

The Greatest Dangers to the Final Reformation

Part 7 of 7

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In one sense, bringing about the final reformation is a tall order. The logistics and possibilities are mind boggling, to say the least. And it can be a bit intimidating and overwhelming to even contemplate. But in another sense, it is entirely inevitable and unstoppable and we need not be overly concerned about “the big picture.” All we need do is submit, on our own individual basis, to what God is doing in our own life – and the more those people who truly belong to Christ do this, the more we will see the final reformation come into existence and produce incredible amounts of eternal fruit!

Equally in this same way, we do not really need to worry about the greatest dangers that the movement as a whole faces – unless we find ourselves in some unenviable position where what we say or do influences the movement as a whole and indeed those who are in such positions stand potentially in front of great judgment and should walk the most alertly. Yet even so, while it is possible that such leaders could do much to damage the movement as a whole, in truth, all they will do is derail themselves and those who are foolish enough to follow them. If the reformation is moving in the directions it should be, such circumstances should be minimal among those who truly follow Christ and God because the key element and prime directive of the last reformation is the need for every person to be both individually and corporately led and guided by the Spirit of God in all things whether great or small. (Rom. 8:14, etc.) That is, the primary thrust of the last reformation is and must always be a return to our first love, Christ Jesus Himself, and this entails that we must personally and corporately and attentively follow Him..

And again we must start any discussion about reformation by recognizing again the difference between the “church” and the *ekklesia* [1577]. One is genuine – the other is counterfeit. One can be changed and is able to grow in godliness – the other is worldly in its very elements and cannot be anything like Christ though it will use His name and words to accomplish its own agendas and pursuits. One, the *ekklesia*, is the Bride (people, temple, house, household, family) of Christ – the other, the “church,” is the Great Prostitute who usurps the role and function of the Bride and who is the mother of abominations and all her denominational daughters. (Rev. 17:5)

The “church,” because it builds and relies upon (as well as refuses to discard!) deceptions incorporated by the Catholic “church” in the second through the fourth centuries and maintained by every “church” sect afterward, simply will not submit to the needed reforms. It can be truly said that the “church” *is* the deceptions and errors brought into existence two millennia ago and the *ekklesia* must shake these off in order to be the spotless and purified Bride ready for her Husband’s return. In many instances, the “church” will oppressively, even violently oppose the reformation because the deepest change, the return to our first love for Christ, simply and completely exposes the “church” for the counterfeit that it truly is. And, rather than surrender to God and come out of the “church” so as to become genuine *ekklesia*, many carnal “Christians” will resort to deception, oppression, slander, subterfuge and even violence rather than recognize their own sinful wickednesses. But for any truly born again individual who departs from all the “church” deceptions that have kept them from entering and inheriting the kingdom of God, the door to the kingdom and the arms of the King Himself stand wide open in complete welcome.

As we examine the greatest threats against the final reformation, let us keep in mind that even this knowledge can be used against us. If we compile an intellectual list of dangerous and

beneficial behaviors and attitudes and attempt to live or work by that list rather than by the Spirit of God, we are doomed to the same failure the “church” is under. We will have left our first love and exchanged it for bits of knowledge. But let us examine this subject in the light of the Spirit so that we will not be caught unawares by the schemes of Satan and so that we can avoid stepping into the many snares and pits he and his demonic hordes have cleverly concealed along the path before us. (2 Cor. 2:11)

Speaking in the broadest of terms, we can state that the dangers are of two types – internal and external. The internal dangers are many:

- There is always the danger that any individual in some leadership role will cease to be a humble servant and take on the attitudes and status of star, tyrant and/or Nicolaitan overlord – that is, one who has the unquestionable right to be adored, served, followed and obeyed no matter how deceptive their practices, teachings and lifestyles become. When this happens, every true child of God should not hesitate to get up and leave. When any genuine leader ceases to be a humble servant of Christ – and Daniel prophesied that many in this category would fall (Dan. 11:35) just as Jesus, Peter and Paul each prophesied that many deceivers would deceive many (Mt. 24:5, 11, 2 Pet. 2:1-2, 1 Tim. 4:1, etc.) – he becomes a tool in the hands of the deceiver (2 Tim. 2:26) and becomes just another blind leader of blind followers heading for a ditch. (Mt. 15:14) He ceases to be one who serves and equips and instead becomes a thief, a robber and a murderer, a mere hireling. (Jn. 10:8, etc.) This is one of the main reasons the saints must be made to understand that the *prime directive* of the kingdom of God is that every true follower of Christ *must* hear the voice and the leading of the Lord for themselves. This is how we know we are His sheep (Jn. 10:27) and this is how we learn to truly abide in Him. (1 Jn. 2:27) Certainly, if we become complacent about listening to just any voice that speaks to us, we will fall and be led away from the true way of following Christ – but that will be our *choice* just as surely as deciding to listen to a “pastor” or “apostle” or some demonic voice instead of carefully and diligently attending to the Spirit of God will be (or already was!) our choice. Our own life is our own responsibility. Anything else is merely a religious façade and deception – and it is this very personal and very real and demanding responsibility which will be the most rejected by the “church” and all those who want some kind of feel-good, religious experience without necessarily having to attain to the reality of righteous, holy, eternal and abundant life.

- There is also the constant danger that the people will be content to be merely followers rather than workers. Many have already departed from the truth and have instead flocked to their favorite teacher so they can sit passively and idly and have their ears soothed and scratched (2 Tim. 4:3-4) – whether that be because they prefer to be energetically entertained, spiritually stimulated, ritualistically moved or intellectually taught. If the people, as they are under the “church” paradigm, are allowed or ensnared to sit idly and passively at the feet of some man (whether literally or figuratively as in constantly requiring books or internet teachings), the leaders of the final reformation will easily become for

such people just another ear scratcher in an already overly long list as the followers become their sycophants (yes-men) and spiritual groupies. Only as the people are diligently and actually *doing* the good works God prepared in advance for them to do (Eph. 2:10) will they actually be doing the work of the ministry for which they have been equipped. (Eph. 4:12) When the people are merely passive and idle listeners or perpetual learners, they are deceived (Jas. 1:22, 2 Tim. 3:7) and the devil and the demonic will have gained power over at least that sector of the reformation movement. It is only infants who need constant instruction and supervision – the “church” paradigm produces perpetual spiritual infancy and childishness and those who have been exposed to this deception will be content to remain as infants or will fully and finally devolve into carnal, pseudo-believers and apostates (fallen from the faith). But this is merely the way of deception and death, not the way of eternal and abundant life.

- Another great internal danger is the inadvertent succumbing to demonically induced error and deception. Few indeed seem to recognize even the existence of what is best called the “dual streams” of power (both divine and demonic) that is present in nearly every gathering of people who claim to belong to Christ and God. Even fewer seem to know how to discern and differentiate between the two! Yet it remains true that dual streams of power have attended all revivals, renewals and moves of God. **Every** move of God, **every** revival, **every** outpouring of His Spirit has devolved into a schism (Greek *schisma* [4978]), sect or heresy (*haireisis* [139]), a dissension (*dichostasia* [1370]), and/or a contention (*eris* [2054]), etc. – and usually as the expression for someone’s incomplete or twisted version of “the faith.” Today these are known as denominations and are considered the norm in modern churchianity. But each of these things are contrary to the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:25) and keep us from experiencing and inheriting the kingdom of God. (Gal. 5:20-21) We must not presume that the devil’s ability to imitate spiritual gifts and produce counterfeit miracles is his primary strategy or aim – these are only some of the weapons in his arsenal. The “church,” the counterfeit of the Bride of Christ, is his ultimate achievement and, in certain circles, it now allows for nearly unrestrained flow of demonic power in the name of Christ and God. Knowing that the devil’s ultimate goal is to lure the gullible away from the path that leads to life is what enables us to see more of his schemes and devices in their operation and to see also their deadly potential threat to individuals, groups and the reformation movement as a whole.

- Yet an even greater danger is that the people will fail to press on into *all* that Christ wants us to enter into. It is an ancient human tendency at least as old as the New Testament to begin a work in the Spirit but be misled somehow into attempting to finish the work in the flesh. (see Gal. 3:3) **Every** work of God has been undermined or prevented from reaching the fullness of what the body of Christ is intended to be as a result of the deceptive work of the demonic. Whereas leaders may have had God (and little else!) and consequently they walked in great light and power, their followers and those who come in successive generations after them have only rules and precedents and have little light and virtually no

power except that of law and coercion. In order for the reformation to be complete, the deceptive “church” systems that have so hindered the people of Christ for so long must be abandoned. The first and second century people of Christ changed their entire world without any “church” system whatsoever. In the final reformation, God intends that we should do the same. This is simply more than most who have been to “church” can fathom and many will be unable to walk in such a totally “crazy” freedom. Yet this is precisely what is prophesied. (see Rev. 14:1-5) Simply laying down our lives when someone comes looking for us because we are a “Christian” is not to be the whole story – expending our lives to make genuinely mature disciples for Jesus while “trapped” in a carefully contained and controlled hostile environment is. Those who are unwilling to endure to the end will likely have trouble convincing Jesus they were once saved! (Mt. 24:13)

In relation to these internal dangers, we do well to consider Paul’s instruction to Timothy. He told him to “pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” (2 Tim. 2:22) If we would simply take care to *be* one who has a pure heart and to be united in spirit only with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, we will see much fruit come from our lives. If we are unwilling or unable to do this, we will simply be yet some form of “church” that is only one more disappointing façade of “godliness” that lacks the power to make us truly like Christ, the kind Paul told us to turn away from! (2 Tim. 3:5)

The external dangers to the final reformation are equally present:

- In dealing with the “church,” it will perhaps be easier to endure its persecutions than it will be to avoid having one’s teachings and practices coopted by smooth-sounding, perhaps even well-intentioned “church” and especially mega-“church” “pastors” who will seem to be in agreement with the outward practices, aims and ideas of the last reformation. But being coopted back into the more subtle of the deceptive “church” practices will be just as deadly to the life in the Spirit as will never coming out and walking in the life and power of God in the first place. At all costs, the genuine ekklesia must maintain the unanimity, power and purity of the one Holy Spirit of God. That is, we must return to and always remain in our first love for Christ Jesus and accept no substitutes! Neither humans nor demons (both of whom try to occupy places in our lives that truly belong only to Christ) have any ability to deliver what He has promised!

- In addition to the “church’s” persecution, we will also face both secular and religious persecutions as we refuse to compromise on politically incorrect topics such as sin, abortion, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, etc. As we stand for righteousness in these darkest of days, we will be a target for the hatred and violence of those who do not want to give up their sin. This is why John was told, “they overcame [the devil in his fury] by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.” (Rev. 12:11) Paul *promised* that “*everyone* who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (2 Tim. 3:12) Is there any reason to expect that when groups of people everywhere around the world cease being religiously passive

and idle and start trying to live a godly life in Christ Jesus that we will experience some kind of different reaction?

Regarding all these great dangers (about which we can do absolutely nothing outside of our own circle of influence), we truly need only be aware of their existence as we remain focused on our Lord and Savior who can equally lead us away from such things or deliver us through such things.

The greatest dangers to any individual seeking to truly follow and experience Christ is on two fronts. First, the individual may drift away from or be negligent toward his or her first love toward Christ. The New Testament is replete with multiple warnings about our need to diligently attend to Him who gave His all for us (2 Cor. 5:15, etc.) and these are readily guarded against in much the same way we guard ourselves in regards to being faithful to our husband or wife. But the second danger is much more subtle and therefore all the more easy to stumble into. This second danger is that we will exercise all the diligence and loyalty of a faithful spouse but be deluded into believing that the deceiving spirit we give ourselves to is Christ Himself.

In the “church” context, we can be more loyal to our denomination, our “pastor” or our traditions than we are to Christ and this is simply idolatry. Outside of the “church” context, we can be more loyal to our own ideas, knowledge or beliefs than we are to Christ and this is simply the same idolatry with a different object of worship. Paul warned that God Himself would send strong delusion upon those who preferred unrighteousness above the righteousness that God is because they did not love the truth. (2 Ths. 2:11-12) This lie which people prefer and which God gives them over to is the lie that the spirit they contact, the spiritual or religious experiences they have, the knowledge they gain, really is God. Whatever flavor of deception one prefers above his or her first love for Christ, God will give that individual over to it and allow them to think they are really worshiping, serving and following the one, true and living God. And they will do all manner of abominations and wickedness in His name and see not one thing wrong with what they are and say and do.

Paul wrote, “Know this, that in the last days perilous times will come.” (2 Tim. 3:1) And Jesus warned of the last days, saying, “Watch out that no one deceives you.” (Mt. 24:4) The last days are perilous because no man can be trusted – only Christ who leads us by His voice and life within us can be trusted. The “church” most often denies and derides such a notion because it competes against the “pastor” overlord standing in the pulpit over the people. The “church” will prove to be as much a snare as any other aspect of this world as its practices and agendas are not of God. And the people who are content to be deceived at “church” will rise up in the devil’s fury against those who dare to stand only in and by the Spirit of Christ.

The last days are perilous because it will be, apart from divine spiritual discernment, virtually impossible to know who is friend and who is foe. Even one’s own self – the carnal, flesh nature – with which one is so familiar and comfortable could be one’s own worst enemy. In all this darkness and deception, however, Christ remains faithful and in the end the humble will stand with Him on the real Mt. Zion, the new Jerusalem and they will follow Him wherever He leads. And they will participate in the completion of His work of overcoming and destroying all the power of the devil. This will be the final reformation this world will experience – and it will happen whether we participate on the right side of it or not and whether it involves large numbers of many peoples or merely a few, a purified but tiny remnant. Whatever happens, we will bear the consequences of the choices we make and will have to answer for what we have done with what the Lord gave us to be and do to further His kingdom within our own circle of

influence. (Mt. 25:15) It is merely a distraction to be caught up in or worried about anything else.

“Lord, what would You have of me this day?”

Let he who has ears hear.

Part 6 of 7: The Many Rs of the Final Reformation

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