

## 2<sup>nd</sup> PETER BIBLE STUDY

2 Peter 2:1-10

Lesson #4

### Introduction

#### False Teachers Within the Churches (2)

##### Many Will Follow Them

*1 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep. 4 For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of darkness, reserved for judgment; 5 and did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a preacher of righteousness, with seven others, when He brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly; 6 and if He condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah to destruction by reducing them to ashes, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly lives thereafter; 7 and if He rescued righteous Lot, oppressed by the sensual conduct of unprincipled men 8 (for by what he saw and heard that righteous man, while living among them, felt his righteous soul tormented day after day by their lawless deeds), 9 then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from temptation, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment, 10 and especially those who indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires and despise authority.*

2 Peter 2:1-10 (NASB)

#### Verse 1:

We discussed verse 1 last week. Peter's warning that false teachers arising from within the churches themselves was inevitable. Because, the churches are filled with false converts who profess to know God, but by their actions they demonstrate that they only know about Him, they don't actually know Him. And we quoted Paul's verses in Titus, when referring to certain teachers and leaders, he said, that because these people's mind's and conscience's were both defiled, they were detestable, disobedient, and useless for any good work. (Ti 1:15-16) Again, speaking of elders and pastors of churches who were teaching what is false, and defiling, and destructive.

Any and every believer of the gospel, and recipient of that work of regeneration of the soul, will sit up and take notice upon hearing such a warning. The notification that there will, without doubt, be false teachers among us, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies into our very midst, demands our constant and vigorous attention. Peter didn't say they *might* rise up, but that they *will* rise up, so we will most certainly encounter them, many of them, and very often. But what is most troubling is that they will lead away many, as Peter goes on to explain.

#### Verse 2:

*2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned;*

Concerning this statement of "many" all of you who are familiar with my teachings already know that I often speak of the relative sizes of these groups called the "many" versus the "few" as they're used in scripture. You also know that I've more than once said openly, that from all indications, it would appear that as little as ten percent of the memberships of churches are actually regenerate. I'm sure that statement has drawn much comment, some of affirmation and some of condemnation, but I stand by it still. And in further defense, I just became aware of a comment made by John Calvin in his commentaries on 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter, where he himself made this following comment that I'm now going to quote:

*2. And many shall follow. It is, indeed, no slight offense to the weak, when they see that false doctrines are received by the common consent of the world, that a large number of men are led astray, so that few continue in true obedience to Christ. So, at this day, there is nothing that more violently disturbs pious minds than such a defection. For hardly one in ten of those who have once made a profession of Christ, retains the purity of faith to the end. Almost all turn aside into corruptions, and being deluded by the teachers of licentiousness, they become profane. Lest this should make our faith to falter, Peter comes to our help, and in due time foretells that this very thing would be, that is, that false teachers would draw many to perdition. [end quote]*

(Calvin's Commentaries)

*“and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned.”* Can there be any doubt of such results? When we survey the situation, both now and historically, by far the greatest damage that has been done to the Christian faith is that of the hypocrisy of false converts. It is these, who claim the name of Christ, and the title of Christian, and then proceed to speak and behave in direct opposition to everything that Christ taught, and everything that Christ did. And even before the Lord Jesus, when God had chosen out a nation of people for himself, and given them the 10 Commandments, and all the statutes and ordinances as a testimony of His righteousness, it was those very people, by their contrary behaviors, who brought derision and ridicule to God from the neighboring peoples.

And now, in this very day, is it not the contrary behaviors of the multitudes who claim to be Christian, that are used by the news media as a means to discredit the name of Christ? As I said in an earlier lesson, there are many among the liberal news media who have no greater aspirations in life than to find something derogatory every day of their life that they can try to attribute to Christianity. I wish I could say that this is limited to false Christians, but unfortunately we know that that’s not always true. We have the example of David, in his relationship with Bathsheba, that culminated in his ordering the murder of her husband Uriah the Hittite. In his scathing rebuke, Nathan the prophet told David that his actions had given occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme His name, and for that there would be serious repercussions, including the death of the child that was born of the adulterous relationship.

Nathan didn’t say anything about the derision it brought on the name of David and his offspring. The sin committed here is that of dishonoring God by one who had every conceivable reason *not* to ever do such a thing. It’s very sad, but it’s absolutely true, that the way of the truth can, and often is maligned, both by false Christians, and unfortunately, sometimes, even by the true ones. In the earlier quote from Calvin, he said there is nothing that more violently disturbs pious minds than to see a defection from a profession of faith back into a life of licentiousness and profanity. This is a heartbreaking situation for that individual for sure, but even more, look at what it does to the good name of Jesus Christ which they formerly proclaimed. In discussions with unbelievers, this very situation is among the most commonly cited as the primary objection to the verity of the gospel. If Christ is true, and Christianity is real, then why do 9 out of 10 people who profess at some point in their lives, to believe it, end up falling away and abandoning it? And certainly this is a fair question isn’t it? And the answer is that there isn’t just one reason, but a multitude of reasons.

Were going to get into this in deeper detail in verses 17 through 20, but so that we don’t leave this question unanswered lets look at the Scriptures and see what they say about those who seemed to receive the gospel at some point, but then, over time, proved to be false converts. Matthew chapter 13 starts out with a large crowd gathered around the Lord Jesus, and He begins to tell them a parable, about a man who sows seeds on the ground. He cites four specific situations in His parable. The first is seeds that fell along the roadside, the second is seeds that fell on ground that was hard and stony, the third is seeds that fell on ground that was filled with weeds, and the fourth is seeds that fell on good clean soil. Afterwards his disciples asked him to explain what He meant by these examples, and He did that in these following verses:

*18 "Hear then the parable of the sower. 19 "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road.*

This example speaks of those who can’t make sense of the gospel and consider it to be pure foolishness. They make no profession of faith because they don’t even understand what it means, and perhaps they even find it offensive. There is no positive response of any time within this group. Then there’s the next group:

*20 "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; 21 yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.*

This is that “how could a loving God possibly allow such things to happen to us” group? This is that group that gathered around Jesus for the miraculous healings and the excitement, and the camaraderie, but they had no stomach for adversities or hardships or persecutions. When following Christ brought these situations they had absolutely no motivations to stick with Him. They were quick to receive it when all they could see were the benefits, but when benefits

turned to sacrifices they quickly abandoned ship. Because, they were never really on board to begin with. This is typified by the name it and claim it movement of today. It's the prosperity gospel that the charismatic movement has embraced wholeheartedly. It's all hyper emotions and fleshly excitement. They're in it for the quick benefits they perceive it to offer, but when it finally fails to deliver on those benefits, as it most certainly will, then they'll eventually leave disappointed and disheartened. Because the New Testament Gospel is a call to self-sacrifice, not self fulfillment. It is a call to suffer, not a call to prosper. This kind of belief isn't the kind that regenerates the hearts and saves the souls. It's worldly and materialistic based religion, and Jesus said those who chase after this will fall away from the truth that saves. They'll fall away because their anticipation of prosperity and self-fulfillment is absolutely antithetical to the call of Christ, therefore this whole gospel idea of prosperity is doomed to failure. It cannot, and it will not deliver.

Those who are offering this perversion of the gospel are "false teachers" that are doing it for personal gain. They will eventually suffer the consequences of their deceptions, but their followers will also suffer all the losses of following after their sensual and worldly enticements. This is the kind whose immediate response is great joy and excitement, but not for the right reason. Not joy and excitement over having been freed from their slavery to sin, but rather their perceived promises of health and wealth and prosperity irregardless of their continued heartfelt bondage to sin.

It's this group who doesn't want to hear anything about the term "Lordship salvation" or repentance of sin, or obedience to the Scriptures. Their preachers can be male, or they can be female, they don't care, as long as they're talented at their art. The fact that the holy Scriptures absolutely forbid female pastors or teachers seems to make no difference to them whatsoever. They stand up in the pulpit and quote holy Scriptures while they themselves act in total defiance to those very same scriptures. One has to wonder what their mind's are thinking when they're doing this, and even more, why is anybody who has ever read the Bible even listening to them?

If you base your eternal hope of salvation on the promises of the Scripture, how can you follow someone that you know is acting in direct defiance of those scriptures? For the most part, this is false teachers leading groups and assemblies of false Christians. But, if by chance you are a true Christian, who has gotten yourself caught up in one of these groups, then I exhort you to flee immediately. Do not follow a teacher of the scriptures who himself or herself is not willing to obey those same scriptures that they're teaching. If your church pastor, or your Sunday school teacher is teaching you things that are contrary to scriptures, or if your pastor or Sunday school teacher is female, then get out of there immediately, and don't even look back. Because there's nothing back there that a true Christian wants to see or hear. Don't be deceived into thinking that you can tolerate a little bit of open disobedience. The Scriptures tell us that just a little bit of leaven will affect the entire lump, meaning that just a little bit of poison renders the entire loaf of bread inedible. When you encounter this situation then you must understand that you are looking at false teachings, and you must remove yourself from such influences or you will also suffer serious consequences yourself. Now I could go on farther, but I want to cover a little more ground in this lesson, so let's move on to the next group in Christ's parable:

*22 "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word, and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.*

This group is described as those who don't necessarily leap up and down with enthusiastic joy, but yet the implication is that they responded to it positively. The Lord says that this man "hears the word," suggesting that he does understand what it means, and the implications of what it teaches. The prior group that received it immediately with great enthusiasm didn't quite grasp the significance of the commitment, but this group has a response that tends to indicate a little broader understanding of the gospel's call to repentance and faith. What fails to happen with this group is that the word doesn't produce within them the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. They seem to intellectually grasp it, and according to the description, they had no objection, but what happens, or should we say what doesn't happen, is that it failed to produce the appropriate results.

These people's worldly concerns simply consumed their attention. In other words, their treasure was on earth and not in heaven, so their heartfelt affections were for earthly things, as opposed to heavenly things. (Mat 6:20-21) The gospel may very well have influenced their thinking, but it did not change their heart attitudes, and priorities, and affections. And unless this happens, there will be no sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit producing obedience to Jesus Christ. (1Pet 1:2)

This is an apt description of the vast majority of people in the contemporary evangelical churches. They've heard the gospel preached, they had a reasonable understanding of what it meant and the implications that it involved, so they answered the altar call and came forward with a profession of faith. The Church was delighted at their response and joyfully received them into the congregation. So far so good. But sadly, just as John Calvin taught over 400 years ago, and this preacher has been declaring for decades, only about one in ten of these prove to persevere to the end. Ninety percent or so just go on living their lives as usual, and no sanctifying work of the Spirit is ever evident, no holy affections ever blossom in their lives, no hungering and thirsting for righteousness are ever openly manifested. But instead, only the same old striving to make better their position in the world of today. What's so sad about this is that many churches actually help them to justify this attitude, by teaching that we should put our families first, and that they are our first priority as a good Christian. So our affections and our time should be firstly and foremostly directed toward them.

Do you realize that this is absolutely opposite of what the scriptures actually teach? Of course the Scriptures teach that we have obligations to our families which we are expected to meet, but the Scriptures tell us that the Lord Jesus Christ demands our first priority. He is to be our first love, and every other living entity falls in behind. Assuming you've read your Bible, what did you make of those verses in Luke chapter 14, starting a verse 26 and following? And what did Paul mean when he told the Corinthians who were married that the time had come when they should conduct themselves as those who were not married? (1Cor 7:29-31) Well, he certainly wasn't talking about promiscuity, he was talking about priorities of life. When even the closest and dearest things of this life become our treasure, then our heart attitude will be worldly, and the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't tolerate divided affections. He is either our first love, or He's not willing to be our love at all. What man would marry a woman that he knows full well loves another man equally as well as himself, or even more than him? I don't know if there are any such men, but I do know that if there is, Jesus isn't one of them. (Rev 2:4-5)

These are those really nice people sitting just down the pew from you. They come to church every Sunday, they volunteer on the committees that serve the church. They show up at all the business meetings, but you've never once seen them at a prayer meeting. They've been church members for decades, but as yet they've never quite managed to read their Bible, even though they bring it with them to church every Sunday. This is exactly what the Scriptures are talking about when it says that this group is unfruitful. Not unfruitful in tangible works, but unfruitful in progressive sanctification and transformation to Christlikeness. Their outward behaviors are usually kept within acceptable boundaries, but their heart's have not been renewed, and their spirit's have not been regenerated. Their thinking and their attitudes are no different than the secular world. The scriptures hold little or no sway on their opinions and beliefs and practices. This is the description of fruitless Christianity, a Christianity that cannot be distinguished, by its beliefs and practices, from the rest of the secular world. And sadly, this is the textbook description of the majority of contemporary evangelical Christianity. A systematized religion resembling a giant tree, that looks very pretty from a distance, but when examined closely proves to yield very little, if any, edible fruit.

Now we've got one more group to go in Christ's examples, but you might be asking yourself what all of this reference has to do with false teachers, since these examples are mostly regarding the individual responses to the gospel? The answer to that is, that it's these very principles themselves which provide for us the understanding has to just how all these false teachers get into the churches in the first place. Who are they, and what motivates them to do the things that they do? It makes no sense does it, born-again Christians should not intentionally teach false doctrines for personal gain, that just shouldn't happen? But yet it does, and we're warned to be on guard against it, so it behooves us to know and understand who these people are, and how it is that they get into these positions of leadership that they hold on our churches. So now, let's look at the last example:

*23 "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."*

Let's first and foremost establish the understanding that bringing forth fruit in this example of Christ is not, I repeat is not, talking about how many followers He produces. It's not talking about how many other people this person leads to faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus is speaking here about the fruits of righteousness and sanctification, not numbers of followers, as is so often wrongly assumed by those who can't seem to see beyond the earthly man-centered perspectives.

This group is said to bring forth fruit after receiving the word. As we've already said, this means beginning to show visible signs of sanctification and transformation. It means developing a worldview that's structured around the holy scriptures. It means to begin thinking, feeling, and behaving as our example, the Lord Jesus did. Our feelings and opinions should start to be reshaped into conformity with His teachings, not into conformity to the world. (Rm 12:1-2) The function of the Holy Spirit, according to Peter in his first epistle, is to begin the process of bringing the true believers into obedience to Jesus Christ. Peter says this is an action of the Holy Spirit, not an optional decision made by the individual. Of course it is optional, in so much as it's not externally forced upon us, but rather implemented through choices freely made as a consequence of the new heart and new priorities that characterize regeneration. Simply put, it's optionally implemented, but not optionally occurrent. They must be present, because these fruits of regeneration that demonstrate themselves in sanctification and willing obedience, are those very indispensable fruits that authenticate this group, and distinguish them from all the others who Jesus described as false. In His teachings regarding false teachers Jesus said:

*15 "Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravaging wolves. 16 You'll recognize them by their fruit. Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? 17 In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree produces bad fruit. 18 A good tree can't produce bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So you'll recognize them [false teachers] by their fruit.* Matt 7:15-20 (HCSB)

When you're following a teacher who disobeys the scriptures themselves, and by doing so, encourages you to do the same, you are following a false teacher. When you are following a teacher who promises you worldly benefits, and entices you through fleshly desires, and tolerates, or even promotes sensual behaviors like promiscuity, or homosexuality, or lesbianism, or adultery, or any sensual behaviors that are forbidden in the holy scriptures, you are following a false teacher. If you are following a teacher who is telling you that Jesus wants you to be prosperous and wealthy and healthy, and all you have to do is learn how to claim these promises, then you are following a false teacher, because Jesus made no such claims in His New Testament covenant. Just the opposite in fact.

Those who espouse these teachings cleverly try to combine elements of the Old covenant with elements of the New covenant, while simultaneously eliminating other components, so they come up with a nonexistent hybrid covenant. One that makes great promises of worldly prosperity, but is freed from all requirement of strict obedience to the commandments of God. They attempt to substitute new covenant grace in place of the Old Covenant curses for disobedience, thereby eliminating one whole side of that covenant, and then substitute worldly benefits in place of spiritual benefits of the new covenant, while ignoring the whole side that speaks of forfeiting everything we have to follow Christ. Thereby producing a hybrid covenant containing old testament benefits coupled to New Testament graces, that eliminate the responsibilities altogether and keep only the benefits. But no such covenant exists in holy Scriptures. The old covenant did provide enormous worldly benefits, but only in return for a level of obedience that proved to be impossible for humanity to maintain. Therefore, the Lord promised them a new covenant, based on better promises, not worldly promises but spiritual promises. (Jer 31:27-34; Eze 36:26-27)

One may choose to try to live under the benefits and obligations of the old covenant, or they may choose to try to live under the benefits and obligations of the new covenant, but we may not make our own covenant, by choosing and rejecting various provisions and options of each, to produce our own custom tailored covenant. But this is exactly what the prosperity preachers are doing. They have created a nonexistent hybrid covenant and are offering sensual and worldly benefits under an umbrella they call Grace, or Faith, which demands absolutely nothing in return. I wholeheartedly agree that one would have to be a fool to reject this covenant, if it actually existed, but it doesn't. It's only a figment of their godless imaginations, and all their followers will suffer a great loss for their ignorance. These kinds of things are not just personal preference issues, these are truth issues, obedience to holy scriptures issues. (Mat 7:21-23)

As we spoke about in our previous lesson, these issues that must be decided as being related to optional preferences or Godly ordained boundaries, are ones that demand a knowledge of the scriptures, or we will never be able to make the determination accurately. But still, having become aware of the scriptures, and becoming capable of making these determinations, we must then be willing to promptly act upon those issues with due diligence and resolve.

For example, You would never be satisfied just to accurately identify a terrorist with a bomb who was onboard your airplane, you would absolutely demand that either he be removed, or you be allowed to get off. Some things absolutely demand an immediate response, by way of positive action. And false teachers, secretly introducing their destructive heresies within our Christian churches, are as deadly as any threat that can be launched against them. If you can't successfully get them out, then you better get off yourself, because no good thing is going to happen if they're allowed to stay on board.

We just quoted Jesus where He said that a bad tree cannot produce good fruit (Mat 7:18), so don't be fooled into thinking that a little "false teaching" is tolerable, so long as the majority seems to be okay. I don't want to belabor this point, but using this same analogy of the terrorist on the airplane, who has a bomb under his coat, or in his shoe, what if he's wearing very fine clothes, and he's smiling, and he's speaking very kindly to everyone, shall we then let him stay on the airplane, because, after all, for the most part he seems okay? Would you do that? I should certainly hope not, but I'll bet there are more than a few who actually would.

They would be that "judge not lest you be judged" group, who have no idea what this verse means, nor the context within which it was spoken. To these, truth is relative, and we're all entitled to our own opinions, so we must never make a judgement regarding the teachings, or actions, or behaviors of others. This is so absurd that it hardly warrants an answer, but to the ignorant it seems to make perfect sense. Trying to explain the difference between Godly ordained commandments and personal preferences of grace to these, is like trying to explain calculus to first graders. No amount of words that you use will ever have any effect at all, not until they mature to a level of comprehension, if in fact they ever do. So we must not put people like this in positions of teaching or authority, when they themselves are completely ignorant, but this is a common practice in almost every church that I've attended. Anybody who's willing to serve, will be allowed to serve, irregardless of qualifications, biblical knowledge, gender, or even discernable evidences of regeneration.

Our current situation doesn't inhibit false teachers, it promotes them, it even invites and begs them, because we've created so many programs that we're desperate to fill the leadership positions with anybody who'll take them. The programs themselves have become more important to us than the content, and sadly even the accuracy and truth taught by those programs. We have churches that have been largely custom tailored by the unregenerate masses within them to meet their own desires and expectations. And while not all are literally "false teachers" by biblical definition, they are nevertheless, by their biblical ignorance, teaching mostly the secular pop psychology of the times, which they've picked up from television programming and liberal news media. And it appears that we're perfectly satisfied with this situation, if not actually even happy with it.

So the fact is, the climate has never been better for the growth and prosperity of false teachers, we don't discourage them, we most often welcome them. We invite them to speak in our churches, and we promote their books and videos without any real scrutiny as to their biblical accuracy and conformity to truth. All they have to be is popular. Under conditions such as this, false teachers are not going to fade away, in fact they're going to grow and prosper, both in popularity, and in the degree of their apostasy, as Paul warned in 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy chapters 3 and 4, and Jude in his epistle, and Peter in this chapter we're discussing now. Despite their eventual destruction of which Peter speaks in these verses.

The current trend, which has been developing and growing for a long time, is to accept all differing points of view as equally valid, regardless of how it conforms to scripture. Or, to allow the scriptures to be twisted into a virtual pretzel of truth, with no fixed shape or absolutes, so that any doctrines whatsoever will be made to seeming fit within its permissible boundaries. We value a perceived unity of relationships as being more valuable than truth, but biblical unity is based entirely upon truth. It is the unity of our specific beliefs in scriptural truth that *is* biblical unity, not a unity of acceptance of anything and everything as being equally valid. That's not the biblical definition of unity, that's what the bible defines as apostasy. But we've renamed it "unity" and declared it loving and tolerant, rather than evil and sinful.

We're not actively looking for false teachers so we can identify them and remove them from our midst, we're looking for them so we can elevate them to positions of leadership, so we can all be entertained by their fresh new approaches, and ear-tickling new ideas and perspectives to spice up our church meetings.

And all of this can be traced directly back to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 13, and John Calvin's comments on 2<sup>nd</sup> Peter chapter 2, that scarcely one in ten of those who once make a profession of Christ, actually persevere to the end. Most of the seeds of the gospel fall on unproductive soil, and only a small remnant bring forth lasting fruits of righteousness through regeneration and sanctification. Even though many seem to look good, at least for a short while anyway.

Now to finish up on Christ's comment regarding the seed on good soil, He said some being forth fruits of righteousness 100 fold, and some 60 fold and some thirty. What does this signify? It's easy to try to put quantities of followers, or number of converts to these numbers, because that seems appropriate, but again, that's not what Jesus is talking about in this parable. He's speaking of what happens when a seed is placed in good soil, which is a pure heart regenerated by the grace of God, and the effect it has on that recipient. Jesus makes the point that there are differing degrees of fruitfulness. But take note that none of those is "no fruit" as a recent popular teaching going through the churches suggested. Every good tree produces good fruit, some more, and some less, but all are fruitful if they are good. (Mat 7:17) If not, they are cut down and thrown into the fire. (Mat 7:19)

We should learn from this. If there's no signs of fruit (meaning righteousness) then the soil wasn't good, but on the other hand, not every true believer will necessarily respond with the same speed or degree, so we must be very careful not to use our most fruitful members as our litmus test, and then completely disqualify anyone who falls short of their level. The whole of scripture can be said to be a delicate balance of priorities and perspectives. When all aspects are in proper proportion it's a beautiful thing, but if any single aspect is either reduced, or expanded beyond its proper proportions, then the whole thing loses its beautiful symmetry. Maintaining this delicate balance is a matter of scriptural knowledge and proper interpretations, just like identifying false teachers. It involves first a proper and accurate identification, and then a proper and biblical based response, both carefully formulated and performed in proper balance and perspective. A church can be free from false teachers if it wants to be, but it must truly want to be, and then be willing to take those unpleasant and unavoidably confrontational measures that are required to make that happen. Wolves won't stay away if they're never confronted. Just recognizing them as wolves won't deter their actions, you have to resist them when they attack.

### **Conclusion:**

According to scriptures, we will always have false teachers within our churches. We have them because we're not willing to take the measures required to accurately identify, and then effectually remove them. In fact, For the most part, we end up assisting them in their works by our own biblical ignorance and lackadaisical attitudes towards absolute truths and positive actions. We who are the regenerated, that is the born again church members, are truly in the minority in the vast majority of our churches, and until and unless, we're willing to see this, we're going to continue to have our pastor selections, our deacon appointments, our church agendas, and our preaching and operating policies, influenced and directed by the overwhelming majorities of non-Christian church members.

I wish I could offer an easy solution, but there hasn't ever been one, as the epistles of the New Testament so clearly point out. The 7 churches described in Revelation are a sad testimony to the effectuality of Christians to maintain the purity and truth of the gospel. But the up side is that in every situation described in those 7 churches, there are said to be true Christians who are maintaining their testimony even amidst the sad conditions of their churches. These ones are all encouraged to persevere, and promised many diverse and wonderful rewards for do so.

Therefore, we must earnestly contend for that faith which was once and for all delivered to the saints. While we won't always be one hundred percent successful in keeping the false teachers out of our midst, we are nonetheless encouraged to persevere in our faith, and in our efforts to protect those sacred and divine truths that form the New Testament gospel, and set Jesus Christ apart as the one and only true Savior of mankind and beloved Son of God. The coming King for whom we eagerly wait with passionate resolve. To Him alone be glory and honor and praise forevermore. Amen.

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11/12/10