

1 JOHN 4:1-21

OBSERVATION: WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE SAY?

1. How is the audience addressed in verses 1, 7 & 11?
2. Note the number of times “spirit” is used in the passage.
3. Note the number of times “love” is mentioned.
4. Note the number of times “world” is used.
5. Note the number of times “abide” is used.
6. Note the usage of the phrases “the one” and “no one” (or their equivalents based on version differences)
7. As always, note the usage of God, Jesus Christ, Son, etc.
8. Spend more time than you think you should simply making observations: what do you see?

INTERPRETATION: WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN?

1. What is the “spirit of antichrist”? Note that the only place this word appears in the NT is here in 1 John: 2:18, 22; 4:3, and 2 John 1:7.
2. 1-6 appears to be a section, and 7-21 appears to be a different section. Referring back to the Introduction, what tests are being applied in these sections: Doctrinal, moral, or social?
3. What is the key to discerning truth from error in vs. 1-6.?
4. What does “spirit/spirits” refer to?
5. Connect the dots in John’s teaching about love: 2:9-11; 3:10-18 and in the gospel: John 3:16; 15:12-27; 21:15-17.
6. The word “abide” is a favorite of John’s, he uses it here in chapter 4 and in the gospel of John 14 – what does it mean to abide in God and for God to abide in you.
7. Connect this passage with Matthew 22:36-38.

APPLICATION: WHAT DOES THE PASSAGE MEAN TO ME/US?

1. Is there a necessary connection with believing Jesus is from God and loving one another?
2. Pursuing the truth and pursuing love are emphasized in this passage, which is more important?
3. Does loving lead to believing or does believing lead to loving?
4. How do you experience the presence of God in your life?
5. List ways in which you have loved others?
6. List ways in which you plan to love others?

ACTION PLAN

Spend time personally and with others in coming up with an action plan inspired by your study. What in this passage compels you to desire a change, to move to action, become more like Jesus. It could be a change in thinking, behavior, character. It could be internal or external. It could be personal or relational. Just don’t leave studying the Bible as simply an intellectual exercise.