incarnation?
 - to disbelieve that Jesus is the God-Man?
 - to diminish the singular mediatorial work of Jesus? (cf. I Tim. 2:5)
 - to dismiss Jesus as irrelevant?
 - to detach the activity of the living Lord Jesus from God’s restoration of humanity?
 - How does this verse correlate with what John has previously stated concerning “the antichrist”? (cf. 2:18,22)
 - Does John indicate that “the antichrist” is...
 - yet to come in the future?
 - is already in the world?

- Is “the antichrist” to be identified as...
 - a spirit?
 - a confessional statement?
 - a teaching?
 - Satan?
 - a future world leader?
 - a character expression?
 - an attitude?
 - a movement of opposition to Christ?
 - a *modus operandi* opposed to Christ?
 - persons deriving their character diabolic spirit?
 - the false-teachers John is warning against?

- 4:4**
 - Does “you are from God” mean...
 - “you are godly”?
 - “you belong to God”?
 - “you derive your character and activity from God”?
 - In what way had John’s followers “overcome” the false-teachers and their adherents?
 - quantitatively?
 - qualitatively?
 - by outlasting them?
 - by running them off?
 - by standing in the victory that is ours in the “finished work” of Jesus Christ?
 - Who is “the one who is in you”?
 - God, the Father?
 - Jesus, the Son?
 - the Spirit of God (cf. vs. 2), of truth (cf. vs. 6), of Christ (Rom. 8:9)
 - Who is “the one who is in the world”?
 - spirit of antichrist? (cf. vs. 3)
 - spirit of error or deceit (cf. vs. 6)
 - spirit of this world (cf. I Cor. 2:12)

- 4:5**
 - When John writes that “they are of the world”, does he mean that the false-teachers are...
 - associated with the world?
 - belong to the world?
 - deriving what they do from the “ruler of this world”? (cf. Jn. 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
 - Does John’s statement that “they speak from the world, and the world listens to them,” mean that...
 - they derive their message from the “god of this world”? (cf. II Cor. 4:4)
 - since they are “from the world”, they speak the language of the world?
 - there is inevitable audience acceptance when you speak their language?
 - those in the fallen world-system respond to what tickles their ears and encourages them to increased performance?

- 4:6**
 - “We are from God...” Does this refer to...
 - John and those identified with him?
 - all genuine Christians?
 - Does John’s statement, “he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us,” smack of elitist exclusivism? ...of sectarianism? ...of “we are right, and you are wrong ideology”? ...of a “remnant persecution complex”? Why?

- Do the following verses help to clarify what John means by “listening” or “not listening”?
 - John 8:47
 - John 10:5
 - John 10:27
 - John 18:37
 - I Cor. 2:6-16
- What is the basis on which (“by this...”) we know “the spirit of truth and the spirit of error”?
 - whether or not they listen to us or not?
 - whether they have the ability to discern spiritual source?
 - whether their character is indicative of one spirit or the other?
 - whether they confess Jesus?
- Is the differentiation of “the spirit of truth” and “the spirit of error” a...
 - dualism?
 - dialectic?
 - dichotomy?
- Do the following verses assist us in identifying “the spirit of truth”?
 - John 8:32,36
 - John 14:6
 - John 14:17
 - John 15:26
 - John 16:13
- Do the following verses assist us in identifying “the spirit of error”?
 - John 8:44
 - I Cor. 2:12
 - Eph. 2:2
 - II John 7
 - Rev. 12:9

- Conc.**
- Is John’s primary intent to identify...
 - the two spirits that function in human behavior?
 - the two groups manifesting the character of those two spirits?
 - the one Spirit which his followers were to derive from, in contrast to the spirit that the false-teachers were deriving from?
 - Is there a particular statement in this paragraph that most impacts your thinking?