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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "Stop Believing False Doctrine" (1979). *Vaught Sermon Notes: John*. 16.
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STOP BELIEVING FALSE DOCTRINE

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN
NUMBER 27
1 JOHN 3:23-4:1

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1 JOHN 3:23-4:1 "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 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. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

You can't walk anywhere these days without bumping into some cluck who gives his testimony by saying, "I became a Christian on such and such a day when I invited Jesus into my heart." Now, please learn this truth once and forever--you don't become a Christian by inviting Jesus into your heart. You became a Christian when you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour. But so many people are so sloppy in their thinking and they are so shallow and childish they use just any old term they have heard and use it to express their faith in Christ.

Have Rejected Bible Doctrine

We are living in a day when Bible Doctrine has been neglected and rejected. People in our day are about as shallow as in any generation of history. Bible Doctrine means very little to the average Christian in this country. People will go to some conference or read a book and get some goofy idea in their mind and think that you can build the whole Kingdom of God on their goofy idea. Where this expression "I invited Jesus into my heart" came from, I do not know. Listen, you can't invite Jesus into a sewer and that's exactly what your heart is before Jesus comes in. God has provided a grace way whereby that sewer can become a clean, new place and this comes about by our faith in Jesus Christ. We are spiritually dead and you don't invite Christ into a spiritually dead heart and life.

An Invitation For Fellowship

REVELATION 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

This verse has been misused about as much as any verse in the Bible. That verse has nothing to do with salvation. That verse is for believers only. It is a verse speaking about fellowship. Christ and the believer are to sup together, they are to talk together, they are to walk together.

1 JOHN 3:23 "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." In our last study we took a good look at this verse. This verse says that "This keeps on being his decree." The word entole should be translated "decree," not commandment. It means God's design, God's plan which he carved out in eternity past. Now what is that entole from eternity past concerning salvation? It is this--"For by grace are ye saved through faith." It doesn't say, "For by grace are ye saved by inviting Jesus into your heart." That's sloppy doctrine.

We need to be exact in our Christian witness and in our testimony concerning what really happens when we become Christians. Does it say, "This is the decree, that we invite Jesus into our hearts?" No, a thousand times no. But this passage says that this great entole from eternity past is that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. But people come up with the idea that I am a very great person and Jesus is real lucky that I finally decided to invite him into my heart. Notice the word here. It is the aorist, active, subjunctive of the word pisteuo, which means believe. The aorist tense refers to the point of time when you believe in Jesus Christ. It is the exhale of faith toward Jesus Christ. The active voice means that you have to exercise this faith yourself, no one can do it for you. The subjunctive mood means that your volition is involved, and maybe you will do this and maybe you won't do this. The name here refers to the person. This name is representative of the person, the God-man, Jesus Christ.

ACTS 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

The word "Son" is used because he is the one who in eternity past agreed to go to the cross. Jesus is the word which points to his humanity, the Virgin-born human Jesus. Christ is the word that refers to his office, and means he is the anointed-appointed one. Next we have the expression "And love one another." This also is an aorist, active, subjunctive and is the exact same construction as the word "believe" which we just studied. Please notice that the belief has to come first, and then the loving comes afterwards. Once you believe, you begin to take in doctrine, and as you grow an Edification Complex, then you have a foundation on which you can love. Learning grace doctrine always provides the basis for loving. The verse ends reminding us that this decree "to believe" and "to love" came from God.

1 JOHN 3:24 "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." This verse is going to discuss the grace life, the Edification Complex in the soul. This is mature Christian living. "He that keepeth" is from tereo and it means to keep something that belongs to you. This is a present, active, participle. This is the believer who constantly keeps these entoles, these decrees we studied about in the last verse. The only way to keep these decrees is to be filled with the Holy Spirit and be willing to listen to Bible Doctrine. Man's plans in the Devil's world belong to the Devil. This is why it is so necessary to know God's plan and God's will, and God's decrees. Any system of false doctrine takes true doctrine and distorts it. They look at doctrine through a meritorious system and this is human viewpoint. They take their own human viewpoint and then quote Scripture to prove their point. A believer can gradually go negative toward doctrine and if he refuses to rebound and refuses to take in new doctrine, it becomes impossible for him to get out from under the power of the old sin nature and be renewed into fellowship. This is the tragic story that is told in Hebrews 6:1-6. The renewal here is not talking about the renewing of a believer who has lost his faith, which is impossible for him to do, but rather it is talking about the believer who has fallen out of fellowship who will not rebound and get back into fellowship.

The next word we have is "dwelleth in him" and this is from meno and is a present, active, indicative, so it means keeps on dwelling in him. Next we have en plus the locative and this refers to God the Father, who is the author of these divine decrees. In this way we are in the sphere of his plan. God is in us and we are in God. This is talking about our position as a believer. As a result of this position, we read, "We know." Learning doctrine is the most important function of the Christian life. Next we have the word "hoti" and it means "because" rather than the word "that." So it should read, "Because he abideth in us." Now we have the same form of meno as we had above. Then we have "out from the source of his spirit" which God has given to us.

So a corrected translation of this verse goes like this--
 "And the one keeping his decrees abides in him (God, The Father) and He (God) in him (The believer); and in this we know, because the Father abides in us, out from the source of the Holy Spirit which he (God The Father) hath given us."

1 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." In this chapter the word "Beloved" is used to mark off the paragraphs. We have this word in verse 1, which begins the first paragraph. Then it is used again down in verse six to begin another paragraph, and then used again in verse 11 to begin a third paragraph.

This first beloved introduces us into the Angelic Conflict.

The second use of beloved in verse 6 introduces us to the dynamics of love.

The third use of beloved in verse 11 introduces us to the production of love.

So in these three paragraphs we have danger, the dynamics and the production.

False Doctrine Blots Out Love

There is no love where false doctrine exists. Many of the people who talk the most about love also discount doctrine. Some years ago there was a great movement in this country to unify all the churches into one super denomination. They said, "Let's forget our doctrinal differences and just put our arms around each other and love one another." They said that we would agree to disagree on doctrine but we would be bound by one great force called love. Now what is wrong with that? I'll tell you what is wrong with that. You can't carry false doctrine in your mind and love at the same time. Satan will provide a pseudo-love which he shovels out to all who follow him. He gives a beautiful pseudo-sweetness so they can give out false doctrine to mixed up believers. They consider love to be the one great factor in life at the expense of everything else. This is a pseudo-love which always leads to falsehood and it comes from the energy of the flesh.

"Beloved" is the word used here to call attention to the fact that every believer is the subject of God's love. Beloved is the word used in Scripture to describe Christ. Christ is God's beloved but the believers are also called beloved, and the word is agapetos. It demonstrates to us that God cannot do anything but love us with a perfect love. God loves us and still preserves his perfect character. Many

believers are not mature enough to cope with this kind of love because they are unstable and immature. But God has the stability and perfection with which to love us, and yet at the same time not lower his standards of his perfect character. Because God loves us, we cannot conclude that God has lowered the standard of his character or has damaged any point in his essence. God found a grace way to do this and still be consistent with his perfection. This is why the believer under grace can love and still retain his character. Now this can't be done in the energy of the flesh, but it can be done in the power of the Holy Spirit.

GRACE ALWAYS FINDS A WAY

In the second paragraph of this chapter we are going to see how grace found a way for God to love us. Now just how did God manage to do this? Justice demands that sin be punished. But God in his perfect grace found a way, and that way is the cross, and the cross is God's perfect grace plan. It is at this point where we are able to see the perfect grace and perfect love of God. The cross is the most amazing happening of history, and at the cross, Christ did something whereby God became free to love us with a perfect love. Jesus Christ is the Beloved. Through faith in him, we enter into union with Christ and in this way we too become the Beloved. Our position in Christ demands this new high rank. This was explained in 1 John 3:2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

Jesus is the Son of God, and once we believe in him, we are in him and we then become sons of God. Love demands character but we don't have this character within ourselves. But Christ comes and takes his abode in us and begins to produce his character in us.

THE GREAT HINDRANCE TO LOVE

Now the answer to this question ought to be quite evident to you. It is false doctrine. That is why we have the admonition here "Believe not every spirit." This is the present, active, imperative of pisteuo so this is a command to them to stop doing something they were already doing. One of the quickest ways to drop by the wayside as a believer is to get into false doctrine. This is why we have this sharp demand here "Stop believing the false spirits." These people to whom this is addressed were already guilty at this point. They had been listening to hearsay. False doctrine always gives a whitewash of pseudo love. The only capacity for true love comes from knowing true doctrine.

UNDERSTANDING THE HOLY SPIRIT

We desperately need to know the Holy Spirit and his work and the way he works in and with us. The word for spirit is pneuma and it is derived from a verb pneo which means to breathe. The Holy Spirit is the breathing one, one who is alive. So the Holy Spirit is the one who makes it possible for us to inhale doctrine. That is why the Scripture says that "All Scripture is Theo pneustos, and that means "God-breathed." Sometimes this word spirit is used to describe a breathing one, one who is alive. It is so used here to describe a false teacher who is alive, breathing.

GNOSTICISM, A FORM OF FALSE DOCTRINE

Gnosticism was rampant in Paul's day and also in John's day. Many people were being led away from true doctrine. Gnosticism is Christianity perverted by learning and speculation. The intellectual pride of the Gnostics refined away the gospel into a philosophy. In gnosticism knowledge replaced faith. This is what John was warning the believers about in this verse. The word for "try the spirits" really means "test the spirits" and this is the present, active, imperative of dokimazo. It comes from the word used for testing metals to see their true value. All doctrine must be filtered through the true Word of God to see if it will stand up.

The new believer must avoid running around giving his testimony and must sit down and learn doctrine. In this way the spirits can be tested. You can't sit down and read the Bible and get it for yourself. You have to be taught. Once you know true doctrine, then with this true doctrine, you can test the spirits. In our nation today there are so many false teachers, so many cults, so many who are teaching contrary to Scripture. Their voices fill the radio and television and the printed page.

FROM THE SOURCE OF GOD

This verse goes on to say that we need to test every spirit to see whether they are from the source of God or not. It is very important for you to know whether the doctrine is from the source of God or not.

The next sentence says, "For many false prophets are gone out into the world." This may be the understatement of the year or even the century. You can find these false prophets in every city and in every church. Gone out is from ezerchomai. The word kosmos refers to the Devil's world and the Devil's world is filled with these false spirits. They are designed to neutralize you and to remove truth from your mind.

In our next study we will examine some of these false teachers and false doctrine.