

## The Kingdom-Focused Don't Accept Satan's Illusions

Dear Friends in Christ Jesus our Lord,

If you're a younger person who's reading this (say under age 55) and you hope to someday have a comfortable retirement awaiting you, it isn't going to happen. Both in this nation and around the world our heavenly Father has set events into motion to shake people out of their complacency and their disregard for His Son. Even within organized Christianity any consideration for the Lordship of Jesus is dismissed, or never even comes to mind when catastrophes strike. These global wake-up calls from Father aren't anything new. Throughout the Bible we see Him sifting people so that their true priorities are revealed. A glance at history shows, for example, His repeated shaking of Europe over the centuries — especially when institutionalized Christianity became so corrupt that it defamed our Lord Jesus.

If you're a younger follower of Jesus, you are inheriting a "Christianity without Christ". Please don't let this tragic situation go on in your own life or that of your family! Christianity in this nation as well as in Europe and elsewhere has sadly proven many Muslims accurate when they call "Christianity" as a whole the **"pawns of Satan."** The love and Christlike character of Jesus are sorely lacking in too many who call themselves Christian — the very characteristics by which unbelievers would recognize genuine followers of Jesus (John 13:34,35). Without the unifying factor of love, this nation overflows with 380,000 diverse and competitive congregations, all too many which have been drawn together by the same prevalent demonic strongholds. This disunity and lack of love keep them from being our Lord's representatives in unified spiritual power under the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. So in the eyes of an unbelieving world, the organized religious system really is just a "pawn of Satan". Our Lord's accusation against the religious leaders of His time on earth could be accurately leveled at the institution of Christianity today:

*"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean" (Matthew 23:27).*

If you think Christianity is doing well in the US because there are so many congregations and denominations, think again!

•What do you think is the percentage of people who are still "Christians" five years after going forward at the most well-known evangelistic crusade in the world?

4%    24%    74%    94%

•What do you think is the percentage of people who are still "Christians" five years after spending several years involved in the most noted Bible study ministry in the world?

5%    25%    75%    95%

•What do you think is the percentage of children who were actively involved in church youth groups and are still "Christians" as adults?

3%    23%    73%    93%

•What do you think is the percentage of children who were raised in “church-going” homes and are still “Christians” as adults?

23% 53% 73% 93%

•How did one prominent mission group to Native Americans evaluate their success rate after decades of ministry?

0% 40% 70% 90%

The answers to these questions are far lower than you may want to think. If it weren't for Christian pollsters like George Barna surveying Christianity, or for ministries just being honest about their own unfruitfulness, Christians would be completely hoodwinked by the illusion that Christianity is doing well in this country.

And, one last question:

•What percentage of missionaries fail to stay the course through their first term overseas?

25% 45% 75% 85%

Lamentably, the answer is much higher than you'd like to believe. Consider all the money and time that was spent to train these eager individuals. For a number of reasons they give up discouraged and disheartened in front of the unbelievers with whom they were supposed to share the Gospel. The enemy of our souls sneers for two reasons: The ex-missionaries feel like failures in their own Christian walk, and the unbelieving have all the more doubts about a “Jesus” Who can't even preserve His own.

We've cited this deplorable fact before. Missiologists have stated that since 1977, Christianity in this country hasn't grown at all in terms of new followers of Jesus. Instead, there's been far more “church slosh” — people migrating from one faith community to another and yet another — than there have been authentic conversions. And no one seems to feel our Father's sorrow and anger over self-serving, socially-satisfying gatherings in which nothing of His Spirit is manifested in the lives of those attending. Yet all too many religious leaders accept unquestioningly whatever crumbs of satisfaction that Satan allows them.

### **The Halo Effect Of Denominationalism On Our Society**



Denominationalism is now a widely accepted view of Christianity — a system of disunity and competition. Ecumenism creates an illusion of unity — but by its very nature it waters down the Person of Jesus Christ and the foundation of the Bible alone as God's Word. The fracturing of Christianity into spiritually powerless congregations gives the demons glee. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that wherever a new denominational or sectarian outpost is established, those who are getting together are already unwittingly serving Satan's purposes. In every city in the world in which denominationalism exists, the devil

dishes out to clergy his crumbs of them feeling successful in the system: someone “getting saved”; a new congregation forming out of the slosh from other congregations; a costly new building constructed to attract more people into the door. It’s called measuring success by “**counting nickels and noses**” — a phrase we first heard 45 years ago.

How did all this divisiveness become so universally accepted? With the election of Gregory I as Pope in 590 AD, Roman Catholicism took hold of power with religious and political force. Unopposed in using the “conquer or kill” enforcement policy of the Roman Empire which it had replaced, this institution reigned for the next 9 centuries. Any individual or region or religion which resisted Roman Catholic domination suffered the consequence, as in the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the devastating pogroms against the Jews. Not until the Protestant Reformation swept through Europe in the 1500s did Roman Catholicism lose its widespread control over Christianity. But with the Reformation we have the inauguration of what became an ever-increasing number of denominations. Today over 40,000 denominations and sects exist, almost double the 23,000 in 1994. Has this accumulation of new denominations and sects just served to further divide what Christ intended to be His unified body? The current strife in the political arena is really no different than the divisive agitation that has existed within organized Christianity for centuries.

Let’s look at an example of how this disunity is played out within a locale. We live about 30 miles outside of Spokane, Washington, a medium-size city with “church” buildings dotting multitudes of street corners. Founded in 1879, 35% of Spokane’s population of over 217,000 consider themselves “Christian”, comprising Baptist, Episcopalian, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Pentecostal, Presbyterian, LDS, and other expressions. **But note this:** Spokane also has one of the highest crime rates per capita in America compared to all communities of all sizes. Sadly, Christianity in Spokane has accepted the scraps that Satan hands it, and the religious leaders live under the illusion that they’re doing their best to maintain a “Christian” presence. Paul could be writing about the congregations in Spokane, *“having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people”* (2Timothy 3:5).

Denominationalism and sectarianism in Christianity have never been the plan for our Lord’s called-out ones whom He recruits to serve His Kingdom purpose and do His Father’s will. Please don’t accept the schisms in Christianity as a given. Instead consider Paul’s words: *“For firstly indeed, when you come together as called-out ones, I hear of divisions among you, and I believe it in part. For there must also be factions among you, in order that the approved ones may become manifest among you”* (1Corinthians 11:18,19, literal).

Our Lord Jesus Himself tells us who He approves of: *“The one trusting and being immersed will be saved; but the one not trusting will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who trust: In My Name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues; they will pick up snakes with their hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and they will*

*get well*" (Mark 16:16-18, literal). When you have trusted in Jesus as your Lord and Savior and you're immersed, you are dying to yourself (Romans 6:4) and pledging to keep a clear conscience (1Peter 3:21). By His indwelling Holy Spirit you can trust in our Lord's promise that you truly are one of His Kingdom-focused followers.

***"In the past God overlooked such ignorance,  
but now He commands all people everywhere to repent"*** (Acts 17:30).

**Please note this reality:**

In our lifetime (especially since 1948 when Israel once more became a nation) our Father is showing His mercy to the Jewish people by restoring them to the land He promised Abraham and giving them back Jerusalem (in 1967). He is also restoring the Hebraic foundations for us who are Gentiles in order to undo the curse which He placed on institutional Christianity because of the anti-Semitism of the "Church Fathers." Before 1967 few recognized the truths He is restoring. For centuries He has overlooked our ignorance of the Hebraic foundations. But now it's time for us who love and serve Jesus as our Lord to change our ways, the ways in which Romanism and Hellenism have so deeply taken root. How could our Father curse institutional Christianity for so many centuries? Because He promised Abraham, *"I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you [and subsequently Abraham's descendants] I will curse..."* (Genesis 12:3). It's our Father's right to do this, as He says, *"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion"* (Romans 9:15).

If you think that our Father is unjust by your standards of what's just, consider how a Jewish person might feel on reading Paul's words, *"hardness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles comes in"* (Romans 11:25, literal). More Jewish people have placed their trust in the Messiah since 1948 than in all the centuries before. (As a side note, a number of Jewish people who have read our book, [Restoring the Early Church](#), have placed their trust in the Jesus we write about. That's because we point to the Messiah which the Older Testament promised them, and not to the Hellenized version which anti-Semitic theologians foisted on Gentiles and Jews alike.)

***"On this rock I will build My collective called-out ones,  
and the gates of hell will not withstand it"*** (Matthew 16:18).

For especially you younger people who are resolutely committed to Jesus as your Lord and Savior, we want to encourage you to take the offensive in the spiritual battle that's raging in the unseen world for the souls of mankind. As "spiritual warriors" in this battle (see Ephesians 6:10-18, for example) our Lord requires that during our pilgrimage to our salvation, we wage war against the powers of darkness (2Corinthians 10:3-5). You've most likely recognized that Satan has achieved a certain level of success by convincing many congregations through their clergy that Satan doesn't exist: **"There is no devil. Evil is only the absence of good."** Or that spiritual warfare against the devil is irrelevant to their Christian walk, as in "Don't even think about Satan". Sadly, this ignorance nullifies Peter's warning to followers of Jesus that there really is an enemy in the unseen realm to stand firm against: "Be alert and of sober mind. Your adversary the

*devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Oppose him firm in the faith*” (1Peter 5:8,9a).

Even followers of Jesus who are well aware of the spiritual battle that’s going on may still shrink back from the authority they have in union with Jesus to overcome the evil one. That’s because the devil has deceived them into a defensive posture that’s reinforced by a mistranslation about the gates of hell, that these gates “won’t overcome” our declaration of trust in Jesus as the Son of the Living God (Matthew 16:18). Many in Christianity are trying to defend their faith against what they perceive as an attack by the gates of hell. But gates do not attack! In response to Peter’s declaration, Jesus proclaims that “**the gates of hell will not withstand [His collective called-out ones].**” These gates cannot withstand the presence of the Spirit of Jesus within His own.

Don’t be duped by theologians and Bible translators who’ve never experienced even one demon flee in the Name of Jesus. Christianity has been hamstrung in overcoming the unseen realm ever since Roman Catholicism reserved the role of demonic deliverance (exorcism) solely to its clergy. This restriction served to again enhance the clergy dominance (Nicolaitanism) and limit the power of the Holy Spirit being enacted through the individual follower of Jesus. But you certainly hear little about people within Catholic circles being “exorcised” these days. Yet Protestants haven’t done much better in encouraging followers of Jesus to free themselves or others from the bondage that afflicts a certain area of their mind — the part that’s demonized and not yielded to the Holy Spirit. So especially if you’re a younger person who is loving and serving our Lord Jesus wholeheartedly, take the offensive against the devil in the power and authority of Jesus’s Name. A warfare mentality to set the captives free (see Luke 4:18) demands that each “soldier” for Christ do his or her part through the power of the Holy Spirit (2Timothy 2:3,4).

We personally are mindful of the authority which anyone who follows Jesus as Lord has in His Name over demonic interference. Before we enter a store or clinic or other public setting, we bind in the Name of Jesus any demons for the time that we are present there. In His power we are taking authority over their influence or activity so we can represent our Lord’s purposes and interact with others according to Father’s will while we’re in the premises. You’ll find other examples of how we take authority over demonic interference in [Turning The Hearts Of The Fathers To The Children, Practice 2.](#)

The Holy Spirit will guide, empower and intervene in and around you as you put these truths into practice. In biblical times, being the “salt of the earth” meant that a person represented the best or noblest character qualities in his or her society. To ratify a covenant, salt symbolized fidelity and constancy, bringing to mind the eternal faithfulness of God toward His beloved. So having our Lord tell His disciples they were the salt of the earth is both great praise and great responsibility. In your Kingdom service, make sure our Lord Jesus can say to you, “**You Are The Salt Of The Earth.**”

Mike & Sue