

1 John 4

God is Love – an important chapter, both for why it was written & what it says

1) Read 1 John 4: 1-6

Spirit = wind, “test the winds” = test the various winds of your generation – use your heads to examine the doctrines & theologies of all their teachers. Be mentally awake and be growing Xns - morally, intellectually, spiritually. Discern what is sound, and test the winds. The criteria – only one here – that JX has come in the flesh: the full humanity & deity of Jesus.

The Good News of Jesus was not preached into an empty vacuum - the philosophical atmosphere was Hellenistic (Greek), which included sacrificial rites of the Greek-Roman mystery cults religions and temples of Greek religion. Basically, they were opposed to the picture of God which both the OT and NT embrace. Xnity was on a collision course with Greek religion, which held a fascination with everything mystical.

2) Read 1 John 4: 7-12 The Social Test – love (show our blue hand towel w “God is Love” in Arabic.)

v. 7: How John defines love – in 4 ways:

Beloved	love is granted towards people
Love one another	it involves our will
Love is of God	love has its origin from God – God is the source of love
Everyone who loves	experiencing God’s love is an integral part of being in a relationship w God

Then John says the same thing in the negative – if you don’t love you don’t know God...

Love is the event in which God spoke for Himself in human history by his Son –
not that we loved God, but God loved us and sent his Son.

Love, for John, is what God has done in our behalf.

Love is the person Jesus Christ alongside humanity on the road as Savior of the world.

v.11 Beloved (again - echoes v.7), since God loved us so much...we ought to love one another.

It is our experience of God’s love that proves us the inner motivation towards love.

Thru the love we ourselves receive we are to extend that love to others.

We are to love outwardly toward others what we have received personally from God.

We continue to learn to love on a day-to-day basis, w ups & downs.

Thus, love in the NT is not an ideal but a relationship.

“Love is a dynamic and growing result of a relationship w JC.” (Earl Palmer)

3) Read 1 John 4: 13-21 doctrinal and social test – God lives in us

John reminds us again of the assurance of the Holy Spirit in our lives. (John loves to restate and repeat.)

A Trinitarian reference - God has given us his Spirit (v.13) and God has sent his Son (v.14)

Xnity rests on this combination of the objective and the subjective, the Son’s mission and the Spirit’s testimony.

The perfect love that drives out fear (of God) can also drive out hatred (of others). **Love for God and love for our brother form one single command (1 John 3:23). You cannot have one without the other.**

“And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, just as he has commanded us.”