

Hijacked!

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The term “hijacked” commonly refers to items or processes that are forcefully taken over and diverted from their original destination or purpose and are made to serve the purpose of the agents who took them over. Thus an airliner taken over by terrorists demanding that their fellow terrorists be released from prison or an automobile taken over by a gunman who intends to rob the driver and the passengers are said to have been hijacked. We do not normally associate this term with the New Testament yet this is precisely what has happened and is happening. If one were able to be an impartial, unbiased and uninvolved witness, this fact would be all the more readily apparent. But most people who claim to be “Christian” are too personally involved with their own experience of God (or some “God” of their own creation) to be able to separate the original gospel from their own practice of modern “Christianity” or churchianity. Many are like passengers of the rear of the airplane who know only that the stewardesses suddenly look scared and these do not yet know that the captain and crew are no longer in control of where the airliner is going.

God chose one Man to be the sole mediator of the New Covenant – the Man Christ Jesus. (1 Tim. 2:5) Jesus chose twelve men to first be His closest disciples and then His apostles. (Mt. 10:1-4, etc.) These twelve (once a replacement was chosen for Judas Iscariot) would stand as the witnesses of the resurrection of the Christ. (Acts 1:22) The Jewish law allowed for a criminal to be convicted on the testimony of two (Dt. 17:6) but for a matter to be deemed incontrovertible, Jewish tradition required twelve men to give unified testimony. God gave the Jews these witnesses and more and yet Jesus’ own people “did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name; who were born...of God.” (Jn. 1:11-13) Of these twelve witnesses, three – Peter, John and Matthew – would leave written testimony that still bears witness to the resurrected Christ today. Six other men – Mark, Luke, Paul, James, Jude and an anonymous writer (perhaps Apollos or some other disciple or apostle) – would also leave writings. We collectively call these writings “the New Testament” or “New Covenant” because these represent the written basis upon which God has revealed His agreements with men.

These writings are not to be understood apart from the work of the Spirit of God who is said to be the Spirit of truth. (1 Cor. 2:10, Jn. 16:13) Unless one is born again of God, a man remains what Paul called “the natural man” and such a one “does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor. 2:14) Peter wrote, “No prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation [...because...] holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Pet. 1:20-21) “Private” interpretation is therefore any interpretation of Scripture gleaned apart from the work of God’s Holy Spirit of truth. Peter later warns us that those who are untaught (meaning those not taught by God’s Spirit) and unstable (James called such men “double-minded” – Jas. 1:8) would twist and distort the Scriptures to their own destruction. (2 Pet. 3:16)

Paul wrote:

“The Spirit explicitly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to [obeying] deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons...” (1 Tim. 4:1)

He also warned the Ephesian elders:

“From among yourselves [the elders] men [making an exalted title and position called “bishop,” the forerunner of the modern title and position “pastor”] will rise up, speaking perverted [distorted, corrupted] things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.” (Acts 20:30)

And he warned the Corinthians:

“But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.” (2 Cor. 11:3)

This partial sampling – and there are many other similar warnings – is sufficient to show that the way of following Christ would be “hijacked,” that *many* will follow the *many* false teachers and, as a result, “the way of truth will be blasphemed.” (2 Pet. 2:2)

Jesus warned His disciples, “Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended [stumbled, made to fall away], will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.” (Mt. 24:9-11)

This is the extent to which the apostasy will be permitted to do. There will be no genuine large scale “revivals” or “harvests” of new converts at the end of the age. There will be deception and lawlessness (men having no real king to obey but instead doing whatever is right in their own eyes – Mt. 24:12, Jdgs. 21:25) and betrayal and hatred. How is all this possible? Because so few recognize exactly how the way of following Christ has been hijacked.

The way of following Christ has been transformed in many ways over the centuries but primarily and foremost the children of God intermingled with “tares,” the children of the devil, and, abandoning the life led only by the Spirit of God, followed the ways of the tares. (see Mt. 13:24 and 36 and following) John foresaw a day, though, when the Lamb would again stand on Mount Zion and His true remnant would again follow Him wherever He goes. (Rev. 14:1, 4) The call upon the people of Christ in this day is: “Come out from among the ‘Christian’ idolaters... Come out from the midst of the Babylonish ceremonies and rituals that replace and usurp the true way of following Christ. Return to your first love – Christ – and repent of the ignorance and blindness that caused you to turn to false ‘Gods’” (see 2 Cor. 6:17, 1 Cor. 5:10-11, Rev. 18:4,2:4-5)

One cannot hope to list every instance in which the way of Christ has been historically hijacked and made to serve the agendas of men or demons but these must surely include:

- the gnostic heresies whereby men first redefined “God” according to their own preferences and intellectual understandings;
- the exaltation of the bishop (as was already noted – Acts 20:30) by which various factions arose based upon the popularity of the bishop and his ideas which now culminates in the heaped-up teachers who dutifully scratch the itching ears of many (2 Tim. 4:3-4);

- the suppression of Montanus' ecstatic spiritual excesses by Nicolaitan bishops (by virtue of their "delegated authority" to rule over the people – Rev. 2:6, 15) who insisted that through the hierarchical "church" centered in Rome was the only way to obtain eternal salvation;
- the replacement of being personally led by the Spirit of God (so as to actually and in real time be God's sons – Rom. 8:14) with creeds and manuals and philosophies (a process begun in the second century but which now dominates virtually all of "Christianity") so that faith in Christ Himself is now almost entirely replaced by faith in various (and most often conflicting!) doctrines and schools of "Christian" thought; and
- the replacement of kingdom and eternal values with middle- or upper-class "sensibilities" so that purported "ministers" of the gospel are symbiotically dependent upon the good will of their affluent listeners and the gospel of health, wealth and prosperity replaces the gospel of the kingdom.

There are certainly more ways in which the way of following Christ has been hijacked but these certainly represent some of the more prevalent deceptions and the astute reader can supply others from their own experience.

Jesus said, "He who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Mt. 24:13-14)

The gospel of the kingdom – the gospel that was hijacked and replaced with the gospel of the "church" – will again be preached in all the world. As extensive and pervasive as the apostasy will be (and already is), death and deception will not ultimately prevail. Truth – the testimony of Jesus – will prevail even at the cost of the disciples' lives. (Rev. 12:11) The tares will one day be forever removed and the true sons of the kingdom will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Mt. 13:41-43)

No one wishes to experience these things – much of the "church" (the apostasy) tells its followers that they'll escape it (the "pre-trib rapture" theory) – and everyone wishes to be well received into eternity. (Mt. 25:21) But the truth still remains that only he who endures to the end shall be saved. (Mt. 24:13, also see Mt. 25:30)

Paul wrote, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, *if indeed we suffer with Him*, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. 8:16-18 – emphasis added)

Those who would return to the original way of following Christ must be prepared to suffer. They must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow the King wherever He leads (Lk. 9:23) – a meeting that *requires* a departure from the "camps" of men. (Heb. 13:13) Anything other or anything less than this is the way of the flesh, the way of death and deception, that will confirm our status as tares, sons of the devil, and not wheat, the sons of Christ's kingdom. (Mt. 13:38) The gospel of the kingdom proclaims that He (*and He alone!*) – not our flesh and its lusts nor the devil and his works (see 1 Jn. 2:16, 3:8) – is to be our King. Whereas the "God" of the "church" is tolerant and even caters to the lawless desires of the flesh, the one

true God is still a “jealous God” who demands that His true followers walk in both spirit and truth, combining holiness and love in the righteous fear of the one and only Most High Almighty God. (Jn. 4:24, Heb. 12:14, 1 Jn. 4:8, Jas. 4:4-5, Ex. 20:5, 2 Cor. 7:1) Anything else is merely “church.”

Let he who has ears hear.

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