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Series 2. Understanding The Church

Episode 3. Another Jesus, a Different Gospel

2 Cor. 11.3-4 **3***But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches **another** Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a **different** spirit which you have not received, or a **different** gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!*

The Caution

The thought of mixture entering into the Church remains a constant concern. Anything foreign to the absolute truth of the Gospel and the testimony of the apostles is an impurity that must be discerned and purged out. This mixture can come from multiple sources, such as false doctrine, false prophets and teachers, worldly influence, culture, as well as a subtle mixing in of other religions and philosophies. Two things for sure, a church in mixture cannot mature, falling short of the expectations of Christ, and Satan does not fear it but encourages it; for it poses no real threat to him or his kingdom.

Paul considered the Gospel of Christ, as preached by him, perfect and with little hope it could be improved upon. After all, he had received Divine visitations, visions, and revelations throughout his calling and life. Any change, any alteration he felt would be for the worse, and that the minds of the false teachers and other spiritual leaders were corrupted from the *simplicity* of Christ, meaning from the singleness of affection, reserved for Christ alone.

Another Jesus

Erroneous logic—Logic is not spiritual but is actually a part of the natural mind. It is the process of reasoning according to some supposed guidelines or truths, or even life's experiences. Logic is often influenced by emotions, how you "feel" about something. I know a young man, who was active in searching out spiritual truth. He actually attended my Bible study for a while in his pursuit of such knowledge. One evening, while lying on his bed, he saw a spider eat another insect. He reasoned, "A good and righteous god would never let this happen, the whole idea of killing and eating." At that critical point in his life he determined to become an avid atheist, denying all he had ever learned of Christianity. Logic comes from eating the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—this reasoning power might be helpful subsisting in the natural life, but it is forbidden to eat of this tree in place of the Tree of Life who, by faith, is Christ. This young man, yet in his early twenties, committed suicide a few years later. Faith in the unadulterated Word of God, not logic, must guide and persuade the mind of the believer.

All things, outside the narrow focus of the Gospel, enter in so subtly, as an interesting thought, as a fresh revelation, or just someone wanting to bring something new, something fresh into his life or that of the church. The initial hope is that it will cause a spark of life into a faltering church; eventually, however, any absence of spiritual *truth* brings to remembrance the parable of the foolish man who built his house on sand, Mt. 7.27 *"the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."* Eventually, the whole of the lampstand is removed from its place because corruption has entered in and has done its evil work. It is written in 2 Tim. 4. 3-4,

3*For the time will come when men will not tolerate sound doctrine, but with itching ears they will gather around themselves teachers to suit their own desires. 4***So they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths.**

The Bible clearly warns that in the last days deception will come—introducing *another Jesus*, a *different Spirit*, and a *different Gospel*. (2 Cor. 11.3-4; 2 Pet. 3.3; 1 Tim. 4.1) Note the particular use of the words *another* and *different*; it is "*another Jesus ... but, a different Spirit and a different Gospel.*" *Another Jesus* does not mean a false Jesus, a different Messiah, or an antichrist; but it does mean that they may preach the same Jesus but preached in a way to misrepresent Him, to give a different understanding of who He is and why He was crucified on the cross. They often give a misleading account of His Divine nature and character, His motives in doing or saying

certain things, and of the Divine mandate from which He was sent by the Father. His messages are often twisted to mean other things, perverting His intent. They pick and choose scriptures to support their ideas which cannot stand the test when compared to the context or whole of the scriptures. These thoughts come from “wanna-be” preachers, “wanna-be” pastors and teachers, and “wanna-be” prophets and elders, all fatten from eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil while the fruit of the Tree of Life goes untouched.

They may say things like, “Jesus kept the Passover meal, therefore we should keep the Law of the Old Testament as well; or that, by knowing the love Jesus has for all mankind they insist His love and tolerance are broad enough to include sexually deviant lifestyles into His Church; or that He died for the whole world and eventually everyone will be saved, even saying that Satan will eventually be saved. All are perversions of truth. I’ve heard people say that Jesus died so we won’t have to suffer with our arthritis or other ailments; that He doesn’t want to see us unhappy, so therefore He will alter the unpleasant situation we are in.

Many are these perversions and misrepresentation of Christ. Some say that Jesus was just a prophet or a reincarnated Elijah or Jeremiah (Mt. 16.14); others say that He was here only as a spirit-being having no real body. When in fact Jesus was born of a virgin; He was and is the Son of God, being fully God yet fully man in the flesh; He alone is the Savior of the world. He died to restore mankind to God, the fellowship with God lost in Adam but now gained to an even higher degree in Christ. His crucifixion was to redeem man from sin and death and his body from decay to resurrected life.

The words Jesus spoke are truth, Divine truth. Jesus said to Pontius Pilate, Jn. 18.37 *“For this reason I was born and have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the truth listens to My voice.”* To twist or pervert His words about Himself, His Father, the Kingdom of God, salvation, the resurrection and eternal life is not some innocent mistake or naive blunder; no, not at all, it is a form of blasphemy, blatantly speaking sacrilegiously about God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and/or the Holy Spirit. The one committing such error must be immediately rebuked, admonished, and led to repentance—for the benefit of both the Church and for the erring person as well.

Deviants’ ministries attempt to lessen Jesus’ true Divine nature and remold Him in a way in which they think He should be, or maybe as equivalent to the gods of other religions as just another way to eternity, as one god among other gods. Many would vehemently deny His divinity and proclaim Him to be only man, and a good example to follow with good words of love and lump Him together with prophets and teachers of other religions or with the saying of what others consider “holy books.” Jesus Christ is distinctly different from any man born of a woman because God is His Father, Divinity is in Him, uniquely set apart by God for His purposes in the earth, being fully God yet fully man, and God’s Lamb slain for the sins of the man.

Paul cautions that such vulnerable believers might become corrupted away from the “*simplicity that is in Christ*,” that is, the singleness of the person of Christ; and drift away to become either man-centered, multi-god centered, or centered on one spirit god that exists in all things living and nonliving. He cautioned not to become distracted by the enticing fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, deciding for themselves righteousness, their minds becoming impaired with corrupt principles formed by societies and cultures, and they then be carried away in error from the pure and simple doctrine of the Gospel of Christ. A Gospel that concludes that “*without Him we can do nothing*” of any spiritual value (Jn. 15.5), and “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*” (Acts 4.12)

To choose Christ as “*the Way*” is a very narrow and exacting way; there is no room for mixture. Whether it be Moses’ tabernacle, Solomon’s temple, or the vision of Ezekiel’s temple, all of them had a gate to pass through with a threshold to cross over in order to enter into God’s holy environment. In facing the gate, the entire world is behind you, a world with other gods, intellectuals, science, philosophies, and religions. Before you is the gate into the temple of God and the voice of His invitation to enter in. In choosing to enter in, your first step through the gate crosses the threshold into an altogether foreign and different realm. Everything, and I do mean everything, is now of God, by God, and for God. All within has been sanctified and consecrated unto God for His purposes. It is a spiritual environment wherein righteousness and holiness dwells.

It is all a matter of the will, what you choose to do or choose not to do. After a time of deep spiritual teaching many followers of Jesus found His words difficult to understand, and as it is written, Jn. 6.66 they “*went back and walked with Him no more*” These stood at the gate of the Kingdom and chose not to cross the threshold and enter in but to return to the familiar world easily understood. But when Jesus questioned the will of the twelve apostles as to whether they too would go away, it was Peter who said, Jn. 6.68-69 “*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69*Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Thus, this small flock exercised their wills to walk away from the world as they all their lives had known it and pass through the gate into the Kingdom of God. Jesus said,

Mt. 7.13-14 **13**“*Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14*Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

The gate is not the end of the way but the beginning of the way into life. It is narrow, as if entering through a narrow gorge in a mountain range. But the statement, “*there are few who find it*,” is most disturbing. It seems this sad contrast runs through all of

Jesus' teachings; that there are the few and the multitudes, there is the remnant and there are the masses; the few enter into life but many choose *the wide gate that leads to destruction*. This *destruction* does not mean the extinction of conscious life, annihilation, but a loss of well-being, of all that makes our existence precious. And, this *destruction* is certainly not God's will for man, not at all. The choice of gates to enter through is made by the will of man. It is written, Jn. 3.17 **17***For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

Those who respond to His invitation to pass through this narrow gate are but a "little flock," yet these by virtue of their will become the chosen of God. The picture is but a dark one for the multitude who seem to turn away from the narrow gate of the simplicity of Christ, or just choose to ignore it. They seem unconscious of what is at stake for them. They are ignorant of the fact that both the righteous and the unrighteous will experience the resurrection in the last day as Jesus said,

28*Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice **29**and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.* John 5.28-29

In order to flow in harmony with the world, one's will must be consistent with the will of the world, the society in which we live. Any exercise of one's will that is contrary to the will of the world encounters conflict, constraint, even persecution. If you break the law, you go to jail; if you express your opinion or have a way of life that is contrary and offensive to society, there is scorn and segregation. However intolerable this might be, it is insignificant to the destruction and loss for those who reject the way of Christ in the *resurrection of condemnation*. But one thing we cannot do is to pick and choose those things we want to retain and what we do not want to retain regarding the full Gospel of Christ. This too is mixture.

The argument is not about the historical accuracy of the Bible or the historical figure of Jesus. These arguments are always being tossed about by so-called intellectuals. The true argument, never to be distracted upon, altered in any way, or explained in a natural way, is the absolute spiritual truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, who Himself is totally God and yet totally man, who is the only Lamb of God sacrificed for the atonement of man's sins, and through Him alone is the way to the resurrection and eternal life.

A Different Gospel

2 Cor. 11.4 *"For if he who comes preaches **another** Jesus whom we have not preached, or if you receive a **different** spirit which you have not received, or a **different** gospel which you have not accepted—you may well put up with it!"*

Gal. 1.6-9 **6** *marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a **different** gospel, **7** which is not another; but there are some*

who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. **8**But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. **9**As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches **any other gospel** to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

The Prosperity Gospel. I would like to touch upon ever so briefly two non-subtle very invasive false gospels permeating the Church in various ways today; they are “*the prosperity gospel*” and “*the gospel of post-modernism.*” I recall one popular TV evangelist, Ken Copeland, writing in one of his newsletters that Paul had not come into the revelation of the deceptive “*prosperity gospel*” which is popular today among many churches, and that is why Paul never wrote about it in his letters to the Churches. Copeland, and many others (such as T.D. Jakes, Paula White-Cain, Joel Olsteen, Ceflo Dollar, Benny Henn, Joseph Prince and Jesse Duplantis) argue that the truths they have are outside Paul’s Gospel. That should be warning number one.

Thus the supposed truth of prosperity in health, finance, and personal achievement must be implied from various scriptures and must be reasoned upon. This evangelist claimed his source of inspiration was the Holy Spirit, just like the doctrine of another popular pastor/evangelist holds fast to his belief of *ultimate reconciliation* in which all souls will eventually be saved, none will be lost. He too claimed the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and a logically interpretation of the Bible.

These false preachers repeatedly use terms like *faith*, *positive confession*, and *visualization* to release the abundant blessings God has in store for them. Oftentimes these preachers will entice listeners to “sow” financial seed into their ministry with promises of a ten-fold return, however, with the preachers becoming richer, multimillionaires, and the listeners still struggling with day to day finances. It is a shameful gospel whose answer to failure in prosperity is never due to the reluctance of God to bless His children but can only be due to the lack of faith or sin in the life of the believer. This puts an incredible weight of guilt upon the people still struggling to overcome adversity in their lives, trying their hardest by quoting supposedly faith scriptures, but linger in their weakness and poverty.

The Postmodern Church. Postmodernists believe the Biblical Christ as being intolerant, egotistical, and arrogant because of its exclusive claims of the singleness of Christ in salvation and divine worship. To quote Acts 4.12, “*Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,*” is be intolerant, as the modernists feel there are many ways to heaven and other “*christs.*” To embrace a strict moral code, one that condemns sexual perversion like homosexuality or sexual permissiveness, fornication, and adultery is restrictive, judgmental, and lacking the sophistication of the modern church. The church, they claim, has redefined the notion of “*tolerance.*” Jesus was extremely tolerant keeping company with beggars, sinners, tax collector, and lepers; to these He blessed and forgave, yet He also commanded, “*Go and sin no more.*” (Jn. 8.11) It seems that tolerance must balance with deliverance.

To the “normal Christian” this perverted gospel seems absurd and not possible in any of today’s Christian Churches; but its filthy tentacles have entered many a church. I bear personal testimony of this as an advisor to a large student Christian group on a college campus. I witnessed the invasion of this Postmodernism brought into this young body of believers as the products of this teaching, being the new incoming students from such postmodern churches, joined the ranks of this thirty year old vital Christian organization—I was there at its beginnings and can testify of its original authenticity. They eventually swayed the thinking of the entire group, to the point where it became, by name only, a Christian organization whose sole purpose then became tolerance and the betterment of man—they had lost their first love. I resigned as advisor. Today, these same young people have grown into adults bringing this perverse gospel into their new churches.

Thus, the God-centered and Christ-centered Gospel has deviated into a man-centered religion. Postmodernist still retain some aspects of Christianity while doing away with the Christian influence of “absolutes.” They would flatly reject Paul’s statement in Eph. 4.4-6,

“[4](#)There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; [5](#)one Lord, one faith, one baptism; [6](#)one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”

It is well written in 1Tim. 4.1-2, *“[1](#)Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, [2](#)speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, ...”*

These and many other false doctrines have infiltrated the Church leading multitudes along a different path, opposing the Gospel of Christ as narrowly written by the apostle Paul. This is so serious that in Revelation 2 and 3 Jesus admonished six of the seven churches in Asia, as in Rev. 2.5, *“[5](#)Therefore, keep in mind how far you have fallen. Repent and perform the deeds you did at first. But if you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”*

This admonishment by Christ is so threatening and disconcerting that an alarm should have gone off in their heads immediately, especially in the hearts of the elders of the church, those who walk in ministries of apostles, pastors, prophets, teachers, evangelists, and in other leadership-type ministries. Remembering that any individual church, such as the church at Ephesus or any of the other churches in Asia, or the local church presently anywhere in the world, is not some independent organization, but is comprised of many individual souls, each one to be cared for and protected as one shepherds a flock of sheep from wolves lying in wait for the narrowest of openings to enter in.

The meaning of “*remove your lampstand from its place*” relates to the fact that the church is the sole light in its location, and surrounding it is the darkness that is in the world. Once the lamp is removed, darkness will cover in its absence. Thus, the church will no longer exist, and its members will be scattered. History has shown that none of the Asia churches of Revelation heeded the warning; none did repent, and the threat was fulfilled. These Asian churches became extinct long ago, and for ages, nary a professing believer could be found there. The only memory we have today of these churches are in the writings of the New Testament and some present-day photos of their lingering ruins.

The battle against evil, against false doctrine and worldly influence entering into the Church is ever present and must be guarded against with all the resolve the elders, pastors, teachers and other church leadership could muster. They must stay awake, stay alert, and stay in prayer.

Acts 20.28 “[28](#)Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.

S2.E3. Another Jesus, a Different Gospel – Questions for Discussion

1. What is the difference between “another” Jesus and a “different” Jesus?
2. Cite some examples how some may misinterpret the words or actions of Jesus.
3. What do you think is meant by the “*simplicity that is in Christ?*” (2 Cor. 11.3) Cite some examples how this has been corrupted in the Church.
4. Explain how following Christ is entering through the narrow gate; and what exactly is the wide gate, and its consequences.
5. To the best of your understanding, explain the following, and why they are considered a *different Gospel*:
 - a. The Prosperity Gospel
 - b. Postmodernism