

**Who are you listening to?**

**5 They are from the world, therefore they speak as from the world, and the world listens to them. 6 We are from God. The one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.**

Last week we looked at the worldly system in organized rebellion against God; with its lust of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life. A person is either in the World or in Christ. In order to overcome, we must be from God. The source of our power must be God, and that means that we have to walk in the light, according to God's Word, as Jesus walked. We have to choose to fight against the enemy, and this worldly system which is under the dominion of Satan and operating by the spirit of the antichrist. We cannot put our faith and trust in the World.

**They are from the world**

John now describes the false teacher's relationship to the world. They are part of the worldly system. They hear and teach by listening to worldly influences, and demonic spiritual influences. They are good at tying their messages in with the "Spirit of the Age", what the media is saying, what the influencers are saying, and they tend to echo their messages. They are speaking according to their world view, the philosophical, cultural, and theological world in which they live

We see in John 8:43-44, when Jesus was confronted by some false-teacher Pharisees, Jesus names the reason why they couldn't understand and accept His True teaching. Jesus says **43 Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot listen to My word.** Oh, their ears were working just fine, but their hearts were hardened against the truth, because of sin. They were just fooling themselves. John adds in 1 John 1:6 **6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;** Those Pharisees were walking in darkness, and so had no fellowship with God. They couldn't love Jesus, and couldn't listen to Him, because they were not from God as their source. As Jesus continues in John 8:44 **You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning,** The ultimate desire of all those who follow these evil spirits is to do the will of the enemy, and John 10:10 records Jesus defining the will of the enemy, **saying "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy;**

Because Satan is a deceiver and lies like a rug, so do his followers. They lie when the truth sounds better. They can't help it, it's a mark of the followers of the enemy. As Jesus continues in John 8:44, Satan **does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks from his own nature, because he is a liar and the father of lies.** Well, if false Christians, and to an even greater extent false teachers are the children of the Devil, then we can expect deceit, manipulation, lies, and treachery from them.

Those who choose not to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior of their lives, basically are calling Jesus a liar, just as so many of the Pharisees did. In John 10:25, **25 Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these testify of Me. 26 But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep.**

**And the world hears them.** The result of speaking the world's language and values is that a false teacher gains the world's hearing. Things against the Truth appeal far more to people than the truth. The person's origin is expressed in terms of the one to whom they respond.

**We are from God**

John makes the same claim of the apostolic witnesses that he did of his readers. It refers to all orthodox Christians including John and his readers.

**"He who knows God hears us."**

The word for knowing God here is important. It's ginosko, to come to know, recognize by experience. By walking with Him. And how do we do that? 1 John 2:3-6 told us: **3 By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. 4 The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; 5 but whoever follows His**

**word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: 6 the one who says that he remains in Him ought, himself also, walk just as He walked.** And so, it is through walking with God that we come to know the sound of the Truth from God. Those who know God respond to God's Truth from true teachers like the Apostles. And it is this recognition of the truth that reveals the heart of the hearers. True followers of God will always recognize His truth. Those who know God belong to Him, and progress in experience with Jesus by living in fellowship with Him. We have a relationship with Him, since HE is our God. Psalm 23:1 **The Lord is My Shepherd, I shall not Want** Psalm 100:3 **Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.** Jesus says something similar in John 10:14-16 **14 I am the good shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me, 15 just as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. 16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will listen to My voice; and they will become one flock, with one shepherd.** And again in John 10:27 **27 My sheep listen to My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me;** So, it's not the person who's the best speaker, or the person who is the most charismatic, or the person who makes us feel great about ourselves that we listen to, but we DO listen to one who tells the truth from God! As Christians, it's who we hear Jesus' voice through that we listen to, and it's Jesus' voice through the Holy Spirit within us that we listen to.

**"Whoever is not from God does not hear us.**

Though John makes the point that personal relationship with God is demonstrated by one's response to apostolic teaching, he describes it as the result and not the cause of that relationship. Thus, though this describes the regenerate and unregenerate, John is not providing his readers a "test" of their own salvation as much as an explanation of the significance of one's response to orthodoxy or heterodoxy. We have the choice either to believe in Jesus, step into the light, and hear His voice of truth, or not to believe, stay committed to our evil deeds, and try to hide in the darkness. John 3:18-21 . **18 The one who believes in Him is not judged; the one who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. 19 And this is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the Light; for their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light, so that his deeds will not be exposed. 21 But the one who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds will be revealed as having been performed in God."** So, just like John's telling us in our verses today, we have a choice whether or not to come to the light, to respond to the truth of Jesus. But many will make the choice to reject the light. John 15:20-21 **20 Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well; if they followed My word, they will follow yours also. 21 But all these things they will do to you on account of My name, because they do not know the One who sent Me.** So we should be unsurprised that if they rejected and persecuted Jesus, and if they refused the Truth that He gave people, then those who do not follow God will reject the Truth we have from Jesus that we have to give them. The world responds to us in the same way it had to Jesus. So, here John gives us a test of whether we're following God or not, by whether we hear, comprehend and respond positively to the Truth of God's word, rather than trying to run away to the darkness.

John is saying that believers act like nonbelievers when they fail to listen to the Truth, sin and, rebel against the apostles and their teachings.

**From this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of deception**

You can tell by people's response to the Truth what spirit is influencing them.

The spirits of truth and deception are revealed by a person's response to the Truth from God's Word.

John repeats spirit and contrasts the two with descriptive gens.: truth and error.