

## **Jesus Christ Is Come In the Flesh**

Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991

### **1 John 4:1-6**

*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 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. 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. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 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.*

I am going to have you open your Bible today, to the Book of First John. I'll be reading from First John Chapter 4: verses 1 through 6. I would like very much, (if you don't mind), for you to get your Bible and follow along as I read these scriptures and comment on them. Open your Bible to the First Epistle of John, Chapter 4:1. This is the subject: "Jesus Christ Is Come In the Flesh."

My friends, the living God has chosen to use men. He has chosen men like you and me to preach the gospel and to teach His Word. That is what the Lord has chosen and that is His good pleasure and purpose. Men like you and me are to preach His Word and preach the gospel.

The scripture says in First Corinthians; *"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* In other words, if a person hears from God and learns of God, it won't be by a vision, dream, or some type of revelation. He will hear from God by the hearing of the Word preached. That is what the scripture says; *"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God."*

In Romans 10, it says this; *"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved; but how shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a preacher and how shall they preach except they be sent?"*

If a person hears from God in this day, he will hear by the means God has ordained. There was a day in which God spoke directly to the prophets. That is what He says in Hebrews One; *"God who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake unto our fathers by the prophets; hath in these last days spoken to us through His Son."* If a man hears

from God or learns of God, it won't be by a vision or a dream, it is going to be by the hearing of the Word of God and that is just so!

It is illustrated at Pentecost. There were a lot of people assembled at Pentecost. They were from all the different nations. God purposed that they hear His Word and hear His gospel. How did He purpose for them to hear? The answer is that Peter preached to them and the apostles preached to them. God even gave these men the ability to speak in other languages so that men from every nation heard the gospel in their own tongue and language. They still heard it from a man. Angels didn't come down and preach the gospel; men preached the gospel. That is how they heard the gospel.

Cornelius was a man who had prayed to God and asked God to visit him. He asked God to reveal Himself to him. What did the Lord do? He sent Peter to Cornelius to preach to him. What about Lydia? God would save Lydia and open her heart. How did He do it? He sent Paul down to preach the gospel. As Paul preached to her, the scripture says; *"God opened her heart and she attended to the things spoken to her by the apostle Paul."*

You can take the Philippian jailor, Paul taught him the gospel. Take the Ethiopian Eunuch. Here was a man that was reading Isaiah the prophet. He had been up to Jerusalem to find out something about God. He was interested in something about a revelation of God. He learned nothing. On his way home, he was reading Isaiah the prophet and God sent a preacher. God sent Phillip to him. Phillip joined himself to the chariot and was walking beside it. The Eunuch was reading Isaiah 53 and Phillip asked him, *"Do you understand what you are reading?"* He was reading the Bible; he was reading passages of scripture from the Old Testament. Phillip said, *"Do you understand what you are reading?"* The man said, *"How can I accept some man show me."* So, Phillip climbed up in the chariot with him and from that scripture preached to him Jesus.

This is what our Lord said to his disciples; *"You go into all the world and preach the gospel. He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that refuses to hear you, refuses to hear Me."* So, that is what I am saying; *"God has chosen by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* If a man or a woman hears from God, they will hear from God through a man, preaching God's Word.

Paul wrote Timothy and told him, *"Preach the Word."* He told him again in another place, *"You commit this Word to faithful men, teaching them, and instructing them that they might instruct others."* He said also, to Timothy, *"Take heed to yourself and to your doctrine, for in so doing you'll both save yourself and them that hear you."* That is true! God speaks through men, preachers of the gospel. God speaks to people through His servant.

We are faced with a dilemma. We have a problem. While we know that God has His faithful preachers; God has never left himself without a witness. You know that and I know that. He does have a witness. He has had a witness in every generation. While we know that God has His faithful preachers in this world; there are many false preachers and there are many false prophets.

There are very many religious con men in this world and we have had this brought seriously to our attention in the past few days, weeks and months. There are many religious con artists. People are making merchandise of the souls of many. People are using religion to further their own cause.

Our Lord said in Matthew 7; *“Beware of false preachers; they will come to you in sheep’s clothing but within they are ravening wolves. Beware of these false preachers. You will know them by their fruits.”* In Second Peter Chapter 2, verse 1 and 2 writes this, *“But there were false prophets among Israel.”* There were many false prophets in the Old Testament days. There were many false prophets among the people of Israel. Watch this, *“Even as there shall be false teachers and preachers among you.”*

Here is the tragic result. Back in the days of Israel, there were many false preachers, among you and even among the early church. Even a few years after our Lord was crucified and arose from the grave, He said, *“Even among you there will be false preachers.”* Here are the tragic results; *“Many shall follow their pernicious or lascivious ways and through covetousness shall they with vain words, make merchandise of you.”*

What are you to them? You are nothing but merchandise to be used for their gain. They use people. These false preachers use people for their profit, for their gain and for their glory. In other words, there are many false preachers. The world is full of them and always has been since the days of the apostle Peter.

They pass themselves off as ministers of God. They pass themselves off as ministers of righteousness. He said, *“Even Satan himself comes as a angel of light.”* It is no marvel that his ministers pass themselves off as ministers of righteousness. They use the Bible and they use religious phrases and words. They make merchandise of people. They are using people to get rich or to get famous. They are trying to advance themselves.

That is a dilemma! God has His true preachers. The world is full of false preachers and is full of false religious con artists. How can we detect false preachers? How can we tell the difference? How can we be sure that a man is a true servant of God and not an enemy of the truth? Whom do we believe when their words are so similar? They are reading

from the same Bible. They are saying the same, "Hallelujah, praise the Lord!" They talk about healings and heaven. How are we to tell the difference?

This is John's subject in First John 4; that is what we are dealing with right here. Look at First John Chapter 4:1. Look at these words. I told you to get your Bible. This is important! John says; "*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are going out into the world.*" He is speaking to believers, the children of God. John repeats what Peter said, "*Don't believe every spirit; try the spirits.*"

What does the word "*spirit*" signify when he says, "*Beloved, don't believe every **spirit**, but try the **spirits** because many false preachers are gone out into the world?*" The spirit signifies here a person like myself who claims to be endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, who claims to be endowed with the gift to perform the office of preaching, prophesying or teaching. He claims to be endowed with the gift to speak for God.

Don't you believe every preacher; don't you believe everybody that comes in the name of religion. Don't you believe everybody that comes to you in the name of God. Make sure and try the spirits. We are not to believe everyone who lays claim to the calling of a preacher or to the distinction of a teacher. God says, "*Try these spirits.*" Try these preachers and put them to the test. Put me to the test. Put everyone you hear to the test.

What is the test? How are they to be tried? Here it is, try them by the Word of God. I don't mean a few pet verses that people take out of the scripture and use for their own causes and purposes. They will try to use it for their own advancement of programs. I am talking about using all the Word of God. Become familiar with the Word of God as one Book, one message, and one glorious gospel. Don't single out this verse and that verse and make it mean what you want it to mean. Become so familiar with the whole Word of God that you can put a preacher to the test by the Word of God.

Listen to what Isaiah 8:20 says; "*For if they speak not according to the Word of God, it is because there is no truth in them.*" When a man keeps giving his revelation and his opinions and his thoughts and he doesn't speak according to the Word of God, it is because he has no light, or truth. The truth is not in him.

In Acts 17:11, the people of Berea were nobler than the Thessalonians because when they heard Paul preach; "*They searched the scriptures to see if these things were true.*" They were going to go home and search the scriptures.

The Word of God is our only rule of faith and practice. False preachers have used parts of the scripture, and not all of the scripture. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God and all scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.”*

What about the miracles, Brother Mahan? You will find that most of them are phony. What about miracles? What about signs? What about the miraculous things that men claim? Do you know what the great Martin Luther said? Martin Luther once said this; “There are many false preachers in this world; don’t believe them. If they speak not according to God’s Word; don’t believe them even if it shows miracles and signs.” The scripture says, *“Beloved, believe not every spirit; try the spirits whether they be of God.”* Try them by the Word of God.

Look at First John 4:2; *“Hereby this is the way, hereby know we the Spirit of God.”* Here is how that we know if a man has the Spirit of God; if a man is truly a preacher of God, a true servant of God, here is the way that we know it. Here is a sure sign; every spirit, every preacher that confesses that Jesus Christ is come into the world, is of God. Every preacher that confesses that Jesus Christ is come into the world, in the flesh, that preacher is of God. *“Hereby know we the Spirit of God. Every preacher that confesses that Jesus Christ is come from heaven into the world; he is of God.”*

Every true preacher of God is clear and plain in what he preaches about Jesus Christ. He preaches about the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows who He is. He knows why He came into this world. He knows what He did. He knows where He is now. He knows why He did what He did. This is what John is saying. You can determine if he is real by what he preaches about the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming into the world. *“He came into the world.”*

I didn’t come into the world. I was born into this world. I didn’t exist before I was born. You couldn’t say, “Henry Mahan has come into this world.” I had no preexistence, none whatsoever! When my father conceived me in my mother’s womb, it was the first time that the seed was ever heard of. When Jesus Christ was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary; He came from heaven and inhabited that body that God prepared for Him. This is what I am saying, Jesus Christ is God Almighty. No question about it!

*“He is come into the world.”* He wasn’t just born in this world; he came deliberately and on purpose. He came from heaven into this world and inhabited that body that God prepared for Him. Jesus Christ is God!

He is called the Word. *“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God. The Word was God and all things were made by Him and without Him was anything made that was made. The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory.”* Yes, He is God Almighty. *“The Word was made flesh.”* God became a man. God was in Christ.

Jesus Christ is the sum and substance of all scripture. That includes the Old and New Testament. Jesus Christ is the only revelation of God Almighty. *“No man has seen God at anytime. The only begotten Son hath declared Him. Christ was made of the flesh according to the seed of David. He was declared to be the Son of God.”* He was made what He was not before, the seed of David. He was declared to be what He always is, was and shall be.

He’s the Surety of the everlasting covenant. He’s the only Prophet, Priest and King. He’s the whole foundation of acceptance with God. *“You are accepted in the beloved.”* He’s the cornerstone of the living temple. *“He’s the same yesterday, today and forever.”* The Prophet said, *“Unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be on His shoulders and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”* This is the name of Jesus of Nazareth.

*“Show us the Father,”* the disciple said to the Lord Jesus. He said, *“Have I been with you this long and you don’t know Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Jesus Christ is come into the world.”* The whole question regarding your relationship with God, hinges on your answer to this question; *“What think ye of Christ?”* Whose Son, actually, is He? Jesus Christ is come from heaven in the flesh. He was made of a woman. He became a real man.

Paul, writing to the Philippians, says, *“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation. He took upon Himself the form of a servant and was made (for a time) in the likeness of sinful flesh. He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven, earth and under the earth, and every tongue shall declare that He is Lord.”*

Why did He come? He came as our Representative. In a man we fell and in a man we are restored. In a representative man, called Adam, we became sinners. In a Representative man, called the God-man, we were made righteous. By one man, sin entered this world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men. *“By the disobedience*

*of one we were made sinners, by the obedience of the second man we were made righteous.”*

Jesus Christ is the Son of God. God Himself took a human body and came into this world as a Substitute. As our Substitute and Representative, He made full satisfaction for our sins. We need to really, clearly, and plainly declare that Jesus Christ is come into the world in the flesh, as a man. What we are telling people is this, our true condition is to such an extreme, that it took God Himself in human form to redeem us.

Christ said this, *“I’m come that they might have life.”* That must mean that we are dead! Isn’t that right? Christ said, *“I’m come into the world to seek and to save the lost.”* That means we are lost! The scripture says, *“Christ died for the ungodly.”* That means we are without God. *“God was in Christ, reconciling the world.”* That means that we were enemies. So, we are dead, we’re lost, we’re without God and we are enemies.

Christ came to change that. *“He came into the world to save sinners of whom I am chief.”* You see; when we preach that Jesus Christ came into the world, we also preach the Holiness of God. He must come, and He must be lifted up. *“The Son of man must be lifted up.”* There is no way around it.

Job laid the foundation when he asked this question, *“How can a man be just with God? How can he be clean that is born of a woman? The moon, the stars, they shine not, nothing is clean in God’s sight. How much more abominable is man?”* So, how are we going to be just with God? That is why He came. He came to enable God to be just and to justify us. He says in First Peter, *“Christ once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”*

He obeyed every law and gave us a perfect righteousness. He died under the curse of God’s law. He died under the wrath of God and gave us justification. You see; *“He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was laid on Him and by His stripes we are healed.”* He represented us.

Every preacher who preaches that Jesus Christ is who He is and that He came into this world, and lived and died perfectly; enables God to be just and justifier. That is why He did it. Ascending into heaven, He is seated at the right hand of God where He is our Intercessor. That is where He is now. If the preacher preaches that, he is of God.

When we preach Jesus Christ came to earth in the flesh, we preach the certainty of His work. We also preach the sufficiency of His work. Can God fail? Would you even consider such a thing? Do you really think that God can fail? Did Jesus Christ the God-

man do what He came to do when he came into this world in the flesh? Did He do it? Did He get the job done?

The scripture says; *“He shall not fail. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand.”* He said; *“I have finished the work you gave Me to do.”* He also said, *“All that My Father giveth Me shall come to Me. Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. I came down from heaven; I came down in the flesh to do My Father’s will and this is My Father’s will that of all which He hath given Me, I will lose nothing but raise it up again at the last day. For whom He did foreknow He predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son. In whom He predestinated, them He called. Whom He called He justified. Whom He justified, He glorified. What shall we say to these things? If God be for us who can be against us?”*

Look at verse 3; *“And every spirit (or preacher) that does not confess that Jesus Christ is come into the world is not of God.”* Isn’t that clear? If he doesn’t preach Christ, who He is, what He did, why He did it and where He is now and that He came into the world, he’s not of God! This is the test. A man who does not clearly define the person and work of Jesus Christ is not of God. What is he?

I want you to read this; *“It is the spirit of antichrist.”* Antichrist is not anti-religion. He’s not anti-morality. He’s not anti-good works. He is antichrist! It is the person and work of Christ. You heard that the antichrist shall come. Look at verse 3; He’s already in the world. Every spirit that confesseth not, every preacher that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come into the world, in the flesh, to redeem sinners is not of God. He is antichrist. You’ve heard that the antichrist will come. He is already come.

In verse 4, it says; *“You are of God little children.”* You have overcome these evil spirits. You have overcome these false preachers. You know them and you can detect them. You can even discern them. They do not deceive you because; *“Greater is He that is in you than He that is in the world.”* You can detect a false message and you can detect a true message.

He said, *“These preachers are of the world. They speak of the world and the world hears them. We are of God and He that heareth God heareth us. He that is not of God will not hear us.”*