

Paul said to the Corinthians, “I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds will be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ. For if one comes and preaches another Jesus whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully” (2 Cor. 11:3-4).

Like Jeroboam, when a Christian leader has selfish ambition, self-preservation, and selfish motives, a door is open wide to Satan, who through his craftiness, weaves his way in to present another Jesus and a different gospel.

Never forget the law of the airplane. If a plane is one degree off course flying from JFK to LAX, it would land in the Pacific Ocean. Small degrees of deception easily result in embracing and worshiping another Jesus.

Because another Jesus is being preached in the nations, we need to be careful who we listen to and read. We need to use discretion in the worship music we listen to and sing. The day in which we live is incredibly deceptive and the undiscerning can easily be led astray.

If we are unwilling to embrace the cross and die to our selfish ambitions—if we want to fit Jesus into our life rather than having Him as our life—then we can easily desire, accept, welcome, embrace, and worship another Jesus that meets the cravings of our itching ears.

In many churches today, pastors, teachers, and ministers are carefully crafting a more relevant version of Jesus—one who is more palatable to our post-modern, morally relativistic, overly tolerant, and politically-correct culture. They are crafting a version of Jesus that fits into our love-is-love, what’s-true-for-me-may-not-be-true-for-you society.

Jesus 2.0

Like Aaron and Jeroboam, many leaders take their favorite scriptures and the “good” side of God they like—conveniently ignoring the “negative” side of God that is intense, demanding, and confrontational—and they design another version of Jesus. Though Jesus 2.0 is what the people want, it’s not who He truly is. It is an idol, crafted by cherry-picked doctrines. And it is deceiving God’s people, leading them into sin, compromise, and eventual apostasy.

Jesus 2.0 is light on sin, winks at lawlessness, waters down truth, and views judgment as too old-fashioned and narrow minded for today’s technologically advanced, intelligent culture.

Because many modern-day churchgoers don’t care for the super-intense version of Jesus, who calls for holiness, overturns tables, calls for fervent prayer, confronts sin, and challenges us to deny ourselves, leaders have rebranded Jesus. This contemporary Jesus is cool, hip, tells great stories, is always in a good mood, would never allow us to suffer, and is most interested in giving us our best life now.

The old-fashioned Jesus, revealed in the outdated Scripture, comes across too narrow-minded for our hyper-tolerant culture. That is why Jesus 2.0 is heavy on grace, kindness, love, mercy, compassion, and understanding (all of which are true) while ignoring His exacting judgment, fiery jealousy, fatherly discipline, utter lordship, intense severity, intolerance of sin, warrior nature, and even His wrath. To know Jesus as He is, we need to know Him in all of His “good” and “negative” attributes. Like Paul said, “Behold . . . the kindness and the severity of God” (Rom. 11:22).

Jesus 2.0 never calls us to repentance, to mourn over our lawless condition, and to overcome what entangles us, for this would be unappealing to non-believers and lukewarm Christians.

Jesus 2.0 Versus the Real Jesus

Jesus 2.0 says, “I came that you might have life and have it in abundance. This is a life characterized by comfort, prosperity, and favor, for I exist to bless you.” *The real Jesus* says, “I came to put My life into you and I want My life in you to fill and permeate your entire being—including your heart, soul, and body. I want you to die so that I can live in you and through you. As you yield to Me and seek first My kingdom, I will bless you.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “I want to give you your best life now. A life of happiness, blessings, influence, and wide-open doors of opportunity.” *The real Jesus* says, “Here’s how to be happy and blessed: Become poor in spirit, knowing your profound need for Me to fill you, possesses you, and live My life through you; mourn over your condition as you hunger and thirst for My righteousness to be established in your heart and soul; and

pursue meekness, a pure heart, and make peace with your enemies. After you have done that, if you really want to be blessed, gladly suffer persecution for My sake.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “I want to help you fulfill your destiny.” *The real Jesus* says, “You have no destiny apart from Me. Your destiny is tied to God’s eternal purpose in Me. Will you surrender what you want Me to do for you so that I can have what I want in you?”

Jesus 2.0 says, “You don’t need to repent or confess your sins because you are under grace. My blood has already forgiven all your sins. Just believe.” *The real Jesus* says, “Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand. Confess your sins and My blood will wash you clean and restore you to fellowship with God.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “Relax. My words before the cross were for Jews living under the Law. Teachings such as the Sermon on the Mount, take up your cross, deny yourself, and walk the narrow path are all part of the Old Covenant and don’t apply to you.” *The real Jesus* says, “Go into all the nations and teach them what I taught you. This includes the Sermon on the Mount, taking up your cross, denying yourself, and walking the narrow path. This is part of the New Covenant and applies to you.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “I’m always in a good mood.” *The real Jesus* says, “I am joyful and glad, but I am also grieved at the condition of My church. Have you read what I said to the churches in Asia Minor in Revelation 2-3? Let me assure you. I wasn’t in a good mood about their condition. Neither am I happy about the sin, lukewarmness, and compromise in My church today. Repent therefore and overcome what entangles you. You have lost your first love, you are enmeshed in compromise and sin, you are tolerating the woman Jezebel, and I will spit you out of My mouth because you are lukewarm.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “Don’t judge anyone but love everyone.” *The real Jesus* says, “Don’t judge with hypocrisy, pride, criticism, or unrighteousness. Look at yourself first. Humbly deal with your own issues. Then you can speak the truth in love to others and judge righteously.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “I am not like the God of the Old Testament who judged people for their sins and waged war against the pagans who worshipped idols and practiced gross sexual immorality.” *The real Jesus* says, “Have you not read Revelation 5-19? I am the Lamb of God who was slain and I am going to release My end-time judgments upon the earth. Half of the world’s population will die because of My wrath. Yet those who survive will not repent of their sins. When I return, I will wage war against My rebellious and lawless enemies. As a result, I will be covered in their blood. Blessed is the one who is not offended at Me.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “Because of the New Covenant, you need to unhitch yourself from the Old Testament, including the 10 commandments.” *The real Jesus* says, “Truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. You have heard it said you shall not commit adultery. But I say don’t even look on a woman to lust. You have heard it said not to commit murder. But I say don’t harbor any hate in your heart.”

Jesus 2.0 says, “A loving God would not send people to hell simply because they wouldn’t believe in Me.” *The real Jesus* says, “My Father, who is a God of love and justice, sent Me to die as the atonement for the sins of the world so that He would remain just and the justifier of all who have faith in Me. Those who refuse My sacrificial death will spend eternity in the lake of fire because of their rebellious, sinful, lawless, and depraved condition was never remediated by My shed blood and indwelling life.”

The False Prophet and Another Jesus

Jesus warned, “Many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will mislead many” (Matt. 24:5). Who in their right mind would be deceived by some freak who claimed to be Jesus Christ? Though some naïve people might fall for this gimmick, Jesus explicitly said *many* would be deceived.

The Lord is not warning about some lunatic dressing up in a white cloak, growing out his hair and beard, wearing sandals, and proclaiming he is Jesus Christ. If this is what you have believed about this verse, reread it from the perspective of ministers coming in Jesus’ name, claiming Jesus is *the Christ*, and misleading many because of their doctrines. Like Paul, Jesus was warning about “another Jesus” who would be preached, deceiving the masses. Don’t we live in such a day?

In Revelation 13:11, we see the false prophet calling the earth to worship the antichrist. This false prophet has “two horns like a lamb” but speaks “as a dragon.” In Scripture, horns represent authority, power, and dominion. In addition, Jesus is referred to as the Lamb repeatedly in the book of Revelation. The false

prophet, therefore, will derive his authority by proclaiming *another Jesus*. Yet inwardly he will be a dragon, wicked to the core. His voice will be satanically empowered, deceiving the masses, convincing them his version of Jesus is the right one.

Whatever this ultimately looks like, no one can say with certainty. Whether the false prophet will be the Pope, the Muslim Jesus who encourages the worship of the Mahdi, or some other manifestation, time will tell. The main thing to understand is another Jesus will be preached and proclaimed. This will give him authority, power, and dominion to deceive the nations.

The main point to grasp is this: Hell's strategy to deceive millions is to present another Jesus, a carefully crafted imitation that looks, sounds, and feels like the real Jesus. Nevertheless, it will be another Jesus—a demonically designed idol, fashioned by doctrines of demons, leading multitudes to apostatize from the real Jesus. This is one of Satan's major end-time strategies.

Doctrines of Demons

"The Spirit explicitly says," wrote Paul, "that in the later times," which are undoubtedly our times, "some will fall away from the faith" because they paid "attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons" (1 Tim. 4:1).

Considering this verse, let's go back in time for a minute, to when Aaron fashioned the golden calf for Israel to worship. This culturally-relevant version of Yahweh was molded from the golden earrings of ancient Israel (Exo. 32:2-4). Aaron, the spiritual leader of the Hebrews, took their valuable treasures and fashioned a god to their liking.

In a similar way, Jesus 2.0 is the profile modern-day audiences desire. The golden earrings, used to fashion this idolatrous Jesus, are cherry-picked verses from Scripture taken out of context. These isolated verses have now morphed into doctrines—what Paul called doctrines of demons. Like Aaron, many Christian leaders are giving God's people exactly what they want—another Jesus formed from the golden earrings of false doctrines.

What, exactly, are the doctrines of demons' leaders are using to craft another Jesus? The ones which stand out are hyper-grace, partial preterism, and dominionism.

Hyper-Grace

Michael Brown coined the phrase "hyper-grace" to describe the modern-day grace message, which takes the beautiful and glorious biblical truths about grace to an unbiblical extreme. In his highly recommend book *Hyper-Grace*, Brown lists many of the egregious errors of the modern-day grace message leading multitudes into compromise and sin.

According to hyper-grace teaching, Christians no longer need to confess our sins because we have already been forgiven. To ask forgiveness after sinning is a sin—the sin of unbelief. You are asking God to do something He has already done.

Hyper-grace teachers also claim born-again believers are made perfectly, totally, and forever holy in God's sight the moment they are saved. Regardless of what we do or how we live after our conversion, we became righteous in God's eyes once and for all when we were justified and the Holy Spirit came to dwell within us. In this false teaching, sanctification is not a process whereby we become progressively holy. On the contrary, we became eternally holy the moment we were justified. Hyper-grace teachers make a serious error, blending together justification and sanctification into a doctrine that is absent from Scripture.

Building upon this error, hyper-grace teachers say because God always sees us perfectly righteous in His sight and doesn't see our sins, there is nothing we can or should do to please God, for we are already pleasing in His sight. In fact, any effort we make to please Him is religious, legalistic, and even be pharisaical. Because you are in Christ, you are already as good and pleasing to God as you will ever be. Nothing you do will ever change this. Therefore, God is always in a good mood when He thinks about us.

When I hear hyper-grace teachers make statements such as these, I seriously wonder if they have ever read Revelation 2-3, when Jesus confronted His church with scathing, sharp, and severe rebukes. I doubt He was smiling when He confronted the church of Pergamum's compromise, the church of Laodicea's lukewarmness, or the church of Thyatira's toleration of demonic Jezebel.

There's much I could say about hyper-grace. But of utmost importance is hyper-grace inevitably leads to universalism, where hell is erased, God loves all His created children, and there are many ways leading to God for various cultures, nations, tribes, and people. We will look at universalism in more detail in the next session.

Partial Preterism

Hyper-grace and partial preterism are typically kissing cousins. Because hyper-grace ignores God's righteous judgment and a Christian's call to embrace suffering and self-denial, it fits well with partial preterism—the belief most of the prophecies in the Old Testament, Matthew 24, and the book of Revelation were fulfilled in 70 A.D.

Building upon this false belief, preterist teachers claim things are not getting worse but better. To proclaim any negative event gets you immediately labeled as a doom-and-gloom prophet.

My belief of the end-times is it will be the best of times and worst of times at the same time. It will be a time of increasing glory and deepening darkness. We will witness the maturing of the righteous wheat and lawless tares together.

The truth is God will use end-time shakings, economic pressure, evil governments, and persecution to purify the church and make her ready for Jesus as a glorious bride. Fiery end-time trials will refine the bride like gold, preparing her for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

The false doctrine of partial preterism leaves the church unprepared for the great shaking that is coming before the Lord returns. Unprepared and unequipped for hardship, partial preterism could even lead believers to apostasy, especially when the false hope they have been served is dashed by the harsh reality of end-time pressures.

Dominionism

Hyper-grace, partial preterism, and dominionism are like a chord of three strands, that together, could accelerate the great falling away.

Dominionism—also known as the Seven-Mountain Mandate—believes a great revival will lead to the salvation of billions and the transformation of the nations before Jesus returns. This unprecedented revival will be advanced by wonder-working apostles and prophets who perform great signs and wonders.

Overly focused on the externals—miracles, revival, kingdom advancement, and cultural transformation—many in this movement could easily be persuaded by the antichrist's and false prophet's signs and wonders movement. Especially if they believe most Bible prophecy has already been fulfilled.

Paul said the antichrist would be in "accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9). Not only will the antichrist operate in great power, but he will be raised from the dead, apparently mimicking the resurrection of Jesus (Rev. 13:3). The antichrist's resurrection will trigger amazement, wonder, and worship from the nations (Rev. 13:3).

But it won't just be the antichrist who performs mighty miracles. The false prophet will also have power to perform "great signs," even having the ability to make "fire come down out of heaven to the earth in the presence of men" (Rev. 13:13). "Because of the signs," John said, "he [will deceive] those who dwell on the earth" (Rev. 13:14, emphasis mine).

Serving in the Charismatic Church for most of my adult life, I know how easily signs, wonders, and miracles persuade us Charismatics and Pentecostals. Those who have embraced the Seven-Mountain Mandate and believe a worldwide revival will Christianize the nations through mighty miracles could easily be deceived by the antichrist's and false prophet's religious movement. Especially when these two perform astonishing miracles, which will legitimize them in the eyes of many who are believing God for a worldwide revival. Add to this, the belief prophecy was fulfilled in 70 A.D. and the antichrist and false prophet have already come, multitudes could be swept away by the coming delusion.

For the record, I believe a great outpouring of the Spirit is on the horizon marked by signs and wonders. I also believe many will be saved during this great end-time revival (Rev. 7:9-17). But I don't believe the Lord aims to transform nations nearly as much as He aims to transform hearts. This end-time move of the Spirit will be a *bridal revival*, aimed at preparing the bride of Christ for the Bridegroom. Signs and wonders will

undoubtedly occur. But these miracles will not be our message—Jesus will be. Revival won't be our ultimate aim—God's ultimate intention, to bring many sons to glory, will be.

Though the antichrist and false prophet will perform false signs and wonders, God will release true signs and wonders. Though Christ is our message and the person of Christ is our focus, signs and wonders will be an important part of the end-time move of the Spirit. Therefore, we should not fear being deceived by false signs and wonders. If we pursue Jesus Himself—not miracles or revival—we will have both without being distracted from Him.

The Present Apostasy

Phase 1 of the apostasy is already underway. It seems Christians are walking away from the faith daily, embracing the lie that God's Word is not inerrant, authoritative, and Spirit-inspired. Numerous believers have "deconstructed" their faith and found they really have no faith at all.

Others have gone the path of false teachers like Rob Bell, who believes the Bible is nothing more than a collection of books aimed at delivering humans from destructive behavior, with the ultimate goal of creating world peace. Bell believes the Bible is a book articulating what it means to be human. To him, it's a library of evolutionary thought, written to deepen an enlightened life. The biblical narrative, as Bell purports, is ultimately geared toward blessing the world through love, enabling humans to overcome violence and hate. Sadly, many biblically illiterate readers have digested his lies and have fallen away from the faith.

We are also witnessing the flimsy backbone of churches, nonprofits, and ministries, who, with the slightest threat from our current cancel culture, are abandoning the clear teaching of Scripture. Through the LGBTQ agenda, which views Scripture as the source of hate speech, bigotry, and intolerance, we are watching numerous Christian organizations and churches cave to the cultural pressure. Entire denominations are affirming gay marriage. Recently, one of the largest evangelical adoption agencies changed their longstanding policy to only work with heterosexual, married couples, pledging to now help homosexual couples adopt children.

If the Equality Act becomes law in America—codifying sexual orientation and gender identity as civil rights issues that trump religious convictions—we will witness a tidal wave of churches, ministries, nonprofits, and spiritual leaders cave to the pressure of cancel culture. This, too, will accelerate the apostasy.

Conclusion

Having seen how Phase 1 of the apostasy will unfold, we will look at Phase 2 in the next section. As you will see, the present-day sins of Jeroboam will lead to Jezebel's state-sanctioned religion of universalism and the persecution of those who hold fast to the God of Scripture.