

An Open Letter to the False Church

“For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions” (2 Tim. 4:3).

Dear false prophets, false teachers and Christian apostates of every stripe:

We’ve all heard this phrase: “You know who you are!” It’s an expression typically levied in the context of some corrective admonition, intended for some person or persons, busy about some misbehavior. While sent via certified mail, this is one of those rare open letters to whom the preponderance of intended recipients have, somehow, managed to convince themselves, and one another, that they’re not even home. Most of you decidedly do not know who you are. You’re living on Deception Lane.

Indeed, this letter, for many who read it, will be marked “return to sender.” Such is the nature of deception. Those who labor beneath it have become so accustomed to its crushing weight that they’ve lost all sense of it. It is my humble hope and simple prayer that, if this is you, upon reading this letter the Holy Spirit might, instead, plant a seed of revelation in your soul and water it with His Word of life and truth, so that, for you, it might blossom to repentance and right-standing with God the Father.

To be sure, the guidepost for that which makes up the false church is not rooted in my opinion. I’m a fallen sinner, saved by grace and worthy, by my own merit, of nothing more than the lake of fire. The guidepost for that which constitutes the false church is the Word of God.

“But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there

will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with false words.

“Their condemnation from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. ... For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for ‘people are slaves to whatever has mastered them.’

“If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit,’ and, ‘A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud’” (2 Peter 2:1-3, 18-22).

Let’s define the terms:

The church: The body of Christ—those regenerate, sanctified Christ followers who have sincerely called upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, King of the universe, Creator, soul saver and sole savior of mankind, and have been forgiven, redeemed and saved by grace. The church recognizes God’s holy Word as infallible, unchanging and eternal.

The terms “orthodox,” “conservative,” “fundamentalist” or “Religious Right” are sometimes used pejoratively by those outside the church (and at times from within) in an effort to undermine the church and water down the Word of God. The

church is hated by the world because the world first hated Christ and, as such, must suffer persecution.

The false church: The body of self-identified Christians who may, or may not, have begun the process of sanctification through belief upon and acceptance of Christ. The false church either rejects the infallibility of Scripture outright, or seeks to rationalize and radically “reform,” revise or reinterpret the Word to justify sin. False-church apostates are Olympic-caliber mental and exegetical gymnasts who systemically call good that which the Word of God calls evil. They imagine many paths to God and hold that the Holy Spirit-inspired men used of God to record the Holy Scriptures were, in their view, rather uninspired after all.

Thus, our apostate friends attempt to satisfy their spiritual hunger with Christianity a la carte, taking that which is palatable and leaving behind those bitter morsels given to curb the carnal appetites. The false church is loved by the world and can be summed by its central doctrine, coined long ago by its founding father, which is this: “Did God really say?”

With my apologies to Jeff Foxworthy, if you believe that “many paths lead to God” and that Jesus was joking when He said in no uncertain terms, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,” then you might be an apostate (see John 14:6).

If you have marched with, frequented or otherwise support Planned Parenthood—if you believe that there is any biblical justification whatsoever for one person to dismember alive another person in her mother’s womb, a most murderous, tortuous and excruciating end—then you might be an apostate.

If you demand a “free Palestine,” actually believe that Israel is intentionally targeting innocent Arab citizens in Gaza and elsewhere and, therefore, is guilty of genocidal “war crimes,”

then you have aligned yourself with the Islamic terrorist group Hamas, a group indistinguishable from ISIS, a group that admits using its own women and children as human shields and actually does target innocent Israeli citizens with thousands of rockets and suicide bombs on a regular basis. If this is you then, as with Islam and the rest of the pagan world, you are an enemy to Israel and, as Scripture warns, just might be an accursed apostate.

If you, as my good friend Dr. Michael Brown puts it, are among the growing numbers of those who engage “the fundamental error of ‘gay Christianity,’ namely, people interpreting the Bible through the lens of their sexuality rather than interpreting their sexuality through the lens of the Bible,” then you might, you just might, be an apostate.

C.S. Lewis wrote, “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done.’ All that are in Hell, choose it. Without that self-choice there could be no Hell.”

These are matters of eternal weightiness and consequence. For as it is written, “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father who is in 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!’ (Matt. 7:21-23).

For those who hear God speak to them, “Away from me” will be the most pure, righteous, just and all at once terrifying words ever breathed.

I pray you don’t hear them.

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concentrating in constitutional law. Having retired as an undefeated heavyweight professional boxer, Matt has taken his fight from the ring to the culture war. (Follow Matt on Twitter:@jmattbarber).