

1.

Introduction

1.

Pleasure and persecution are the two key enemies of the church in the book of Revelation. Pleasure is Babylon the harlot, and persecution is the beast. We see persecution today in Turkey, China, Africa. In America we see pleasure. The aim of both is for you to deny Christ, because you are forced to, or because you want to. And both aim to convince you that God is not your God, and you are not His people. They aim for you to find your identity in this world, and with the ways of this world, rather than with Jesus Christ.

2.

There is a crisis of identity among Christians today. Too many Christians do not truly identify themselves with Jesus Christ. God is seeking worshipers who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), but I've spoken with two households recently who do not worship God because they are seeking a youth group. I want a youth group too, but I tell you the truth, if you want a youth group more than a worship service, your kids will follow your example! Show me a Christian father who says "I owe my life to Jesus Christ, so for me and my household on Sunday morning and Sunday evening, we will worship the Lord!" and I will show you 50 of my classmates at Covenant College who for that reason worshiped God faithfully as high schoolers, and now as young adults are giving their lives in service to Christ and His church. Our new missionary doctor Jim Knox is one—by deciding to go to Uganda he decided "I will give my body to malaria, to save Karimajong souls from death." These are salt that has not lost its saltiness, young people who will not deny Christ though pleasure and persecution may do their worst.

3.

Outline.

1.

The Identity Crisis vv. 24-25

2.

Do Not Fear Men, but God vv. 26-27

Matt. 10:24-33 - Protection in Persecution

Written by Tim Black
Sunday, 14 June 2009 13:00 -

3.

God Will Protect You, Soul and Body vv. 29-31

4.

Acknowledge Christ vv. 32-33

5.

Body

1.

The Identity Crisis vv. 24-25. Persecution seeks to create an identity crisis. It will make you question whether you really want to identify with Jesus Christ.

1.

You Are Not Above Christ's Persecution v. 24. You might hope that even if people reject Christ perhaps they will still like you. But Jesus tells you you are not above Christ's persecution

. If you really do belong to Jesus, you are not more privileged than He is.

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Text

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24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master.

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Though you will not receive the wrath of God because Christ bore it for you, you will receive the wrath of man.

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Your Persecution Is Like Christ's v. 25. The persecution you experience will be like the persecution of Christ.

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Text

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25 It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.

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They Will Call Christ's Satan's v. 26. Specifically, people will malign you like they maligned Christ; they will call Christ's people Satan's people.

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Text

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If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household.

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Christ calls Himself the "Master of the house," which means He is the Lord of the Church, the house of God on earth.

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The Philistines believed their god "Baal-zebub" was able to save you from death and carrion flies, so that is why Ahaziah wrongfully inquired of Baal-zebub on his deathbed in 2 Kings 1. Baal-zebub's name means "Lord of the flies" but he was also considered "the Prince of demons" (Matt.

12:24

)
The Jews changed the name "Beel zebub

--which means "Lord of the flies"--to "Beel zebul

," which literally means "Lord of the dwelling," but sounds like "Beel zebel

," "Lord of dung." So the Jews were saying your silly Philistine god won't save you from death, but he does get to keep watch over the dung! When Christ cast out demons the Jewish pundits called Him this name, making a pun upon a pun upon a pun(!) and scoring points with the peanut gallery. Christ is the true Master of the house of God, but His detractors call Him the Lord of the earthly dwelling, the "prince of the power of the air"

" (

Eph. 2:2

), the name for Satan. Yes, it's funny to a Jew, but also the height of evil, to call Jesus Christ by Satan's name!

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If they did that to Christ, they will do it to you. They will demonize Christians, calling murder "Pro-Choice," calling preaching God's word against homosexuality a homophobic "hate crime," calling you a "goody two-shoes," a prude, a puritanical throwback to an outmoded era. They will call you crazy for believing Christ rose from the dead, and naively idealistic to believe true forgiveness and reconciliation can be had among men.

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Now you need to answer the question: Do you belong to Jesus, or to the unbelieving world? In the face of persecution, who do you really worship?

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Do Not Fear Men, but God vv. 26-27. Jarringly, Christ tells you that because men persecute you for belonging to Christ you should not fear men, but God . Because of persecution? Yes!

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Unbelievers' Lies Will Be Exposed v. 26. First, because it is founded on lies, and unbelievers' lies will be exposed

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Text

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26 So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

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We should recognize that Christ speaks of unbelievers' lies here because of the immediately preceding verses, but also because Christ uses this statement in **Luke 12:2** to indicate the Pharisees' hypocrisy one day will be unmasked:

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Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. 2 Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.

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If you really cared that Christ was evil, you would love the God who is good—but you don't! If you really want your children to go to church, you would take them there—but you don't! One day the secrets of your heart will be laid bare. Your excuses, your false accusations, will fail you before the judgment seat of God!

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Have no fear when unbelievers malign you as evildoers for doing good. If they are not ashamed today they will give an account on the judgment day, and seeing your good works they will glorify God in the day of visitation.

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Proclaim God's Truth v. 27. Over against their lies, proclaim God's truth! Christ says

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Text

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27 What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

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The gospel was not meant for the 12 apostles alone, but for the world. It is not only for Christians, but for unbelievers. It is the good news of salvation through Jesus Christ, meant to be told to others, meant to be proclaimed openly for all to hear. The light of Christ banishes the darkness of this world—it defends the innocent, it convicts the guilty, it saves the sinner. "The light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their deeds were evil. 20 For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. 21 But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.

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" (
John 3:19-21

)
Do not fear men, but fear God
, and for that reason,
proclaim God's truth
!

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God Can Destroy Both Soul and Body v. 28. Not only will God's truth triumph through you, but God will triumph over wicked men. Do not fear men, because God alone can destroy both soul and body

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Text

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28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.

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Men can kill the body. But they cannot kill the soul. Now be honest with me. Are you more afraid of losing your body or your soul? Day to day, do you put more effort into your bodily, or your spiritual health? And if a terrorist on a plane told you to raise your hand if you are a Christian, would you do it? I am convinced Christians should make the best soldiers, because they know their soul is safe in the hands of God. Do not fear men, but fear God.

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God Will Protect You, Soul and Body vv. 29-31. God will protect you, body and soul.

1.

God Protects Sparrows v. 29. You see, God even protects the sparrows.

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Text

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29 Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father.

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I've seen sparrows all my life, but never as close as I have out the study window of our house here in Caney. I've learned something new about sparrows—they flutter two feet off the ground, almost hovering, then drop down to catch an insect in the grass. Until learning that, frankly I've considered sparrows to be one of the most common, drab, and boring birds around—right up there with starlings. In Jesus' day too they were a dime a dozen—nothing to get excited about, but God watches over them so carefully, attends to them so particularly, provides for them with such compassion, that not one of them will fall to the ground apart from His will. Do you know God cares for you in this way? And even more than that!

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God Numbers the Hairs of Your Head v. 30. God even numbers the hairs of your head.

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Text

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30 But even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

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In God's omnipotence, and His omniscience, He is absolutely sovereign. He "works all things according to the counsel of His will.

" (
Eph. 1:11
) So far from being a curse, this is a blessing, because His sovereign providence is also deeply personal ; He cares for each sparrow; He cares for each hair of your head. How much more does he care for you , in your whole body and soul!

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God Values You More than Many Sparrows v. 31. Do not fear men, but fear—and trust—God, because God values you more than many sparrows

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Text

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31 Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

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Acknowledge Christ vv. 32-33. Brothers and sisters in Christ, whom do you fear? Who intimidates you into silence about your love for your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ? Your unbelieving neighbor, your family member who refuses to worship God, your boss who has no respect for the Lord's Day? Acknowledge Christ before men. You need not launch into a full gospel presentation the next time you see them. But when they push, tempt, lead, or connive you to drop your commitment to Jesus Christ, tell them "No, I cannot, because I serve Christ my Savior." When it comes down to it, who is your master? Who is your Lord?

1.

Acknowledge and Be Acknowledged v. 32. Christ said,

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Text

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32 So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven,

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Paul Houtari was one grade behind me from 6th grade through high school. We were both skinny, studious, and gentle natured. He was under me when I was safety patrol captain in 6th grade. He sat with me at the bottom of the bench on the C-squad basketball team. He was ridiculed and abused by the same guys I was. Back then the "No Fear" t-shirts were popular. After I spoke at my high school graduation saying the only way to truly have "no fear" is by salvation through Jesus Christ, he caught me in the parking lot, and said, "These 7 years, you inspired me to stand up for Christ." I never knew he was a Christian before that day.

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Acknowledge Christ before men, and I tell you, you will be rewarded with the greatest reward—not popularity, not pleasure, not an easy life, but with Christ your Savior who will say on that final day, "Yes, he belongs to me."

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Deny and Be Denied v. 33. Christ also tells you,

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Text

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33 but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.

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Deny Christ before men, and one day He will tell you, "I never knew you; depart from me."

(
Matt. 7:23
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Conclusion

1.

Jesus Christ is Lord. He is your Savior. This is the simple confession of a true Christian, and this is the reality in the world. But do you actively identify yourself with Christ? Or do you allow the world to intimidate or tempt you away from Him? Do not fear men, but God. God will protect you, body and soul. So acknowledge Christ, and remember that He will acknowledge you before His Father in heaven!

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