

TO THE CHURCH

TO THE CHURCHES SPREAD throughout the world patiently waiting the return of Jesus Christ. Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

What I have to say may not be easy, but our present age demands that we ask, "Am I a true Christian?"

A great deception has swept over the church, removing *most* of those claiming the name of Christ from Christ to another gospel: which is not another gospel in language and appearance, but is another in practice and spirit. This deception has been spoken of throughout Scripture. The Apostle Paul warned: "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition" (2 Thessalonians 2:3). The Apostle is clear that a great deception will fall upon the church before the Antichrist appears. During that time when the Antichrist is about to appear, the deception will be so great that most who claim the name of Christ will not be Christian at all. Paul warned the disciple Timothy that in the last of the last days "Christians" will "depart from the faith" and "shall turn away their ears from the faith" (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4).

The Apostle Paul also warned Timothy that in the last days those claiming to belong to God will have an appearance of godliness, but will deny the power of God who is able to make us truly godly (2 Timothy 3:5). How the church can have an image and appearance of belonging to God while not belonging to Him at all is described by the Apostle John in Revelation chapters two and three. These churches have an image of being alive to Christ by being hard workers for him, patient, untiring in their labors, defenders of correct doctrine, persecuted, and faithful. Yet all their good works were mixed with conformity as they were Christians for monetary gain, tolerated sin, involved with immorality, submersed in the occult, allowed teachers to teach false doctrine, lived on their reputation, and would not take an all-out stand either for or against Christ. The deceived church is not without the works of Christianity, but lacks the purity that comes only by an active Holy Spirit in its midst. The church did not lack works, but relationship with God. Brethren, if we acknowledge that we live in the last days when the Antichrist could appear at any time, then we must also acknowledge that the church as we know it today is deceived--bewitched by the great bewitcher: doing many things in the name of Christ without having relationship with him. It is not correct works and doctrine that keeps us pure, but relationship with God in us.

Our present age demands that every one claiming the name of God should examine themselves to ensure God is with them. Ask the majority of Christians and they will acknowledge that they are a true Christian and not deceived. If everyone is a true Christian, then who are the deceived during the great deception of these last days? The sober truth is that most who think they are not deceived are very much deceived. Deception has a way of making us truly think we are what we are not. Remember the words of our Lord when he spoke: "Not every one that says unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven"

(Matthew 7:21-22). You say you are a Christian. You point to the works that you do in the name of Christ--but *are you Christian?*

In these days when wrong is being made right and right is being made wrong, let us search ourselves as we have never done before. Let us study Revelation two and three and understand the message that God Himself gave to the churches to help wake them out of their spiritual slumber and deception. The day is coming when you will meet God face-to-face and then you will be alive somewhere one million years from now. Take the time now to search your own heart and to meditate upon the word that God has revealed to us. Take time off from your present denomination and go off by yourself with the Scriptures in hand and the Holy Spirit in your heart so that you and God might be able to get at the root of who you truly are in Him.

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