

Another Gospel (Revised)
Joseph Herrin (5-25-08)

Six years ago I write an article that bore the same name as this one. I believe it is time to bring it out and dust it off, updating it to reveal a message of truth that is lacking among those flocking to what is being called “revival” in Lakeland, Florida, at Morningstar Ministries, and elsewhere.

Six years ago, the Spirit led me to consider a very important question. The Spirit did so by leading me to examine some new books that were on display at the local library. The first of these books was on the topic of witchcraft. This library was located in a prosperous, fast growing, and progressive community in Middle Georgia. Many young people frequent this library, and it is reported that there is much interest in witchcraft at some of the local high schools, the largest of which has the image of a demon as their school mascot.

I picked up this new book on witchcraft and looked through the index and then I flipped to the middle of the book, which was written by a young female witch. There were photos in the center, and in some of the photos this young woman appeared completely nude as she practiced different aspects of her rituals and ceremonies. As I considered this book the thought arose, “How can Christianity compete with this?”

This book presents witchcraft in a way that is powerfully alluring, promising spirituality while also satisfying the strongest passions and desires of the sinful flesh. It promotes a path to spirituality that does not require suffering, and denial of lusts. Instead, lusts can be satisfied and one can attain to a promise of spirituality at the same time. With such appeal, many young men and women are getting sucked into the occult, new age teachings, and witchcraft. Witchcraft appeals to people on various levels. It attracts them with sexuality and eroticism. It attracts them with power and the promise of enhanced personal and occult abilities. It attracts them with its mystery and its spirituality.

I thought of what witchcraft offers and how it is so very appealing to the young people of this generation. I considered all of the young people in Middle Georgia who would find it very appealing, knowing that many more would certainly be enticed into this counterfeit for true spiritual life found only in the Son of God.

I then considered Biblical Christianity (not what is passed off as Christianity in most churches today) and how it offers none of the same things to appeal to the flesh or the carnal nature of man. In fact Christianity calls the disciple to come and die to all the desires of the soul. It speaks of putting the flesh to death, and there is much written of the call to suffer with Christ that we might later reign with Him. The glory and reward of Christianity is to be received at a later time, for Paul speaks in this way:

Romans 8:18

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed in us.

And again, we have Peter's words:

I Peter 5:10

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

Those who would be disciples of Christ must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him. The disciple must not seek to protect their life and its desires, or fulfill their soulish longings, but rather they must die to the desires of the soul that they might live. This does not seem, to offer much attraction. The hope of the Christian has for the last 2,000 years been set off in the distance. This hope is to rule and reign with Christ after the resurrection from the dead.

As I mentioned, the question arose in my mind, "How can Christianity compete with what was presented in this book on witchcraft?" The book this young witch wrote says nothing of denying self. It speaks of gratification now. Witchcraft offers its followers power now, and it entices with sexuality and mystery.

Many in the church have unconsciously asked the same question. They have sought to make Christianity as alluring to the flesh and soul of man as Satan has made his offerings. For those men and women who love mammon, the church has given them the prosperity doctrine. This doctrine is focused upon satisfying the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the soul, while promising the saints spiritual life in Christ. Is it any wonder that this corrupted gospel has been so widely embraced among Christian churches? It satisfies the desires of

the natural man and promises spiritual life without requiring any to count the cost, to embrace suffering, or to take up a cross.

There is another manifestation among the church that also has arisen from the desire to make Christianity more appealing to carnal men and women. It is a “judge not” gospel where a message of spiritual life is promised that allows one to retain all the scent and flavor of a sinful and fallen world. This gospel is growing at a great pace, threatening even to overtake the numbers of those who have embraced the prosperity gospel. This “judge not” gospel proclaims that Christians can come to Christ and be forgiven, and that they need not change. They can be accepted just as they are, and they can remain just as they are. It is salvation without transformation.

This “judge not” gospel finds itself comfortable with all of the ways of a fallen world. Every act of rebellion is accepted, whether it being young people smoking cigars and cigarettes, or tattooing their bodies. It is a gospel that says it is to be viewed as normal, and not censured in any way, for men and women, boys and girls, to adorn their bodies with body piercing, whether it be tongue or nose, or ear, or eyebrow, or navel, or nipple. Nothing is taboo, for this gospel is not about conformity to Christ, or righteousness and holiness. Its main tenet is “judge not lest you be judged.” Its highest precept is toleration, even when sin, rebellion, and sinful lusts are what are in view.

This “judge not” gospel rapidly adopts all of the trends of the world. It follows the world’s lead in music, whether acid rock (or stranger variations), or hip hop, or rap. Concerts in these churches have all the flavor of the most cutting edge and current trends in the world. The “judge not” gospel embraces all manner of worldly fashion, even punk styles and the most bizarre gothic fashions. The message is, “You can be whoever you want to be, and pursue whatever passions are in your heart, and Jesus will love you and accept you.”

Please note, I am not suggesting that the true gospel message excludes any from coming to Christ, no matter their former manner of living. The true gospel, however, does not leave people as they were. It brings them into a state of conformity to Christ. It takes fleshly and sensual men and women, wed to the ways of a fallen world, and it washes them, it cleanses them, until they no longer resemble that which they formerly were.

Ephesians 2:1-5

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked

according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ...

The true gospel of Christ does not leave men and women bound to the lusts and desires of the flesh. The true gospel of Christ leads all to conformity to the One who was Himself a perfect representation of the Father in heaven. The true gospel is one where separation from the world and its ways is an absolute requirement.

Ephesians 5:3-11

But do not let immorality or any impurity or greed even be named among you, as is proper among saints; and there must be no filthiness and silly talk, or coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks. For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. And do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them...

“Trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” This is the focus of the true gospel. The false gospel is focused upon what is pleasing to man. That which is false does not require transformation. It embraces worldliness. It leaves men and women in all their filthiness and covetousness and lusts and self-focused living. “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.” Yet many are deceived. They are willingly deceived, for they despise the cross appointed to all who would be disciples of Christ, and they love the world with all of its sensual appeal.

We see that the church has found a way to compete with witchcraft, and other Satanic offerings. It has modeled itself after the same pattern that Satan uses.

After I looked at this book on witchcraft, the Spirit drew my attention to a book focused on the life of Jay Bakker, the son of Jim and Tammy Bakker. As I flipped through the pages it was evident that much of the contents focused on a youth ministry that Jay is involved in. There were pictures of the people who participated in it, as well as pictures of their activities. It appeared to be a high octane type of group that offers non-stop activity of the type that would appeal to many different segments of youth. Its approach is to offer to youth the things that would entice them and keep them interested.

In one picture that was subtitled something to the effect, “Jay and two of his friends,” he was standing between two very strange and bizarre looking characters that looked like something one would normally only encounter on Halloween night. One of the young men had tattoos all over his body and he was described as being a tattoo artist. The other young man had an appearance that I will describe as ultra-gothic. He was wearing black leather and spikes and his face had a ghoulish appearance. My immediate reaction upon seeing the picture was that I was looking at something demonic. There was nothing in their appearance that would tell anyone that these people had anything to do with Yahshua the Messiah.

Jay has himself gotten heavily into tattoos. I went out to the website of the ministry in Atlanta, Georgia that he is involved with. It listed the various staff members and provided biographical information on each one. Their favorite books, music and hobbies were listed. Over and over I read of staff members who were into cigars, tattoos, Stephen King novels, gothic fashions, vampires, and extreme forms of rock music. The motivating doctrine of the group is acceptance of all people without judgment. An antagonism toward any righteous standard was evident, and a mocking of any religious form that would judge a particular behavior to be unacceptable in the eyes of God.

Pictured below are some tattoos on the arms of Jay Bakker. Notice especially the skull head with the dagger thrust through it that declares “religion destroys.”



Note on the wrist of Jay's left arm is the word "Outcast" and there is a demonic form on his arm above the word. Satan himself stylizes himself as an outcast from heaven. He is the original rebel, who wants all to sympathize with his rebellious attitude. He pictures himself in the Phoenix Bird who is cast down to the earth and consumed in fire, but which rises from the ashes of destruction. Yes, Satan is an outcast, and in the "judge not" gospel he has fashioned a message to appeal to men and women who also see themselves as rebels, and outcasts, who are unwilling to submit to the rule of another, even if that other is the holy and omnipotent God who created them.

Consider now that there is a church that God calls Babylon in the book of Revelation. It is a church that protects the flesh, as she is pictured as riding upon the beast (a symbol of the beast nature of fallen man). This church has presented to the world another gospel not proclaimed by Christ or His apostles. It is a gospel that appeals to the flesh. The Babylonian church takes everything the world has and it creates a "Christianized" version of it. The world has its music with its soulful appeal, and the church has mimicked the same. The world has its fiction, mystery, and romance novels, and the church

has the same. The world has its T-shirts with sensual, provocative, or profane sayings and pictures, and the church has the same.

Recently I have noticed Christian girls wearing T-shirts that have the message emblazoned across their breasts "R- Rated", or "X-Rated." On the back of the shirt would be some scripture, along with some pithy saying, that would explain the message on the front and make it "Christian." However, knowing some of the young ladies wearing these shirts, I know they are out to make more than a Christian statement and to lead people to Christ. The terms R-rated and X-Rated immediately stir thoughts of adult content and have explicit sexual connotations. When another person is confronted with such a message across the bosom of a young lady an instant sexual association is made.

Does Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, need the young girls of the church to use themselves as sexual billboards to entice people to read some message about Him? Yet, this really reveals the mindset of the church as it tries to compete with the world and its allure. Like the witch who appeared so enticing in her nudity, the church has adopted sensual methods to attract members into her embrace. They present a gospel that is devoid of the cross. It is a gospel that says, "Come and live and be fulfilled" instead of "Come and die." It is a gospel that makes the following words of Christ meaningless:

Luke 14:25-35

25 Now large crowds were going along with Him; and He turned and said to them,

26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

27 "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.

28 "For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?

29 "Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him,

30 saying, "This man began to build and was not able to finish."

31 "Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him

with twenty thousand?

32 "Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

33 "So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all he possesses.

34 "Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

35 "It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

It seems strange that every time Yahshua saw a crowd gathering He would say something to get rid of the majority whose hearts did not truly desire Truth and Light, yet the church today seeks to attract and retain these same ones by whatever compromise or allure is necessary. Yahshua was content to receive only those whom the Father had given to Him (John 17:12), but the church seeks to widen its embrace to include many false brethren and many who desire the things of the world and all that is in it, forgetting that love of the world is enmity with the Father.

Yahshua cautioned all those who would follow Him to count the cost before they committed. Today the church avoids all talk of a cost being associated with following Christ. There is a great cost, however, and many who would like to be called followers of Christ really don't have the desire to "give up all they possess," to hate their own life. They are salt without savor. The church is seeking out these bland, tasteless followers, for although they may not please God, they provide all that the church desires, pews that are filled, offering plates that have lots of money, and participants for its activities.

Todd Bentley, as the progenitor of the current "revival" typifies those in the "judge not" gospel movement. He has rejected the cross which alone can produce a true anointing, releasing the Spirit within as the flesh is crushed, and he has embraced the methods and pursuits of the world. This conformity to the world is revealed in his tattoos and jewelry. It must be noted that tattoos have long been associated with rebellion. A rebellious son or daughter would go out and get themselves tattooed or pierced as a sign of their independence from their parents.

The pictures below reveal the numerous tattoos on the body of Todd Bentley.



Among the various tattoos on Todd Bentley's body are an Oni demon arising out of a flower, which is located on his neck. A serpent haired warrior on his leg. A Jesus death head on his arm with a subliminal monkey head found in

the beard of Christ, and many other images that are occult in origin. All of these tattoos have been acquired in recent years as he has been actively involved in ministry.

What will the people find who flock to Todd Bentley and the “revival” sites that have sprung up around him? They will not find the true gospel preached. They will not hear that a true release of the Spirit comes only as the flesh is crucified. They will hear that they can experience some feeling, like fire, they can manifest actions such as jerking and laughter, and they need not worry about hearing a message of suffering for Christ. In fact, there is very little doctrine at all being shared, just a bunch of babble about an angels and an anointing resting upon Todd.

The Spirit has answered my question regarding how the church can compete with the offerings of Satan. The answer is that the church doesn't have to compete. There is only One Way, One Truth, and One Life, and it is Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah. Those who love Truth will overcome all obstacles from within and without to follow hard after the Son of God. They need no enticement of the flesh, no allure to the soul of man. Such ones may be few and far between, but they will follow Christ, despising the shame, taking up their cross, and by their lives they will glorify the One who has given all for them.

It is Satan that must use the allure of immediate gratification of the flesh and soul to woo people to that which is false. If the church uses the same methods then the church is itself walking in unbelief and it knows not the true gospel of Christ. If the church must entice people into its fold with entertainment and a self-centered gospel then it knows not the mind of the Savior that it so fervently calls Lord, for Christ never enticed anyone. Christ said His sheep know His voice and they will not follow another.

It is a Babylonian church system that attempts to use the methods of man to build the kingdom of God. It was Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, that surveyed his realm and declared, “Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty” (Daniel 4:30)? In the same way a Babylonian church builds kingdoms to rule over men, and then the men who have done the building boast over what they have constructed.

It matters not to Babylon whether there is one true disciple of Christ among

all those who fill the pews and coffers of the church. It matters not whether the people have had their ears tickled, telling them exactly what they want to hear, to get them there. It matters not that the youth are merely being entertained and that they are having all of their worldly desires met by the programs of the church. It matters not if there is lacking a single member who has truly been delivered from the world, the flesh, or their own soulish desires. If people are gathering, activity is going on, the church is making money, buildings are being constructed, and the church is paying large salaries to its ministers then it is viewed as being successful.

Revelation 3:17

Because you say, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing..."

Yahshua did not come simply to forgive men their sins and to assure them of a trip to heaven when they die. He came to make disciples of Himself. He came that man might be formed in His own image and that the intent of man's original creation might be fulfilled. The scriptures state that the elect are being "conformed to the image of Christ." This same Christ never satisfied His flesh. He did not turn the stones to bread when He was hungry, instead He waited upon the will of the Father. He never did anything of His own initiative. He never even spoke a word of His own initiative. When it came time to be handed over to sinners to be crucified for the sins of man He declared, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Thy will be done."

Is this the same image that the church is forming among those who fill the pews week after week? Are the youth also dying to their own fleshly and soulish desires? Can they state that they never speak a word of their own initiative, but they speak only what the Heavenly Father commands them to speak? Is the body of Christ being brought to a place of maturity that is like unto the fulness of the stature of Christ who is the Head of the body?

In truth, there are two bodies present today. One is the Babylonian church from which God is calling His people out. There is also the true Ekklesia, the called out ones, who are being formed and fashioned after the image of Christ. One body uses the allure and methods of the world to attract and retain its members. The other body is going through continual refining, purging, and purification from all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life.

How can the true church compete with the world and false religion? She will not do it by becoming like the world, for this only creates myriads of worldly followers who have not been delivered from that which they truly need deliverance from, their own lusts and desires. The world needs to see a body of Overcomers who have been conformed to the image of Christ and who love not their lives. What is needful is for the Elect and the Overcomers to take up their crosses and follow wherever the Spirit leads. There is a glorious hope set before these ones for after they have suffered for a little while, in due time they will be exalted. May you be encouraged by these words.

Postscript: For those who find themselves already tattooed and pierced, etc., this teaching is not intended to condemn or to shame. It is intended to instruct. Christ receives us just as we are, but He does not leave us this way. Whereas it is expected that people called out of the world to Christ should appear identical to the world at the time of their calling, they should not ever consider it appropriate to continue to live as the world, chasing the same carnal pursuits.

I Corinthians 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

If you have tattoos, no longer flaunt them. If your body is pierced, take out the piercings. If you have collected ungodly music, throw it out. If you have impure movies, discard them. If you have been living in sin, leave off your sinning. Christ has forgiven all. Do not despise His grace by continuing in sin.

John 8:11

Yahshua said, "Neither do I condemn you; go your way. From now on sin no more."