

NOTE TO THOSE SEEING THIS STUDY ON THE WEB SITE:

Our aim is to regularly post a new lesson on the first part of each month. So if you wish to follow this course of study, please check regularly each month. If no new lesson appears at the beginning of a particular month, it indicates that we were unable to get it ready in time. In such a case, please check for it after the first of the following month. Your questions or comments are welcomed and will be responded to as much as possible.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of Yahweh; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)

LESSON 162, 1 John chapter 4

We now begin I John chapter 4. Here the apostle John warns the believers to examine the spirits to make sure they are only listening to those that are of Yahweh.

VERSE 1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of Yahweh: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Here the apostle John speaks of, trying, or testing, the spirits as they speak through those who come proclaiming to be prophets from Yahweh. He says to “try” (or test) “the spirits, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

This is in keeping with the words of our Master as recorded in Matthew 24 (as well as in Mar 13:6 and Lk 21:8) where He speaks of those events that would take place between His ascension into heaven and His second coming. In Matthew 24:4-5 we read, “And Yahshua answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Messiah; and shall deceive many.” Also He said, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.” (Matthew 7:15)

Yahshua said the main way we are to know whether the prophet, or teacher, is of Yahweh or not is by the kind of lives they live. We read His words in Matthew 7:16-20, which says, “Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree brings forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”

That the “fruits” He is speaking of means the kind of lives they live is evident when He continues on telling us that many will say they have prophesied, cast out devils, and done many mighty works in His name, but that He will reject them as “workers of iniquity” (or “lawless ones”). (Matt 7:22)

In fact, after Yahshua says He will call them workers of iniquity , or lawless ones, He says, “Therefore, whosoever hears these sayings of mine” (that is, His teachings in the beatitudes and the rest of the sermon on the mount) “and does them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock And every one that hears these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand.....”. Matt. 7:24-27.

VERSES 2-6 Hereby know ye the Spirit of Yahweh: Every spirit that confesses that Yahshua Messiah is come in the flesh is of Yahweh: (3) And every spirit that confesses not that Yahshua Messiah is come in the flesh is not of Yahweh: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. (4) Ye are of Yahweh, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. (5) They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world hears them. (6) We are of Yahweh: he that knows Yahweh hears us; he that is not of Yahweh hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

The first and primary test of who are the false prophets, speaking by evil spirits, and who are the true prophets speaking by the spirit of Yahweh, is whether or not they acknowledge that Yahshua is the Messiah, and that He came in the flesh. This is the first and most important test.

This involves more than just saying they believe Yahshua is the Messiah. It involves what is called the incarnation. John 1:1 says, “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” or “ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Yahweh, and the Word was Yahweh.” Then, it says in John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” Yahweh became flesh by the virgin birth, when the Eternal Life was untied with the “seed of the woman”, the ova, in the virgin Miriam to bring about the conception of the Son of Yah.

The Gnostics denied Yahshua had a true flesh and blood body. They claimed He only had the appearance of a physical body. They taught that anything of material, physical substance is sinful and that Yahweh, therefore, could not have come in the flesh.

We read in Col 1:15 that Yahshua, “is the image of the invisible Elohim, the firstborn of every creature.” Also Col 2:9 says, “in Him dwells all the fullness of deity bodily”.

Four times in the book of Revelation Yahshua declares that He is “the first and the last”. This identifies Him as being Yahweh made flesh, for Yahweh says He is the “first and last”. (Isa 44:6; 48:12) There can, of course, only be one “first” and one “last”. Therefore, to deny Yahshua is Yahweh come in the flesh is to be an anti-messiah. This is what John is including in saying “Messiah is come in the flesh”.

Although not confessing that Messiah is Yahweh who has come in the flesh (the incarnation) is the primary meaning of John’s statement, there is another aspect that can be included by “come in the flesh”. John’s statement not only means Messiah came in the flesh, but also that He continues in the flesh. That is to say, He still has His same body of flesh (and bone), which He had when He came and when He died for our sins.

This is brought out by the tense used for the verb that is translated as “is come” in “has come in the flesh”. It is the Greek perfect tense, which is a verbal tense that means the action of the verb happened and continues in its result. Therefore, it means He came, and continues to be, in the flesh.

In other words, when He arose from the dead, He did not arise as a mere spirit with His body dissolved. Yes, He did rise with His body now sustained by spirit life, not by blood life. However, He still had flesh and bone as He said to the disciples (as recorded in Luke 24:39), “ Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.”

When He ascended into heaven to sit at Yahweh’s right hand as the man Yahshua the Messiah, He did so with His body of flesh and bone. But it is in a glorified Holy Spirit imbued condition and it now sustained by spirit life instead of natural blood life. That is why we read in 1 Corinthians 15:45, “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam *was made* a life giving spirit.” Nevertheless, He still has His flesh and bone body, even though it has taken on spiritual qualities so that He can now be seated on the throne in heaven with the Father, Yahweh, and still come to live in us by the Holy Spirit as “Messiah in you, the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27)

Those who deny He arose bodily, like the Jehovah Witnesses do, are anti-messiah. They teach another, different, Messiah than the true one.

John assures us that, as believers, we are victorious over these false prophets and the spirits that work in them. John says, “You are of Yahweh, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.” How good to know this.

Another evidence John gives of false, anti-messiah, spirit and the prophets or teachers they work through is the type of messages they give. He says that they speak of, or about, the world. They have a world centered message. “They speak of the world and the world hears them.” Many today use the Bible to teach that you can have anything you want just by claiming it in faith. They emphasize material wealth and say it is a sign that you are walking in faith. That is a worldly, covetous type of message. Those

teaching it make merchandise of their followers and, thereby, accumulate much of this world's goods for themselves. Many of them live like kings in mansion type houses, drive expensive cars and have much of this world's goods.

We read in 1Timothy 6:7-8, "For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content." We are instructed in Hebrew 13:5, "*Let your* manner of life *be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'"

So John says this worldly spirit, this spirit that speaks of the world, is not of Yahweh.

Then, John says, "We are of Yahweh: he that knows Yahweh hears us; he that is not of Yahweh hears not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." In other words, those who cling to the worldly speaking teachers or prophets do so because they are of the world also. But those who cling to the ones who bring the true message of being dead to this world system, thereby, show that they are of Yahweh, that they are His own. That is how we know the "Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."

That will have to be it for now. We will continue from there next time as Yahweh enables.