

## **I John 4:1-6** **Testing the Spirits**

### **Introduction:**

The gold rush of the mid-1800's created a great influx of people to the state of California. The occupations of many became miners for gold. But there were certain tests to be applied to determine what was really gold or fool's gold. One test involved biting the rock in question. Real gold is softer than the human tooth, whereas fool's gold is harder. Another test involved scraping the rock with a white stone. True gold leaves a yellow streak whereas the residue left by fool's gold is a greenish black.

Christians need to be equally wary of spiritual "fool's gold". They must not accept something as true without first testing it. The testimony of Scripture and the witness of the Holy Spirit is the acid test to prove the validity of the doctrine. Questions like: Is this the Apostles doctrine or is it some individual revelation without the verification of witnesses? Even Jesus had a witness of His teaching and that was the witness of the Old Testament Prophets and the witness of His heavenly Father. (Luke 24:25-27; John 5:33-39)

### **I. Testing the spirits – v.1**

#### **A. Infiltration of False Prophets**

1. Jesus warned us of false prophets – Matt. 24: 5, 24
2. Old Testament example of false prophets – I Kings 22:1-36
3. The Prophets words must come to pass – Jer. 28:9
4. Beware of Prophets who speak presumptuously – Deut. 18:22
5. Sometimes the false prophet's words come to pass. What then?  
Turn To: Deuteronomy 13:1-5

#### **B. Imperative mood and present tense – “test the spirits”**

1. Examine carefully – I Thess. 5:20,21
2. Speaking according to the Word – Isa. 8:20 (John Mac Arthur)
3. Satan's disguises – II Cor. 11:14-15; Luke 8:18 (Joel Beeke)

### **II. How to Test the Spirits –v.2-3**

#### **A. Major Test: What do they say about Christ? v. 2; Gal.4:4**

1. The incarnation of Christ – John 1:14
2. The Divinity of Christ - Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3
3. Eternal pre-existence – John 1:1-3
4. Substitutionary death – I John 2:2; 4:10; Isa. 9:6

### **III. Contrasting the Church and the World – v.4-6**

#### **A. Encouragement**

1. John's flock “have overcome them”

#### **B. Intellectual battle**

1. Thinking properly – I Cor. 2:14; Phil. 1:9; Eph. 4:14
2. Elijah sees those who are with us are more than those who are against us – II Kings 6:15-18

#### **C. Proper Distinctions:**

1. “You” are from God
2. “They” are from the world
3. “We” the apostles are from God – I John 1:1-3

#### **D. The Line of Demarcation – v.6**