



World Christian Fellowship

www.wcflondon.com
wcflondon@gmail.com

Cure for Hypocrisy. Fear Spirit of God! Luke 12:10-12.

Luke 12:1-12, *In the meantime, when an innumerable multitude of people had gathered together, so that they trampled one another, He began to say to His disciples first of all, "Beware of the [a]leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.² For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, nor hidden that will not be known.³ Therefore whatever you have spoken in the dark will be heard in the light, and what you have spoken in the ear in inner rooms will be proclaimed on the housetops. ⁴"And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. ⁵But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! ⁶"Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. ⁷But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.
⁸"Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. ⁹But he*

who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God. ¹⁰“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. ¹¹“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. ¹²For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”

In Luke chapter 11 says that false religion is all hypocrisy.

False religion does not truly know God.

It cannot bring someone to God and to His kingdom.

False religion does not provide forgiveness, redemption, it does not empower people to do what is right to please God.

False religion is deception.

It is all lies and hypocrisy.

Jesus, only spoke truth, because He was the truth incarnate, and He made it crystal clear how hypocritical the false religion of Judaism was.

Jesus came preaching the kingdom, preaching the good news of forgiveness, salvation, giving people the hope of heaven if they trusted in Him.

Calling people to repentance and faith and acknowledging Him as Lord, Messiah and Saviour. He confirmed the truthfulness of that message in a massive, extensive display of supernatural miracles to make it very clear that He was indeed God in human flesh speaking the truth.

Luke 11:15, *But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."*

The ultimate blasphemy, the opposite to the truth!

They called Jesus satanic, when in fact He was divine. They said He did what He did by the power of Satan, when what He did, He did by the power of the Spirit.

They have rejected their Messiah.

This is one discourse that took place at one time, and it runs from **Luke 12:1 to 13:9**.

It is a long discourse punctuated by a couple of interruptions. The background here of all that our Lord says is judgment.

V 5, *But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him!*

You have got to avoid the hypocrisy that is all around you.

How do you do that?

How does one avoid being a hypocrite?

Luke 12:2-12, the Lord's give you three things.

1. Honour God,
2. Honour Christ, and
3. Honour the Spirit.

1. Fear/Honour God.

Escaping hell starts with honouring God.

V 5, *"Fear the One who after He has killed has authority to cast into hell."*

Why should you fear God?

- a) **God will uncover what is hidden.**
- b) **God will punish hypocrites in hell.**
- c) **Nothing escapes God's knowledge.**

2. Honour Christ/ Son of God.

How do I truly fear God?

Honour the Son.

V 8-9, *“Also I say to you, whoever confesses Me before men, him the Son of Man also will confess before the angels of God. ⁹But he who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God.*

It all comes down to Christ. If you do not honour Christ, you cannot honour God.

John 5:23, *that all should honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He who does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent Him.*

You cannot honour God without honouring His Son.

There is only one way to avoid being condemned with the hypocrites.

There is only one way to avoid false religion and that is to come to the truth, to come to the one true religion.

In order to escape the judgment of those in false religion, the judgment of hypocrites, we must confess and honour God. We must confess and honour Christ. There is no way to God except through Christ.

John 14:6, *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*

Now we come to the next transition and the third member of the Trinity. You do not honour the Son unless you honour God the Spirit.

V 10 -12, *“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven. ¹¹“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say. ¹²For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”*

- ✓ The One to fear, God the Father.
- ✓ The one to confess, God the Son.
- ✓ The One to hear, God the Holy Spirit.

No one comes to the Father except through the Son, and no one comes to the Son except by the Spirit.

To avoid the damning judgment that comes on people in false religious systems requires believing in the Father, the true God. But it also requires believing in the true Son and it also requires believing in the true Spirit.

- ✓ We must acknowledge God the Father as sovereign judge, law giver.

- ✓ We must acknowledge the Son as sovereign Saviour and Lord.
- ✓ We must acknowledge the Holy Spirit as sovereign revealer, Sovereign revealer.

- We acknowledge God the Father as the One whose holy law has been violated.
- We honour God the Son as the one who has paid the penalty for that violation and satisfied God's wrath.
- We honour the Spirit as the one whose revelation concerning God and Christ has been made known to us.

No one comes to God except through Christ.

No one comes to Christ except through the Spirit because you cannot come to Christ unless you know the truth about Him, and you cannot know the truth about Him unless you believe the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit that tells us about Christ. It is Christ who points us to the Father. God is revealed in Christ and Christ is revealed by the Holy Spirit.

1 John 4:1, *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

Everybody who comes along and tells you they represent God, they speak for God, they know the truth of God, do not believe. The world is full of liars and deceivers and false prophets. They are everywhere. Do not be gullible.

Just because somebody says that they have a word from the Lord, or a message from God, or the Lord spoke to them and told them this, or that, do not believe it just because they claim that, put them to the test because there are so many false prophets.

1 John 4:2, *By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,*

Remember now, the Holy Spirit is the singular revealer.

How do you know when the message is really from the Spirit of God and not some other spirit, either a human spirit or a demonic spirit?

How do you know when the message is really from the Spirit of God?

1 John 4:3, *and every spirit that does not confess ^{to} that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.*

There are only two possibilities out in the world.

When somebody says they have a message from God, it is either true from the Spirit of God, or it is a lie from the spirit of Antichrist.

There is no middle ground.

Matthew 12:30, *He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.*

You cannot just believe everybody's message is from God because they claim it is.

How do I know when this is from the Spirit of God?

It is a true confession of Jesus Christ.

Christology is the test that Jesus is God, Lord, Saviour come in the flesh. It is a confirmation of the reality of Jesus Christ, God the Son, that the human Jesus and the divine Christ are one and the same.

Anybody who does not confess this true Christology is not from God. The Holy Spirit's testimony to Christ is the only way we know the truth about Christ.

Romans 10:17, *So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Who is the author of the Word concerning Christ?

Who is the author of the Word of God?

Who is the author of the New Testament?

Who is the author of the Old Testament?

The Holy Spirit.

2 Peter 1:21, *for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.*

It is the Spirit who has authored the Word.

He is the revealer.

Now we already know you cannot reject Christ and know God.

You can only know God if you know Christ.

Luke 10:16, *He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."*

John 14:6, *"No one comes to the Father but by Me."*

If you don't honour the Son, you can't honour the Father.

John 8:42, *Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me.*

1 John 2:23, *Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.*

If you do not have the right teaching about Christ, believe the right teaching about Christ, you do not know God and you cannot know what is true of Christ unless you believe in the revelation that has come by the Holy Spirit.

Those who confess Jesus Christ as Lord do so because they have heard the truth about Christ, which is revealed in the Scripture. They have read it or heard that Scripture proclaimed or given to them in witness and testimony.

The Spirit is the one who gives life.

2 Corinthians 3:6, *who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*

The Spirit is the one who regenerates, as Jesus said in His conversation with Nicodemus in **John 3**.

It is the Spirit who convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment.

John 16:8, *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:*

The Spirit does all that not in a vacuum, not in some mystical experience. He does that through Scripture. It is the reading of the Word of God authored by the Spirit that brings the sinner to the reality of his own sinfulness, because it is the Scripture that reveals the law of God.

Measured against that law, you know you are a sinner and that is how you become convicted of sin and righteousness and the judgment that is revealed in Scripture.

You would not know what sin was without the law.

You would not know what righteousness was without the law.

You would not know what judgment was unless God had laid down the punishment for the violation of that law.

So, the Spirit brings conviction through the Word.

He brings regeneration through exposure to and belief in the Word.

He brings, of course, new life through the Word.

1 Peter 1:23, *having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever,*

It is the Word of God makes you to be wise for salvation.

2 Timothy 3:15, *and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*

No one knows what is inside of a man.

1 Corinthians 2:11, *For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.*

The Holy Spirit knowing the mind of God who reveals that mind in Scripture.

How do you know then that the Spirit of God is speaking?

If what is said is consistent with Scripture if it is consistent with the revelation of Jesus Christ and the gospel in the Scripture because that is what the Spirit's work is.

Now you begin to see a very important truth emerge here.

You cannot know the Father except through the Son, and you will never be able to know the Son unless you believe the testimony of The Spirit.

Because there is no way to get there apart from the revelation of the Spirit in the external Word and then energized through the internal work.

The Corinthian church is a chaotic assembly of people. They had managed to import into church life just about everything that was bad from their pre-Christian days. They were so steeped in paganism that it found its way into the church as we well.

Perhaps the worst way was using ecstatic experience. What occurred in pagan, mystery religions, in pagan, cultic religions in the ancient Roman and Greek world were these kinds of esoteric things that were called *enthusiasmos* and *ekstasias*, the Greek words, “ecstasy” and “enthusiasm.”

The idea was to get yourself in euphoric state, to elevate yourself through gluttony and the combination of drunkenness and sexual orgies conducted with temple priests.

Somehow in this kind of condition you would commune with God. So, they were high on these kinds of ecstatic and esoteric mystical experiences.

When they came into the church, they found a place where they could sort of attach these things, they were so much a part of their life. The place they found to attach them was in the exercise of spiritual gifts. The Holy Spirit had given to the church certain spiritual gifts, abilities for people to minister to each other. But they had perverted that by bringing into the category of spiritual gifts these esoteric experiences.

1 Corinthians 12:1-3, *Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: ²You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. ³Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit.*

You were in demonic religion, and you abandoned yourself to these things and let demons take you anywhere they wanted to take you and you thought this was how you communed with God. You were just being led away by these dumb idols any old direction.

You have people standing up cursing Jesus. That is not by the Spirit of God. But they were allowing for it because it was supposedly a supernatural manifestation.

No one will ever be able to confess Jesus as Lord except by the work of the Holy Spirit.

You cannot get to God except through Christ and you cannot get to Christ except through the Holy Spirit.

It is the Holy Spirit working internally from the hearing of the external Word which the Spirit has authored.

A full, true confession of Jesus Christ as Lord is only possible by the work of the Holy Spirit through exposure to the written revelation, the external Scripture which He authored and accompanied by the internal heart work by which He regenerates, illuminates, and sanctifies.

V 10, *“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.*

Now this verse has been misused, misapplied, misrepresented.

What does it mean to blaspheme the Holy Spirit?

Some people think it means to deny

- somebody's tongues, or
- somebody's encounter with God, or
- somebody's revelation, or
- somebody's word of wisdom, or
- somebody's word of knowledge, or
- somebody's claim that the Lord led to do this, or that.

Nothing to do with that at all. That has nothing to do with the text of this passage or its meaning.

How can you be forgiven for speaking against Son of God?

There would not be any Christians if you could not be forgiven of that.

Do you understand that every person before they are converted is a blasphemer?

What does it mean to blaspheme?

- To reject Christ,
- To deny Christ.
- To be against Christ.

You are either for Me or against Me.

If you are against Me, you have taken the position of one who rejects Me, who speaks against Me, or believes against Me, that is forgivable, or nobody is saved.

John 16:8-9, *And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: ^aof sin, because they do not believe in Me;*

That is the blasphemy.

Every sinner is a blasphemer of Christ.

Before I was saved, I was.

Before you were saved, you were.

Before anyone is saved from the blasphemy of not confessing Jesus as Lord and acknowledging Him as Saviour.

Luke 5:32, *I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

Mark 3:28, *"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter;*

- You may blaspheme God and God will forgive it.
- You blasphemed God every time you broke His Law.
- You blasphemed God every time you denied the sovereignty of God in your life.
- You blasphemed God every time you did your own will without regard for His.
- You blasphemed Christ when you did not acknowledge Him as Lord and Saviour.

You have been forgiven of that.

Matthew 12:31, *"Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.*

Jesus said, *"Sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven men."*

Of course, if you cannot forgive blasphemy, nobody is ever going to get saved because all sin, in a sense, is blasphemy.

Salvation does forgive the sinner's blasphemy. Every human who has repented and believed. We have all repented of our blasphemy and been forgiven of it.

Blasphemy is not some unique extraordinary evil, some isolated attitude, act, or expression. It is the way of all the human race.

- It is blasphemy to break God's Law.
- It is blasphemy to ignore God.
- It is blasphemy to reject Christ.

Everyone who has been saved has been forgiven of that. That can be forgiven.

Here is what cannot be?

V 10, *“And anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but to him who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven.”*

Why?

Because the Holy Spirit is the revealer of salvation through Christ.

If you speak evil against His revelation, you cannot be saved because there is no other way to come to the truth.

That is what the Pharisees had done.

Luke 11:15, *But some of them said, “He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons.”*

They said Jesus was of Satan.

His power came from hell.

What they were doing was not just rejecting the father because you cannot honour the father without honouring the Son.

It was not just dishonouring the Son, but what they were doing was rejecting the testimony to Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Once you cut yourself off from the revelation, you can never be saved.

When Jesus came into the world in His incarnation, He was subject to the Holy Spirit.

Luke 3:22, *And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."*

As Jesus began His ministry He did with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 4:1, *Then Jesus, being filled with the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,* He went into the wilderness to be tempted but He was full of the Holy Spirit.

When the temptation was over.

Luke 4:14, *Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.*

He began to announce who He was in the synagogue at Nazareth.

Luke 4:18-19, *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ¹⁹To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”*

Acts 10:38, *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him.*

It was the Spirit who worked through Jesus. That is why Jesus said, if you blaspheme Me, that could be forgiven. But if you blaspheme the Spirit, you just cut yourself off from the revelation; you cannot be saved, because there is no way to be saved except to believe the Spirit's testimony to Christ. So, if you do not believe the Spirit's testimony to Christ, there is no way to get the truth. There is no truth apart from the Holy Spirit.

In the upper room in the last Passover, Jesus said many wonderful things to His disciples.

John 14:26, *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*

John 15:26, *“But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

The Spirit is the revealer.

You reject the testimony of the Spirit recorded for us in Scripture, you will never be forgiven. You will be condemned to hell with the rest of the hypocrites.

That is what the Pharisees did. They thought they were honouring God, but they refused to honour the Son. They could be forgiven for their blasphemy against Jesus if they would believe the testimony of the Spirit. But if they blasphemed the Spirit and denied the authenticity of His testimony, there was no hope of salvation because faith again comes by hearing the truth. We are born again by the Word.

Illustrations.

Hebrews chapter 6 is a warning to people who have been exposed to the Spirit's testimony.

Hebrews 6:4, *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit,*

What does it mean to be enlightened?

Intellectually you had the truth, you heard the message, you heard the gospel.

What does it mean tasted it?

You heard its offer of grace, mercy, and forgiveness. Right relationship with God and heaven and eternal life.

Have been made a partaker of the Holy Spirit.

Not a possessor of the Holy Spirit but you experienced the Spirit's power.

Hebrews 6:5, *and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come,*

The exposure of these Jews to whom this epistle is written to the apostolic ministry where the apostles came in the power

of the Holy Spirit, did signs and wonders, which are mentioned back in chapter 2, miracles, signs, and wonders.

Remember they were warned. How are you going to escape the judgment of God if you neglect so great a salvation which was confirmed to you through signs and wonders and miracles?

Hebrews 6:6, *if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.*

You cannot be saved.

- You have just rejected the testimony of the Holy Spirit,
- the good Word of God,
- the enlightenment that comes from the gospel,
- the taste of what the heavenly gift offers you,
- the powers of the age to come,
- the miracle power that was testimony by the Holy Spirit through the apostles of the truth of the gospel.

If after all that revelation, enlightenment, understanding, and tasting then you depart, you can never be saved because the only way to be saved is to believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit, no way to be saved.

Another warning in Hebrews 10.

This is similar warning to Jewish people who had this exposure but were turning away from all of that.

Again, you can be forgiven for blaspheming God. We have been. You can be forgiven for blaspheming Christ by rejecting Him. We all have been.

But you will never be forgiven for blaspheming the Holy Spirit because the revelation that He has given must be accepted and believed in order to come to Christ.

Hebrews 10:26, *For if we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins,*

You have been exposed to gospel truth, if you just go on sinning wilfully, then there is no other provision for your sins.

Hebrews 10:27, *but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries.*

All you have got left is judgment in hell.

Hebrews 10:29, *Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which*

he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace?

You heard it, you experienced it.

You saw the power of the Spirit.

You tasted the heavenly gift.

You heard the good Word and you trampled it.

How much severer is your punishment in hell going to be?

When you have rejected the message of Scripture, when you reject the gospel of Christ, you have insulted, or blasphemed the Spirit of grace and all that is left for you is hell.

Hebrews 10:30, *For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. And again, "The Lord will judge His people."* ³¹*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

Blasphemy of the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with rejecting your supposed claim to a tongue as a gift from the Spirit, or a word from the Lord, or a vision or a prophecy.

Blaspheming the Holy Spirit is rejecting His revelation as to the truth of Jesus Christ.

- If you reject the revelation the Spirit has given us,
- if you reject the Scripture,

- if you reject the external record of the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ,
- If you have seen the miracles, signs and wonders.

Then you cannot be saved.

You have just insulted or blasphemed the Holy Spirit.
That is not possible to be forgiven if it is a final rejection of that truth. You can never be saved.

No one can ever be saved who does not believe the testimony of the Holy Spirit to Jesus Christ.

As long as you reject the testimony of the Spirit to Jesus Christ, you are unforgivable.

1 Thessalonians 5:19, *Do not quench the Spirit.*

How do you quench the Spirit?

1 Thessalonians 5:20, *Do not despise prophecies.*

Do not despise proclamation.

How would you quench the Spirit?

By despising, belittling His revelation, His disclosure and those who preach that truth.

You quench the Spirit when you will not respond to the truth that He has revealed when it is preached.

So, if you want to escape the damning hypocrisy of false religion, you must honour the Father. You can only do that by honouring the Son. That means confessing Him as Lord. You can only honour the Son by honouring the Holy Spirit. That means affirming that what the Spirit says about Christ on the pages of Scripture is the truth.

V 11-12, *“Now when they bring you to the synagogues and magistrates and authorities, do not worry about how or what you should answer, or what you should say.¹² For the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.”*

If you will once believe the Holy Spirit concerning the gospel you will have the Holy Spirit as your permanent teacher throughout all your life here on this earth.

If you will believe the testimony of the Spirit of God to the truth of Christ, if you will embrace the gospel and believe in what the Spirit has revealed concerning Jesus Christ, the promise is that the Spirit of God will come to take a residence in you and be there even to the severest time when you will be literally called on the carpet, your life on the line, and the Spirit of God will sustain you even at that hour.

Once you become a believer in the testimony of the Spirit, the Spirit will assure you that you will always be a believer in the Spirit's testimony.

A great statement.

Issue of persevering of the saints.

What could be worse than saying I believe in the Holy Spirit, I believe in His testimony concerning Christ, I embrace Christ as Lord, I confess Him as Lord, therefore I am honouring the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

What might happen down the road somewhere if I am called before a synagogue, tribunal, if I am called before a court, or if I am called to give testimony to Christ and if I do, I will lose my life, I will lose my freedom, I will get thrown in prison, I will become a martyr, etc., etc.?

I might not be able to make it,
I might not be able to hang on,
I might not be able to sustain that,
I am too weak.
I know my own heart.

The testimony here is you have nothing to be concerned about. Do not be anxious about anything.

Do not worry about what you are going to say in your defence.

The Holy Spirit is going to teach you in that very hour what you should say. The Holy Spirit becomes your permanent anointing.

1 John 2:27-28, *But the anointing which you have received from Him abides in you, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will abide in Him. ²⁸And now, little children, abide in Him, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.*

To the end of your life, no matter what the difficulty, is going to be a confirmation of your affirmed faith in Jesus Christ.

This is the inevitability of it.

It does not say if, it says when.

Every synagogue had a court in it. There were usually about twenty-three judges that presided over the local synagogue court. All the issues of law were taken care of in the synagogue and many of them were violations of the Jewish religious law and the local court.

If you were brought before a local synagogue court it was a terrible indignity to a person to have that happen. Very embarrassing.

The court usually wielded the power of scourging.

According to **Deuteronomy 25:1-3**, they were not to give more than forty lashes, so they usually gave only thirty-nine in case somebody miscount, they did not want to break the law. The court would then decree that if you violated the Jewish law, the religious law, you were to be beaten with thirty-nine lashes.

One judge would then recite an appropriate psalm or an Old Testament text.

A second judge would count the blows, never more than thirty-nine for fear that the miscount you might go over forty.

A third judge would issue every command.

This went on in every local synagogue.

In fact, by the testimony of the apostle Paul himself — who was a fastidious Pharisee, one of the Pharisees and certainly a scribal Pharisee in the sense that he was a very astute theologian — he himself engaged in this. Listen to

Acts 22:19-20, *So I said, 'Lord, they know that in every synagogue I imprisoned and beat those who believe on You. ²⁰And when the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I*

also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

That is what Paul did.

He went from synagogue to synagogue finding Jews in the community who had embraced Jesus as Messiah and giving them thirty-nine lashes.

Jesus says it is going to happen.

The rulers and the authorities could include other Jewish authorities, but probably extends it to Gentiles, to the Romans and the Greeks. They are going to persecute you as well. Whatever it is that they bring, whatever kind of punishment or threat, you do not have to be anxious about how or what you should speak in your defence or what you should say, for the Holy Spirit will teach you in that very hour what you ought to say.

Always the revealer!

This is a time we know in Scripture as the Tribulation.

Luke 21:10-18, *Then He said to them, "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.¹¹ And there will be great earthquakes in various places, and famines and pestilences; and there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.¹² But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the*

synagogues and prisons. You will be brought before kings and rulers for My name's sake. ¹³But it will turn out for you as an occasion for testimony. ¹⁴Therefore settle it in your hearts not to meditate beforehand on what you will answer; ¹⁵for I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries will not be able to contradict or resist. ¹⁶You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. ¹⁷And you will be hated by all for My name's sake. ¹⁸But not a hair of your head shall be lost. ¹⁹By your patience possess your souls.

Eternal life will be yours through your endurance.

1 Peter 4:12-14, *Beloved, do not think it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened to you; ¹³but rejoice to the extent that you partake of Christ's sufferings, that when His glory is revealed, you may also be glad with exceeding joy. ¹⁴If you are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are you, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you. On their part He is blasphemed, but on your part He is glorified.*

The more you suffer here, the more you are rewarded there. Once you have believed the revealer, He takes up residence in you and your body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit, who teaches you all things, brings things to your remembrance, shows you Christ and confirms your confession in the greatest

times of distress. This is a promise of perseverance through the ministry of the Holy Spirit.

How do you avoid the disaster of being a hypocrite?

How do you come to the truth?

By believing and honouring God as holy, sovereign judge, by honouring the Son as holy, sovereign Lord and Saviour and by honouring the Holy Spirit as holy, sovereign revealer of truth.

You cannot come to Christ but by the Spirit's testimony.

You cannot come to God but by Christ.