

EXAMINING EUGENE PETERSON'S UNHOLY MESSAGE BIBLE

-Christopher Gregory

It has sold more than 10 million copies and was ranked #9 of the top selling Bibles in 2013 by ECPA (source). With endorsements from such spiritual leaders Chuck Swindoll, Christianity Today, Dan Quayle, Bill Hybels, Gordon Fee, J.I. Packer, Jack Hayford, Jerry Jenkins, Jerry Savelle, John Maxwell, Richard Foster, Rick Warren, Rod Parsley, Tony Campolo and Warren Wiersbe, among many others, Peterson's The Message Bible has found a genuine place within the modern evangelical, as well as Charismatic and Pentecostal church world today.

We are told throughout the word that in the last days grievous wolves would slip into the fold, devouring the flock. The problem is, many are not doing what it takes to know who those wolves are and how they are devouring many within the body today, because they have resisted the call to "study to show thyself approved". In fact, the sentiment today is in direct contradiction to the word to expose false teachings, to expose false teachers, instead, many have adopted a more tolerant view of teachings which, out of fear of being called "troublemakers" or "intolerant" they have allowed these men to sneak in unawares to divide and then destroy the body, all under the guise of religious political correctness. Case in point – the general acceptance by many within the modern church of Eugene Peterson's The Message Bible.

Galatians 1:8 we are warned about false gospels and those who come preaching them; "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed." When we begin to examine the life, beliefs and teachings of Eugene Peterson, we begin to better understand not only his agenda and directive, we also gain a deeper understanding as to why he is making an imprint into the minds of not adults, but of the young and impressionable. It is my personal opinion that the Message Bible and its radical departure from the core text was purposely designed for the younger generation and not the older generation before it, why? Because the older generation, those who have been rooted and equipped with the spirit of God, will see through the veil of mysticism and new age teachings Peterson's "Bible" is promoting. The sad truth is, the reason why the Message Bible was purposely geared toward the younger generation (35 and under) is due to two (2) things, Biblical ignorance and Spiritual immaturity.

While Peterson considers himself Pentecostal, he is officially a licensed minister of the United Presbyterian Church. An ecumenical advocate, Peterson openly supports and even encourages the union between evangelicals and the Roman Catholic church. Not only has Peterson removed the very themes of Biblical standards, he has purposely chosen to exclude many important truths from his Bible – but why? Why

change or even omit such things as “Lord” when it refers to Jesus Christ, replacing it with “Master” which is a derogatory declaration of Christ which the religious used against the Lord, even Judas referring to Jesus as “master” and not “Lord”. By subverting the term “Master” instead of “Lord” Peterson denotes the authority and deity of Jesus as God, instead, what Peterson attempts to do is make Christ a teacher, a new age guru and not the son of God he rightly is. It’s a subtly that unless one is rooted in the contextual grammar of the written word they won’t notice the slight variations Peterson is attempting to accomplish.

So what else has been deleted in The Message Bible? Here are a few things which Peterson has removed:

1. God’s Holy name
2. Sinful nature of man
3. Homosexuality and its sin
4. Adultery
5. Sexual Immorality

Some would ask what is the harm of Peterson’s attempt to re-write the Bible? The problem is what Peterson is attempting to lose (the cross) and instead replace it with the power of the resurrection. This cannot be done, for it is the cross which redeemed man, not the resurrection. The resurrection was never in question, but it is the cross which satisfied the sin debt, it is the cross which washes away the sins of man, not the resurrection – the cross. “Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.” (Hebrews 9:22)

in his book *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, Peterson makes his cross-less claim in his statement where the emphasis is on the resurrection instead of the cross: Peterson says this:

“We live the Christian life out of a rich tradition of formation-by-resurrection. Jesus’ resurrection provides the energy and conditions by which we ‘walk before the Lord in the land of the living (Ps. 116:9). The resurrection of Jesus creates and makes available the reality in which we are formed as new creatures in Christ by the Holy Spirit. The do-it-yourself, self-help culture of North America has so thoroughly permeated our imaginations that we don’t give much sustained attention to the biggest thing of all, resurrection. And the reason we don’t give much attention to it is because the resurrection is not something we can use or manipulate or control or improve on. It is interesting the world has had very little success in commercializing Easter, the way it has Christmas. If we can’t say, as we say, ‘get a handle on it’ and

use it, we soon lose interest. But resurrection is not available for our use; it is exclusively God's operation."

Yet notice what Paul says in Galatians 6:14 "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." Notice Paul does not say "I boast in the resurrection" but he boasts in the cross. It is the cross which redeems man, which gives the believer Holy Ghost power – not the resurrection. The resurrection is the life we receive thru the death Christ paid. But Peterson would deny us this truth.

Peterson uses the term in The Message Bible "As above, so below". Why? Why would Peterson use a new age root word which has its very foundation in witchcraft and the occult? Could it be because Peterson is disciple to the occult world himself? I believe so. Make no mistake, there is a genuine plan to not only water down the word of God, but make the living word of God a social experiment to adapt itself to the changing social behaviors of the day, but the word of God does not change, but it remains faithful to its foundational truth and that truth is sin is sin and man's problem is his wicked heart, Peterson's Message Bible removes man's central problem (the sin nature) and rejects the concept of Original Sin, and instead makes man out to be something which can redeem himself through his own efforts. This is the heresy we are told to expose in Ephesians 5:11.

When we look at Peterson's Message Bible, we come to only one conclusion – it's heresy. Not only heresy, but it's equipping young people into an understanding that is grooming them for the coming World Order for religion, a religion based on another gospel, another message and another Christ. This makes Eugene Peterson's Message Bible a doctrine of devils, created by the devil to destroy the church and render it powerless. But God has a remnant who is exposing the depths of the devil to call that which is false into question and reveal it to all that it is a product to destroy and not redeem. Such is the work of Eugene Peterson and his Message Bible.