

Few are chosen

Introduction

In a recent podcast, the perceptive social commentator Max Igan stated that in his whole life he had never met a genuine Christian who practised the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. Though not religious, he said this with disappointment. This is sad.

Several people have said to me that I was the only Christian that they had ever met who actually practised Christian ethics.¹ This is tragic; especially as I know that these people have met many churchgoers and evangelical people. I am not special at all, merely a believer in Christ; in fact I am 'the chief of sinners' (1 Tim 1:15) and 'an unprofitable servant' (Lk 17:10). The point is that few churchgoers are living a normal Christian life.

What is critical in these assessments is the practice of claimed believers and not what they say. This leads me to a specific point; I believe that the majority of people attending church are not genuine believers. I have made this point many times over the decades and I see no reason to alter my view. In some settings, such as Charismatic churches, I believe that the vast majority are not genuine Christians. In some cultic-type churches it could be as high as 98%.

But even in the traditional institutional churches true believers are a minority. How can a genuine Christian, that fully believes and obeys God's word, remain in dead churches, apostate churches and compromised churches? For example (this regards the UK situation):

The Anglican Church

This has been apostate for over 100 years and swallowed liberal theology and modernism with enthusiasm. It is much more apostate now than 57 years ago when evangelical leaders urged regenerated believers to leave.

It produced bishops that claim that God is dead in the 1960s. Its synod blatantly teaches heresies, such as the acceptance of homosexual priests, female priests, and favours transgenderism and political Wokeness. For that matter the whole hierarchy is unbiblical. Anyone calling themselves a priest offends God because it denies the sole mediatorship of Christ and denies the priesthood of all believers. Its leadership structure is unbiblical. The idea of an archbishop is anathema.

Its meeting places are unbiblical. Its liturgy is unbiblical. Its doctrine of the Eucharist (consubstantiation)² is unbiblical. Its doctrine of salvation is now unbiblical and far removed from, say, the Lambeth Articles or even the 39 Articles.

How could any regenerated believer stay in such a church? To stay means formal acceptance of synodical pronouncements, which are unbiblical. Your very presence in this structure is therefore compromised.

¹ I say this in modesty, claiming nothing special about me at all. I merely claim to be a normal Christian like every other true Christian. I use my story to illustrate my main point.

² The doctrine that the substance of the bread and wine coexists with the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist.

The Methodist Church

This is largely dying out in England. It capitulated to liberal theology long ago and became completely compromised. Even in its heyday it followed the errors of John Wesley with Evangelical Arminianism being the chief problem, but there are many others. It had female leaders even before Anglicanism.

The URC

This has been a liberal, compromised church since virtually its formation.

The Baptist Church

This is a mixed bag. From the beginning Baptist churches were mainly Arminian (General Baptists). Various sub-groups (e.g. Strict Baptists, Particular Baptists, Grace Baptists) were more evangelical but had their own problems (e.g. Duty-Faith, legalism).

Most Baptist churches today are Charismatic and deeply flawed. The degeneration (downgrade) of evangelical Baptist churches started in Spurgeon's time and he fought it, unsuccessfully. Baptist churches claiming to be Calvinistic (e.g. Grace Baptists) are no such thing being Amyraldian at best.

The Charismatic Churches and Pentecostal Churches

These have a multitude of doctrinal errors, appalling heresies, and aberrant practices. It would take too long to list all these here. Essentially these are a syncretism of occult ideas mixed with Christianity. At worst they represent the importation of demonic ideas, mysticism and paganism (as in the Toronto Blessing, Pensacola Revival, New Apostolic Reformation and so on). I do not deny that there have been some very good leaders, missionaries and teachers that came from these churches, but these swam against the tide of error.

To illustrate my claim I make one point. Some Charismatics practice what they call 'grave sucking'. They lie on the grave of some 'powerful' Charismatic/Pentecostal leader in order to absorb the power from the dead person. This is nothing but necromancy; a depraved occult practice.

The Brethren

Mostly vanished in England; there may be some isolated groups somewhere but most Gospel Halls are now homes. The younger members of many Brethren assemblies were absorbed into the Charismatic Movement and the older members died off. They were historically steeped in Dispensationalism leading to many other errors.

Some independent groups, such as that led by George Muller in Bristol, were very good. Plymouth (Exclusive) Brethren led by Darby were autocratic domains full of legalism and hypocrisy. At one time the chief Brethren leader was an alcoholic. Despite this, the brethren produced many fine writers and missionaries, such as GH Lang.

The FIEC churches

Most of these churches are compromised. Many have joined the Charismatic Movement; some are very legalistic and dead; others are dying off as the young leave.

I maintain that it is impossible to have a good testimony towards God and the angels (Eph 3:10), let alone men, if you are a committed member of such churches. Therefore, most of the churchgoers cannot be believers. Genuine Christians in such churches will not flourish.

All of these churches disobey even the basic NT principles about the local church, which include:

- The church meets as a family not as an institution.
- This requires a small congregation.
- This necessitates following the only Biblical precedent of meeting in a home.
- There are therefore many small churches in a town (like salt in a meal).
- Leadership of the local church is by a group of equal elders (plurality and parity). These live by faith if full-time or have jobs.
- There is no clergy / laity split.
- There is no single dominating leader.
- There is no submission to a higher human church authority.
- The church breaks bread every Sunday.
- There is a focus on fellowship (one-anothering) and didactic teaching through dialogue (not sermonising).
- There are no musical instruments. Praise is a cappella.
- Evangelism is by members going out and witnessing to the world, not bringing people into the church for a special Gospel meeting where they are encouraged to respond en masse to altar calls.
- There is no compromise with the world.
- There is no focus or directives on giving money to leaders. Giving is by personal deliberation and focused on giving to the poor and needy.

This problem of professing Christians needs some analysis.

What are the fruits of genuine regeneration?

What is it that people should see in the lives of true Christians that give evidence that they are genuine converts to Christ?

Without giving long expositions of ethical qualities, I will restrict myself to bullet points.

- First, true evidence of faith and repentance. These are the signs of conversion. I dislike personal examples but I can't think of anything else. When I was saved and confessed this to two girls from college that witnessed to me at my home, I immediately took my books on the occult and burned them in the garden. No one told me to do this. I also stopped swearing and blaspheming immediately. Nobody told me to do this either; it just happened.
- A testimony of a confrontation with Jesus. All converts must have met Jesus in some way in their conversion. This may not be some blazing light, such as that which Saul experienced (Acts 9:3), neither need it be a vision. But at some level there is a meeting with Christ whereby sins are confessed and belief in Christ is expressed in prayer. Conversion is meeting with Jesus and choosing to follow him.
- After this there should be a noticeable change of lifestyle whereby former sins are abandoned and a new life begun. Your friends and family should notice a difference.
- A willingness to witness to Christ. Open confession of faith.
- A devotional life that is meaningful and not legalistic.
- Maintaining personal requirements: such as working for a living with integrity, being a faithful husband, being a good father.
- Being trustworthy.
- Being loving.
- Doing good to all.

- Being charitable; giving to the poor.
- Helping people in need, not just by giving money but in various actions.
- Being a good neighbour.
- Responding to evil with good.
- Overcoming sin.
- Having victory over life's tribulations.
- In simple terms, the fruit of the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Biblical precedents of a faithful minority

Church history is full of examples of the majority falling away and true believers being a small minority.

The remnant

The Bible is quite strict regarding genuine believers. In fact, in every administration of the church the Bible emphasises that it is only a remnant that is saved; not the whole community of worshippers.

And the remnant who have escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward. For out of Jerusalem shall go a remnant. 2 Kg 19:30-31

And now for a little while grace has been shown from the LORD our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a peg in His holy place, that our God may enlighten our eyes and give us a measure of revival in our bondage. Ezra 9:8

Unless the LORD of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom, we would have been made like Gomorrah. Isa 1:9

And it shall come to pass in that day That the remnant of Israel, And such as have escaped of the house of Jacob, Will never again depend on him who defeated them, But will depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel, in truth. The remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, To the Mighty God. For though your people, O Israel, be as the sand of the sea, A remnant of them will return; The destruction decreed shall overflow with righteousness. Isa 10:20-22

In that day the LORD of hosts will be for a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty to the remnant of His people. Isa 28:5

Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, And all the remnant of the house of Israel, Who have been upheld by Me from birth, Who have been carried from the womb. Isa 46:3

O LORD, save Your people, The remnant of Israel! Jer 31:7

The remnant whom the LORD calls. Joel 2:32

This is but a small sample.

The vast majority of Israel and Judah fell away; indeed most committed heinous idolatry. Only the remnant remained faithful to the covenant promise.

The 7,000

The children of Israel have forsaken Your covenant, torn down Your altars, and killed Your prophets with the sword. I [Elijah] alone am left; and they seek to take my life.' ... I have reserved seven thousand in Israel, all whose knees have not bowed to Baal, and every mouth that has not kissed him. 1 Kg 19:14, 18

Elijah thought that the rebellion and idolatry of the nation had caused all to apostatise; however, God had saved a remnant of 7,000 only. However, this means that hundreds of thousands more fell away.

The wilderness dead

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness, where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works forty years. Therefore I was angry with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart, and they have not known My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' Heb 3:8-11

For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, *was it* not all who came out of Egypt, *led* by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? *Was it* not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? Heb 3:16-18

The generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt is often treated as a type of salvation; they were delivered from their oppressors. But that generation (with a very few exceptions like Joshua and Caleb) perished in the wilderness in the anger of God. They did not enter God's rest of salvation in Christ.

This cursed generation did not know God's ways. They sinned. They went astray (were deceived) in their hearts. They did not obey. They were a stiff-necked people (Exod 32:9).

This was a generation that saw the greatest miracles in history. They had the superlative godly leader in Moses. They were given the law of God. They were guided by angels. The presence of God was in their midst in the Tabernacle. And yet they were judged by God and died in the wilderness outside of God's rest.

This was the most privileged people in history. Yet despite all their spiritual advantages, they fell away. Paul uses this as a warning to churchgoers.

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. Heb 4:1-2

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. Heb 4:11

Saul

So it was, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, that God gave him another heart; and all those signs came to pass that day. When they came there to the hill, there was a group of prophets to meet him; then the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it happened, when all who knew him formerly saw that he indeed prophesied among the prophets, that the people said to one another, 'What is this that has come upon the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?' Then a man from there answered and said, 'But who is their father?' Therefore it became a proverb: 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' And when he had finished prophesying, he went to the high place. 1 Sam 10:9-13

So he went there to Naioth in Ramah. Then the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?' 1 Sam 19:23-24

Saul had everything going for him. When Israel disobeyed God and cried for a king God appointed Saul to rule and Samuel commissioned him. Saul was tall, winsome and strong. He had one of the greatest prophets of Israel to advise him on every manner of policy. He won battles against Israel's enemies. God also gave him David to be his champion.

On two occasions the Spirit of God came upon Saul temporarily so that he prophesied with other prophets. Exactly what this comprised of is hard to say; possibly worship with musical instruments and dancing.

After that you shall come to the hill of God where the Philistine garrison is. And it will happen, when you have come there to the city, that you will meet a group of prophets coming down from the high place with a stringed instrument, a tambourine, a flute, and a harp before them; and they will be prophesying. 1 Sam 10:5

But Saul fell away from the Lord and rebelled against his will. He disobeyed Samuel regarding Agag, which was rebellion against the word of the Lord (1 Sam 15:23). He also consulted with a witch and usurped the ministry of the priesthood.

Saul had been signally blessed by God and even had the Spirit of the Lord rest upon him and prophesy, yet still he fell away and committed the grave sin of self-murder in an ignominious end.

Apostolic desertions

One would think that when an apostle of the Lord chose men to be his fellow worker that he would choose wisely. Yet even Paul chose men that fell away and deserted him; this is how difficult it is to identify good people.

Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellow labourers. Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica. Philem 1:24, 1 Tim 4:10

A good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck, of whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I delivered to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. 1 Tim 1:19-20

Shun profane *and* idle babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness. And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort. 2 Tim 2:16-17

This you know, that all those in Asia have turned away from me, among whom are Phygellus and Hermogenes. 2 Tim 1:15

For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. Phil 2:20-21

If even apostolic workers, who had witnessed the glory and works of the Lord, could fall away - how much more less privileged people?

Biblical statements about the minority elect

Few are chosen

For many are called, but few chosen. Matt 20:16

For many are called, but few are chosen. Matt 22:14

Essentially this shows that there is a distinction between the called (*kletos*) and the chosen (*eklektos*).

In theological terms this is the difference between the indiscriminate universal call of the Gospel to all and the irresistible, efficacious grace within that call to the elect; the few.

In any presentation of the Gospel there is but a few that are truly chosen. Yet in many free-willism, modern situations there is a multiple response to an emotional Gospel presentation and counsellors often inform respondents that they are saved when all they did was to repeat some dictated prayer from the platform. There was no indication of conviction of sin; no repentance and no pure expression of faith. There was no confrontation with the risen Christ and no grieving for sin. There is often not even recognition of Jesus as Lord and Master.

These are the called but they are not the chosen. Counsellors have no right to tell someone they have just met and know nothing about that they are saved. Yet perhaps the majority of modern 'Christians' became churchgoers through this failed means.

This phenomenon of raising a hand in response to the Gospel, or coming to the front in an emotional reaction to the Gospel, despite being widespread today, is comparatively modern. This was not how evangelists once behaved. Historically, after responding to preaching and proclamation, seekers would be properly counselled and given directions for soul searching and private prayer. It may be weeks of dealing with God before they came to faith and were then accepted as believers and then baptised.

The practice of presumed conversion upon a response to an emotional message really began with crusade evangelism. In reality, if large numbers come forward there was never the infrastructure to properly handle enquirers and so many were just told that the response itself (which may just be emotionalism) was said to be proof of conversion.

Although there were large responses to public preaching in the past, such as under the ministry of George Whitefield, this was handled in the local churches when done properly. Although even Whitefield, while preaching a true Gospel, saw many of his converts fall away and in later life called them, '*a rope of sand*'. However, with CG Finney this emotionalism was encouraged and what was called '*the altar seat*' was where the practice of merely coming forward in an emotional response to a speech was established. The equivalent of Finney's altar seat is respondents coming to the front of the meeting today ('altar calls').

This was later taken up by Moody's crusades and all the crusade evangelists that followed him. All of them admitted that the vast majority of converts fell away. Finney admitted this later in life and Billy Graham's organisation admitted that 95% of his converts fell away.

This was also the case in revivals. There was an emotional or even hypnotic response, great joy was evidenced and respondents were told that they were saved. Often this amounted to nothing.

In some cases, such as the 1904 Welsh Revival, there was much to be desired in emotional meetings. There was poor communication of the Gospel, and reliance upon feelings instead of conviction. Preaching that consisted merely of praying '*Bend me, oh Lord*' is not the Gospel. Yet the Holy Spirit often acted even in these poor circumstances and truly saved people, almost with little human ministry. This is proven by the deep religious conviction that fell upon Wales and the building of thousands of chapels. It is undeniable that many Welsh people were genuinely converted and that these conversions lasted. It took 100 years for this fervour to diminish and the chapels to be converted into shops and homes.

So, in the sovereignty of God, even the failings of men can be overcome and the Spirit does a powerful work of awakening. Yet it remains true that modern methods post-Finney have led to the false conversions of many thousands of people. We should be warned from Jesus' teaching that genuine conversions are few and a more careful examination of professed converts be undertaken before calling anyone saved.

I never knew you

Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!' Matt 7:21-23

This was said in the context that the fruit of people demonstrates their inner status, 'Therefore by their fruits you will know them'.

Now this statement of Jesus is hugely important and is a severe warning. He tells us that at the end, at the Day of Judgment, there will be professing Christians who not only called themselves believers but also prophesied, exorcised demons and performed miracles in the name of Jesus. Most churchgoers today would consider such people the very epitome of a great Christian. Jesus says that he never ever knew them at all.

This brings us to the proof of being a Christian – obedience to God's will.

The only means of knowing whether someone is a true believer is to look at their fruit. Do they perform the will of God? Today, most churchgoers do not even know what the will of God is let alone do it. In fact, church leaders preach against obeying commands as legalism. Yet the NT constantly affirms that Christianity means obeying God's commandments:

If you love Me, keep My commandments. Jn 14:15

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. Jn 14:21

If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. Jn 15:10

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you. Jn 15:13

Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God *is what matters*. 1 Cor 7:19

You know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus. 1 Thess 4:2

Whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked. 1 Jn 2:5-6

Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. 1 Jn 3:22

Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. 1 Jn 3:24

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. 1 Jn 5:3

Blessed *are* those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. Rev 22:14

Obedying God's law is not burdensome. True believers love to obey the will of God and want to please their Saviour. It is a joy to learn more about God's will and a thrill to do it. We bemoan those occasions when we fail to obey God and thank him for forgiveness of sins.

Now these false Christians, despite their works, are said to be lawless, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'.

Throughout history men have claimed to be apostles or prophets of God and dominated the churches, while at the same time were lawless. It has happened again and again. You can see this in institutional churches, such as in Roman popes who outwardly blessed God but in private performed all sorts of licentiousness and violence. Leo X (born Giovanni de' Medici, 1475–1521) dressed himself in armour and led an army to war as well as excommunicating Martin Luther.

You see lawlessness frequently in revivalist leaders who generate emotionalism and religious fervour but were secretly alcoholics, money grabbers and fornicators. We could demonstrate that multiple famous Pentecostal leaders were alcoholics, sodomites, occultists, adulterers, fornicators and more. One London Charismatic husband and wife team not only carried out false exorcisms and abused people psychologically, they also developed 'internal healing' whereby they fondled the genitals of troubled women to get rid of evil spirits. These sexual predators continued until finally exposed as perverts.³

I will give more famous examples.

William Branham [1909-1965]

Branham was called the greatest prophet of the age by Charismatics but was a misogynist,⁴ an occultist, an anti-Trinitarian, he believed in astrology and equated the Great Pyramid with God's word. He taught that Eve had sexual relations with the serpent. He claimed that Hell is not eternal. The seed of God, the Bride of Christ, are those who accept his own teaching. In fact he claimed to be the angel of Rev 3:14 and 10:7. Co-workers exposed him as a fraud. A more corrupt heretic is hard to conceive of, yet many Pentecostals and Charismatics affirm that he was divinely inspired; a true man of God. Instead he was lawless.

Paul Cain and Todd Bentley

Two more recent examples of people considered to be prophets and revivalist leaders by Charismatic people are Paul Cain and Todd Bentley. Cain, while preaching his ridiculous speeches of aberrant nonsense (e.g. Joel's army teaching) was a practising homosexual and an alcoholic. Bentley, while leading a claimed revival was violently kicking people in the face and also committing adultery.

Both these men are lawless.

James Jacob Prash

This is a truly appalling false teacher and charlatan who masquerades as a Jew.

His birth name is James Aloysius Prash. He originally called himself Yacov to appear more Jewish (until challenged) but growing up he was called 'Jimmy'. He is a shill for Israel and a perpetrator of false teaching on things Jewish, and the heretical Jewish Root theology in particular. He changed his name to appear more Jewish instead of using his middle birth name (Aloysius) that represents Roman Catholicism. He even went to a

³ See this and other examples in the book 'Charismania'.

⁴ He said that women were not worth 'a good, clean bullet'.

Catholic school. His father and mother were Catholic. His father is buried in a Catholic graveyard and there is no indication that he was Jewish. Neither is 'Prasch' Jewish as he claims; its origin is unknown but is prevalent in the U.S., Germany and Austria. The lies about his name and background are but the beginning of his fabrications.

His methods seem to me to approach those of the Jesuits. Is there a connection? The Catholic St Aloysius was a Jesuit.

His character is the worst I have ever witnessed and those that knew him growing up said that he was always angry. How he gets people to follow him is a mystery since he contradicts all the fruit of the Spirit. He is vitriolic, nasty and ruthless in his constant attacks on other people, often those who cannot defend themselves. I have heard him wish death on his critics and opponents from the platform as if he is some formal prophet issuing a curse. I have seen him vilify a middle-aged lady I once knew in the foulest manner when she had done nothing wrong. He has vehemently attacked many eminent and godly church leaders.

He is riddled with false teaching, deception and lies on theological and historic subjects. I once wrote a book to counter his false teaching on the Reformation alone. He even promotes known historic heretics like Schwenkfeld while denigrating Luther and Calvin with lies.

His method is to highlight obscure subjects so as to appear academically gifted when he is no such thing. Thus he talks about Midrash, which he uses as leave to give personal interpretations of Biblical subjects using typology and symbolism – even when he is directly contradicting other Biblical statements. But because his exposition is novel, especially on the OT, gullible people are attracted to it.

His many statements about Jewishness, based on Dispensational theology, are riddled with errors, exaggerations, obfuscation and plain heresy. Sadly, his followers become immersed in Jewish things that go against Christ's New Covenant teaching. The goal of Messianic Christianity is to take the focus of disciples away from Christ and place it on Israel.

His editor once told me that his manuscripts were so inflammatory that he was surprised the pages didn't catch fire. Yet the edited works were still inflammatory, so what the originals were is hard to imagine. Even his grammar is simplistic and riddled with basic errors of spelling and syntax. He rarely gives sources for his statements.

He once launched a strenuous attack on a husband and wife ministry team that had helped him. He started a campaign of false accusation, intimidation, libel, slander and threatening physical violence. After years of attack they finally released a video entitled, 'Prasch – heretic and shameless liar'. You can find it on YouTube. Other videos from various people followed. Multiple people around the world have been the target of his venom and have exposed that he is a deceiver and liar.

Another former helper after being fired by Prasch found himself caring for his dying wife alone with no job. He launched a 'go fund me' page to help his dying wife. Prasch and his colleagues did a terrible hit job on the man, so that the funding stopped. God stepped in and helped the guy. The person later did a video called, 'My testimony – and how to handle bullies'.

This truly obnoxious person, clearly no Christian, with an overtly downtrodden wife, this vilifier of God's people (alive and dead), this false teacher who fleeces the saints, is now the

subject of a formal investigation by at least one Christian charity which approached me for evidence. I trust he will be eventually exposed for what he is. In many respects he is lawless.

William Seymour [1870-1922]

William Seymour is the hailed leader of the 1906 Azusa Street revival. This is what prompted the growth of the Pentecostal Movement that had begun at Topeka under Parham. The Los Angeles revival is hailed as a major work of God and Seymour as a pioneer of faith.

None of this is true. Seymour was poorly educated, with former slave parents, and unable to teach spiritual truths properly; he relied upon generating emotionalism. He was given to dreams and visions rather than Bible study. Influenced by the Holiness Movement and several female pastors, he taught the error of entire sanctification. He absorbed the errors of Methodism, the Holiness Movement, and the Evening Light Saints, such as tongues as initial evidence, the secret rapture and a global revival before it.

Upon moving to LA and meeting in the home of Richard Asberry (where he spoke in tongues) he then held meetings in a mission at Azusa Street, a former stable and warehouse. Almost immediately the meetings descended into what the LA Times called '*wild scenes*' similar to the Cane Ridge revival excesses. An invited Charles Parham was repelled by what he saw. This included the influence of spiritualists, noisy demonstrations and fleshly excesses. Parham was rejected and spoke out against the demonic expressions, which made him sick at his stomach. But they increased for three years in daily meetings. Witches and mediums proliferated in the meeting conducting their paganism unchecked to such an extent that many believers feared attending. The bedlam increased to fever pitch levels with total freedom and no correction. Fleshly exhibitions amidst uncontrolled glossolalia prevailed along with trances and people collapsing. In the loud bedlam Seymour had to pray with his head in a shoebox (such boxes made up the pulpit).

By 1908 things began to unravel as the meeting was riven by schisms, opposition and separations. One faction became the Assemblies of God following William Durham in 1914. Eventually a diminished Seymour led revival meetings here and there with about 20 followers and drew up a constitution whereby he was named bishop of the Pacific Apostolic Faith Movement. After his death the authorities sought tax non-payments. The mission was demolished and sold to pay taxes and is now a parking lot.

How can any of this extremism be considered Christian? None of this is Biblical; absolutely none of it. Sinners and witches should have been removed. Emotional excesses should have been forbidden and curbed. Mystical tongues should have been avoided (they weren't even interpreted but were just loud gibberish en masse). Falling down in mystical fits exposing lady's nakedness (requiring blankets) should have been stopped. The lack of leadership control should have been condemned. The general lack of self-control should have been called sin. Respect should have been given to corporate prayer. There should have been proper teaching of a respectful flock. Nothing was done '*decently and in order*' (1 Cor 14:40; Col 2:5). Nothing was done for edification (1 Cor 14:26). Nothing was done properly, avoiding revelry (Rm 13:13). It was therefore not Christian in the slightest. How could this be a work of the Spirit (as claimed) when all the fruit of the Spirit were contradicted? The fact that many writers and church commentators still laud this revival as a work of God shows how poverty stricken and lacking in discernment the church is.

Azusa Street was lawless.

John Wesley [1703–1791]

Going back further to John Wesley we could show that he held multiple heretical beliefs (not least Arminianism and instant perfectionism) and hated the doctrine of predestination. He believed in ghosts, he believed that sincere heathens were saved, he promoted women teachers, he supported emotionalism in meetings (including tongues at one stage). He committed plagiarism, forgery and fraud at a time when these carried the death penalty. But worst of all at the end of his life he wrote to his brother stating that he never loved God at all.

John Wesley was literally (by the legal standards of the time) lawless.

Mother Ann Lee [1736-1781]

Women have been equally false. Lee became a Shaking Quaker at 22, married at 25 and had four children. After losing all her children in infancy, Lee's distress was funnelled into religious enthusiasm, resenting her marriage and subjecting herself to rigorous penance. As a result of these exercises, in 1770 she was overcome by divine 'revelation' and received a new gospel, which was based upon a hatred of sex: human depravity was caused by the sex act. Eventually, she saw herself as the messiah, a second version of Christ and was known as Ann the Word or Mother Ann. This and other doctrinal heresies accompanied her teaching on the restoration of end time spiritual gifts including tongues and healing, the most serious deviation being the rejection of the inspiration of the Bible.

In 1774, upon 'divine' command, she immigrated from England to New York State, near Albany, with 8 followers, and in 1787 her growing followers, many from Baptist churches, were organised into the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing, a millennialist, perfectionist sect. As well as basic Quaker beliefs of simplicity, frugal living, equality, honesty and charity, they believed that the source of evil was sex, pride and greed. Salvation was by good conduct. God was a duality of the masculine and feminine, with Lee as the counterpart to Christ, commissioned to complete his work. Christ's physical resurrection was denied. Celibacy was enforced along with communal property and strict regulation of ethics, including diet. Their worship was a wild and exuberant spontaneity which included the shaking off of sin and vigorous dancing (hence the name 'Shaker'). Visions, tongues, healings, revelations for guidance, prophecies, signs and other gifts attracted attention, many being convinced by Lee's end-time restorationist message. One source states that they danced together naked, whilst speaking in tongues, in order to mortify the flesh and learn how to control sexual temptation.⁵ They were the original Pentecostals in the States.

What is more, the Shakers openly practised spiritualism. Messages were regularly received from the dead Mother Ann, and other deceased Shakers, who conversed with the recipients who were called (by themselves) 'mediums' or 'instruments'. Furthermore, they willingly accepted the entrance of indigenous tribal spirits into their bodies (i.e. demonic counterfeits). In a willingness to embrace different peoples, they took on spirits of Eskimos, African Americans, Chinese, Native American Indians etc. in order to receive 'light' from their religious cultures.

Ann Lee and her Shakers were lawless as regards the church.

There is no point giving further examples. There have always been false teachers, false church leaders, false prophets, false messiahs and false apostles who practised lawlessness.

⁵ John MacArthur, *The Charismatics*, Lamp Press, (1979), p170.

Those who do not obey God's will and who practice lawlessness are not saved – whatever great deeds they claim to have done for God.

The falling away

Now, brethren, concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together to Him, we ask you, not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled, either by spirit or by word or by letter, as if from us, as though the day of Christ had come. Let no one deceive you by any means; for that Day will not come unless the falling away [lit. apostasy] comes first, and the man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, 2 Thess 2:1-3

The coming of the *lawless one* is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this reason God will send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie, that they all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 Thess 2:9-12

Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron. 1 Tim 4:1-2

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! 2 Tim 3:1-5

For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, *because* they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn *theirears* away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. 2 Tim 4:3-4

This teaches us that a significant event in the end-times is the falling away of the church. Like Israel, the church will succumb to idolatry, self-love, and the doctrines of demons so that most people in the church will be thoroughly apostate. This will result from massive deception thrust upon the church which Jesus and the apostles warned us about.

Therefore, as we approach the end, many of the professing Christians in the churches will not be Christians at all but will be deceived people. In fact, such is their belief of all forms of deception that God gives them up to complete delusion.

Deception is the work of the Devil; his main weapon of choice is deceit, lies, obfuscation, appearing as an angel of light, fraud, counterfeits, chicanery, subterfuge, and guile. Never was there such a time as this when there was so much deception in the church all at the same time. The churches are filled with deceit and heresies. Every formal heresy in the history of the church is present at this moment. There are even new heresies unheard of in previous history such as: the importation of Kundalini yoga mysticism from Hinduism; the importation of Soka Gakkai Buddhist visualisation techniques, the idea that God cannot know the future because of the sovereignty of man (Open Theism). There are legalised ethical aberrations never seen before (transgenderism, identity politics, Gay marriage etc.). The fallen church is imbibing all these things.

It is notable that church history statisticians have stated that there have not been meaningful conversions in large numbers since before the 1980s in the UK. This coincided with the rise of UK Restorationism and extreme Charismaticism, which corrupted the church with mysticism, occultism and paganism. The last true localised revival with

genuine conversions was in the early 1950s⁶ (apart from a more minor general revival in 1970-71).⁷ But even routine evangelistic success is now a thing of the past. The many claims of Gospel success in large church meetings are not supported by evidential facts. Also census data show the continued demise of church attendance in the UK and the rise of paganism.

Warnings

Thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Consider your ways!' Hag 1:7

But I discipline my body and bring *it* into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified. 1 Cor 9:27

But let a man examine himself. 1 Cor 11:28

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 1 Cor 11:31

Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? -- unless indeed you are disqualified. 2 Cor 13:5

Let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. Gal 6:4

To present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight -- if indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard. Col 1:22-23

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. Heb 4:1-2

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. Heb 6:4-6

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled. Heb 12:14-15

Believers need to test themselves, examine themselves, to see whether they are truly in the faith. This is not arduous; it is sensible. At the end of the day, the concrete test is whether you continue to the end or fall away.

I am not encouraging continual bleak introspection and negativity; I am merely explaining what the Gospel commands – that we test ourselves.

This does not deny the preservation of the saints; the elect cannot fall away and have eternal security. However, merely professing converts do fall away because they were never saved to begin with.

⁶ The Shetland and Hebrides Revival; short but intense.

⁷ Known as the Jesus People movement in the USA, which had ramifications in the UK. This was not an intense localised revival but a general revival, mostly amongst students and former hippies in a steady trickle of lasting conversions.

I have known leaders that appeared to be eminently godly people; good people, able to preach the word in humility; able to lead churches well. For many years they continued apparently in the faith until, after some trauma or disappointment, they abandoned God completely. They left the church and took up a secular life and never returned before they died.

I have known church leaders that gave evidence that they were genuine believers for many years and then suddenly left their wife and their children, abandoned their house, committed adultery and lived a completely new life having apostatised completely. I have seen professing Christian wives do the same thing.

I have known good church women, wives and mothers who maintained a good testimony for years until one day they abandoned the Lord and their families and took up a life as a lesbian. In one case two women in one church set up a lesbian home as a couple.

I have known church leaders who were excellent teachers and church planters who fell away and committed multiple adultery.

I have known famous church leaders with a national presence leave their family and take up life as a homosexual.

I have known of famous church leaders be compromised by gross public fornication or even run overseas brothels.

I have known of church leaders that were prosecuted for tax evasion, embezzlement or fraud. Some went to prison.

We could go on.

There is no guarantee of our salvation other than continuing with the Lord, obeying his word and bearing a good testimony to Christ. Treat every sin as something to grieve over. Treat every failing as a crisis that needs to be fixed. Keep short accounts with God. Call every sin, 'sin' and deal with it effectively. Keep focused on the Lord at all times. Take nothing for granted. Thank God for everything.

The elect proportion

'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, against the Man who is My Companion', says the LORD of hosts. 'Strike the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered; then I will turn My hand against the little [lit. insignificant] ones. And it shall come to pass in all the land,' says the LORD, '*That two-thirds in it shall be cut off and die, but one-third shall be left in it: I will bring the one-third through the fire, will refine them as silver is refined, and test them as gold is tested. They will call on My name, and I will answer them. I will say, "This is My people"; and each one will say, "The LORD is my God".'* Zech 13:7-9

God often seems to work in thirds (Ezek 5:12; Rev 8:7,8,9,10,11,12, 9:15,18). It was a third of the angels that fell away and became demons while two thirds were elect (Rev 12:4).

Now it is hard to be specific about this passage in Zechariah. Is it referring to a specific instance of salvation or is it a general term regarding the saved elect? Some apply it to Israel and specifically the effect of the Jewish War in 70 AD. This cannot be the case as the rebellious Jews were not refined, did not call on the name of the Lord Jesus and were not

God's people but were rejected (Matt 21:43; 1 Thess 2:14-15). The Lord's people are the church (1 Pt 2:9-10).

The passage is certainly talking about the Lord Jesus, the shepherd that was struck (Matt 26:31). The chapter begins by referring to the opened fountain of the house of David. The third that is brought through the fire and refined as silver is certainly the church, those who call on God's name, God's people.

So it seems to be a general statement regarding those who are saved through the work of Christ, the good shepherd.

Then we have to decide if the two thirds that die refer to all humanity or just the apostate in the church. Who are 'the insignificant ones'? This is very difficult. Are the two-thirds part of the sheep that are scattered or does 'all the land' imply mankind in general? Certainly it is only one-third that is saved either way.

This either means then that: a) only one-third of humanity is elect and saved; or b) two-thirds of the church will be lost and one-third saved.

Whatever the case only one-third is refined and saved. Only a remnant is saved.

This should be a warning to all people.

Conclusion

It is a fact that supposed Christians fall away and never come back. This is just an observable truth. Since the elect are preserved from falling away completely (they may temporarily backslide like David) then it can only mean that many people that claimed to be Christians were never truly converted at all.

I have known both men and women that lived for decades as a believer and had a good testimony only to have a mid-life crisis and abandon the faith and never come back.

This means that true believers must examine themselves and test whether they are on track. There is nothing to fear from self-examination. I am not talking about continual dark introspection, but critical self-examination from time to time to take stock.

True believers will bear fruit. This is how we know the truth. This is how outsiders judge Christians and it is how we bear a good testimony. If outsiders like Max Igan have never seen a Christian with good fruit then there is something very wrong with the church. This is because we are in the period of the great apostasy; the falling away. Seek to not be in this category and remove yourself from dead churches; they only produce dead people.

Check yourself; examine your works. Are you producing good fruit? Could you improve? Are you focused on pleasing God?

Scripture quotations are from The New King James Version
© Thomas Nelson 1982

Paul Fahy Copyright © 2023
Understanding Ministries
<http://www.understanding-ministries.com>