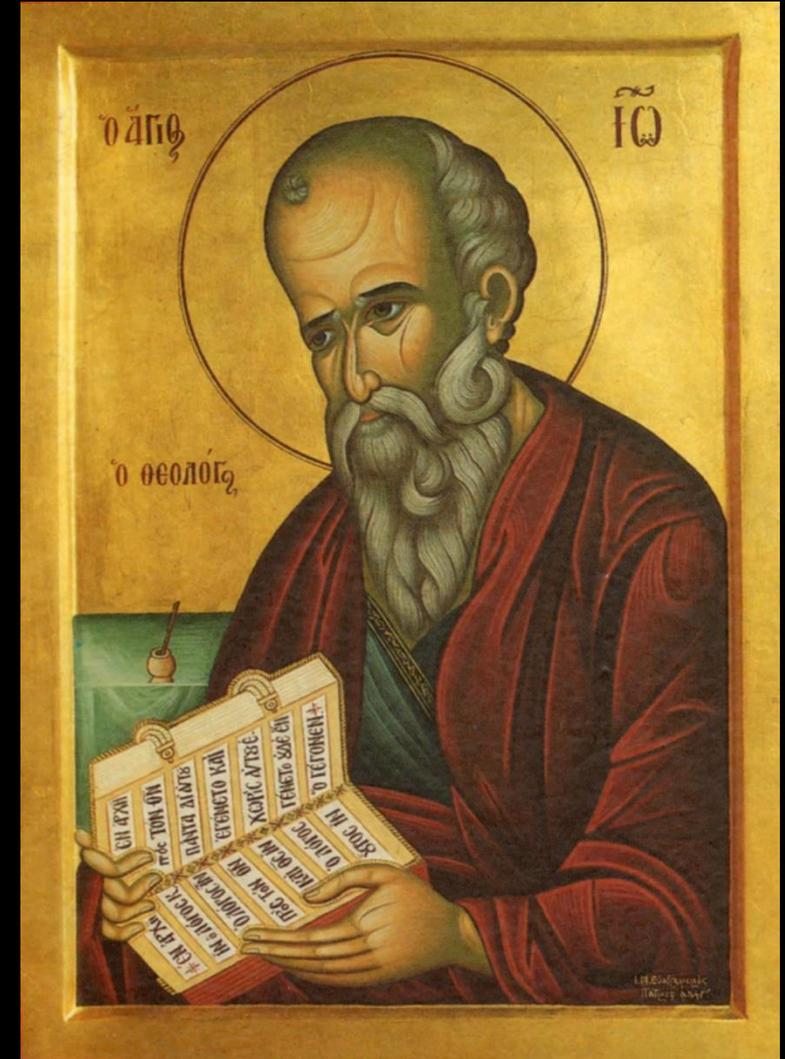


# Truth and Love

1 John 4



Truth and Love    Introduction

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- **Author:** John the Apostle
- **Date:** 90 AD (more or less)
- **Location:** Ephesus
- **Recipients:** Believers in and around Ephesus in the Roman province of Asia.
- **Circumstances:** Some leaders separated from John, teaching false doctrines and soft views of sin.
- **Purpose:** John writes both to warn and encourage the flock to remain faithful to the original apostles' teaching.

# Truth and Love    Introduction

## Today's Passage

1. Test the Spirits    4:1-6
2. God Is Love    4:7-21

# Truth and Love Introduction

Soundbite:

Jesus is the standard for both truth and love. Our devotion to both are a measure of our devotion to him.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

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*[People] always think you are recommending Christianity not because it is true but because it is good. And in the discussion they will at every moment try to escape from the issue “True—or False” into stuff about a good society, or morals, or the incomes of Bishops, or the Spanish Inquisition ... Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important.*

*– C. S. Lewis (1898 – 1963)*

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- The Bible presents itself to us as a true story.
- It claims to tell us who God really is, what really happened in history and how things really are in the world.
- Therefore it can be countered by false stories, false teachers and false prophets.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- Every problem in the world began when the serpent came to Eve with a false claim, “You shall not die.”
- She took her chances, disobeyed God, and Adam joined her.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- John 14:6 (ESV)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

- No surprise, then, that many false beliefs since the time of Christ have differed precisely about him.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- In John's day there were two already forming.
  1. One said that Jesus was not a real man.
  2. Another said he was, but that the divine Christ entered him at his baptism and left him before he died.
- Almost every NT author deals with truth and false teaching.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- 1 Timothy 4:1-2 (ESV)

Now the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons, <sup>2</sup> through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared ...

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- 2 Timothy 4:1-4 (ESV)

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: <sup>2</sup> preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. <sup>3</sup> For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- 2 Peter 2:1-3 (ESV)

But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. <sup>2</sup> And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. <sup>3</sup> And in their greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- Jude 1:3-4 (ESV)

<sup>3</sup> Beloved, although I was very eager to write to you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. <sup>4</sup> For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- Paul gives a short summary of what we believe about Jesus in **1 Corinthians 15:1-8**.
- Let's also reread **1 John 4:2-3**.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

- Christianity is without question a religion of truth – a system of beliefs that explain reality as it really is.
- God also reveals himself as a God of love – or more accurately as love itself.
- When he comes to abide in us, he brings this love with him, giving us the capacity to love him and one another.

# 1. Test the Spirits 4:1-6

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Jesus is the standard for both truth and love. Our devotion to both are a measure of our devotion to him.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

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- Underline the phrase “**God is love,**” which is found in both **1 John 4:8 & 4:16.**
- Now let’s reread **4:9-10.**
- These verses remind us that love and truth are connected at a deep level.
- God’s love caused him to do something that can be historically pinpointed to a specific time and place.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- When we personally experience God's love, it impacts us in at least two important ways.
- It removes our fear at standing before God in judgment.
- It frees us up and empowers us to love both God and others.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- Let's talk about fear and confidence before God – specifically in the day of judgment.
- We need to reread 4:17 & 18.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- As we consider the possibility of standing before God in judgment, we can respond in a few different ways.
  1. We can wish God away.
  2. We can declare our freedom to ignore him.
  3. We can admit our need and receive God's forgiveness.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14



- Thomas Nagel is one who simply wishes away God.

*I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God: I don't want the universe to be like that!*

*– Thomas Nagel, NYU School of Law*

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14



- Guy Kahane of the Faculty of Philosophy, at Oxford also does not want to live in a world in which human beings

*“are the subordinates of a moral superior, a superior who deserves our allegiance and worship, and where we have been created to play a part in some divine cosmic plan.”*

- He claims to be free of such constraints.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- Sin makes us fear standing before God.
- These smart guys are seeing reality – but deciding that it is better to deny God than to receive his forgiveness.
- They, like Adam and Eve, want their autonomy and are willing to take their chances.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- It really would be a frightening thing to stand before a God who would only accuse us.
- The Bible teaches that we will someday stand before a God who loves us and has declared his desire to forgive.
- If we receive God's love it removes any reason we might have to fear his existence – especially his judgment.
- Perfect love casts out fear.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

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- How are we empowered to love others?
- Let's start again with the statement John, "God is love," which John repeats in 4:8 & 16.
- What does this mean? How does it work?

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- How could he simply *be love* in all of eternity?
- It is hard to imagine love in a static or abstract state.
- Love needs a both lover and one who is loved.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- The Trinity is where love is expressed eternally – from Father to Son and Spirit and Son to Father and Spirit, etc.
- So love has always been more than an abstract idea.
- It has been a reality from eternity past going back and forth among the persons of the Trinity.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- God abides in us through the Holy Spirit who indwells us.
- See 4:13.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- He reveals himself in us by the **fruit of the Spirit – love**.
- The Spirit, who eternally loves the Father and Son, prompts us to love them too.
- It is his nature to do so – and he now abides in us.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

- Further, when the Holy Spirit in us looks at another Christian he sees himself in that other person just as in us.
- So he prompts us to love one another as we spiritually recognize the Spirit in our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- God's pure, holy, truth-filled love becomes the basis of our love for one another.
- Reread **1 John 4:7-8**.

## 2. God is Love 4:7-14

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Jesus is the standard for both truth and love. Our devotion to both are a measure of our devotion to him.

Truth and Love      Conclusions

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# Truth and Love      Conclusions

1. Keep your nose in the Bible as your ultimate source of truth pertaining to God, yourself and reality as it really is.
2. Remember that God by his very nature is both truth and love – and desires to express these qualities through you.
3. Because God is love he empowers you to love him and others.
4. Because he loves you, he offers forgiveness and confidence in the day of judgment.

Truth and Love

Conclusions

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