



The Agape

Class 6 • 1st John 4

• 1st John 4

- 1) Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.
- 2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:
- 3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: 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 God, 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 heareth them.
- 6) We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.
- 7) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.
- 8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.
- 9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.
- 10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.
- 11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
- 12) No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.
- 13) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.
- 14) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.
- 15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.
- 16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

- 17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.
- 18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.
- 19) We love him, because he first loved us.
- 20) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?
- 21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

- Last week we looked at the example of Cain
 - Cain refused to have fellowship with his Brother
 - And then Cain withdrew himself from his Brother to start his own form of unacceptable service to God
 - Now we start to learn what Paul means when he says, *“Because his own works were evil, and his brother’s righteous.”*
 - John demonstrates with Cain that separatism is *“evil”*, and fellowship at the Lord’s table is *“righteous”*
 - Hatred is Murder - Just like Jesus said in Matthew 5
 - We also talked about laying down our life for our Brother
 - Not focusing on self, but focusing on others
- 21) Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.
- God is more merciful than our own concept of Him often allows
 - God is more merciful than we think he is
 - We ended last week with a directive to keep the Lord’s commandments
- 23) And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.
- And...
- 24) And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

- The First Century Christians had the sign of the Holy Spirit to assure them of a believer
- John very deliberately introduced this allusion to the Spirit, so that he could make a little diversion to talk about another problem
- Verses 1-6 seem to be an interruption in his discussion about the Agape, but there is a connection

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

- It becomes readily apparent that he isn't talking about some kind of "false spirit"
- We know that there is no Devil, and there are no spirits who work contrary to God's will
- John is referring to humans
- People who teach claiming Holy Spirit guidance
- These are the people John referred to in 2:18 as Anti-Christ's "that went out from us, but were not of us"
- Acts 15:24

24) Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law:* to whom we gave no *such* commandment:

- 2) Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:
- The message of these false teachers (the Judaisers) was simple: An essential item of Christian teaching is that Jesus did NOT come in the flesh
 - Why would they do this?
 - Notice that they are not saying that Jesus Christ didn't come, they are saying that Jesus Christ did not come in the flesh
 - What they are really saying is that he came in the spirit
 - He is not really human, he is God
 - Remember who they are talking to

- They are trying to get Jews to leave the church, and come back to the Synagogue
- What a perfect appeal to Jews!
- What Jew would deny the basic tenet of their faith? “Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God is One”
- In fairness, we don’t know WHY they said this
- All we know is that this is what their argument was - Jesus is not come in the flesh
- We also know that by mid to late First Century the rate of conversion of Jews to faith in Christ slows to a trickle and within a few years stopped altogether
- We also know that the doctrine of the Trinity begins to appear very soon thereafter
- It’s interesting to note that John doesn’t say “came into the flesh” or something that might imply that God changed himself into a fleshly creature from a heavenly one
- John’s words imply that from the very beginning, his appearance originates in flesh
- The word “flesh” means more than just skin and blood
- In chapter 2 he talked about “*lust of the flesh*”
- The connection is that Jesus was not just Mortal, but was “tempted in all points like as we are”
- Jesus was not God, as he was subject to the frailties of man and in need of redemption
- It’s so impressive to realize that this same test that John institutes 2000 years ago, works extremely well for us today
- If someone teaches that Jesus was not a man, was not subject to sinful lusts, that he was a God, then we are not to believe them
- It’s a simple Trinity test invented well before the Trinity was established
- The connection to the Agape becomes readily apparent as well
- The Breaking of Bread service is a symbol of his “flesh” and his “blood”
- What better way to be reminded that he came in the flesh?

3) And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

- John is calling them to choose between Christ and the Anti-Christ

4) Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

- Ye are of God... They are not

5) They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6) We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

- We are of God... Listen to me, John says

- John establishes the authority of the apostles

- Then he returns to the Love Feast

7) Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

- Beloved = Agapetos

- It's interesting to think of this phrase that he uses over and over again, when you read that there is some historical evidence that the apostolic letters were read to the believers at the assembly for the Breaking of Bread

- Think of love in terms of the Agape, again

8) He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

9) In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

- What "*this*"?

- Visually him standing there next to the Memorial Emblems, pointing down at them and saying that sentence!

10) Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

- The undeserved love of God
- You aren't doing God a favor by showing up at the Breaking of Bread
- He is doing you one

11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

- Wouldn't the natural thing be, "if God so loved us, we ought also to love God"?
- Instead we are commanded to reflect God's love to us (by sacrificing his Son on our behalf) by loving each other

12) No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

- To be perfect is to be spiritually mature
- If we learn to love one another, we will learn maturity

13) Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14) And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

15) Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

16) And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17) Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

- And with this maturity comes "boldness in the day of judgment"

18) There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

- We won't be afraid of judgment if we have spiritually mature love

19) We love him, because he first loved us.

20) If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

21) And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

- Fellowship is a commandment not a good suggestion