

Titanic Faith

Section One – **Introduction**

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Section Two –

THE CHURCH

“A Titanic-like Theology Has Sent the Church on a Perilous Journey without a Map”

“...fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.

Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith. . .

If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. ...

men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain...

People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction...

Some people, eager for money have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

– Paul (1 Timothy 1:19 and 6:3-10), 62 BC

RELEVANT

In an attempt to be culturally relevant the church has neutered itself of historical and eternal relevance.

Here is a relevant message to the church that worships at the altar of cultural relevance:

You are irrelevant. You are dull. And, you are lost.

What is worse? Prepare to be trampled by the very men you tried to relate to by forsaking your integrity.

You were meant to be the salt of the earth. *“But if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.”*

-Jesus, 27 AD (Matthew 5:13)

SEEKER

By refusing to challenge the seeker with transformation because you feared losing them, the church has itself become lost.

This is the verdict for the seeker church that refuses to become the teaching church:

The seeker church will become the wandering church.

“Leave them; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

- Jesus, 27 AD (Matthew 15:14)

Encouraging

Since the church misunderstood the power of the Word of God they have replaced the teaching pastor with the motivational speaker.

The results will be the same as if cheerleaders were asked to replace the coaches' offensive and

defensive strategy with rhythmic, rhyming chants!
The team will simply become louder and more emotional as their defeat and lack of direction becomes more and more obvious.

Hear the Word of the Lord spoken by Isaiah in 720 BC:
*“For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll.
And if you give the scroll to someone who can read and say to him,
‘Read this, please,’ he will answer, ‘I can’t; it is sealed.’”* (Isaiah 29:11)

SPIRITUAL

Perceiving themselves to be lifeless and spiritless the church has turned to mysticism to counter this emotional accusation.
The church has sought a personal revelation from the spiritual world instead of seeking the written revelation of Scripture.
Your mystic experience will open doors of demonic encounters with wicked council.
It is as Isaiah asked the people of his day:
“When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living?”
(Isaiah 8:19)

COMMUNITY-CENTERED

As a result of research based on community polls and studies of public opinion instead of studies of Scripture
the church has discovered what people want the church to be instead of understanding what Christ wants his church to be.
Hear the Word of the Lord spoken by Jesus in 30 AD:
“Look, your house is left to you desolate.” (Luke 13:35)
And, Jesus in 96 AD to the church in Ephesus in modern Turkey:
“Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.” (Revelation 2:5)

CHRIST-CENTERED

An idolatrous image of Jesus has been formed by piecing together fragments of culturally acceptable Scripture.
The culturally-centered church rallies around this idolatrous image of Christ built from selected illustrations from the life of Jesus and calls themselves “Christ-centered”.
This idolatrous image accepted by the church is an abandonment of the fullness of Christ.
Listen to the evaluation of this betrayal by the Titanic church:
- Instead of being Christ-centered the church has become culture-centered.
- The church worships what culture approves and evangelizes the world with this idol that is merely a mirrored reflection of the world itself.
*“You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts.
What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.”*
– Jesus, 29 AD (Luke 16:15)
“They loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God.”
– Jesus, 30 AD (John 12:43)

MEGA

These are the questions that need to be discussed by today’s Laodicean church board of directors:

Is the mega-church representative of the *great (mega)* multitude that came out of the *great (mega)* tribulation (Rev. 7:14; also, Matt. 24:21), or is the mega-church more like the *wide (plateia)* gate and the *broad (euruchor)* way that is leading *many (polloi)* to destruction (Matt. 7:13-14)?

Is the mega-church a gathering of the many people facing the persecution for Christ, or is the mega-church the multitudes on the broad, fast track to destruction?

In John 6:1-15 the multitude ate the bread Jesus multiplied, but the very next day in John 6:25-69 that same crowd walked away from Jesus when he made it clear that the message was not about the people getting the bread of physical food, but about Jesus being the bread of life.

“Jesus answered, ‘I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill’ . . .

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, ‘This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?’

Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, ‘Does this offend you?’ . . . From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.’

Jesus asked the Twelve, ‘You do not want to leave too, do you?’

Simon Peter answered him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.’ ” (John 6:26, 60-61, 66-69)

The New Testament Apostles Faced False Teachers in the First Century

Early in the New Testament Jesus and the apostles warned that there would be false teachers appearing and misleading the church. Throughout the New Testament letters we read the apostles countering and confronting these false teachers. Finally, at the end of the New Testament period we are shocked to realize that the false teachers had actually secured victory and established themselves within the churches founded by the Apostles.

In the New Testament we see these three phases concerning false teachers:

1. **The warning** that false teachers are coming (28-57 AD)
2. **The battle** in the church with the false teachers (49-64 AD)
3. **The “victory”** of the false teachers over the apostles in the churches (64-96 AD)

The Warning of the Rise of False Teachers:

Jesus in 28 AD:

“Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. . . Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven. . . Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers.’ ” (Matthew 7:15, 21-22)

Jesus in 29 AD:

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand is not the shepherd who owns the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.”

Jesus in 30 AD:

“Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and will deceive many.” (Mark 13:5)

Paul in 57 AD:

“I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. So be on your guard!” (Acts 20:29-30)

The Battle with the False Teachers in the Apostle’s Churches

As the early church began to take root and grow in its first 30 years (30-60 AD) the Apostles found themselves in constant contests with new, rising church leaders who tried to adapt the Christian message to worldly philosophies or pagan religions. Church leaders found it easier to present Christianity if they first took the edge off and made the Christian faith more relevant.

49 AD –

“I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel – which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ...Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God?”(Galatians 1:6-7,10)

“You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth? That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you...The one who is throwing you into confusion will pay the penalty, whoever he may be.” (Galatians 5:7-8,10)

51 AD -

“We ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don’t let anyone deceive you in any way.” (2 Thessalonians 2:1-2)

55 AD –

“For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those ‘super apostles.’ (2 Corinthians 11:4-5)

“For such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.” (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

60 AD -

“Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming.” (Ephesians 4:14)

61 AD -

“It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you.. Watch out for those dogs, those men who do evil, those mutilators of the flesh. For it is we who are the circumcision,

we who worship by the Spirit of God, who glory in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.” (Philippians 3:1-3)
Colossians 2:8-15 -

62 AD -

“I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments” (Colossians 2:4)

“See to it that no one takes you captive, through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” (Colossians 2:8)

63 AD -

“As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God’s work – which is by faith.” (1 Timothy 1:3-4)

“If anyone teaches false doctrines and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, he is conceited and understands nothing. He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions and constant friction between men of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain...People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction...Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.” (1 Timothy 6:3-5, 9-10)

64 AD –

“There are many rebellious people, mere talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision group. They must be silenced, because they are ruining whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach – and that for the sake of dishonest gain.” (Titus 1:10-11)

“Rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the commands of those who reject the truth.” (Titus 1:13-14)

The “Victory” of False Teachers in the Churches of the Apostles

The New Testament ends with Paul, Peter, John and Jude dealing with false teachers in the Christian church community. This is not the problem of persecution they faced from the pagan culture, but the cancer of false teaching within the local churches the Apostles had started and false teaching presented to the church by men who claimed to be believers in Jesus Christ and by men the Apostles knew.

By 62 AD the Apostles are personally being rejected by the churches they started and replaced with false teachers. This practice continues up through 85 AD and an on into 96 AD when the Apostolic testimony closes. Here the Apostle’s own word of testimony concerning false teachers gaining prominence over the apostolic authority even while the Apostles still wrote letters to these churches:

Peter quotes the teaching of Jesus (and, Paul) that predicted the rise of the false teachers. These false teachers are then described by Peter as active in 64 AD in the churches in the area of modern Turkey:

“There were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. . . . These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity.” (2 Peter 2:1, 17-19)

Peter comments on how church leaders were treating Paul's letters and teaching in 64 AD:

"[Paul's] letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." (2 Peter 3:16)

Jude is compelled to write a letter refuting false teachers in 64 AD:

"Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord." (Jude 3-4)

Jude identifies the characteristics of the false pastors in church leadership in 64 AD:

"These men are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm - shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted - twice dead. They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever." (Jude 12-13)

Paul rebukes the church leadership of Asia and identifies two deserters by name in 67 AD:

"You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes." (2 Timothy 1:15)

Paul identifies by name two false teachers in Ephesus and their false doctrine in 67 AD:

"Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some." (2 Timothy 2:17-18)

Paul concerning a member of his ministry team in 67 AD:

"Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica." (2 Timothy 4:10)

Paul concerning legal support in court from the church leaders in Rome in 67 AD:

"At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them." (2 Timothy 4:16)

John warning the churches of Asia to NOT trust every traveling teacher in 85 AD:

"Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." (1 John 4:1)

John writes concerning teachers in the church in 85 AD with the spirit of anti-christ that were laying the doctrinal foundation for the future anti-christ:

"This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the anti-christ, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world." (1 John 4:2-3)

John distinguishes the seeker-church message from the believer's message in 85 AD:

"They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood." (1 John 4:5-6)

John identifies the false teachers who traveled to churches and evangelized the world in 85 AD:

“Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.” (2 John 7)

John warns of traveling teachers who bring a false message that is beyond the Truth in 85 AD:

“Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work.” (2 John 9-11)

John identifies a church leader in Asia who will not let John teach in the church and slanders John and his ministry in 85 AD:

“I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to be first, will have nothing to do with us. So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us. Not satisfied with that, he refuses to welcome the brothers (*traveling teachers trained and sent out by John*). He also stops those who want to do so and puts them out of the church.” (3 John 9-10)

In 96 AD John wrote seven letters of correction to the churches in Asia. These letters were written sixty-six years after the church began in Jerusalem and forty-two years after Paul began these same Gentile churches in Asia:

- **In Ephesus in 96 AD** the false apostles attempting to bring updated doctrine with a more relevant message had been identified, tested and rejected. Also, a heretical group called the Nicolaitans who understood the advantage of a compromise between the salvation message and the cultural standards had also been rejected:

“I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false... You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.” (Revelation 2:2-3, 6)

- **In Smyrna in 96 AD** the true church was being slandered by a group of imposters claiming to be the true people of God:

“I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.” (Revelation 2:9)

- **In Pergamum in 96 AD** the church was tolerating two identified forms of false teaching. One was an early prosperity message called “the teaching of Balaam” that apparently justified paganism in the church because it created church growth and increased offerings. The second false teaching accepted in the church were the Nicolaitans. This supporters of this method of “doing church” were hated in Ephesus by both the church and Jesus. The Nicolaitans were a group that had conformed their church to their pagan world by developing a compromised doctrine of salvation that allowed for a continuation of immorality and idol worship (*false philosophy*):

“You have people there who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin by eating food sacrificed to idols and by committing sexual immorality. Likewise you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. Repent therefore!” (Revelation 2:14-16)

- **In Thyatira in 96 AD**, for the sake of convenience and in order to maintain unity, the church was tolerating a teaching prophetess whose mysticism was uncovering deep secrets from the spiritual realm that led the church to sin sexually and to sacrifice to idols.

“You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophetess. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols...Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan’s so-called deep secrets, ‘I will not impose any other burden on you, except to hold on to what you have...’ ” (Revelation 2:20, 24-25)

- **In Sardis in 96 AD** was a church with a reputation of good deeds, but the church was dead. The “good deeds” were merely social activism approved by men (public services, community centers, basketball leagues, bake sales for youth trips, etc.), but void of any spiritual value in God’s sight.

“I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up!” (Revelation 3:1-2)

- **In Philadelphia in 96 AD** was a church with little material strength in the midst of prospering churches and growing religious groups that called themselves the people of God yet denied his name and compromised his Word. The faithful church was weak among the greater compromised churches, but spiritually faithful and approved by Jesus.

“I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars – I will make them come and fall down at your feet and acknowledge that I have loved you.” (Revelation 3:8-9)

- **In Laodicea in 96 AD** had completely compromised the Truth and rewrote spiritual reality. They had shipwrecked their faith, but did not know their church had shattered into pieces, and was now adrift in the icy sea of false philosophies and deviant standards of spiritual success. Despite their extravagant success and popularity, Jesus himself had left this church.

“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked...Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” (Revelation 3:17, 20)

The Worst of the False Leadership with Corrupt Teaching is Yet to Come

Jesus and Paul clearly indicated that the worst days of confusion and church corruption would be the final days. Paul said the false teachers would go from bad to worse.

“In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.” (2 Timothy 3:12-13)

Both Peter and Jude taught that false teachers would continue to prosper until ultimately they denied the Lord’s Second Coming in the very days directly proceeding the return of Jesus.

“First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, ‘Where is this ‘coming’ he promised? Ever since our fathers died everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation.’ But they deliberately forget ...” (2 Peter 3:3-5)

“But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, ‘In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.’ These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.” (Jude 17-19)

Paul spoke in agreement with Jesus' end time presentation concerning false teachers and the great separation of their understanding from reality and their teaching from the Truth. Paul spoke of this time of great delusion as a time of judgment on those who had rejected the Truth. (Moses spoke in a similar way in Deuteronomy 13:1-3 when he said that the Lord would send false prophets to test the people's hearts.) Paul warned of the final days of confusion caused by the great delusion that is yet to come:

“The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with the work of Satan displayed in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.” (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12)

Before Paul wrote the above words in 51 AD concerning the final days on earth before Jesus returns, Jesus himself had spoken in a similar fashion in 30 AD about these same final days:

“For then there will be great distress, unequaled from the beginning of the world until now – and never to be equaled again...At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect – if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.” (Matthew 24:21-26)

Characteristics of False Teaching and its Followers in the New Testament

2 Peter is an aggressive attack on false teachers which seems to be similar to other books written later in the apostle's lives such as 2 Timothy, Jude and 2 John and 3 John. Peter compares the false teachers that the early church were facing with the false prophets the people of the Old Testament had to combat. Peter and the early church are not facing “false prophets” because, in this case, these false leaders in the first century church were not claiming to have “revelation” directly from God, but were instead twisting, molding and mis-applying Jesus' teaching and the teaching of the apostles. Peter calls the corrupt church leaders false teachers because they are misrepresenting the message that came from God through Jesus and the New Testament apostles. Yet, the style of ministry, the type of message and the ultimate doom of the false teacher was the same as that of the OT false prophet. Peter uses the future tense in 2:1-3 and 3:3 (as does Paul in 2 Tim. 2:16-17; 3:2-5, 13; 4:3-4) because he is likely quoting earlier apostolic teaching that foretold the rise of these false teachers and simply preserves the future tense in his text. This concept is captured in Jude:

“But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, ‘In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.’ These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.” (Jude 17-18).

These false teachers were already present in Peter's day when he wrote 2 Peter 2:10-22. The false teachers were already doing these things in 64 AD:

- feasting, 2:13
- making converts, 2:14, 19
- perverting Paul's teaching 3:15-16

Peter is not focused on false prophets (although there were false prophets active in the churches as can be seen in Paul's and John's letters) because the threat that Peter's churches were facing did not come from men receiving false revelation from God, but instead came from false teachers actively

misrepresenting the message that had already been received. The New Testament revelation had been communicated by Jesus and the Apostles during the previous 35 years (27-64 AD). The churches had been founded on solid teaching, but now false teachers were twisting the received revelation. The similarity between the false prophets of the Old Testament and the false teachers in the New Testament churches are seen in chapter two:

1. Same motivation
2. Same style of manipulation
3. Same type of person
4. Same immoral lifestyle
5. Same ultimate doom

(PUT THE TEXT OF THE FOLLOWING LIST IN A GREY BOX)

False prophets in the OT:

- Deut. 13:1-5 – False prophet is a test from God
- 1 Kings 22:5-28 – Micaiah (good) vs. Zedekiah (false)
- 2 Chronicles 18:21-22 – Lying Spirit in the mouth of prophets can be compared to teachers with doctrines of demons in 1 Tim. 4:1-5
- Isaiah 9:15 – prophets who teach lies
- Isaiah 28:7-8 – prophets who stagger when seeing visions
- Isaiah 29:9-12 – stagger...deep sleep...sealed eyes of misdirected prophets...covered heads of misled seers
- Jeremiah 2:8, 26 – prophets prophesied by Baal
- Jeremiah 5:31 – prophets prophesy lies...priests rule by their own authority
- Jeremiah 6:13 – prophets and priests practice deceit for gain saying “peace”
- Jeremiah 14:13-15 – prophets say “peace”... present lies...not sent by God...prophecy delusions from their own mind
- Jeremiah 23:9-40 – prophets follow evil course and use their power and position unjustly
- Jeremiah 27:9-18 – warning to not listen to prophets who say false words and give false message
- Jeremiah 28:1-29:8 - August 593 BC Jeremiah (good) vs. Hananiah (false)
- Ezekiel 13:1-23 – prophets speak out of their own imagination
- Ezekiel 22:23-31 – the priests and princes are violent in their positions of authority, but the prophets merely whitewash the deeds of these authority figures to justify the violence in the land
- Micah 3:5-12 – prophets used position for financial gain... sun will set on prophets
- Zephaniah 3:4 – prophets are arrogant and treacherous
- Zechariah 13:2 – remove the prophets and the impure spirit manipulating them
- Luke 6:26 – woe when men speak well of you, this is how they spoke of the false prophets
- Matt. 7:15 – watch out for false prophets, they come as sheep, but are wolves
- Acts 13:6 – Bar-Jesus the sorcerer at Paphos on Cyprus
- 1 John 4:1 – Do not believe every spirit, test spirits, many false prophets have gone out into the churches

The false teachers that Peter is referring to are already active as chapter 2 indicates and Peter states clearly in 2 Peter 3:15-16. In the same verse, 2 Peter 2:1, Peter says these false teachers will “secretly introduce destructive heresies. The word “introduce” (*pareisaxousin*) has the idea of “smuggle” more than the idea of “secret” or “stealth”. The Greek word that “introduce” comes from, *pareisago*, means “to bring into alongside of” and “to smuggle in.” The idea is to bring something that is not expected along with something that is expected. It could be done “in secret” or it may be done carelessly. The Greek word used here literally means:

- *para* (by the side of) + *eis* (into) + *ayein* (to bring),
- or “to bring into by the side of”

Since the false teachers are described like this in 2 Peter 2:1 it would seem to indicate they were intentionally bringing in false teaching alongside of some accepted teaching in order to manipulate the listeners who were either not paying attention or not thinking critically about what was being taught.

“Heresies” (**haireseis**) is used elsewhere to mean “sects”. The word **haireseis** originally referred to a choice that was made between two options, but this word developed as it was used to refer to a group, a sect or a school of thought. This was still a positive use of the word and is seen being used this way in:

- Acts 5:17 – “But the high priest rose up, and all who were with him (that is, the party of the Sadducees), and filled with jealousy...”
- Acts 15:5 – “But some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees rose up and said, ‘It is necessary to circumcise them and to order them to keep the law of Moses.’ ”
- Acts 24:5; 26:5; 28:22

When Paul uses the word **haireseis** in 1 Corinthians and Galatians 5:20 he uses it to refer to a faction or division among the believers who held to a particular doctrinal slant. Eventually, the New Testament use of the word we translate as “heresies” (**haireseis**) began to mean a doctrine or a teaching that was no longer in agreement with the Truth. This is how Peter uses it in 2 Peter in 64 AD. The nature of this “heresies” is said to be “destructive” and includes these false doctrinal characteristics:

1. the denial of the coming of the Lord
2. the denial of the Lord’s future judgment
3. the acceptance of immoral lifestyle

The “destructive” aspect would include the natural destruction of the natural lives of those who accept and apply these heresies into their lifestyles. The false teachers would face a similar destruction in their lives, but also a destruction that would extend to an eternal judgment of the false teachers by God. Jude 4 is similar to this verse in 2 Peter when Jude writes,

“For certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.” (Jude 4)

Jude’s identification of the false teachers he was confronting around 63-65 AD indicates they were the grievous threat that had been predicted. Ever since the beginning of the presentation of Truth there was also included within the message a warning that proclaimed the soon appearance of false teachers. The strategy of the false teacher is to gain movement among the church like a parasite. False teaching would move into the church alongside of (and, along with) the Truth. Another insight revealed by Jude is this - it is always consistent for the parasite of false teaching to ultimately manifest its evil source and live out its wicked nature of self-serving, materialistic lust and sexual immorality in the mental and physical dimension. In order for the evil nature of false teaching to continue operating in the church it will have to justify the wicked behavior of the false teachers. In order to justify the false teachers’ sinfulness their doctrines will ultimately have to degenerate to its lowest level of instruction: the denial of God the Father and Jesus the Christ. To survive in the church false teaching will eventually have to discredit and devour the true teaching of the character and glory of the Creator and his Christ.

In verse 4 Jude lists the nature of these creeping teacher’s false doctrine:

1. “secretly slipped in among you”
 - a. The verb used for “secretly slipped” or “crept in” is from **pareisduo**, and is almost identical to the word used in 2 Peter 2:1 (**pareisago**). The literal meaning of the word used by Jude can be compared to Peter’s word like this:
 - i. Jude: **para** (by the side of) + **eis** (into) + **duo** (two), or “two into by the side of”

- ii. Peter: **para** (by the side of) + **eis** (into) + **ayein** (to bring), or “to bring into by the side of”
- b. By using the word **pareisduo** Jude is focusing on the fact that two things come into the church when the church thought they were only accepting one thing. This is detailed latter by Jude in verse 16 – “These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.”
 - i. The parasite of false teaching is motivated by “their own evil desires”
 - ii. In order to enter the church “for their own advantage” the parasite of false teaching will initially present a single positive trait, but actually the positive trait is an imitation cover for the parasite. Eventually the parasite will manifest the nature of the false teacher and the consequential false doctrine needed for the parasite’s nature to continue to survive. Jude gives a couple of examples of a positive trait imitated by the parasite:
 - 1. “they boast about themselves” – this “boasting” refers to the self-promotion of the false teachers’ positive qualities. The false teacher presents to the church the personal qualities such as:
 - a. qualifications for the position
 - b. financially security
 - c. social acceptability
 - d. community influence
 - e. leadership skills
 - f. communication skills
 - g. and many, many more
 - 2. “they...flatter others” – here the false teacher flatters and builds up others by demonstrating characteristics that impress the church members:
 - a. an encourager
 - b. a team builder
 - c. a team player
 - d. friendly
 - e. easy to get to know
 - f. easy to work with
 - g. everyone’s best friend.
 - iii. But, the parasite of false teaching is always serving its own evil desires and using people (many church leaders like to claim they are “loving people”, when in reality these church leaders are “using people”). So, Jude says the real parasite behind the team building encourager with positive personal qualifications is a man who when met face to face with the Truth of the God and his Word becomes:
 - 1. “Grumbler” – (Greek: **goggustes**) is one who grumbles, murmurs and complains about situations and against God the sovereign Creator. The Exodus generation is an example of a generation of “grumblers” (Exodus 16:7-9; Numbers 17:5-10) that eventually began to murmur against God’s plan and God’s process. They wanted to change God’s reality into their own fantasy. This leads to the sin of testing God (Exodus 17:2-3) and refusing to believe God (Numbers 14:11). Failure to believe God prevents any possibility of being obedient to God (Numbers 14:22). (Paul refers to this in 1 Corinthians 10:10 and Philippians 2:14)
 - 2. “Faultfinder” – (Greek: **mempsimoiros**) According to the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament this Greek word “indicates one who complained against the God who has appointed each man his fate.” This person is a “malcontent” who is not satisfied with God’s reality and their place in God’s creation. In context a faultfinder is dissatisfied with God. This manifests as a constant urge to find something better than God’s Truth, God’s reality, God’s Word, God’s revelation, God’s plan, etc. This is not

referring to the man who writes a book condemning the Western church for having rejected God and his Word, but is referring to the man who rejects the Word of God, and then, leads the Western church in the pursuit of a better philosophy! Point taken?

2. “godless men” – (Greek: **asebes**) is a strong word used in 2 Peter 2:5. It means “ungodly” and “impious”.
3. “change the grace of our God into a license for immorality”
 - a. The false teacher changes the meaning of “grace”
 - b. The false teacher changes the purpose of “grace”
 - c. The false teacher uses these changes (or, alterations) to the Truth to justify their immorality
 - d. Instead of preserving the Truth of the Word of God that sanctifies the believer, the false teacher’s new doctrinal perversions allow or provide a “license” for people in the church to continue the sinful behavior.
 - e. False teachers introduce doctrine and practice that does not require men to be transformed into the image of the Son of God.
 - f. Through false teaching and false methods men can come to God as they are and remain as they are. God will accept men and adjust his standards to theirs, instead of providing men with salvation, transformation and glorification.
4. “Deny the Master who bought them” (**ton agorasanta autous despoten arnoumenoi**) includes these words:
 - a. “to deny” (**arnoumenoi**) meaning the opposite of “to confess” the Lord:
 - i. John 1:20 – “He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”
 - ii. 2 Timothy 2:12 – “if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he also will deny us.”
 - iii. Titus 1:16 – “They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works.”
 - iv. 1 John 2:22-23 – “Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.”
 - v. To “deny” the Lord is to say “no” in word or in deed instead of agreeing by saying “yes” and living in agreement.
 - b. “Master” (**despoten**) – refers to masters of slaves in 1 Tim. 6:1-2. It is used to refer to God. The main idea of the use of “master” is to focus on the legal right the master has over the subject. The concept of the “master” is intensified and clarified when Peter goes on to explain by adding phrase “who bought them” (**ton agorasanta autous**).
 - c. “who bought them” (**ton agorasanta autous**) - This is the language used of a free man buying the slave and setting them free. It is called manumission. In the United States manumission this was a common practice when the will of a slave owner called for the release of his slaves upon his death. The ancient papyri uses this same phrase as Peter does to refer to slaves who had been bought and then released. In these documents stipulations were included that would not allow the freed slave to be enslaved again. Violations were met with penalties.
 - d. Believers are those who belong to Christ:
 - i. 1 Corinthians 15:23 – “But each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ.”
 - ii. Galatians 5:24, - “And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.”

These false teachers have been freed by the Lord, but have not only enslaved themselves again to false philosophies and immoral lives, but are also going about the church re-enslaving others with false teaching. Clearly their judgment should be swift and complete.

A False Teacher Takes Control of One of John's Churches in Asia

In 3 John the false church leader Diotrephes was the pastor who had taken over the church in Asia. Diotrephes led the church in this town in Asia and taught them to reject these things:

1. the Apostle John
2. the Apostolic teaching
3. any of John's student/disciples that were sent to teach or check the church
4. any believer who did not reject John and his teaching

Gaius was the member of Diotrephes church who received the letter of 3 John. Gaius was in danger of being driven from this church because he had side with John and John's teaching. Diotrephes considered this a threat to his position of leadership in this Asian church.

Demetrius was the traveling teacher sent by John with the letter we call 3 John. Demetrius would stay in the home of Gaius, but this could result in Diotrephes expelling Gaius from the local church for giving support to a disciple of John that had been sent to teach in the church that Diotrephes had taken control.

The Three Denials Taught by False Teachers

John taught the three denials or the three teachings of the false teachers (false prophet) that deny the Truth that John taught:

1. 1 John 2:22-23 - There is no Father and Son as God (Deny the Trinity)
2. 1 John 4:3 – Jesus is not the Christ or savior from God (Deny Jesus is the Christ)
3. 2 John 7-11 – Jesus did not come in the flesh (Deny God came in the flesh)

(PUT THE TEXT OF THE FOLLOWING LIST IN A GREY BOX)

Islam, Quran and the Three Denials

Inside the Dome of the Rock in classical Arabic was inscribed in 692 AD the following quote from chapter 4, verse 171 of the Quran:

"O you People of the Book, overstep not bounds in your religion, and of God speak only the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, is only an apostle of God, and his Word which he conveyed unto Mary, and a Spirit proceeding from him. Believe therefore in God and his apostles, and say not Three. It will be better for you. God is only one God. Far be it from his glory that he should have a son."

Below are three translations of this same verse from the Quran 4:171 for the reader to use for comparison and accuracy of translation:

Sahih International translation:

"O People of the Scripture, do not commit excess in your religion or say about Allah except the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, the son of Mary, was but a messenger of Allah and His word which He directed to Mary and a soul [created at a command] from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers. And do not say, "Three"; desist - it is better for you. Indeed, Allah is but one God. Exalted is He above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And sufficient is Allah as Disposer of affairs.

Pickthall translation:

"O People of the Scripture! Do not exaggerate in your religion nor utter aught concerning Allah save the truth. The Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, was only a messenger of Allah, and His word which He conveyed unto Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in Allah and His messengers, and say not "Three" - Cease! (it is) better you! - Allah is only One Allah. Far is it removed from His Transcendent

Majesty that He should have a son. His is all that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth. And Allah is sufficient as Defender.

Yusuf Ali translation:

“O People of the Book! Commit no excesses in your religion: Nor say of Allah aught but the truth. Christ Jesus the son of Mary was (no more than) a messenger of Allah, and His Word, which He bestowed on Mary, and a spirit proceeding from Him: so believe in Allah and His messengers. Say not "Trinity"! desist! it will be better for you! for Allah is one Allah! Glory be to Him! (far exalted is He) above having a son. To Him belong all things in the heavens and on earth. And enough is Allah as a Disposer of affairs.”

The Church is Valid IF it is Fulfilling its Purpose

A Church is valid as long as it is fulfilling the Great Commission given in Matthew 28:19 and empowering the believers for works of service as identified in Ephesians 4:11-16:

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19)

And,

“So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.” (Ephesians 4:11-16)

The focus of this commission is to go into all nations and bring people into union with Christ the Savior who is the Son of God, the second member of the Trinity. The Great Commission is to go and proclaim Jesus’ message, make disciples who are to be taught and empowered to do the work Christ has assigned to them. These mature, effective disciples are not to be moved by the waves of culture or the winds of worldly teaching, but instead are to be transformed into the image of the Son of God (Romans 8:29). They are to be transformed by renewing their mind, and are not to conform to the thinking and philosophies of the world (Romans 12:1-2). Then, they will be able to do the unique things God has willed for them to do while they sincerely manifest the very nature of the Son of God in their natural lives in this temporal time (Romans 12:2-9).

If the church understands who the triune God is and what Jesus taught to and through his Apostles, then the church is prepared to become engaged in fulfilling the Great Commission. If the church understands the process of making disciples and teaching them to know and obey the Truth, then the church is prepared to empower people to be transformed into the image of the Son of God. The church embracing the Great Commission will refuse to neglect the responsibility of teaching towards the renewal of the believer’s understanding and will refuse to assist the world in conforming the disciples of Jesus into the image of the world.

If the church aspires to proclaim the message of Jesus then that message must match the life of Jesus recorded in the Gospels and the teaching of Jesus’ apostles recorded in the New Testament letters. If

the church presents a message of love, peace and tolerance with a non-judgmental acceptance of all people, then let that be the presentation of the Good News to the lost world. Indeed, proclaim the Good News to the world! Let all men know and understand that God is love. God offers mankind peace. God is tolerant in the sense that he is patient and wants no one to perish. God is waiting. God is patiently waiting. God is holding back his day of wrath.

God is accepting of all, but his “non-judgmental” attitude would more accurately be understood as “universally-judgmental”. Or, as an “all-inclusive-judgmental” attitude! For all of us have sinned. All of us have been condemned. No one is OK. No one is safe. No one can stand before God.

Yet, through Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, who died on the cross for the sin of mankind, all are free to come. All men are free to come to Christ just as they are, but none are free to come to Christ to seek acceptance of the way they are. All will be accepted, but none will be allowed to stay the way they came. None. No one. Zero. But, absolutely all must change. Undeniably all must be born again and transformed into the image of the Son of God.

- All are welcomed into the kingdom of God, but none can enter without being born again.
- All are free to come just as they are, but none will receive acceptance of who they are.
- All are sinners who have failed, but none should seek validation of their sin and rebellion.
- All can come to Christ, but all who truly come to Christ are required to be transformed into the image of the Christ.
- You can come as you are, but you cannot stay the way you are.

The Failure of the Modern Western Church

The majority of Western churches are NOT proclaiming the message of Jesus, so the majority of the Western church is no longer valid. If the majority of today’s Western church is not the valid church, then many of the “Christian churches” are false, deceptive and misleading their “followers.” The modern Western church is a major part of the problem with today’s Western culture. The modern church does not have answers for their world’s problems. In fact, most modern churches can’t even offer mankind the promise of eternal salvation. The Western church is not providing “hope”, but is instead are bathing people in a false security. The members, followers and seekers involved with the Western church are not following Jesus, but a false, culturally relevant Jesus. And, these followers and seekers do NOT know the difference. As the Western Church and their followers contribute to societies problems they call their attitude “hope” and their actions “Christian.” The Western churches are dead and no longer a life source for Christianity. The state of the Western church is deception – seeking happiness, pursuing relationships, worshipping emotions, following mysticism, encouraging worldly success, hosting weekly self-help seminars and teaching prosperity. Suffering is a topic addressed in scripture, promised by Jesus and experienced by the prophets, the Apostles and believers throughout church history. But, the modern Western church considers suffering to be an indication of human failure and something a loving God would never permit his church to face. (Thus, the doctrinal need of the modern church for a pre-trib rapture.)

Today’s False Teaching

Numerous examples of false teaching, deviant doctrine and misapplied Truth can be found in the quotes of celebrity pastors or illustrated by the practices of the media driven ministries. These deviant leaders create problems for believers in our nation and misdirect churches around the world who attempt to follow the false teachers’ examples and relay their corrupted message. Below some general statements

and doctrinal errors will be cited to capture the Titanic theology that is being marketed to individual believers and imitated by local pastors.

As these quotes are listed look for examples of these false doctrine and the corrupt application of this Titanic faith that scripture warned about:

1. Faultfinder – one who is unsatisfied with God, God’s plan
2. Grumbler – one who wants to change God’s reality into their own fantasy
3. A plea for “human logic” – one
4. Emotionalism – how does this make you feel
5. God being made into man’s image – “If I were God, then I would....”
6. Justification of immorality based on any of the above “false teaching”.
7. The parasite of false teaching will eventually attack the portion of the Truth that exposes its sin.
 - a. Sexuality
 - b. Money
 - c. Power
 - d. Materialism
8. Worldly philosophy – to accommodate worldly philosophies the words and intentions of the scripture will be redefined

False Prophets and False Christs???

Some examples of statements made by contemporary pastors that should be considered as at least incomplete or inaccurate, if not bold, in-your-face false teaching:

- “We shape or God, and then our God shapes us.” – Rob Bell in “Love Wins”
- “Jesus says, he ‘did not come to judge the world, but to save the world’ (John 12). We can name Jesus, orient our lives around him, and celebrate.” – Rob Bell in “Love Wins”
- “Of all the billions of people who have ever lived, will only a select number ‘make it to a better place’ and every single other person suffer in torment and punishment forever? Is this acceptable to God? . . . Does God punish people for thousands of years with infinite, eternal torment for things they did in their few finite years of life? This doesn’t just raise disturbing questions about God; it raises questions about the beliefs themselves . . . If there are only a select few who go to heaven, which is more terrifying to fathom: the billions who burn forever or of the few who escaped this fate? . . . What kind of faith is that? Or, more important: what kind of God is that?” – Rob Bell in “Love Wins”
- “This reality, this forgiveness, this reconciliation, is true for everybody. Paul insisted that when Jesus died on the cross he was reconciling ‘all things, in heaven and on earth, to God.’ This reality then isn’t something we make true about ourselves by doing something. It is already true. Our choice is to live in this new reality or cling to a reality of our own making.” – Rob Bell in “Velvet Elvis”
- “I can’t find one place in the teachings of Jesus, or the Bible for that matter, where we are to identify ourselves first and foremost as sinners.” – Rob Bell in “Velvet Elvis”
- “Who does Peter lose faith in? Not Jesus; he is doing fine. Peter loses faith in himself. Peter loses faith that he can do what his rabbi is doing . . . What I’m learning is that Jesus believes in me. I have been told that I need to have faith in God. Which is a good thing. But what I am learning is that God has faith in me.” – Rob Bell in “Velvet Elvis”
- “It wasn’t until the 300’s that what we know as the sixty-six books of the Bible were actually agreed upon as the ‘bible’. This is part of the problem with continually insisting that one of the absolutes of the Christians faith must be a belief that ‘Scripture alone’ is our guide. It sounds nice, but it is not true.” – Rob Bell in “Velvet Elvis”
- Rob Bell’s response when asked by Oprah when the church was going to embrace same-sex marriage: “We’re close...Lots of people are already there. We think it’s inevitable, and we’re moments (away)...I think culture is already there, and the church will continue to be even more

irrelevant when it quotes letters from 2,000 years ago as their best defense. When you have in front of you flesh and blood people who are your brothers and sisters and aunts and uncles and coworkers and neighbors and they love each other, and they just want to go through life with someone.”

- “For our own sakes, we might take a break from trying to convince ourselves that Jesus was and is God and to spend this twenty-first century meditating on the truth that God is like Jesus. Exactly like Jesus. When the veil that obscured God was torn in two, what did it reveal? A Suffering Servant who hangs on the Cross! Thus, every human conception we previously associated with ‘God’ is uprooted, root and branch!” – Peter Enns in “The Bible Tells Me So”
- “For Christians, the gospel has always been the lens through which Israel’s stories are read – which means, for Christians, Jesus, not the Bible, has the final work. Their story of God’s people has moved on, and so must we.” – Peter Enns in “The Bible Tells Me So”
- “The real Jesus can only be truly understood from a later vantage point – interpreted after the resurrection when the broader implications of who Jesus was and what he did could be better grasped. That is the Jesus the Gospel writers give us, each in his own way... We’re all free to put the pieces together as we think best. The bigger point here is that the stories of Jesus’s birth behave the way stories do, and we can’t wish that away.” – Peter Enns in “The Bible Tells Me So”
- “Wherever biblical writers talk about the past, we should expect them to be shaping the past as well.” – Peter Enns in “The Bible Tells Me So”
- “For Paul, now that Jesus has come, the Bible was more like clay to be molded.” – Peter Enns in “The Bible Tells Me So”
- “If you develop an image of victory, success, health, abundance, joy, peace, and happiness, nothing on earth will be able to hold those things from you.” – Joel Osteen in “Your Best Life Now”
- “You were born to win; you were born for greatness, you were created to be a champion in life” – Joel Osteen in “Your Best Life Now”
- “[God] wants you to live in abundance. He wants to give you the desires of your heart . . . God is turning things around in your favor” – Joel Osteen in “Your Best Life Now”
- “Before we were ever formed, He programmed us to live abundant lives, to be happy, healthy, and whole. But when our thinking becomes contaminated it is no longer in line with God’s Word.” – Joel Osteen in “Your Best Life Now”
- “I am an encourager and I don’t believe it is my role to condemn anyone. I’ve always been an encourager at heart . . . I don’t have it in my heart to condemn people. I’m there to encourage them. I see myself more as a coach, as a motivator to help them experience the life God has for us. . . I’m for everybody. You may not agree with me, but to me it’s not my job to try to straighten everybody out. The Gospel is called the Good News. My message is a message of hope, that God’s for you. You can live a good life no matter what’s happened to you. And so I don’t know. I know there is condemnation but I don’t feel that’s my place. . . You know, I’m very careful about saying who would and wouldn’t go to heaven. I don’t know . . . Well, I don’t know if I believe they’re wrong. I believe here’s what the Bible teaches and from the Christian faith this is what I believe. . . I’m going to let God be the judge of who goes to heaven and hell. I just – again, I present the truth, and I say it every week. You know, I believe it’s a relationship with Jesus. But you know what? ...if they don’t want to believe that that’s going to be their choice. God’s got to look at your own heart. God’s got to look at your heart, and only God knows that.” – Joel Osteen during interview with Larry King

If a church, pastor or Bible teacher finds it necessary to separate their Christian belief system from the text of Scripture found in the Old Testament, then they are following/seeking a false Jesus. They have compromised the revelation of Scripture for a man-centered, man-made message that is philosophically relevant to culture. The Jesus of the Gospels, Epistles and apostles matches perfectly the LORD of the OT. Jesus is the God of the OT. If there is any doubt that the angry God of wrath in the Old Testament matches Jesus, the Son of God, a reader needs to look no further than the biblical description of the return of Jesus to the earth in the New Testament and announced by Jesus’ own words in Matthew:

“At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.” (Matthew 24:30-31)

“Then the kings of the earth, the princes, the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every slave and every free man hid in caves and among the rocks of the mountains. They called to the mountains and the rocks, ‘Fall on us and hide us from the face of him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of their wrath has come, and who can stand?’ ” (Revelation 6:15-17)

“I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. . . his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses... Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, ‘He will rule them with an iron scepter.’ He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” (Revelation 19:11-16)

“God is just: He will pay back trouble to those who trouble you and give relief to you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction. And shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people.” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-10)

“Look, he is coming with the clouds and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.’ ” (Revelation 1:7-8)

Those following the false Jesus of Western culture will continue to insist on redefining and focusing on love, peace, acceptance, tolerance, and a non-judgmental attitude. Many will focus on the fact that we all sin. And, then, since we are all sinners, which of us can judge any other person's sins. Their point seems to be, “I sin. You sin. We all sin. So, let's just sin.” Indeed, we are all sinners, but Jesus of Scripture has saved us and promised to transform us into his image.

There is a vast difference between conforming Christianity into the image of your culture and transforming the Christian man into the image of the Son of God. The former is easy, market driven and non-offensive. The latter is challenging, painful and will face tribulation in this world. The Christian is a sinner who has been saved from the penalty of sin and is currently in the active process of being transformed into the image of the Son of God. The false teacher wants the worldly man to be accepted by God just as the man is without calling him a sinner and without confronting sin. The false teacher then wants to transform God into the image of sinful man so the sinful man no longer has to deal with transforming himself. The way of today's false teacher is the way of paganism and human philosophy. The text New Testament scripture is very, very relevant for rebuking, correcting and training the cool, hip, contemporary Titanic church of the modern Western world. Actually, so relevant that the text of Scripture must be avoided like an infection must avoid an antibiotic to survive.

Jesus Helps Identify the False Message of False Jesus

“He said to them, ‘You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins.’ ”

- John 8:24-25

“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.” – **John 6:40**

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to lie.” – **John 5:24**

“Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets.” – **Luke 6:26**

Historical doctrines of a false Christ:

1. A Jesus who never existed historically - *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* (Moscow, 1952), a two-line entry under “Jesus” includes these descriptive words “the name of the mythological founder of Christianity.”
2. A Jesus who was merely a spiritual manifestation with not body – developed from Christianity’s encounter with Greek philosophy in the Western world. The seeds of this compromise developed into Gnosticism and resurfaced in false Christian philosophies such as Docetism (Greek word *dokein* means “to seem”). The Corinthians had trouble transforming their pagan culture’s philosophy to this portion of the biblical message and as a result rejected the physical resurrection (1 Cor. 15)
3. A Jesus who is the First-created being
4. A Jesus who was an angel
5. A Jesus who is both the Son and, at the same time, is God the Father
6. A Jesus who was a good man – Jesus gave us several good examples of putting others first and living selfless lives.
7. A Jesus who was one of the many prophets that have appeared in history among many different people groups.
8. A Jesus who is the Son of God who fully revealed God’s nature of love, compassion, patience and tolerance of human shortcomings. This new revelation overrides the corrupt revelation.
9. Just believe in “Jesus”
10. A Jesus of a person’s own imagination.
11. A Jesus that has been adapted to a culture’s level of acceptance. (This could range from a peaceful hippie to the military warrior, or the man of homeless poverty to the cultural superstar who lives in a mansion and owns a personal jet, etc.)

Laodicea

(Page 211, chapter 22 in H4A)

Laodicea – The Four Generation Cycle in the Modern Church

- 1880-1920 – Systematic Growth, Methodology, Emotionalism**
- 1921-1960 – Showmanship, Materialism, Theology of Success**
- 1960-2000 – Charismatic, Individual/Personal, Mysticism**
- 2001-2040 – Market Driven**

Laodicea
The Four Generation Cycle
 that has led today's church into the
 Laodicean Church Age
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 Methodology  
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 But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and
 naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you
 can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your
 shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see."
 - Revelation 3:17-18

1880-1920 – Systematic Growth, Emotionalism

Systematic, orchestrated, methodology are words that can be used to describe church activity

- **Revivals** -- 1830 – revivalism moved from the US northeast (New England) to the south and west reaching Tennessee and Kentucky which was the western frontier of 1800. The revival became more and more emotional as it moved west. Thousands of people were converted in this frontier of the south and west of the early 1800's. In 1801 ten thousand people were estimated to be present in the camp meeting revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky that was accompanied by people falling down, jerking, rolling, dancing and barking like dogs. ("Christianity Through the Centuries", by Earle E. Cairnes, page 429) Soon this method of preaching, showmanship and emotional appeal of revival meetings would backwash from the western frontier eastward into the established churches in America's New England states. The Presbyterian churches ceased to use the camp meeting techniques, but the Methodists and Baptist churches began to grow.
- **Emotionalism** – The great revivals that had swept through the American frontier in the early 1800's with emotional experiences had become the expected response to religion and spiritual reality in the late 1800's and early 1900's. People commonly responded to an assumed "spiritual" experience with shouting, falling, dancing and other forms of emotional expression. As textual criticism continued to undermine the authenticity of Scripture in the academic world and modern science and technology seemed provide logical challenges to the existence of God the church took refuge in emotionalism. Instead of seeking the truth of God in creation or in the text of

Scripture the church quickly turned to finding truth and proving the validity of their own faith in their own personal experiences. This personal approach to finding truth and experiencing God is most easily referred to with expressions from the heart: “know in my heart it is true”, “finding God in my heart”, “asking Jesus into my heart”, “feeling the presence of the Holy Spirit”. Emotionalism in the church placed personal faith on a subjective basis that could easily be overturned with any subjective change in personal emotions, cultural beliefs or temporal circumstances. With this phase of emotionalism the church that was to be the house built on the Rock was relocated to a foundation of sand. Things could only get worse for the church down on the beach with society.

- **Charles Finney**- 1792-1875 - studied law in New York and was admitted to the state bar. Since his study of legal books led him to many Biblical references Finney began to study the Bible itself. He joined a church, studied for the ministry and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1824. Finney began to travel on horseback to villages speaking to crowds in the articulate courtroom manner as an educated attorney trying to persuade a jury of common folks to accept his legal position. Finney made the following quote in one of his written works entitled, “On Revivals of Religion”:

“Men being so reluctant to obey God, will not act until they are excited.”

Based on this view Finney pursued an emotional connection with his crowds by exciting his listeners. Finney believed that as he did his work of exciting the people, the Holy Spirit would do his work of convicting and converting them. By 1834 Finney had left the Presbyterian Church and their doctrinal stance on Calvinism. Finney took the emotionalism of the revivals to the main stream church and the Broadway Tabernacle (a Congregational church) was built for Finney. The crowds that followed were moved by excitement and demonstrated emotions through their shouting and groaning. Although this method was criticized, the fact remained that the churches that followed Finney’s model grew.

When Finney traveled he used organizational methods of preparing the communities and drawing a crowd before he arrived. Local ministers and church members were recruited to organize prayer meetings, hand out flyers (called handbills), post billboards (called placards) and buy advertisements in newspapers. These methods that led to Finney’s success were also referred to in his 1835 “Lectures on Revivals of Religion” in this section:

“A REVIVAL OF RELIGION IS NOT A MIRACLE.

1. A miracle has been generally defined to be, a Divine interference, setting aside or suspending the laws of nature. It is not a miracle, in this sense. All the laws of matter and mind remain in force. They are neither suspended nor set aside in a revival.
2. It is not a miracle according to another definition of the term miracle -- *something above the powers of nature*. There is nothing in religion beyond the ordinary powers of nature. It consists entirely in the *right exercise* of the powers of nature. It is just that, and nothing else. When mankind become religious, they are not *enabled* to put forth exertions which they were unable before to put forth. They only exert the powers they had before in a different way, and use them for the glory of God.
3. It is not a miracle, or dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means -- as much so as any other effect produced by the application of means. There may be a miracle among its antecedent causes, or there may not. The apostles employed miracles, simply as a means by which they arrested attention to their message, and established its Divine authority. But the miracle was not the revival. The miracle was one thing; the revival that followed it was quite another thing. The revivals in the apostles' days were connected with miracles, but they were not miracles. I said that a revival is the result of the *right* use of the appropriate means. The means which God has enjoyed for the production of a revival, doubtless have a natural tendency to produce a revival. Otherwise God would not have enjoined them. But means will not produce a revival, we all know, without the blessing of God. No more will grain, when it is

sowed, produce a crop without the blessing of God. It is impossible for us to say that there is not as direct an influence or agency from God, to produce a crop of grain, as there is to produce a revival.”

- **1834-1892 – Charles Spurgeon** – nineteen year old Spurgeon became the pastor at the prominent but struggling New Park Street Chapel in London in 1854. With seating for more than 1,000 worshippers a mere 80 people attended Spurgeon’s first Sunday in the pulpit. Spurgeon’s style was unique, but became popular in London. As the church grew past filling the 1,000 seats a public building that seated 4,500 was rented until the 12,000 seat Music Hall was packed. The local press described Spurgeon’s preaching in these words, “All his discourses are redolent of bad taste, are vulgar and theatrical,” and his style as “that of a vulgar colloquial, varied by rant. . . . All the most solemn mysteries of our holy religion are by him rudely, roughly and impiously handled.” Indeed, Spurgeon was a theatrical performer, but also a theologically solid preacher who set the standard that many would try to emulate in order to gain the same growth and sustained popularity. In 1861 the Metropolitan Tabernacle was built to seat a weekly crowd of 6,000.
- **Dwight L. Moody** – By the 1880’s the targeted revival areas switched from the frontier to the heavily populated, growing urban areas. Similar methods were set in place for mass evangelism to be conducted in massive public buildings. Dwight L. Moody was one of the first to move the public revival meetings out of the churches and into public arenas. Now people were led in one way or another to make a public confession of Christ. Finney had encouraged people to stand up to express the confession to Christ. Moody took this one step further and encouraged those who had stood up to confess Christ during his meeting to continue by going to a room to meet with people who could answer questions and provide prayer.

1921-1960 – Showmanship, Materialism, Theology of Success

- **Billy Sunday** – took Finney’s “stand up to confess Christ” and Moody’s “walk to the counseling room” to stand up publicly to confess Christ and then to walk to the front of the arena to meet with the counselors. Billy Sunday left his mark on America’s culture and the Western Church between the years of 1900-1935. Sunday gained attention as a former professional baseball player with spectacular mannerisms and informal ministry style.
- **Materialism** – By 1914 Christendom had experienced population increase, territorial expansion into every part of the populated world and unprecedented increase in material prosperity and wealth. In the modern Western world the industrial revolution made the production of material goods abundant and attainable. With the high standard of material living possible and within reach of the average man. Thus, the average Western man’s daily focus was on attaining and maintaining this material wealth and high standard of living instead of spiritual truth, spiritual development and the advancement of his soul. Churches had to follow, and this is most obvious when we consider that these material men were leading the Western church. A standard of success in life was materialism, and thus a successful church must also be materialistically comfortable and a reflection of the good life that would indicate God’s blessing.
- **World War I** - In spite of the growth and advancement of Christianity which was accompanied by the increase in wealth and material production the Christian countries (stronghold of Christendom from 900-1800 AD) erupted into World War between the years of 1914-1918 which resulted in the death of 9 million soldiers and 7 million civilians. Christendom in the midst of the Industrial Age had brought history’s deadliest and most devastating conflicts.
- **Theology of Success** found its way into the Western culture and the Western church when an old idea received new momentum with Civil War captain and Baptist pastor Russell H. Conwell’s 1869 essay, 1882 message and, ultimately, 1890’s book all entitled “Acres of Diamonds”. The essay originated from an Arab guide who was leading Conwell’s camel down the Tigris and Euphrates rivers while he was traveling from Baghdad. Conwell’s guide told him a story of a man

named Ali Hafed who owned a large farm with orchards, fields and gardens, but sold it to go in pursuit of diamonds. After years of fruitless wandering Ali Hafed died off the coast of Spain in the Mediterranean Sea as a failure with no money and no diamonds. But, the man who bought Ali Hafed's farm discovered diamonds on the very land Ali Hafed had abandoned to go search for diamonds. A portion of Conwell's lecture and the point of his message can be found in the quote below:

"I say that you ought to get rich, and it is your duty to get rich. How many of my pious brethren say to me, 'Do you, a Christian minister, spend your time going up and down the country advising young people to get rich, to get money?' 'Yes, of course I do.' They say, 'Isn't that awful! Why don't you preach the gospel instead of preaching about man's making money?' 'Because to make money honestly is to preach the gospel.' That is the reason . . . ninety-eight out of one hundred of the rich men of America are honest. That is why they are rich. That is why they are trusted with money. That is why they carry on great enterprises and find plenty of people to work with them. It is because they are honest men. . . Some men say, 'Don't you sympathize with the poor people?' Of course I do, or else I would not have been lecturing these years. I won't give in but what I sympathize with the poor, but the number of poor who are to be sympathized with is very small. To sympathize with a man whom God has punished for his sins, thus to help him when God would still continue a just punishment, is to do wrong, no doubt about it, and we do that more than we help those who are deserving. While we should sympathize with God's poor--that is, those who cannot help themselves-- let us remember there is not a poor person in the United States who was not made poor by his own shortcomings, or by the shortcomings of someone else. It is all wrong to be poor, anyhow . . . as Mr. Carnegie said, the great iron squeezers that laid the foundation of all the steel millions of the United States, 'we men' can invent anything under the stars!"

<http://ebooksoneverything.com/wealth/acresofdiamonds.pdf>

At the time of Conwell's death in 1925 he had presented this story as a lecture 6,152 times and had earned \$8,000,000. Pretty good for a Civil War captain. The original audio of Russell Conwell's presentation can still be heard on YouTube. Today the Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary still carries his name after his Theology school in Philadelphia merged with Gordon Divinity School.

- **Between 1926-1950 church membership** in the United States increased 60% while the population growth of the United States for the same period of time was merely 29%. Church membership in 1950 was 57% of the whole population of the United States. (A History of Christianity, vol. 2, by Kenneth Scott Latourette, page 1410) Note that in 1800 that number was 7%; in 1850 it was 15.5% and in 1900 it was 36%. Church membership of the entire population of the United States had gone from 36% to 57% in fifty years. That is a 21% membership increase in the modern Western church of the United States between the years 1900-1950. It is easy to see that the ideals and attitudes in the church in those years had an impact on the United States and the Western World
- **1950 the United States was the most powerful nation** and its values and culture were being felt everywhere in the world.
- **Radio** – Radio broadcasting became popular in the 1920's and by 1925 it could be printed in an opinion article that "one out of every fourteen broadcasting stations in the United States is today owned by a church and operated by a church." (*Popular Radio*, New York, March 1925) Charles E. Fuller began broadcasting "The Old-fashioned Revival hour" in 1925 and by 1942 claimed to have a world-wide audience ("A History of Christianity", vol. 2, Kenneth Scott Latourette, page 1419) Soon, Christian broadcasting became a big American business.

- **Television** – With the upsurge of television beginning around 1939 entrepreneurial preachers realized their broadcasts required a ministry focused on entertainment, music, visual appeal, celebrity appearances and ministers with appealing personalities. By 1955 half of American homes had a TV set and by 1980 almost 50% of Americans watched weekly religious TV programming. This added to the drive of individual religion and personalization of the Christian experience and opinion.
- **Individualism** – The value of the individual sprang out of nationalism which had its roots in Christianity's stance on the dignity and worth of each person's self-consciousness
- **Norman Vincent Peale** (1898-1993) and preaching the Power of Positive Thinking instead of the Word of God – Peale was ordained as a Methodist minister in 1922, but in 1932 affiliated with the Reformed Church and took a 600 member church in Manhattan (New York City) to over 5,000 members. Peale began to use radio in 1935 and in 1952 wrote the book "The Power of Positive Thinking," the same year he began his TV show. Peale's teaching focused on the concept that our physical world could be controlled with our thoughts and a man could change his life, his health and his destiny by simply believing it. Below is one of my favorite, or actually least favorite, quotes of Peale's. This quote seems to me to be a form of self-abandonment to fate that is combined with a denial of reality but sweetened with self-hypnosis:

"Tell yourself every morning as you go to work that you love your job. Think of it as interesting, even fascinating. By so doing you will ultimately get enthusiastic about your work — and you will undoubtedly do a better job." (From "Power of the Plus Factor", 1987, by Peale)

Concerning the personhood of God, Peale said this:

"Who is God? Some theological being? He is so much greater than theology. God is vitality. God is life. God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized!" (From "No More Stress or Tension" in the monthly periodical "Plus: The Magazine of Positive Thinking" in May 1986, p. 22)

In a 1984 interview with Phil Donahue Peale said: ***"It's not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine."***

Donahue countered Peale by saying, "But you're a Christian minister; you're supposed to tell me that Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life, aren't you?"

To this Peale gave the politically correct answer before political correctness was clique when he said, ***"Christ is ONE of the ways! God is everywhere."***

- **Evangelism with music** – Gospel hymns had become popular and had a wide appeal at revival meetings and over the radio.
- **Methods, practices and forms of worship spread** from one denomination to another. If a church found success and growth by implementing a particular style or outreach it was sure to imitated and initiated by a hundred other churches. This included the use of songs, children's and youth ministries, summer assemblies/vacation Bible school
- **Billy Graham** – began in 1949

1960-2000 – Charismatic, Individual/Personal, Mysticism, Success

- **Charismatic Movement** – The charismatic movement was recognized in 1960 with Episcopal priest Dennis Bennett's public announcement to his congregation in California on April 3, 1960 that he had received the power and filling of the Holy Spirit with the manifestation of the gift of

speaking in unknown tongues. This incident may have slipped by public notice, although similar events were occurring around the nation, unless the event had not been reported to and covered by *Newsweek* (July 4, 1960) and *Time* (August 15, 1960). By 1963 most Protestant publications and journals had published articles concerning the charismatic movement and the phenomena of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues. Every major protestant church had been influenced by these events and most accepted the movement with caution. This movement was seen as more than a prayer movement, but a renewal of the mission and development of the church. Ultimately, the charismatic movement brought people closer to accepting a personal encounter, a personal word, personal direction and personal revelation from deity. More focus was moved towards a personal encounter with God, than with a personal understanding of the revelation given in the Scripture.

- **Individualism** – Individual's making decisions to place faith in Christ and individual's receiving the filling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues paved the way for individual's to form opinions about the nature of God, the interpretation of Scripture and the source of divine authority. Soon the common man was receiving personal directions, insights and revelation from his personal Lord by means of an inner voice in his heart or the "spirit" speaking to his heart.
- **Mysticism** – Direct contact with and expression from the divine presence appeared to be much easier to attain to than the serious study of the Scriptures. Personal views, individual behavior and imaginary desires could easily be justified and pursued with the support of a mystical encounter with "god" or his "spirit." And, who could negatively judge one person's mystical encounter without themselves sounding unloving and not Christ-like? The need for church growth and church unity led the church to abandoned accurate Bible teaching, and instead favor a more culturally relevant redefining of the character of God as tolerant and the nature of Jesus as loving and non-judgmental. This development made room was more tolerance of socially acceptable spiritual opinions



- **Bill Bright (1921-2003)** – 1952 wrote "Four Spiritual Laws"; 1979 produced the "Jesus Film"; 1951 founded Campus Crusade for Christ. Although a great evangelistic tool with accurate biblical insight, this work flooded Christianity with multitudes of converted, but untransformed individuals. The church was unprepared and unfocused on transforming these converts and preparing them for true spiritual service of work in the church. Instead, like the converts of other successful evangelists, these new additions to the church helped conform the church into the image of culture instead of themselves being transformed into the image of Christ.
- **Robert Schuller (1926-2015)** – Began his television program "Hour of Power" in 1970

- **Oral Roberts** (1918-2009) – Emphasized seed-faith giving; laid foundation for prosperity gospel and abundant life teaching ministries; 1947 began his radio broadcasting; 1954 began broadcasting revival meetings by television

2001-2040 – Market Driven

- **Market driven church** – The market driven church is designed to create numerical growth (not conversion or spiritual growth). The New Testament message, purpose, growth process, success target and future goal is thrown under the bus. The foundation philosophy of the church of this age is based on market-driven principles. The methodology is focused on:
 - Marketing strategies
 - Demographic studies
 - Business techniques
- **This church seeks spiritual enlightenment for temporal benefits** – According to the *American Demographics* article “Choosing My Religion” from April 1999, today’s religious person claims to be:

“...into spirituality, not religion...Behind this shift is the search for an experiential faith, a religion of the heart, not the head. It’s a religious expression that downplays doctrine and dogma, and revels in direct experience of the divine – whether it’s called the ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘cosmic consciousness’ or the ‘true self.’ It is practical and personal, more about stress reduction than salvation, more therapeutic than theological. It’s about feeling good, not being good. It’s as much about the body as the soul...Some marketing gurus have begun calling it ‘the experience industry.’”

- **Spiritual Gift assessment tests** are a perfect example of the market driven church tapping into its natural resources for organization purposes and effective management methods. This is the style of the in-house systematic approach the CEO (head pastor) and his staff (pastoral staff) use to turn a profit for their business (church)
- **Manipulation of Customer** (church members) and advertisement strategies
- **Bible studies** are led by a facilitator who seeks to include everyone’s opinion as the groups ignorance is pooled together.
- **Product development** of the Market Driven Church is focused on “meeting people’s needs.” Originally Jesus sent his disciples out with the Great Commission,

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

Notice, Jesus’ commission was Jesus-centered – “All authority...given to ME”... “go and make disciples” to follow ME... “baptizing them in the name of” ME ... “teaching them to obey everything I have commanded”

Notice: Jesus’ commission was not man-centered – “Go solve world problems”... “Go meet people’s needs” ... “Go make people feel connected” ... “Go build relationships between people”

The church is about Jesus. And, Jesus’ people will follow when Jesus is glorified. When the church is made to be all about man, then men will follow that church.

So, if the church is built on the Gospel of Jesus Christ men will be offended and think of it as foolishness, but if the church is built on a marketable product such as solving social problems, meeting people's needs, or being tolerant, loving and not judgmental, then the world of men will pick that product up and use it like a tool to advance their own social agendas and philosophies.

Yes, that's right. When the system of any local church is up and running full speed, the leadership of that church will have made one of two choices:

- Be rejected by the world by preaching the Gospel, teaching the Word of God and glorifying Jesus Christ.
- Be used like a tool by the world to solve world problems, social issues and meet people's needs without preaching the Truth, without teaching the Word and without glorifying the eternal Son of God, the soon coming king of God's kingdom, the man, Jesus Christ!

The choice is between being the church in Smyrna or the church in Laodicea.

Smyrna was told:

"I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer ... Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:8-11)

Laodicea was told:

"I am about to vomit you out of my mouth. You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see." (Revelation 3:14-22)

- **Rick Warren** (1954-present) – Rick Warren developed and implemented successful church growth methods beginning in 1980. Warren uses the church as an instrument to transform people and communities. His 1995 book "The Purpose Driven Church" provides guidance and instruction for church leaders to repair people's personal lives which will result in church growth and production. According to a Barna poll in 2005 pastors and church leaders in the United States voted this book as the second most influential book in their ministries and lives. The most influential book they voted for was Warren's earlier book in 2002, "The Purpose Driven Life."
- **Bill Hybels** (1951-present) – In 1971 Bill Hybels used relevant Bible studies, contemporary music, drama and the best multimedia of the day to grow a youth group of 25 to over 1,000 in less than 36 months. In 1974 Hybels surveyed the community to discover people's attitudes towards church. He then used this information to design a new approach to church. Within two years the church's attendance was 2,000. The enormous success of Hybels methods took the church to a weekly attendance of 24,000 in 2010. His system has been promoted through seminars and his ideas sought through speaking engagements scheduled across the nation.
- **Joel Osteen** (1963-present) – Joel inherited his father's church in Houston, Texas in 1999 when his father, John Osteen, suddenly died. John Osteen started the church in 1959 and had grown the weekly attendance to 6,000. Under Joel's leadership the church attendance spiked to 43,500 per week by 2009. Joel is the author of the books:
 - "Your Best Life Now"
 - "You Can, You Will: 8 Undeniable Qualities of a Winner"
 - "It's Your Time: Activate Your Faith, Achieve Your Dreams and Increase in God's Favor"
 - "Break Out: 5 Keys to God Beyond Your Barriers and Live an Extraordinary Life"
 - "I Declare: 31 Promises to Speak Over Your Life"

- **Christian A. Schwarz**, 1990's research published in 2009 director of Institute for Natural Church Development conducted the most comprehensive research project in church history to discover the causes of church growth. Over a thousand churches in 32 countries were studied and 60,000 surveys were completed. The information is found in Schwarz's book "The ABC's of Natural Church Development" (online as .pdf here - http://www.ljcommunitychurch.org/pdfs/ABCs_Natural_Church_Development.pdf). Schwarz found eight consistent characteristics of growing churches that if set in place anywhere and at anytime they will work every time. Below is the perfect formula for church growth. If you can market this you will have a successful church:
 1. Empowering leadership
 2. Gift-oriented ministry
 3. Passionate spirituality – this "spirituality" is not biblical because the Bible is not the source of their buzz-word definitions. These churches have gone to other sources to develop their meaning of "spirituality."
 4. Functional structures
 5. Inspiring worship – this refers to an enthusiastic worship service.
 - Here again is "emotionalism" which we have seen was the old-school key to revival identified by Finney in the 1830's "excited" men.
 - Schwarz explains that "people who attend inspiring worship services unanimously declare that the church service is... 'fun' " (page 14 of "The ABC's of Natural Church Development").
 - For the church to maintain growth men will need an increasing level of "entertainment" to sustain their sense of "fun" in such an "inspiring worship". This is so very contrary to the true growth and examples of the true church in the scriptures and in history.
 6. Holistic small groups
 7. Need-oriented evangelism
 8. Loving relationships
- Current buzz words:
 1. Church growth
 2. Disciple making church
 3. Plugged in
 4. Small group
 5. A new way of doing church
 6. Mystery
 7. Spiritual journey

The Future for the Western Church

After church growth what's next? The people that are collected in this market-driven church phase will have to be rallied around a purpose or a goal to justify their continuation as a corporation. These people were attracted and brought into the church by:

- Meeting personal needs (physical, social, etc.)
- Entertainment
- Emotionalism

But, now what? Why will these people stay?

The church that was organized by human methods through use of a marketing strategy will need to move into a goal oriented ministry such as a results based service organization. Church leadership will fabricate a new purpose and a fresh sense of mission. The church members will then be able to justify their continuation to assemble as a community while at the same time experience an emotional sense of

personal purpose. This was referred to as the “vanity cycle” in “Hope for America’s Last Generation” (page 84). The churches that modeled themselves after the mega-church’s market driven social research will have to move into a community centered service system. This might involve the building of community centers to accommodate the people of their church with the intention of serving those outside the church who are in the local community. Once again, the church is focused on attracting, serving and pleasing the unbeliever outside the church instead of teaching and preparing those who are already in the church. The church leadership will strive to appeal to more unbelievers by using its members, instead of converting the unbeliever and transforming the believer. Again, the former is easy and marketable, while the latter is challenging and detested. The first is the broad way; the second, the narrow way.

Pastors will defend their community service programs by pointing out that the members of their church are serving their community. This church’s leadership claims to be reaching out to their community for Christ by “showing God’s love”. But, just because you can train monkeys to slap at keyboards does not mean the monkeys are writing literature. In fact, just like the slapping monkeys are not communicating human thoughts or expressions, neither are the unconverted church members able to fulfill Jesus’ words to “let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.” The seekers who were brought into the church through market research are merely monkeys slapping at an author’s keyboard. The monkeys are not authors and they cannot produce the works of the author.

Pagans who are manipulated and motivated by the clergy to assemble in an organization called “Community Church” and then sent to serve their pagan neighborhood are not the same as God’s people prepared for works of service to advance the kingdom of God. They are merely serving the kingdom of this world while making it darker by claiming their darkness is light.

In the coming days cultural and political events are going to require Christians (believers, followers, seekers, church members, etc.) to choose between the Jesus of Scripture and the false Jesus of Western culture. The easy, market driven, non-offensive Christianity will grow rapidly in numbers of members, but will eventually be rolled over by Islam. This will result in multitudes of Islamic converts and church buildings becoming Islamic centers and mosques.

The challenging, painful transformation process of true Christianity will continue in the Western world, but only as true Christians struggle as society (even by the Western church) rejects this challenging, painful process. As true Christianity is purified they will also be rolled over by Islam, but not by conversion, but by Islamic persecution. This will result in multitudes of martyrs and masses of believers being eliminated as they proclaim their faith in the Scriptural Jesus in the face of Islamic denunciation.

In today’s church a reference to “God’s Word” is not necessarily a reference to a biblical text, but is often a reference to:

- a. A personal word from God
- b. A prophetic utterances by another person or a ministry leader
- c. The principles of success laid out by the contemporary church leaders and teachers within a particular spiritual movement or self-help seminar.

Today’s shallow seekers are tomorrow’s Islamic converts. Church community centers are tomorrow’s Islamic centers.

Conclusion

Even though studies show that most people of the twenty-first century who leave church are leaving because of unanswered intellectual questions, today's church leaders continue to present their members with an emotional experience and distract their "converts" with entertainment and social programs (basketball leagues, youth groups, men's ministry activities, community service, etc.)

People are not leaving Christianity because of relationship problems among the women in the women's ministry or as a result of an argument during a church league softball game. People are leaving Christianity because it has become too emotional, too subjective, too centered on individualistic personal beliefs. People are leaving because after years of attendance, service and worship the church still has not answered intellectual questions. Yet, the answers to these questions are readily available in books, in on-line videos, at seminars and much more. The disconnect comes when pastors and local church leaders fear the church will lose attendance and offerings will go down because people were given information and service time was spent addressing intellectual subjects. Indeed, these intellectual questions and maybe boring and unnecessary, but for who? Not likely to the believer who is seeking growth, fellowship with their Lord and understanding of the God they have embraced. But, yes, very boring to those who are only attending church to hear the cool band, to hook up with friends or to find a place to belong as if the church were a bar in a sitcom or a sports program in a middle school. Yes, finding answers to intellectual questions and learning about the eternal Lord would indeed be a huge road block if your attendance at church was merely based on your social needs such as finding a bar crowd or a sports program.

In other words, today's pastors are more attune to entertaining the goats than they are to feeding the sheep. So, who is leaving the modern western church? Is the unbeliever leaving or is the believer leaving? Is the church keeping the goats and driving away the sheep? If we were to base on answer on what is on the church schedule it would appear the sheep are either starving to death or leaving in search of greener pastures (or, in search of teaching pastors). Meanwhile, the unconverted Christian finds themselves surprisingly comfortable at church and very involved with helping to continue the conformation of the church into the image of a tolerant culture that can be respected by a pagan society.

For this Titanic Church the time is too late. Our Western ship has been struck and we are taking on water. It is comparable to the days of ancient Israel in the north that did not repent of the sin of Jeroboam because they could not repent. Israel's history had been rewritten and their true religion had been recreated into the image of the pagan world that absorbed them. Even when the "good" kings came along and led the people in great social reform, the Bible always adds:

"Nevertheless he clung to the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them." (2 Kings 3:3)

Why did they not repent? They had lost the Truth. They had lost their way. They had recreated the image of God and could not find their way back without it. This is where we are today. We have misdirected Bible interpretation. We have recreated how God communicates with man. We have redefined the nature of God and, in so doing, called the glory of God an abomination, unacceptable for a culture such as ours. In our arrogance we have become so ignorant that we are hopeless. No matter how hard we try we will not because we cannot turn away from our sin which is like the sin of Jeroboam.

For us, our sin of Jeroboam is:

1. Systematic revival
2. Marketed church growth
3. Worship of God focused on our entertainment and social activities with other people
4. Personal relationship with God that comes complete with the full package of:
 - a. A personal word from God
 - b. A personal Jesus molded to our own personal image
 - c. A personal divine power sent to solve our personal problems

5. A self-serving theology of worldly success
6. A self-made religion that fully embraces materialism and a non-judgmental attitude
7. Doctrine of our best life now
8. A problem solving God more interested in delivering us than he is in developing us
9. A relevant message that helps us live our dream life now
10. Promise of eschatological escapism with a pretribulational rapture

Why is this true? Because, if a model (often an idol) or a system (often false doctrine) works it will be copied, repeated and duplicated.

Finney copied the revivals. Billy Sunday copied Finney. Theology of Success copied materialism of the United States. Mass evangelism copied Christian radio and television programming. Church services copied the entertainment of mass evangelism. Pastors copied the motivational speakers. Charismatics copied the personal decisions for Christ. The market-driven church copied all the success methods of Western Christianity, but added modern marketing research by conducting public opinion polls in the communities they were considering to investing their church business.

Today's false Jesus is the personification of our culture and the reflection of contemporary celebrity. John's final words in 1 John were:

“Keep yourselves from idols.” (John 5:21)

There are two gates, two roads, but only one way and one door. The wide, easy road is always the way of destruction, but is the most heavily traveled. The scriptures make this clear. If you accept scripture at any level you must consider this.