

Audio Transcript of Sermon

January 11, 2025

Cultural Christianity

Hello. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Tom Laign with Sabbath Bible Study. Have you ever heard the term cultural Christian? Until recently, I hadn't heard the term before, though I have met many people who would likely be by their own account cultural Christians. Within Christianity there is debate as to what makes a cultural Christian, and it might even cause some who are hearing this message today to wonder what the big deal is about cultural Christianity. To begin with, we need to make sure we know what the term culture means. When I finished my career in public education, I was working for the central office special education department and would travel to just about all the schools within the district. If we looked at each school as a person, we could say each school had a unique personality, and if we wanted to get along with the school as a person, we would need to find a way to relate to that school's personality. If we looked at each school as a collective group of people, which is a more accurate representation, we would say each school had a unique culture, and if we wanted to get along with the people of the school, we would need to find a way to relate to that school's culture.

Culture is the customs, arts, social institutions, and achievement of any group of people we are looking at. Working out of the central office special education department, a school's culture is what I would expect to see whenever I visited a school, and making things unique for each school, each school had its own culture. While there were many things I would expect to see at each campus, some parts of a school's culture were unique to that one school. Earlier in my teaching career I was split between two campuses, teaching at one campus in the morning and teaching at another campus in the afternoon. It was easy for me to see the differences in the cultures. At one campus, there was consistently more energy with the students and staff. At the other campus, energy levels would fluctuate throughout the year, with some times of the year being much quieter and at select times of the year being much more boisterous, even though both places provided the same type of educational opportunities. When I later worked for the central office special education department, I used that experience to realize that each campus would have a unique culture even among staff. If I wanted to be effective with my central office position, I not only had to reflect the

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culture of central office, but I had to work within the culture of the campus. Those who are cultural Christians have decided to work within what they see as the culture of Christianity. To fit in, they have identified what Christians do and how they act without believing what Christians believe. They may look like a Christian and act like a Christian, but they do not have the faith of a Christian. To the extreme, they might be the person that appears to be a Christian who dots all the i's and crosses all the t's of Christianity, yet what they do is done without faith.

That's contrasted to people who are of the household of faith who believe that there is God the Father and Jesus Christ, who believe that Jesus Christ came as a mortal man and was crucified and resurrected so that we can have eternal life. Cultural Christians may have a great understanding of what is in the Bible, but faith is missing. They may be able to intellectually describe and relate what they read, but faith is missing. Simply put, a cultural Christian is somebody who lacking faith identifies as a Christian. Some by default consider themselves to be a cultural Christian. These people are honest with themselves in ways that some are not. Often being a cultural Christian is done for social reasons whereas Christianity is a devotion of faith.

There are some as Christians who try to label many as cultural Christians. For instance, anyone who they see as calling themselves Christian who does not attend their church might to them be a cultural Christian, so some over apply the concept of cultural Christianity. Jesus pointed out to his disciples that even a person who didn't follow them could still be considered an ally, because they were not opposed to them. Mark Nine verse thirty-eight.

Mark 9:38-41

38. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

39. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.

40. For he that is not against us is on our part.

41. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

So, for the many who consider themselves or who may think of others as cultural Christians, those many who like this person from Mark who cast out demons in the name of Jesus who did not follow Christ, they are not necessarily opposed to Christ or those who are Christians. They want to fit in, not rock the boat. What they do not bring is faith. But there still is a big deal with cultural Christians, because the faith that we have grows within us an unyielding loyalty to God the Father and Jesus Christ. To a degree, Christians extend loyalty to others of the household of faith, though we keep unyielding loyalty reserved for God the Father and Jesus Christ. Because cultural Christians lack faith, they also lack unyielding loyalty to God the Father and Jesus Christ, and by extension loyalty to others of the household of faith. Should at some future time when God the Father and Jesus Christ are inconvenient in society, cultural Christians may very well change and no longer identify as Christians, but we will remain solid in the faith. Should they change at some future time because of convenience, any loyalty they showed to others because of their connection to the faith can change also.

Today, we are going to review the Biblical history of the term Christianity, review what it means to be a Christian, and even though most cultural Christians just want to fit in, we will see the downside of being a cultural Christian, even looking forward into prophecy.

It was at Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians. When the name Christians was first tossed out by the locals, we don't know if this name was given by locals to affirm the faith they saw in the disciples or to ridicule the disciples. My experience with human nature tells me they probably intended to ridicule the disciples, but their efforts of humiliation became a badge of honor. Recently in the 2012 United States presidential election, the challenger to President Obama tried to ridicule the Affordable Healthcare Act with the name Obamacare, linking the name of the President to a public insurance option available to people with limited financial means. That effort quickly failed when during a debate President Obama replied that he liked the name Obamacare. My thought is something similar happened with the disciples in Antioch. An attempt to ridicule them found acceptance among believers who wore the moniker Christian as a badge of honor. Acts eleven verse nineteen.

Acts 11:19-26

19. Now they which were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phoenicia, and Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to none but unto the Jews only.

20. And some of them were men of Cyprus and Cyrene, which, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks, preaching the Lord Jesus.

21. And the hand of the Lord was with them: and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord.

22. Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch.

23. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

24. For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

25. Then departed Barnabas to Tarsus, for to seek Saul:

26. And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

The use of the term Christians by disciples and non-believers steadily grew. When Paul was on trial before King Agrippa, the king told Paul that he almost persuaded him to be a Christian, showing acceptance and use of the term Christian. Acts twenty-six verse twenty-four.

Acts 26:24-32

24. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

25. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.

26. For the king knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner.

27. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.

28. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.

29. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds.

30. And when he had thus spoken, the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them:

31. And when they were gone aside, they talked between themselves, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds.

32. Then said Agrippa unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar.

Belief and faith are central to what it means to be a Christian. Paul made very clear that we need more than an intellectual understanding of what is in the Bible to be saved. He showed we cannot deny Jesus, meaning we must acknowledge he came in the flesh and died for our sins, and that he was resurrected from the dead, all so that we can be saved. Romans ten verse five.

Romans 10:5-11

5. For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

6. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above:

7. Or, Who shall descend into the deep? that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.

8. But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;

9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

10. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

11. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.

He also showed that when we are led by the Holy Spirit there is no condemnation awaiting us. He explained that if we are led by the Holy Spirit, we will do those things of the spirit. Romans eight verse one.

Romans 8:1-17

1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

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3. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

5. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

7. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness.

11. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Paul made a distinction between living after the flesh and after the spirit showing that we through the Holy Spirit must eliminate what is normal for people to do. It is when we are led by the Holy Spirit that we are the children of God. Verse twelve.

12. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh.

13. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

15. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

16. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:

17. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

As a Christian, we surrender our life so that we can be led by the Holy Spirit to follow Jesus Christ, knowing we are living a life that challenges human mortality and what it means to be human. The life that we live as a Christian is focused on the righteousness of God the Father, and the Kingdom of God, which transcends the human experience. Luke nine verse twenty-three.

Luke 9:23-26

23. And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26. For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

As Christians who are led by the Holy Spirit, who live a life of faith, who seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, we need to be aware that not everyone is of the household of faith. When Paul wrote to Timothy about what to expect in the last days, he gave a long list of all the undesirable characteristics we can easily see today. Along with this long list of undesirable characteristics is added that they have a form of godliness, meaning to many they even with all these characteristics appear to be religious, but they deny the power. This verse describes our present world, and more narrowly describes two-faced cultural Christians.

Cultural Christians don't believe Jesus came in the flesh and died for our sins. Among these people are those who even though they lack faith, they see value in the teachings of the Bible and as best as they can without faith, they follow the teachings. There are others who consider themselves cultural Christians who see a value in the term Christian, because calling themselves a Christian will get them favor with others, but they have no interest in the teachings of the Bible and will go to great lengths to hide that from others. Conversely, we who are Christians know that all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Second Timothy three verse one.

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2 Timothy 3:1-17

- 1. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.**
- 2. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,**
- 3. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,**
- 4. Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;**
- 5. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.**
- 6. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,**
- 7. Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.**
- 8. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.**
- 9. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was.**
- 10. But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,**
- 11. Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me.**
- 12. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.**
- 13. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.**
- 14. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;**
- 15. And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.**
- 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:**
- 17. That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.**

As Christians, we know of the need to repent. Without seeing a need to change our lives through repentance, knowing God would be impossible. Cultural Christians do not see the need for repentance as we would see, and again the difference comes down to faith. Matthew four verse twelve.

Matthew 4:12-17

12. Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

13. And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

14. That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15. The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;

16. The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

17. From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Cultural Christians are cultural Christians because it is convenient for them to appear to be Christian without being a Christian. Among the cultural Christians are those who genuinely seek to be a good person after the judgment of people, and they use the name Christian to identify who they are. Others have no desire to be a good person, but they masquerade as a good person using the name Christian to whitewash who they truly are. Matthew twenty-three verse thirteen.

Matthew 23:13-28

13. But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18. And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

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- 19. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?**
- 20. Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.**
- 21. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.**
- 22. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.**
- 23. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.**
- 24. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.**
- 25. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.**
- 26. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.**
- 27. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.**
- 28. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.**

Cultural Christians will be willing to change their beliefs when it is convenient for them to change. We who are Christians know that God and Jesus Christ do not change, and therefore our beliefs will not change. As society changes, we evaluate the changes in society by what is taught in the Bible, and we uphold what is taught in the Bible even when society wants change contrary to what is in the Bible. Malachi three verse five.

Malachi 3:5-6

5. And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts.

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6. For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.

Cultural Christians will be distracted by new teachings because they do not have the faith that God and Jesus Christ do not change. Christians look to the forgiveness of sin made possible by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, not to new teachings. Hebrews thirteen verse seven.

Hebrews 13:7-9

7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

For cultural Christians there is no hope for what is to come. When we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, there is hope for us. When we consider the words of Paul that when Jesus returns those who are dead in Christ will be raised first and then those who are alive will be changed, those words give us hope. When we read that God will wipe away every tear, that there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and no more pain, we have hope of a time to come of love that will be unlike anything we have ever seen before. We who have faith, have hope in all these things and more, but for the cultural Christian there is no such hope.

Before we get to this future time of love when things will be unlike anything we have ever seen before, we will go through some dark days, and while we do not hope for these dark days, through faith we know these dark days will come because of what is written to us in the Bible, and here is something I want you to consider. Could a cultural Christian have a role to play in the dark days to come? There are verses which suggest that could be the case. With prophecy we won't know until it happens, so even though a cultural Christian could have a leading role in the dark days to come, it could also be another person, but for now, let's examine a passage from Revelation.

There are many who focus on the antichrist to come, and this future antichrist has been featured in plotlines of movies and books, with a lot of ideas, and yet when

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the Bible speaks of antichrist, it speaks of antichrists in the plural and how the spirit of antichrist was working in the days of the early church. The Apostle John was given a vision while on the island of Patmos and saw a beast rise out of the sea with seven heads, ten horns, seven crowns, and the name of blasphemy. This beast is given its power from the dragon, Satan the devil. One of the heads of the beast appears to be mortally wounded and is miraculously healed and the entire world worships the beast. This beast makes war with Christians and kills many of them. It is hope of eternal life and redemption from this time of trouble that keeps the Christians faithful. Revelation thirteen verse one.

Revelation 13:1-18

- 1. And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy.**
- 2. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.**
- 3. And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beast.**
- 4. And they worshipped the dragon which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? who is able to make war with him?**
- 5. And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.**
- 6. And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.**
- 7. And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.**
- 8. And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**
- 9. If any man have an ear, let him hear.**
- 10. He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity: he that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword. Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.**

A second beast comes out of the earth appearing like a lamb but speaking like a dragon, and this second beast causes the world to worship the first beast with the

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deadly head wound. This second beast causes fire to fall to earth and to the masses it looks like something miraculous. This fire could come in any shape like fire orbs, lightning, lasers, or somethings else. This second beast also has the power to animate the image of the first beast, to give it a voice, to bring it to life. This second beast controls the economy and prevents those who don't worship the first beast, who don't have the mark of the beast from buying and selling. Verse eleven.

11. And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon.

12. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14. And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15. And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16. And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17. And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

18. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

Collectively, these two beasts are thought of as the antichrist by most of society, even though there are two of them. At about this same time there will also be two witnesses aligned with God who will be working, so do not let the number two be what helps you decide who is the antichrist. The difference between the two witnesses and these two beasts from Revelation thirteen is faith. The two witnesses do the work of God in a very hostile environment. The two beasts as antichrists do not believe Jesus is the Messiah, that Jesus came in the flesh, died,

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and was resurrected so that we could have eternal life. Second John one verse seven.

2 John 1:7-11

7. For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

8. Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9. Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed:

11. For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

The John of Revelation is the same John who is writing these letters and warning of antichrist and shows that anyone who does not believe that Jesus has come in the flesh is a deceiver and antichrist. Antichrists lack faith and deny God the Father and Jesus Christ. First John two verse eighteen.

1 John 2:18-29

18. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

20. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

24. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

26. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

27. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

28. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

29. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of him.

Denying that Jesus came in the flesh is a marker of antichrist, and John mentions it again. First John four verse one.

1 John 4:1-6

1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

6. 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.

Could the end-time antichrist, as described in Revelation, the two beasts, be a cultural Christian? Yes, because it fits John's definition of antichrist, because cultural Christians have no need for faith, to believe that Jesus came in the flesh, died, and was resurrected so we can have eternal life. Remember, we don't know

who the two beasts of Revelation thirteen will be. Even though a cultural Christian would fit, it doesn't mean that a cultural Christian will be among the two beasts.

As Christians who live by faith what are we to do? We live our lives affirming that Jesus suffered for us and that leads us to put sin out of our life as we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness. We seek to do God's will even when others mock us because we know the time of judgment nears. When others seek their own pleasure, we do all things through love knowing that love covers sin. First Peter four verse one.

1 Peter 4:1-11

- 1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;**
- 2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.**
- 3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:**
- 4. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:**
- 5. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.**
- 6. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.**
- 7. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.**
- 8. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.**
- 9. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.**
- 10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.**
- 11. If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.**

Cultural Christianity is real. Even though we believe and have faith seeking first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness there are many who use the name Christian who really do not believe nor do they have faith. We have nothing to fear from Cultural Christians so there is never a reason for us to take any harmful action against them. Even should a cultural Christian be one of the two beasts of Revelation thirteen, they can only do to us what God allows, so of and by themselves we need not take any action. We do need to be aware of cultural Christianity, and how there are those who while they claim the name Christian do not believe that Jesus came in the flesh, died and was resurrected so that we can have eternal life. Instead of being deceived by cultural Christianity, we remain steadfast in the faith. Every day we live our lives affirming the sacrifice of Jesus Christ by choosing to live our lives by putting sin out of our life. Each day we seek first the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness.

Thank you for joining us today. God-willing we'll get together next time on the Sabbath. Until then, thank you for joining us today.