

“ MODERN CHRISTIANITY” AND THE MINISTERS OF FALSEHOOD

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There's a popular phrase used by pastors today. On any given Sunday in churches across the U.S. A preacher says "I invite you to engage in community". There are podcasts and sermons. And it all sounds good because they sound like they're talking about fellowship, the deepening of bonds between the messiah's followers.

Yet often what's behind the phrase "Engage the community" **IS SOMETHING ELSE**. As one author tells pastors, "unless the people entering your doors connect with six friends in six months, they'll be out the door." That isn't gospel motivation, its about keeping people coming. That's a lot different from Yahuah-Elohim's purpose for community.

Pastors also think of community in another way. It's said to be the glue that sticks people together. That sounds good too-after all, a disconnected church can't be very effective in doing the work of Yahuah-Elohim's kingdom. But when some pastors use the word glue, they're concerned about something else. They've been told their church numbers will never grow if they don't maintain the numbers they already have; to keep people coming they have to glue them together with engagement.

Again the motive isn't fellowship as prescribed in Yahuah-Elohim's word. Instead it's to a grow a church; to draw more people, build a bigger audience, and keep funds coming in to maintain buildings and expand programs.

Not all pastors have these motivations. But these are severe temptations to any minister especially today, as churches dwindle. The growth mentality is an after-effect of the "church growth" movement, which began in the 1980s supposedly that movement has ended but its influence keeps reverberating. This is never more true than with the Identity truth; which most all pastors pass up in favor of Unitarian and ecumenical teachings that will fill the pews rather than teaching truth which will weed out the "feel-good" story/message seekers.

I can't imagine Peter or John discussing these kinds of concepts. Peter preached with Holy Ghost's power so that 3000 people were saved in one day. I don't think it ever crossed his mind to wonder, "how can we keep these people on board". Everybody present that day knew they had experienced a sanctifying, supernatural move of Yahuah-Elohim. People's eyes were opened to their need for Yahshua. They became aware of their sinfulness, and they sought Yahuah-Elohim with their whole being. And when the Elohim got hold of them, their hearts were gripped with passion because He placed His very own heart within them.

Brothers and Sisters, when you see a world that has gone mad with sin, you want to know Yahuah-Elohim's ways. And you long to be with others who knows his ways. That is true community. People who love each other with conviction and the heart of their true shepherd. But none of that can happen if you're involved in a corrupt community. As a preacher of Yahshua's gospel, I urge you to run from any community that has corrupted Scriptural standards.

Be careful about those you attach yourself to or align yourself with. Don't be quick to join a Bible study. Be discerning about the books you read. And be smart about the friendships you have.

You may be saying, "Where did this come from, Pastor Enoch? I understand why you might wonder. This isn't the standard message you get from your evangelical pulpits. In fact you'd probably

be told the opposite: not to be quick to judge others. But I'm not telling you to judge others; I'm telling you to discriminate! And I want to give you some important reasons why.

1st Kings 13 contains an eye opening story about a young man identified only as a “a man of Yahuah-Elohim.” Without knowing his name we learn everything we need to know about him in a single verse: “Behold a man of Yahuah-Elohim came out of Judah by the word of the Elohim to Bethel”(13:1 NLT).

This verse gets my heart pumping. Here's someone who obtained a sure word from Yahuah-Elohim -something pure and unadorned, real and truthful- and it was meant to pierce the hearts of a people who'd fallen into a lax, lukewarm condition. How many of us could be identified the same way this man was- as simply a “man of Yahuah-Elohim”? Could our neighbors look at us and say, “There goes someone who is different. He's not caught up in the things the rest of us are. When I talk to him there's a solidness about what he says and how he says it. You can tell he knows something of Yahuah-Elohim.”

The unnamed “man of Yahuah-Elohim” in Scripture was all this and more. He was set apart for Yahuah's purposes and he clearly disentangled himself from worldly things to know Yahuah-Elohim's ways. That alone qualified him to stand before a nation and a king and preach Yahuah's truth. The next scene shows us that's exactly what he did.

King Jeroboam had just committed a horrible sacrilege: “Jeroboam was approaching the altar to burn incense” (1 kings 13:1). On The surface, this sounds like a good thing. A nations king goes to the Assembly to worship Yahuah-Elohim and to give offerings. But the young man of Yahuah-Elohim knew differently. Here's how he responded:

“Then at the Elohim's command, he shouted, 'O altar, altar! This is what the Elohim says: A child named Josiah will be born into the dynasty of David. On you he will sacrifice the priests from the pagan shrines who come here to burn incense and human bones will be burned on you.' That same day the man of Yahuah-Elohim gave a sign to prove his message. He said, “The Elohim has promised to give this sign: This altar will split apart, and its ashes will be poured out on the ground” (13:2-3). Its a mysterious sounding prophecy, but its clearly horrifying. And that did not make the king happy. Next we read that Jeroboam pointed at him and shouted, “Seize that man!' But instantly the king's hand became paralyzed in that position and he couldn't pull it back. At the same time a wide crack appeared in the altar, and the ashes poured out, just as the man of Yahuah-Elohim had predicted in his message from the Elohim” (13:4-5).

When the king went after the man for prophesying, his hand suddenly froze. It was a supernatural occurrence, but this scene contains a powerful truth: the Elohim will stay the hand of anyone who moves in his own authority while calling it a work of Yahuah-Elohim. That signals a corrupt community. And any such work will wither the way Jeroboam's hand did.

The king realized Yahuah-Elohim had intervened, and it shook him to his core. Frantic “The king cried out to the man of Yahuah-Elohim, please ask the Elohim your Yahuah-Elohim to restore my hand again!' So the man of Yahuah-Elohim prayed to the Elohim, and the king's hand was restored and he could move it again”(13:6). Jeroboam was so grateful to be healed that he invited the man of Yahuah-Elohim home with him so he could reward him. But the young man replied, “Even if you gave me half of everything you own, I would not go with you. I WOULD NOT EAT OR DRINK

ANYTHING IN THIS PLACE. FOR THE ELOHIM GAVE ME THIS COMMAND: YOU MUST NOT EAT OR DRINK ANYTHING WHILE YOU ARE THERE, AND do not return to Judah by the same way you came” (13:8-9).

I love this young man's obedience. He chose it over a path that could have made his life more comfortable. He's an example of someone who chooses Yahuah-Elohim's way over the false appeal of corrupt community.

False teachers promise that we can follow both the world's ways and a faithful life in the messiah. It's easy to identify the world's corrupt ways. It's a lot harder to identify corruption in spiritual places where we don't expect to find it. That's when things get dangerous.

The young man of Yahuah-Elohim had done everything according to Yahuah-Elohim's word up to that point. But on the way home- on the road Yahuah-Elohim directed him to take- he came across an older prophet.

“Then (the older man) said to the man of Yahuah-Elohim,”Come home with me and eat some food.”No I cannot, he replied. 'I am not allowed to eat or drink anything here in this place. For the Elohim gave me this command: “You must not eat or drink anything while you are there and do not return to Judah by the same way you came” But the old prophet answered. 'I am a prophet too, just as you are. And an angel gave me this command from the Elohim:”Bring him home with you so he can have something to eat and drink.” But the old man was lying to him. So they went back together and the man of Yahuah-Elohim ate and drank at the prophets home” (13:15-19).

Here was a very different circumstance from king Jeroboam's invitation. The young man was inclined to listen to an older prophet, a man with a ministry and a following, someone who'd been around for a while. That made the temptation a lot subtler and in this instance he disobeyed Yahuah-Elohim.

Note the phrase the old man used to tempt him: ”An angel said to me by the word of the Elohim...” Does this remind you of a certain bible passage? Paul admonishes, “Let Yahuah-Elohim's curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of good news than the one we preached to you” (Galatians 1:8).

The words of Christian leaders carry a lot of weight, and so it was for the young man of Yahuah-Elohim. The older prophet assured him, “You don't have to continue in your hunger. You've done your job. It would be legalistic to stay in this rigid mode of obedience. Its time to relax, to chill a little. To take it easy.” That's actually the tenor of a lot of preaching today. We hear very few sermons on subjects like leading a holy life. Tell me, when did Yahuah-Elohim ever change the path his people are to walk?

Paul has some tough talk for those who would mix the way of the Elohim with the way of the world, “You cannot drink from the cup of the Elohim and from the cup of demons, too. You cannot eat of the Elohim's table and the table of demons, too” (1 Corinthians 10:21).

It wasn't the fallen world that entangled this godly young man in sin. It was the corrupt church- a false prophet who had deviated from Yahuah-Elohim's way. What a tragedy: The young man had such spiritual authority that his words caused a king's hand to shrivel. But he was derailed by the soft words of a supposedly godly leader.

The next scene is tragic: “The man of Yahuah-Elohim started off again. But as he was traveling along a lion came out and killed him”(1 kings 13:24). Throughout the Scripture, from Ezekiel to the new testament, false teachers are described as ravenous wolves ready to kill and devour. This young man's death was literal, while the lesson to us is spiritual: Spiritual deception from a corrupt community leads to destruction.

Do not listen to false teachers who would have you believe Yahuah-Elohim can be used like a genie to grant your wishes. Don't ever put a dollar in a church offering hoping to get more back. Yahuah-Elohim is grieved by the king of false teaching and by the parishioners who embrace it. Our prayer can't be, “Elohim bless me” but rather “Elohim align me. Set my heart right. Make straight my path, then no lion can devour me. And I'll have your authority to do the works of your kingdom.”

It's always best to run from corruption before it can happen. Over and over in the Bible we see Yahuah-Elohim removing his people from corrupt situations. When he commanded Noah to enter the ark. It was to remove this servant from a corrupt world. When he led Israel into the promised land, he was removing them from Egypt's oppressive bondage.

Yet it's not just a fallen world or false church leaders that are corrupt. Finally there's the issue of our own sinful hearts. When poplar preachers tell us”You can have a prosperous life today,” Something inside us stirs- especially if we feel our life has been disappointing but our motive for approaching Yahuah-Elohim can't be, “Can I get something from him?” If it is, we're pursuing the wrong Elohim.

I don't preach messages like this very often. But I can't backtrack on anything I've written here. Friend, run from the bible study that exists only to make you feel good. Avoid the relationship that takes you deeper in pleasure seeking and away from the messiah-seeking. Find a different faith community if yours labors to get you in the building instead of training you to take Yahshua everywhere. Run- and know that Yahuah-Elohim is pleased with your obedience. Amen!