

How Can You Recognize the Truth?

Intro:

1. **ILL: Fake gems in King Tut's tomb.**
2. There's so many churches & cults, it's hard to know who's teaching the truth.
3. Most of them claim to be Christians, so how can you know who the false teachers are?
4. This passage gives you some criteria, some evidence, you can use to determine who is right & who is wrong.

I John 3:23-4:6

I. 4:2-3 - The Truth will be Expressed by the Right Confession

A. Putting into words what you believe about Jesus is called "The Good Confession".

1. This confession is the foundation of your faith upon which everything else is based.

2. **ILL: The House Built Upon the Rock & the Sand (Matt 7:24-27).**

B. What are the Good Confessions found in the Bible?

1. The classic confession we use the most is "**Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God**" found in **Matt 16:13-16** - When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - a. **Jn 4:29** (the Samaritan woman) - Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?
 - b. **Jn 11:27** (Martha) - I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.
 - c. **Jn 1:49** (Nathaniel) - Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.
 - d. **Act 8:37** (the Ethiopian) - I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
2. Thomas' confession in the upper room "**My Lord & my God!**" - **Jn 20:28.**
 - a. Confessing **Jesus as Lord.** **Rom 10:9-10** - If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.
 - b. Confessing **Jesus as God.**
 - c. This is important because many just think of Jesus as a good man, a prophet, the leader of one of the world's great religions.
 - d. But - Lord Jesus was divine - God in flesh, God in human terms!
 - e. **Jn 1:1 & 14** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only.
 - f. **Jn 10:30** - I and the Father are one.
 - g. **Jn 14:8-9** - Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father."
 - h. **Col 2:9** - For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,
 - i. **Rom 9:5** - There are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised.
 - j. **Jn 8:58** - "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"
 - k. **Matt 1:23** - The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel - which means, "God with us."

3. **4:2-3 - Jesus has come in the flesh.**

- a. This is important because with my emphasis that Jesus is divine you may conclude the Lord was just God with skin on.
- b. Jesus was a complete human being!
- c. **Has come** (perfect tense) implies a completed event that affects us now.
- d. Lord Jesus was a man who lived in history & His life is an historical fact! Your faith is based on an historical fact!

II. 3:24 & 4:1, 4-5 - The Truth will be Empowered by the Right Spirit

- A. **3:24** - The Holy Spirit has been given to you. You received Him when you surrendered your life to the Lord. **Act 2:38 - Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
- B. **4:1-3** - The Holy Spirit can be tested to prove His reliability.
 1. The Spirit of Christ will acknowledge His true nature.
 2. The cults universally deny the deity of Christ.
- C. **4:4** - The Holy Spirit in you is greater than the spirits in the world!
 1. **ILL: "The Greater Power"**.
 2. You never have to fear the supernatural - the occult, witches, voodoo, ghosts, etc.

III. 4:6 - The Truth will be Obtained from the Right Source

- A. **Listens to us** = the message proclaimed by Paul & the other apostles.
 1. This is the message of the Bible in contrast to the "sacred writings" of the religions.
 2. The cults claim to have "inspired" writings in addition to the Bible.
 3. They rely more on the other writings than they do the Bible.
- B. It's the gospel of the Bible that makes you a child of God!
 1. **Rom 10:17 - Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ.**
 2. Remember our Lord's claim, **I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. - Jn 14:6.**
 3. The Bible is our source of truth. Other religious writings must be tested by that standard.
 4. Right & wrong, truth & falsehood are determined by what the Bible says about the Lord & your relationship to Him.

Confused about who's right? Who's wrong?
Recognize truth only when it comes from
the right confession,
the right Spirit &
the right source!