

Monday Morning Rewind – April 21, 2008

Good morning. On Sabbath we took a serious look at what has been called, “The largest church in the world. This “church” grew from 300,000 to 2 million in just a few weeks. The church is really not a church at all, but rather a spiritual movement championed by celebrity megastar, Oprah Winfrey. Through her weekly live web cast, Oprah has opened the “largest classroom in the world” to promote the study of Eckhart Tolle’s newest book, *A New Earth: Awakening to your life’s purpose*.

The book captures the ideology of the new spiritual movement—ideology that does away with many of the fundamental principles of Christianity, including the need for belief. According to Tolle, God is about a feeling, not a belief. This clashes with the 98 mentions of “belief” in the gospel of John alone, not to mention the most famous of Jesus’ statements in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes** in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Oprah herself claims to be a “free-thinking Christian” who believes there are many ways to God, despite the fact that Jesus declared, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

A New Earth turns out to be New Age religion reborn in a fresher, more mainstream package. And many unsuspecting Christians are opening the package. Some examples of the new spirituality are seen in the following comparisons:

Old Spirituality

Who Has Authority? The hierarchy has the authority. Church authorities tell you how to worship in church and how to behave outside of church.

New Spirituality

Who Has Authority? You are your own best authority. As you work to know and love yourself, you discover how to live a spiritual life.

Old Spirituality

What Is Spirituality? God, and the path to worship Him, have already been defined. All you need to do is follow the directions.

New Spirituality

What Is Spirituality? You listen within for your own definition of spirituality. Your deeper longings are your compass on the search.

Old Spirituality

What Is the Path to God? There is only one path. It is the right way and all other ways are wrong.

New Spirituality

What Is the Path to God? Many paths lead to spiritual freedom and peace. You have a rich array of gems from which to draw illumination: the world’s religious traditions; mythology; philosophy; psychology; healing methods; scientific wisdom; your own experience. String a necklace all your own.

Old Spirituality

What Is Sacred? Parts of yourself—like the body, or ego, or emotions—are evil. Deny or transcend or sublimate them or they will lead you astray.

New Spirituality

What Is Sacred? Everything is sacred—your body, mind, psyche, heart, and soul. The world is sacred, too, with all of its light and darkness. Bring the exiled and unloved parts of yourself back into the fold.

Old Spirituality

What Is the Truth? The truth is like a rock. Your understanding of it should never waver. Therefore ask the same questions and receive the same answers at all stages of life.

New Spirituality

What Is the Truth? The truth is like the horizon—forever ahead of you, forever changing its shape and color. Let your spiritual path change and diverge as you journey toward it. You live many lives in one lifetime. The truth accommodates your growth.

Rewind to Genesis 3:1-5 and see if the new spirituality isn't the same old self-focused spirituality that Satan disguised as "higher consciousness" at the Tree of the Knowledge of good and evil. This is not meant to be an attack on Oprah Winfrey—someone who I consider to be a great humanitarian. Rather, it is a wake-up call to those of us who claim to be believers in Jesus. A profound planetary shift is taking place that was foreseen thousands of years ago by the apostle John on Patmos (See Revelation 18). A new gospel is being preached by powerful people, and many may be seduced with promises of peace and a more "enlightened way."

It is important what we believe. Take a look for yourself:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JW4LLwkgmqA> Then read Col. 2:8 and 1 Tim. 6:20, 21. Let's pray for open eyes to see the way, the truth, and the life as it is in Jesus. —Pastor Randy