

Revelation 21 (8) – The People of the Lie

Have you ever sincerely believed something, and you lived your life as if it was true, but then you found out it wasn't actually true? How long did you believe that lie? What did it take for you realize the truth? What did it cost you? Because sometimes, you might not be living the truth, but believing a lie, following a lie, and living as if the lie were the truth, and yet you don't know it. Something has to open your eyes to the truth.

And this is the truth about everyone who isn't a Christian. They are believing a lie. However, there are many people who think they are true Christians but they are not. They are also living a lie. And when you don't believe that you can be deceived, that's when you already are.

The Apostles spent a lot of time describing these deceived people. And at the end of his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of them in Matthew 7:21-23 – *Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name? And then will I declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.*

Now that is a scary passage of scripture. And what's scary about it is that Jesus is saying there are many so-called Christians who fit this profile. These people didn't seem to be outside the faith. They were church people. These people were very involved in ministry. These people were successful. These people sincerely believed they were true Christians. But they were not. Everyone who has ever seen this text has asked, who are these people? And who are the liars that the Apostle John is speaking of in Revelation 21:8?

Well, they are everywhere, and there are two basic types. The people of the lie are those who don't believe in Jesus. And also, those who say they do but don't live like it. And we will look at both throughout this message, because

you might outright deny Jesus, so you are certainly one of these people. But you might claim Jesus, and still be one of these liars. Like Jesus says.

Many people, calling themselves Christians or not, live their lives as if sincerity is the true religion. They think that as long as you are true to what you believe, then it doesn't really matter what you believe, everything will eventually work out good for you. But that is just humanism, and that is the great lie, that Jesus is not God, that Jesus is not the only way of salvation, that Jesus doesn't change people, and that God will not punish anyone who is good and sincere. It is a lie.

The birth and life and death and resurrection of Jesus means that we know what false religion really is. People are looking a political savior, a social savior, an economic savior, a technological savior, or a medical savior. But God tells us all that we need salvation from sin, and Jesus is the only way. Jesus came to save people from their sins. That's the message of the Bible.

The OT says God has promised a Savior. The Incarnation says God has sent a Savior. The Gospels tell the story of the Savior. The NT says we've been saved by the Savior, and that we should live for the Savior, while we await the return of the Savior. Titus 2:11-13 says that the grace of God that brings salvation trains us *to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.*

To refuse Jesus his rightful place as God, Savior, and Lord, is to believe the lie and to refuse salvation. And that is the message of the Bible. It is all about Jesus. You see him in pattern, promise, and present from the first book of the Bible onward. And to live like God doesn't care about it is to live a lie.

Are you a liar? Revelation 21:8 says that all liars will end up in eternal damnation. What does that mean? Well, it can't mean anyone who ever lied is going to hell. That would mean there's no point in converting to Christianity. Everyone has lied at least once in their lives, and many if not

most people lie on a regular basis. So, Revelation 21:8 can't mean that liars can't become Christians. Because then no one could be a Christian.

So, what does that mean, then, that all liars will go to hell? In the context of the book of Revelation, this term "liars" has reference, not simply to outright lies, or lying to protect the innocent, or other singular instances. Rather, the "lie" in Revelation is false worship. Counterfeit religion. Atheism, agnosticism, diabolical heathenism, in defiance of the true faith. The "lie" is paganism, idolatry, polytheism, or anything else that isn't the exclusive worship of the One True God as seen in the person of Jesus Christ.

God is real. The Bible is true. Jesus is the only way. Anything that denies Jesus as God, Savior, and Lord is living in service of the big lie. To believe that Jesus didn't claim to be God, that he didn't claim to be the only way of salvation, this is what it means to live the big lie, to be a liar who will end up in hell, like Revelation 21:8 says. The people of the lie are those who don't believe in Jesus. And those who say they do but don't live like it. These are unrepentant people, who might seem to do a lot for other people, or even in the name of Jesus, but they don't actually follow Jesus.

The Apostle John wrote the book of Revelation. He also wrote the epistle of 1 John. And this is what he says about the big lie in 1 John 2:22 – *"Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?"* And in 1 John 5:10 – *Whoever does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the testimony that God has borne concerning his Son.* It is a religious lie. In John 8:44, Jesus said that Satan *is a liar and the father of lies.* He deceives people about God. He leads them astray from the one true God. Satan has been telling this lie from the very beginning, he tries to get you to believe that God has not spoken when he surely has. Jesus is God's answer to the big lie.

Yes, liars are one category of lifestyle sinners, and a life characterized by lying is not a saved life. But this list in Revelation 21:8 is larger than just eight types of sinners. This list, and what it represents, is not limited by these words. The words describe symptoms of the same problem. And the last

word tells us what that problem is. In other words, the eighth category is manifested by the other seven categories. The phrase “and all liars” describes all the other types in one word. All of the other seven types are manifestations of believing the big lie. This is why you can rightly translate that part of the verse as “all the liars”.

The cowardly, faithless, detestable, the murderers, the sexually immoral, the sorcerers, and the idolaters, these are all liars. These types of people are identified by their sin. And these types of sins are symptoms of the root problem. These people are not following Jesus Christ. As 1 John 3:10 says, *it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil. They are not the people of the truth; they are the people of the lie.*

The Apostle Paul speaks about people who may call themselves Christians but are not. In Philippians 3:18, he says – *For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. These aren't people who are simply struggling with sin. These are people who won't struggle with sin. Philippians 3:19 says – Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things.*

Paul mentions these kinds of people again in Titus 1:16 – *They profess to know God, but they deny him by their works. They are detestable, disobedient, unfit for any good work.* Their lifestyle proves that they don't actually know God.

John's list in Revelation 21:8 isn't as long as he could have made it. He could have included other types of sinful lifestyles. And you see such a list from the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 – *Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.* People want to pick this list apart and convince themselves they aren't on it, or that someone else is. But you'll notice that while this list mentions some of the same types of sinful lifestyles that the Apostle John does in Revelation 21:8, the rest of his list is different.

Paul has another list in Galatians 5:19-21 – *Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.* You'll notice that his list in Galatians 5 is different than his list in 1 Corinthians 6. And once again, Paul mentions some of the same types of sinful lifestyles that John does in Revelation 21:8, but Paul's list is longer. And here he concludes his list with *and things like these*, clearly indicating that his list is representative, not exhaustive. That is the point with all of these lists. They all give symptoms of the same lie. They are the results of an unrepentant lifestyle.

Lots of people calling themselves Christians believe that grace is a license to sin. They won't say it that way, and most won't teach it that way. But it is a very popular lifestyle today. People think they're going to heaven when they live like hell. They believe in Jesus, but they don't actually follow him. If you don't follow him in this life, you won't be happy in the afterlife.

The point with Revelation 21:8 is that John gives several of the types of unrepentant sinners whose lifestyle proves they don't know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. And then, like Paul, he gives a conclusion, a catch-all to include all such people who have not repented toward God and placed their faith in Jesus Christ. These types of people, whose lives are characterized by these types of sins, and all such people of the lie, they are damned.

John could have named more sins, or sinful lifestyles, but he doesn't have to, because he describes the root cause of their unrepentant lifestyles. They are all liars, in other words, they are all people whose lives show they don't follow the truth, but the lie. Don't believe the lie; your good works or your sincerity can't get you to heaven, only Jesus can. But don't lie to yourself, either; people who are going to heaven don't live like hell.

I'm giving this message on New Year's Day. And lots of people are going to be making New Year's resolutions. There is one New Year's resolution that I

know God will be pleased with...Repentance! Resolve to find the places where you're believing a lie, and the places where you're telling lies to yourself, and to others, and to God. And turn from those lies and turn to the truth and live like the truth is the truth. It's called repentance. That's how God wants your life to change this year. And repent of not being repentant when you recognize in my life the times and places when and where you distrust, disbelieve, or disobey God.

It's not about making yourself perfect, it is trusting that Jesus is perfect, and that Jesus has told you how to live, and the Holy Spirit empowers you to live how Jesus wants you to live. And when you mess it up, you bring your sins to God, who loves you and forgives you and will assure you that you are his and he is yours because you stay in a repentant state. You're not perfect, but you're being purified. Keep a short account with sin, and keep on repenting toward God and placing your faith in Jesus Christ.

When Jesus said repent and believe the gospel, he was saying that your whole life is about repentance. This is not about beating yourself up all the time, this is about being honest with God. It is a good thing when God helps you see a bad thing. Then you know you can take it to him and ask him to cleanse you and help you deal with it. Here is the question that you, and me, and everyone else who calls themselves a Christian, needs to address and answer. Am I living a rebellious lifestyle, or a repentant lifestyle?

Hear me clearly. A repentant lifestyle isn't about anxiously having to find every little thing you're doing wrong every day. Repentance isn't about making yourself miserable; it is about giving yourself to God! And confessing when you haven't been giving yourself to God. Asking for mercy. Asking for grace. Living the truth. A truly repentant life is a life that is truly rejoicing and resting in Jesus. Hallelujah! The problem isn't your sin. The problem is when you say it isn't sin. And the problem isn't when you struggle with sin. The problem is when you don't or won't. That's when you are a liar. The kind of liar that Revelation 21:8 is talking about. The kind that won't go to heaven. The kind that will go to hell. REPENT!