

# Fellowship with God Who Is Righteous – Part III

I John 4:1-6  
April 28, 2024

## I. Review and Introduction

Fellowship with God who is righteous – 2:29-4:6

- A. The fact of God's righteousness – v. 29
- B. Incentives for Righteous Living – vs. 3:1-3
- C. Evidence of Righteous Living – vs. 4-12
- D. Evidence of love for the brethren – vs. 13-18
- E. Assurances resulting from righteous living – vs. 19-24
- F. False teachers: enemies of the truth – vs. 4:1-6

## II. False Teachers: Enemies of the Truth – vs. 4:1-6

### What is the definition of a cult? *Got Questions*

The two most common teachings of Christian cults are that Jesus was not God and that salvation is not by faith alone. A denial of the deity of Christ results in the view that Jesus' death was insufficient to pay for our sins. A denial of salvation by faith alone results in the teaching that salvation is achieved by our own works. The apostles dealt with cults in the early years of the church: for example, John addresses the teaching of Gnosticism in 1 John 4:1–3. John's litmus test for godly doctrine was "Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (verse 2)—a direct contradiction of the Gnostic heresy (cf. 2 John 1:7).

The two most well-known examples of cults today are the Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Both groups claim to be Christian, yet both deny the deity of Christ and salvation by faith alone. Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons believe many things that are in agreement with or similar to what the Bible teaches. However, the fact that they deny the deity of Christ and preach a salvation by works qualifies them as cults. Many Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and members of other cults are moral people who genuinely believe they hold the truth. As Christians, our hope and prayer must be that many people involved in cults will see through the lies and will be drawn to the truth of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

A. The command to test the spirits – v. 1

1. The purpose of the test
  - a. "... to see whether they are from God . . ."
  - b. II Corinthians 11:14, 15
2. The reason the test is necessary
  - a. "... many false prophets have gone out into the world . . ."
  - i. I Timothy 4:1; I Corinthians 10:19-22
  - b. A false teacher's major goal is to keep you from truth
    - i. Acts 20: 28–32
- B. The criteria for the test – vs. 2-6
  1. Jesus Christ – vs. 2, 3
    - a. "... every spirit that confesses . . ."
    - i. Literally "to agree with" – 2:23; 4:15
    - ii. It may cost you to confess Him – John 9:22; 15:18-20
    - b. "... Jesus Christ . . ."
    - i. He is the focal point of our faith
      - Ephesians 2:20; Hebrews 12:2
    - ii. He is the Christ, the Messiah
      - John 1:1; 10:30; Titus 2:13; 1 John 5:20
    - c. "... has come . . ."
    - i. Perfect tense: a completed action with continuing results
    - d. "... in the flesh . . ."
    - i. His humanity – John 1:14; Galatians 4:4
    - ii. We must answer the question "who do men say that I am"
      - Matthew 16:13-20
  2. Apostles – vs. 4-6
    - a. The confidence of believers – v. 4
      - i. The result: "... and have overcome them . . ."
      - ii. The reason: "... because greater is He who is in you than He who is in the world . . ."
      - II Corinthians 2:21, 22; II Timothy 2:11-13; Romans 12:1, 2

- iii. We are in the world but must not be of the world. Insulated not isolated.
- b. The contrasts between teachers, vs. 5, 6
  - i. False teachers:
    - They represent the world
    - The world is their audience
  - ii. The Apostles:
    - They represent God
    - Their audience are those “who know God”

### **III. Conclusion and Course of Action**

- A. How to determine error
  - 1. Know the truth – John 17:17
  - 2. Practice the Truth – James 1:22
- B. Reasons people follow error
  - 1. Immaturity – Ephesians 4:14
  - 2. Instability – II Timothy 3:1-7; James 1:6-8
  - 3. Those in false cults are either looking for truth or have found it and rejected it
- C. Three Key areas
  - 1. The sole authority of the Scriptures
  - 2. The deity of Christ
  - 3. Salvation by faith apart from works
- D. What we must do:
  - 1. Instruct our people and our children in truth
  - 2. Make Christ central in our church and home
  - 3. Warning: Don 't make people go to a counterfeit because you failed to show them the real thing