



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 John 4: 1-6

2011

"Two Spirits"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you Mark, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in 1 John. We're starting a new chapter this morning; Chapter 4. We're going to look at verses 1 through 6. But let me begin with the last part of the last chapter we looked at; chapter 3, verse 24. John says, "We know by this that He", (that Christ), "abides in us by the Spirit whom He has given us." (The Holy Spirit). And then, he writes in verse 1 of chapter 4,

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. **2** By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; **3** and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world. **4** You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world. **5** They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them. **6** We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

1 John 4: 1-6

May the LORD bless this reading of His Word.

(Message) Phineas T Barnum was a showman famous for saying, "There's a sucker born every minute."; only he didn't actually say that. What he did say was, "The people like to be humbugged." And he made a lot of money humbugging them with hoaxes like Charlie Stratton, a person he discovered in Connecticut who was not quite two feet high.

Barnum taught him to dance, dressed him up in a uniform like Napoleon, and named him "General Tom Thumb". After showing him in America, Barnum took him to Europe. He was a sensation in London; he was a smash hit in Paris. David McCullough wrote about it in his book, *The Greater Journey*. He wrote, "Barnum had to hire a cab each night to haul his bag of silver back to the hotel." Tom was actually a five-year-old child and just one of Barnum's successful hoaxes; "The people like to be humbugged."

There's some truth in that. Often times, people would rather be deceived than told the truth when the truth contradicts what they want: what they want to know, what they want to hear, what they want to believe. And so, people are easily fooled. And not least in spiritual matters — maybe mostly in spiritual matters.

But Christians are not; or at least, should not be. We have spiritual sight—spiritual eyes and ears. We have spiritual faculties that enable us to understand the truth. And most importantly, we have the Holy Spirit to guide us in the truth to protect us from trickery. John has just mentioned the Holy Spirit in the last verse of chapter 3, which now causes him to pause to give a reminder that He is not the only spirit in the world. There are two powerful spirits.

Satan also is active and has a genius for evil. He has had ages to refine his craft of deception—and the whole world follows him without even knowing it. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians chapter 4, verse 4b that, "...the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel..." The Devil is clever. He knows human nature—and learned long before P.T. Barnum that people like to be "humbugged".

And they are not victims only for they participate in their spiritual blindness. They follow their designers. They listen to the message, (or counsel), that they want to

be true: That they are 'okay'; that their choice is 'the right choice'; their way is 'the right way'. It's self-deception—that's the unbelieving.

But we're not invulnerable. The believing, the believer in Jesus Christ, is also subject to deception. And Paul warned the Ephesians (6:11), of that. He warned them to prepare to stand "...against the schemes of the devil." —the wiles of the "evil one".

And John's doing the same here. We have strong protection against those schemes; nevertheless the danger is real and we need to be aware of it: To be on our guard against it and not naïve; not gullible; not led astray.

So John begins chapter 4 by warning his friends of the danger. The danger is ever present, "...many false prophets have gone out into the world." (vs1b). They are everywhere and they are inspired by the evil one. So he tells them, 'Do not be deceived', "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God." (vs1a). In other words, 'Don't be fooled by the tricks of the devil!' —and there's an urgency about this.

John puts this in the present tense, which he has a certain force, a certain sense, of, "Stop being deceived!" The statement, "Do not believe," has that idea of, "Stop believing what you're hearing!" And evidently, there are some that were being carried away by "the spirits". They had failed to test them. They had been impressed by what they had heard and what they had seen; and they were being influenced; they were being drawn into a web of deception. So there is a sense of urgency about what John was writing to these friends of his. "Christian faith", as John Stott stated, "is not credulity." That is, 'It isn't believing what we know, isn't so. It isn't believing the fantastic. It isn't believing the unbelievable. Christian faith isn't gullibility.'

True faith examines the object to be believed before putting confidence in it. Christian maturity involves unbelief as well as belief. Christian maturity has a healthy dose of skepticism in it. And John's instruction here is, 'Have that. Do not believe every spirit.' Or, 'Stop believing in every spirit. Test the spirits. Don't be naïve.' is what he's saying. Because some were; some were being naïve. It's true, (as I've said and as I'll say

again), that Christians have a strong defense against error. And yet, it's also true that Christians can be too trusting of false claims and easily taken in.

Some of the people John wrote to had been; they'd been taken in. The situation is sketchy but we know there was a church split – that's the occasion for John writing this first epistle to these friends of his. A church split had occurred. A teacher claimed to have great spiritual knowledge; to be inspired of God. He left, and a number of his followers left with him. And they were a persuasive group. They claimed to be following the Holy Spirit. They may even have done some spectacular things; things that seemed supernatural and passed as miracles.

We know this kind of thing happened. The Lord warned early in His ministry of that very thing in Matthew chapter 7, verse 15, He said, "Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing..."; who come to you in the appearance of truth and the appearance of light – they come in sheep's clothing. Beware of them. They say, "Lord, Lord." That's a good thing to say. That sounds quite orthodox, doesn't it? "Lord, Lord." They claim to cast out demons and do miracles. They will make that claim and use those words to Christ on the Judgment Day. But they're false and He rejects them.

The early church experienced these people almost from the beginning when the Gospel spread from Jerusalem soon after Pentecost. It filled Jerusalem and Judea and then it moves out continually throughout the first Century. And the first place it moves to from Judea is to Samaria. Phillip the Evangelist goes out there. And there's a great revival. It's an amazing movement of the Spirit.

But in that revival not all were genuine. And one who begins to follow it is a man named Simon Magus or Simon the magician. 'He practiced magic', Luke said, and practiced it very effectively. (Acts 8: 9-11). He "astonished" the people. He was so effective by his trickery that people followed him, we are told, "from the smallest to the greatest." Everybody was carried away by Simon the Magician.

Well, Simon heard the Gospel. He listened to Phillip preach it, and he was impressed. He professed faith. He was even baptized—but he was false. And when Peter

came down to see what was going on and he talked to Simon, he exposed Simon for what he was—and Simon left.

Satan is a great counterfeiter, he's been called "God's ape"—he tries to duplicate God's work in both word and deed. And he does so in order to deceive. He's done that from the very beginning. We see that in Genesis chapter 3. He is a great deceiver. False prophets, deceiving prophets, are nothing new. Many of them had gone out on the Old Testament times. Moses, in fact, warns of it in Deuteronomy chapter 13. He gives the means of testing for these who are false and who are true.

And there were many in the days of Elijah. Wicked King Ahab surrounded himself with false prophets—and that itself, (Ahab and his prophets), give a timeless example, not only of deception, but of man's willingness to be deceived. The prophet, the true prophet, was God's mouthpiece. God spoke to Israel through prophets. So men who claimed to be prophets were claiming to be men who spoke God's Words.

And King Ahab had 400 such prophets; but they were false. They told him what he wanted to hear. And 1 Kings 22, we read, 'He wanted to go to war with Syria and he wanted Jehoshaphat', (the king of Judah), 'to join him—to join forces.' They'll go up as 'brothers'; and that's how they described themselves.

So to confirm their venture and convince Jehoshaphat that he should go, Ahab brings out all of his prophets; all 400. And they danced around and they prophesied victories—a great show. (But Jehoshaphat wasn't convinced. Jehoshaphat was a faithful king; he was a man of faith. He had some discernment; not as much as he should have had; but he had a good dose of skepticism.) And after listening to all that, he said, 'I would like to hear a prophet of the Lord.' Ahab was a worshipper of *Baal*. But he had a prophet of the Lord around -- Micaiah. He didn't like him; and he said so. He said, 'I hate him, because he never prophesies good about me...' (1Ki 22:8c), (you talk about tipping your hand.), '...I like the ones that say good things, not the bad things.'

But he accommodated Jehoshaphat. He brought Micaiah out, and true to form, Micaiah prophesied bad things: He prophesied disaster; he prophesied defeat. The false

prophet was there, Zedekiah, who then slapped Micaiah on the face—and then he prophesied a glorious victory. Ahab believed Zedekiah. He believed his 400 prophets. They said what he wanted to hear.

And so, he went off to battle with Jehoshaphat following, (against his better judgment). And just as Micaiah warned, Israel was defeated and Ahab was killed. Ahab got what he wanted. He had men speaking about him, speaking good about him and telling him just what he wanted to hear. It didn't serve him very well. It never does.

We're not served well by simply hearing what we want to hear. The truth cuts in different ways: sometimes it comforts us; sometimes it afflicts us. We need both. So Ahab went off on his own, with death following his own will, following what he wanted to hear, and it was the worst thing for him. But that's human nature. Human nature is like that. It hears what it wants to hear.

But there's more going on in that scene than simply that. Because in 1 Kings chapter 22, verse 22, we're told that there was a 'lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets who enticed the king to follow his desires.'

Now, that was true in the days of the Apostles as well. John said, "...many false prophets have gone out in the world." (vs16). And behind those false prophets were spirits, 'lying spirits.' Now, that is the reality of the world in which we live. There is a spiritual dimension to life that is denied in our materialistic, naturalistic age—but which the Bible clearly teaches: 'There are spiritual beings in the world that deceive people. You don't see them. You don't audibly hear them. You can't touch them. But they are there, and they are exerting an influence.'

John recognized that and tells us to, 'Test them': "Test the spirits", (vs1), 'Don't believe everything you hear.' Sometimes people lie in order to take advantage of you—and they have no scruples about it; they want something from you; they'll lie to get your money. It's that basic. So examine them in their words; don't take things at face value. "People need to realize", as one writer put it, "that the supernatural, or unusual, is not

necessarily divine." 'The spectacular must be of God', they said, 'It's of God.' No! "Test the spirits", to know that the person is speaking from the Holy Spirit.

Now, how do we do that? John tells us in verse 2; and the test is *doctrine*. If you want wisdom and discernment, you must know the truth of God's Word. That's how we get wisdom. That's how we have faith and maturity in faith; "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom 10:17). So you want wisdom? Know God's Words; Study it; Be a diligent student of it.

And we see that here. In order to be able to "test the spirits", you need to know the Word of God – and specifically, you need to know the doctrine of the Incarnation; of Christ coming into this world. A person who speaks by the Holy Spirit will confess, John says, "...that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh." (vs2b).

Now, obviously John means more than a confession that "Jesus Christ was a man who lived a long time ago in Palestine." Any liberal preacher could say that—does say that. A demon could say that. In fact, they have; and they said better than that—in the synagogue they called Jesus "the Holy One of God." (Luke 4:34).

It's interesting, you see that in the synoptic Gospels; and that's early in Jesus' ministry in Mark chapter 1, verse 24; where Jesus meets these demon-possessed people in the synagogue, (in the religious realm in that area). And the demons will confess that He is "the Son of God." They know who He is.

That should put a lot of preachers to shame who don't even confess that. The demons know more and confess more than they do. So John means more than that. He means more than, "Jesus was a man and he lived and was a historical person." Not everybody believes that, oddly enough. But he's saying more than that. What he means is: "Did Christ come? Was he sent? Did the eternal son of God enter time and space by becoming a real man with a true body and a reasonable soul? Is Jesus Christ the God-Man?"

Now Cerinthus, the Gnostic heretic, may be the leader of the sect that John was correcting. We don't know that for sure; but Cerinthus was a real person, a

contemporary of John who supposedly, (there's such testimony), was in Ephesus at the same time John was. Cerinthus and his friends, his followers, could not have made this confession because, you'll remember, he taught that 'Jesus was just a man'; and at His baptism 'the Christ' came upon Him—and was with Him throughout His ministry. But when He went to the cross, that's when 'the Christ' departed from Jesus. So 'Jesus the man died' as 'simply a man'. In other words, Cerinthus separated Jesus from this Christ. So he and his followers could not make the confession "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh"; that He's one person and that He came; that He came from the Father to this world as a man. He came by *becoming* a man. That is the confession that the Holy Spirit makes; and that proves the reality, the veracity of the messenger. The one who cannot make that confession, John says in verse 3, "is not from God." You'll notice John doesn't say, 'Every spirit that *denies* Jesus is not from God', but, "...that does not confess Jesus is not from God". There's a subtle difference between that.

What he's saying is that the danger is not always in the error that a person promotes; sometimes, often in fact, it is in the truth that is ignored—it is in what isn't said. False teaching is often hiding in silence and what's not affirmed. The person may speak glowingly of Jesus without affirming the whole truth about Him. And that happens all the time. There are men that stand in pulpits preaching half-truths. The person who speaks from the Holy Spirit confesses the full doctrine of Christ; confesses Him to be, not merely 'the greatest man', but the God-Man and the only Savior: And the only Savior through His blood and His blood alone.

What does the minister say about that? That's what ought to be asked by people in the congregation. What does He believe about the blood? Doesn't seem to talk about blood? What's He believe about sin? Never hear sin mentioned? What about hell? What about the resurrection? Now, if he doesn't speak about them, maybe it's because He doesn't believe in them. But he teaches about the Sermon on the Mount; preaches so eloquently about it, so forcefully, exhorts us to be 'fruitful people' to be 'good people', to 'follow Jesus as their example.'

A person may be learned and likeable but if he cannot speak clearly about the person and work of Christ, about the whole doctrine, then John says, 'He does not speak from the Holy Spirit.' He speaks from a different spirit. He speaks from a spirit, but it's what John calls, "the *spirit* of the antichrist." (vs3b).

They knew about the Antichrist, those early Christians. The early church knew that he was coming and that the spirit that would inspire and empower him was coming. But John tells them, 'That spirit is already here', "...and now", he says, "it is already in the world." (vs3c). That's a little disturbing, isn't it? —Leaves us feeling a little uneasy. "The spirit of the antichrist...is already in the world." Sounds ominous; threatening; and it is.

There are dangerous forces at work in the world. Not in the eerie, ghostly, creepy sense of the paranormal—that's the stuff of charlatans and movies. No, it's in the normal; it's in the conventional. The evidence for that, for what John is saying, was the people John was opposing; the very people that were enticing some of the Christians to follow after them. Why were they able to do that? Because they seemed so credible; because they seemed so normal.

They were charming, engaging, attractive people whose teaching seemed to make some sense. —Did to the people of that age. They made bold claims, prophesy, and miracles; and they gave some evidence of it evidently. It seemed credible. What they were espousing, this false doctrine they were teaching, had some believability about it. It seemed somewhat credible. But it wasn't. It was error and it was deadly error; error that leads to damnation. Now, that is scary and that should make us feel more than a little uneasy. The world is full of that.

"The spirit of the antichrist is already in the world." It is powerful, it is persuasive, because Satan stands behind it. He is the one who energizes it. He is the power behind it, and He is the master of deceit. He blinds people's minds to the truth by means of error that is attractive and that's persuasive.

Look, if it's not persuasive, it's not effective. And if it's not attractive, it's not going to be persuasive. The error is, that it has a sense of credibility about it. One aspect

that makes it so appealing is, he tells people what they want to hear. They hear just the way they want things to be. Now, I said that this should make us feel uneasy but only in the sense of realizing that the danger of deception is real. We shouldn't be casual about it and careless about it. There is a real danger. 'There are many false prophets that have gone out into the world'; so we should be alert—but not fearful because we're not defenseless.

In fact, we're stronger than the enemy. That's the reassurance that John gives his friends in verse 4. He has alerted them to the danger around them so that they won't be gullible, so that they won't be taken in by spiritual tricksters. He's told them to stop believing every spirit; don't be gullible. But now, he gives encouragement by reminding them of who they are and of what they have done and reminding them of what they have; or better, Who they have.

First, he reminds them that 'They are from God'. They are genuine children of God. He had confidence in those to whom he was writing. He's encouraging them that, 'You are in the truth. You've taken the right path. Don't verge from it. Don't follow after those people who have left us. They're wrong. You're right. You have the truth. In fact, you demonstrate from all of this that you are from God, that you're genuine children of God.' They're God's great work of redemption, His great work of re-creation. They are a new creation in Christ. And He can see that in their lives, in what they've done.

The proof of that is that they "have overcome", (vs4), the false teachers. The noun form of that is *nikè*, (nee'-kay), or we say Nike—Victory! We're familiar with that word from sporting goods and running shoes that we wear—Nike. That's what they have. They have experienced *victory*. It's what they have won against a great enemy. It's as though they've won a great military victory over the barbarians. They had triumphed. They had been victorious. And their battle was every bit as important, or more so, than any military conflict. The battle is spiritual. It was just as threatening, in fact more threatening, than a physical battle.

And they had gained victory. They had not given into the lie. They had not left with the false teacher and his followers. They persevered in faith. They persevered in the truth. Even if some wavered a little, they had resisted. They weren't drawn away. They had confessed that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. And they held fast to that. They held fast to the Gospel. They had spiritual perception. They had good spiritual skepticism. They had spiritual strife and maturity. They knew the truth and they used it. They used it well, like a seasoned soldier with a sword. And that's what the Word of God is—it's our sword. It's what we use in this spiritual battle. They were active and they were responsive. They were wise.

But John explains the reason, ultimately, did not lie with them. It did not lie with their abilities. In fact, when you look at the two armies (so-to-speak), they don't match up. They fought against intellectual giants. They fought against the smart people. The Gnostics were the skilled gladiators, so to speak: Not them; not the Christians. They fought and they won the victory, but ultimately it wasn't of them. It was all of God, just as every good thing is. Just as their new birth was of God. They were from God.

And all of their abilities, therefore, were from God. It was all of the Holy Spirit. "You..." he says, "...have overcome them." And then, he explains, "...because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world." (vs4). That is a great encouragement. Whatever we face, whatever the odds are, we have the greater strength within us. Elisha made a similar statement to that. You remember he's in the town of Dothan and the king of Assyria sends his armies to capture Elisha because everything he's talking about with his counselors in the most secret moments are being discovered and learned by Elisha over in Israel. So he says, 'We've got to get him.'

So he sends his army to do that and his servant wakes up one morning, and there is an Assyrian army all around Dothan. And he panics. He's terrified. And so, Elisha calms his spirit by saying, "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them." (2Ki 6:8). Of course then he prays that the servant's eyes be opened and he sees the hills full of chariots of fire.

Well, that's really what John is saying here. The history of John's Christian friends is true of Christians down through the ages and is true of us; "Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world." (4b).

And so suggested in all of that, is our responsibility to be what we are. They were to be what they are. We're to be what we are; "of God", "from God", "children of God." We're to behave like that. We're to behave like that because it's what we are. Never forget who you are. Never forget what God has done in your life. Believers in Jesus Christ are "of God". We are "from God"; and we are to conduct ourselves that way. And we can because that's what we are; so behave as you are.

And we're to ground ourselves in the truth. We're to stand firm in it. We're to resist the deceptions of false teachers wherever they are and whatever form that may take, (and it takes all kinds of forms). Be ready for that and resist it.

That's what John, by implication, is telling his friends to do and was telling us to do as well. And we can because of who we are and because we're not alone. We have the Holy Spirit. The Almighty third person of the Trinity – God dwells within us. He's 'the seal on our hearts', Paul says in Ephesian 1:13 and Ephesians 4, verse 30. He protects us; He teaches us; He guides us.

Paul wrote of that in Romans 8, verse 14. He said that the Spirit of God is constantly leading us. If you're a child of God, then you're being "led by the Spirit of God", and that's a constantly leading of the Spirit of God. He leads us into the truth, He leads us into the right way. And even when we verge off the path, He's always there to convict us, to prompt us, back onto the right way. He's constantly with us. He never leaves us. That explains them; that explains their victory and the reason that we will always be victorious in overcoming error.

The lack of the Holy Spirit, the lack of the new birth; in fact, that explains these false teachers—it explains why they left them—they did not have the Spirit of God. They did not have the new nature. They promote error because they're not of God. They're "of the world."

That's what he says in verse 5, "They are from the world; therefore they speak *as* from the world, and the world listens to them." The world, (in the sense of the spiritual realm of the world, the unsaved realm), the world is spiritually tuned to hear and respond to its own message. The world tells people what they want to hear. The messengers of the world tell people what they want to hear. Doesn't tell them the truth about their soul and its destiny. The world listens to what it wants to hear, what it likes; which is affirmation, not condemnation; toleration, not warning. And these false teachers and their followers are described as, 'of the world' because they've restated or refashioned the Gospel in a way that appeals to the world; that fits with the thinking of the world.

Now, that will change from age to age because ideas are a lot like fashion. They come in style, they go out of style—they're always changing. But the different gospels of the world, the counterfeits, will always lack fundamental truth. They may have some truth—but it's half-truth. They always lack fundamental truth.

In one age, it may be the humanity of Christ. And that seems to be the problem with a lot of these Gnostic cults that came up in the time of John and shortly after. They doubted the humanity, the reality, of Christ's body, in human nature. And another time, it'll be the deity of Christ which is certainly true in our age in which we live; people saying that 'Christ is just a man'. The ideas, the false ideas, about the Gospel, vary in certain ways. And one thing they always are the same on, where there is always common ground among these different false gospels is—they fail at the cross. They fail to define correctly Christ's work of atonement.

And what it always comes out as is man's human ability and merit—it's what we do that saves us, not God's Grace and the sacrifice of Christ.

Well, new gospels come and go. But the old Gospel, the truth of God's Word, never changes and never goes out of fashion with Christians. It never loses its appeal for those who are born again. That is how God's people are known. They believe the Apostles' teaching; they believe the New Testament; they believe the whole Bible.

That's what John says in verse 6 "We", (in contrast to these false teachers), "we" (meaning the Apostles), "We are from God;" and the person, "who knows God," he says, "listens to us;" (listens to the Apostolic testimony). And those who don't are, "...not from God..". Now, that's what distinguishes the true teacher from the false; and the genuine believer from the counterfeit. Belief in the Word of God generally, (but specifically here as John defines it in regard to the person and the work of Jesus Christ), genuine Christians confess Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. He was sent. He came. He came from God the Father out of all eternity because He is the Eternal Son of God and He came by becoming a true man.

That's how He came, in the incarnation. He came by being born into this world in a natural birth; a supernatural conception, a natural birth. He entered the world as a man in order to die for sinners. Those who are of the world reject that. They may be intelligent. They may be sophisticated; and in many ways, good men, good women. But their inability to confess that truth shows their true nature. They are of the world.

William Wilberforce is famous for freeing the slaves in England. He was a close friend of William Pitt the Younger, who became Prime Minister of England. Wilberforce was an earnest believer and was very concerned about his friend who was only a nominal Christian. So he's always trying to talk to Pitt; and tell him about the Lord. When Richard Cecil, a famous Evangelist, came to London he wanted Pitt to hear him. Finally, Mister Pitt promised to go on a Sunday morning. Cecil expounded the glories of the kingdom of God and the relationship of the Child of God to the Father. And Wilbur Force loved it. He was in ecstasy over this sermon and was anxious to hear how Pitt received it.

He wasn't long in learning. Before they left church, Pitt turned to him and said, "I didn't understand a word that man was talking about. What was it?" Well, it wasn't for a lack of intelligence; it was spiritual orientation. He was from the world—not from God. He did not have eyes to see, ears to hear, spiritually. He was not born from God.

Well, if the things that you've heard about Jesus Christ being the Eternal Son of God who became man in order to die for sinners seems unintelligible to you; if you hear

about sin and judgment, of faith and salvation, and you say as Pitt did, "I didn't understand a word of what that man was talking about" —that's a bad sign. You should recognize it. It means you're blind to what the Word of God teaches, to what God has revealed. Your soul is in danger. Don't be fooled by the Evil One. Don't listen to what you want to hear. Don't let yourself be spiritually 'humbled'.

Look to Christ. Seek Him. Ask the Lord God for mercy, that it break into your heart, and that you come to understand your condition, your lost condition—and look to the Savior and trust in Him. He receives everyone who does. All who look to Him, all who believe in Him, are saved. Look to Christ.

And those of you who have, rejoice in Him. Test the spirits. Judge them by the Word of God and live faithfully to our Lord. We'll do that by God's Grace. Let's pray.

Father, we give you thanks for this great text of Scripture with its warnings to us about the world in which we live. It's no different today than what it was in John's day. John's day, 'many false prophets got out into the world.' They're in our world too; and they may be secular prophets, secular teachers; there are all kinds of false prophets and false teachers out there. They're convincing.

Give us wisdom; Give us discernment; Give us steadfastness the faith. Help us to put on the armor every day, to live by Your Word—to be wise. Bless us to that end we pray. We thank You for Christ for all that we have in Him. It's in His name we pray. Amen.

(End of Audio)