

An Open Letter to the Deceived in Joel Osteen's Lakewood Laodicean Church

<http://www.lakewood.cc/>

He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word, and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. (Matt. 13:22)

Dear Deceived Lakewood Churchgoers & Television Viewers:

I write this letter of rebuke and warning, not because Jesus appeared to me in a vision, not because the Holy Ghost came to me in a second anointed filling, not because God the Father teleported me to the Third Heaven for a personal meeting, but because the Word of God, the very Bible which you hold up and confess, commands me to do so.

It is true your church has leased the Compaq Center in Houston for \$12 million dollars. It is also true you renovated and improved the Center for an estimated additional ~~\$70 million~~ \$90 million.



Artist's rendering of Lakewood Compaq Center after ~~\$70~~ \$90 million renovation.
Lakewood is determined to give St. Peter's Basilica a run for its money.

And it is true your church encourages Christians to 'Sponsor-A-Seat' in the nearly 18,000 seat Center at a cost of \$2,500 per to pay for the rebuilding effort.



Joel & Victoria Osteen standing beside \$2,500 theater seat.
Theater seats are necessary to watch theatrical Christian church services.

However, it is also true that Jesus sent His Apostles out to preach the Gospel providing *neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in their pockets, nor scrip for their journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.* Yet Lakewood Church requires ~~\$70~~ \$90 million dollars more to do the work of Jesus, showing little of that supernatural faith which they and their leaders claim.

‘Discover the Champion in You’ – Lakewood’s Gospel of Greed

Under the new leadership of Joel Osteen, son of the late founder, John, Lakewood Church has grown in church attendance, tithes and television markets. It has also provided numerous benefits to Joel, including a ~~\$1-¼ million~~ [\\$2.2 million dollar home](#). One can only imagine the number of servants needed to keep this busy, professional, prosperous, religious household of four afloat and fed. One can also only imagine the budget needed to keep the Osteens cloaked in Neiman Marcus’ finest.

Never short on million-dollar smiles and warm, humorous anecdotes, many about 'Daddy,' Senior Pastor Joel, an Oral Roberts University dropout, exudes confidence and success. Certainly, in worldly terms, he has achieved this at the young age of 39, thanks to the multitudes of deceived tithing Lakewood churchgoers. In what is no less than a meteoric rise to prominence, Joel Osteen has invented an extremely lucrative career as a 'Christian' Motivational Speaker, having worked diligently for years behind the scenes supervising the television production of his father's services. Awarding himself the title of PASTOR, 'one who feeds his flock,' Joel reluctantly took the torch passed to him by his dying father. Today, boosted by his sudden and unexpected success, a confident Pastor Joel urges his disciples to *discover the champion in you*, teaching them weekly how they, too, can achieve their dreams and hearts' desires. God wants to reward his congregation and viewers abundantly, he tells them, if only they would use the principles the Word-Faith Teachers have discovered to tap into this divine treasure trove.

Pastor Osteen's positive brand of non-offensive Christianity, purposefully omitting the Lord's thousands of warnings, pleases the masses, earning him accolades in the American 'Christian' Word-Faith, Pentecostal/Charismatic community. However, when one examines Osteen's ministry by the searchlight of the Word of God, one quickly finds discrepancies between the teachings of Osteen and the teachings of Jesus.

Osteen Preaches a False Gospel

"What does the resurrection mean to you and me today living in the year 2000? Number one. Our sins have already been forgiven..... But listen to me carefully, friends, this is so important. None of this will do you any good unless you rise up and begin to act on it. Do you know you can still die and go to hell even though your sins have already been forgiven? What a tragedy. But if you don't accept this forgiveness and make Jesus the Lord of your life, it's not going to do you any good." [Sermon: *The Truth of the Resurrection.*]

"And some of you today don't want to come to God because you say, "Joel, you know, you're talking about some things I don't understand." Listen, this is what you need to understand. Your sins have already been forgiven if you will only accept the gift. The price has already been paid." [Sermon: *What the Resurrection means to us as believers.*]

If the price has already been paid and the sins forgiven every sinner ever born, as Osteen falsely preaches, then God is an unjust God who demands payment for sins twice: once by His innocent Son on the cross, who was punished in the stead of His people; then again from the non-accepting sinner whom He sends to Hell to undergo eternal punishment. Not even the secular judicial system requires payment from the exonerated defendant. Once declared 'not guilty,' he can never be tried or punished for the same crime again. Yet Pastor Joel preaches a God more unjust than sinful men.

If the price has already been paid and the sins forgiven every sinner ever born, as Osteen falsely preaches, then Christ's sacrifice was not sufficient, nor did He render to the Father full satisfaction and expiation for sin, because many on that Great Day of Judgment will, to no avail, cry, 'But, Lord, Lord,' as they are cast into the Lake of Fire, (Matt. 7:21-23).

If the price has already been paid and the sins forgiven every sinner ever born, as Osteen falsely preaches, then Christ's last words, *It is finished*, is a lie, for He had finishing nothing without the cooperation of the sinner in receiving His atoning sacrifice. Thus, in Osteen's reality, Christ's atonement is incomplete, unfinished, without man's assent. Salvation provided by Christ is null and void without man's decision for Christ.

In Osteen's unconscionable Gospel, every human being has already been forgiven his sins, yet many are going to Hell. This is no Good News. What, pray tell, is 'good' about the Gospel which states that God loves you, has forgiven you all your sins, yet you may still go to Hell? This is the Gospel of the devil.

Osteen Preaches a False Christ

In preaching a false Gospel, Osteen, of necessity, preaches a false Christ. The Christ he worships is under bondage to the will of man, ever so careful not to overstep the bounds of man's alleged free will decision either for Him or against

Him. Christ's will is subservient to man's will. Thus, in Osteen's reality, man is the greater God, for the Lord is always greater than the servant, Matt. 10:24.

Osteen's Christ takes extreme pleasure in blessing Christians with material blessings, those things beloved, esteemed and sought by the world. In Joel's theology, a Christian may love the world and the things therein, while the love of the Father still remains in him. Osteen's Christ allows Christians to worship both God and mammon to no eternal danger of their souls.

Osteen's Christ saves none outright, though He has paid the price for all, though He has forgiven all. His Christ only saves those who agree to being saved. His Christ willingly shares the glory of salvation with man who, by his wise and holy free will decision, makes Christ's sacrifice successful. His Christ, though called 'Savior,' fails to save most of the world, to His shame and humiliation.

"And if people can ever really see how good our God is, they'll come running to Him." [Sermon: The Great Commission]

Though Christ never sinned, doing only good, and telling only truth, He was beaten, mocked, tortured and crucified. This is how religious men, who read and studied the Scriptures, received Him. Though Christ was a Rock of Offense and a Stone of Stumbling, Pastor Osteen would have unregenerate sinners welcome his false Christ with open arms of love. And why wouldn't they? Pastor Joel preaches a 'kinder, gentler, worldlier' Christ. One who does not offend. One who asks nothing of them. One who does not require man to lose his life to gain it. One who does not judge. One who promises to abundantly bless men with the riches beloved of the world. One who simply cheers Christians on to victory over the world, the flesh and devil, for *We Are the Champions*. One who has no cross for men to carry. One whose will is frustrated by man at every turn. One who has forgiven the world, yet cannot save the world, try as He may. One whose primary attribute is love, yet His love fails more often than not, sending multitudes to the eternal pains of Hell.

Osteen Preaches a False Christianity

"I remember that story that Brother Hagin told. Kenneth Hagin, you all know him. He saw Jesus several times in his lifetime. He's still alive. But he told about the first time that he saw Jesus. He fell down. He was overwhelmed with emotion. And he fell down on his face. You can imagine. Just lying flat on the ground. And he said, "I put my hands on Jesus' feet and then I put my forehead on my hands." And I began to cry out, "I'm not worthy, Jesus. I'm not worthy, Jesus. I'm not worthy to be in Your presence. I'm not worthy to look on Your face." And Jesus spoke to him in a sharp military command. He said, "Son, stand up." And Brother Hagin stood up. He thought he was in trouble, you know. He stood up. And Jesus spoke to him sternly. He said, "Son, you are worthy. You are worthy because I shed My blood to make you worthy." See, friends, it's nothing we've done, but God has made us worthy." [Sermon: *No Condemnation*]

Though Kenneth Hagin is an infamous false prophet of the Word-Faith heresy movement, known and exposed worldwide as such, Joel Osteen calls him, 'brother,' revealing Osteen's real spiritual kinship. Though Mr. Hagin wouldn't know the true Jesus if his life depended upon it (which it does), Pastor Osteen naïvely believes every lying wonder told him by this false prophet, a prodigious religious actor. His public endorsement of Hagin is that which Lakewood needs, if they, too, will behave as this present writer has witnessed Hagin behave, (via videotape), howling, screeching, cackling, and wailing like a banshee on assignment from Satan. Accompanying Hagin at this particular demonic inculcation was that All-American Christian couple, Ken & Gloria Copeland.

Though he claims no inherent worthiness in man, as noted in the above quote, Pastor Osteen speaks out of both sides of his mouth. Due to his errant, unbiblical view of man, Osteen believes there is worthiness in sinful men, Christ foreseeing some would receive His free gift of salvation, thereby choosing, electing and predestinating them for the Kingdom of God. But Scripture declares the opposite: *your righteousness* (and worthiness), says the Lord, *are as filthy rags*, Isaiah 64:6. *There is none righteous, no not one; There is none that understand, there is none that seeketh after (the true) God...There is none that doeth good, no not one*, Romans 3:10-18. Deceived of Lakewood, God has not foreseen one sinner's worthy, righteous choice of Christ. He has made His sheep acceptable in Christ, 1 Peter 2:5; Eph. 1:6, by sovereignly and efficaciously giving them the gifts of saving grace, including repentance and the very faith to

believe on Christ, imputing Christ's righteousness to their account. Our righteousness is Christ alone, Him alone being worthy, even after we have been adopted into the family of God: Jeremiah 23:6; 2 Cor. 5:21; Rev. 5:12. John the Baptist, though filled with the Holy Spirit from the womb, reflected a true humble Christian spirit by declaring the very shoes of Christ he *was not worthy to bear*, Matt. 3:11.

"God is a good God. He wants to bless us. He wants to give us the desires of our heart. But if we don't watch it, it's through our own doubt and unbelief that we're reaching up there and we're cutting back the flow of God's blessings and His supernatural power in our lives." [Sermon: *Don't Limit God*]

This is another prime example of Osteen's preaching that sinful man has dominion and superiority over God. The Lord so desperately wants to give us our hearts desires, but we frustrate His will of blessing for our lives, teaches Pastor Joel. Yet Scriptures declare a God whose will cannot fail to achieve its purposes:

All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:35)

"No, this new generation, this new army, it's you and it's me. It's all of us. We have such an unshakable confidence in God. We understand our rights and our privileges. We understand our God-given authority in the name of Jesus. We understand that Satan is already defeated 2,000 years ago. We understand that he's under our feet. We understand that there's nothing impossible to us if we only believe. And I believe this new generation, they dare the enemy to come around. They get excited if he comes around because they enjoy slapping him upside the head a couple of times. (Applause)" [Sermon: *God's Best Path for our Lives.*]

As Pastor Osteen and this new generation of Word-Faith heretics, drunken with delusions of grandeur, revel in their 'power' over Satan, Satan and his minions celebrate their victory over Osteen and Lakewood Church as they sow, unhindered, a false Gospel, a false Christ, and a false Christianity via satellite worldwide.

Osteen Mocks the Doctrine of Eternal Damnation

“Listen; don’t dangle people over the fires of hell. Lisa and I always kid about you know we’re going to dangle them over the fires of hell. Listen, that doesn’t draw people to God. They know what kind of life they live. They know how bad they’ve lived. What you’ve got to do is talk about the goodness of God. Listen, it’s the goodness of God that brings people to repentance. It’s the goodness of God. One thing I always appreciated about my dad is that he instilled into us a good vision of who God was. We learned about a good God.” [Sermon: *What the Resurrection means to us as believers*]

Though Jesus Christ spoke on Hell more than any Apostle, Pastor Joel would dismiss it as offensive and a detriment to man’s salvation. Joel knows better than Christ as to what sinful, evil men need to hear. Yes, God is good to some, sovereignly giving them the gifts of repentance unto life, forgiveness of sins, saving faith, belief in the truth, good works and perseverance. But to the false prophets, false teachers, the reprobate and liars, He promises to give His holy and just wrath, fury and condemnation.

Osteen Introduces a New Sacrament Guaranteed to Give Grace:

The Sinner’s Prayer

“If you’ll bow your heads in prayer, let me just say something to those of you who are viewing by television. Maybe some of you have never asked Jesus into your heart. You know it’s not a difficult thing to do. You just have to pray a prayer and mean it from the bottom of your heart. Be sincere. Just say, Jesus, come in to my heart and save me. Be my Lord; be my Savior. Jesus, I repent of my sins and I turn my life over to You. You are now my Lord and my Savior and I’ll serve You all the days of my life.” [Sermon: *Don’t Limit God*]

Although this prayer of guaranteed salvation is nowhere to found in the infallible Word of God, Pastor Joel has discovered what may well be more popular in false Christianity than *The Prayer of Jabez*. Though Scripture declares man’s heart *deceitful above all things and desperately wicked*, Jeremiah 17:9, Pastor Joel would have us change that which is wicked, which loathes holiness, into a heart which is pure, loving holiness, by simply reciting a magical incantation for a few short seconds. That ‘confession’ commands God to send His saving grace, preaches Pastor Joel. Yet the many professing Christians whom Christ casts into the Lake of Fire, Matt. 7:23, did just that. They confessed the Sinner’s Prayer, yet remained dead in their sins and trespasses.

Have the Lakewood Faithful No Shame?

Though the Lakewood churchgoers and American television viewers live in the most prosperous country on earth, free of persecution and tyranny, enjoying privileges and conveniences unknown to centuries of Christian people worldwide, even those living today, still they want more. *A Holy Ghost Prayer Pity Party* to enlarge their borders is always a righteous cause, as they and their pastor stand by their steadfast, unswerving faith, arms held high, confessing it their sovereign birthright, according to God's many promises, that they enjoy an even richer, less burdensome, tribulation-free, sickness-free, Christian life. And may the Lord have special mercy on those who have missed a Lexus payment or two.

To believe this selfish, self-serving fiction the Lakewood Laodiceans must willfully ignore innumerable Scriptures which oppose such teaching, as well as close their eyes and ears to the factual history of the Christian Church.

Christ Warns Bigger is not Better

Christ tells a parable concerning small beginnings in Matt. 13:31-32. These parables are known as *Kingdom Parables* because their subject is the professing Christian Church on earth. A mustard seed was sown which, though insignificant as far as seeds are concerned, grew to be the greatest herb. It then did something unnatural. The herb became a tree, so large that the birds of the air made the branches of the tree their home. Christ defined *the birds of the air* previously in verse 19 as being those of the wicked one, i.e., Satan. Thus, the parable of the mustard seed is a warning to Christians that the small, humble beginnings of the true Gospel and true Christ will be perverted into that which it is not, thereby attracting evil spirits, multitudes of evildoers and false prophets who preach a false Christ and false Gospel.

Furthermore, Christ purposely uses the pronoun 'few' when speaking of those who find the narrow gate which leads to life. And should we neglect the hard truth that *many are called, but few chosen*?

Osteen's Metaphor of a Check Unbiblical

"We must understand that salvation is a completely and totally free gift. See, if you don't do that, then what you're trying to do is pay back your salvation with your good works. And God doesn't want it to be that way. Because the problem is that one day you're not going to be able to do as many good works you think you should. And then all of a sudden you're going to feel condemned. See, that's the way the enemy works. You're trying to pay back your salvation. We don't have to pay this back. It's a free gift.

"You see, there's a big difference between something you've earned and something that's free. Suppose your boss came to pay you this week and he gave you your paycheck. You probably did not have an overwhelming sense of gratitude. You probably didn't have an overwhelming sense of gratitude because, you know why? You worked for that money. You earned it. The company owed you. You probably took it and you might have said, thank you.

"But friends, listen, imagine this. If your boss came to you next week and he called you by name. He said, John, here's your paycheck. He said, but John, even though you've been late every day this week, even though your attitude is very poor, even though your productivity is way down. Because I genuinely love you and appreciate you, I'm enclosing a \$10,000 bonus in this week's pay period. Do you know what would happen after you fainted? (Laughter) Listen, you'd probably roll over and kiss his feet. Do you know why? It was a free gift. You didn't deserve it. You didn't earn it. You didn't have to work for it. And listen to this, you don't even have to pay it back. It's the gift of God.

"See, we've got to understand the tremendous thing that God did for us in salvation. Really you know, we were all on our way to hell. You talk about a gift. Man, we should be grateful." [Sermon: *No Condemnation*]

As pleasing as Pastor Osteen's metaphor may seem to the natural mind, Scripture tells us, in innumerable ways and verses, that in the mind and heart of the unregenerate sinner, Christ is no \$10,000 bonus. In fact, He has no value whatever.

Isaiah 53 describes Christ's reception by His fellow Jews hundreds of years before He was born:

"He hath no form or comeliness, and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men.....he was despised and we esteemed him not."

So does Matthew 21:33-40:

"But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him."

To the natural man, the unregenerate sinner, Christ is worthless. Recently, this present writer actually received a check - a gift - for less than one dollar. This writer threw it away, disgusted and offended. In order for Osteen's metaphor to remain consistent with God's Word, we would have to add the awful truth that the sinner will always despise Christ, our 'Check,' as being of no value, worthless, offensive and foolish. The natural man, not being the recipient of saving grace, will rip up the check, treading it under his feet every time.

Pastor Osteen presents his congregation and viewing public with a counterfeit 'check,' a counterfeit Christ, which the ignorant and deceived gladly embrace without *seeing if those things be so*.

The Lord Commands His People Leave False Christianity

Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.(Rev. 18:4-5)

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial....Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will

receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. (2 Cor. 6:14-18)

Though Pastor Joel frequently preaches God does not remember our sins of the past, he neglects to inform you, his congregation, that there are those whose sins He does not forget. They include Mystery Babylon, the Mother of Harlots, and her innumerable harlot daughters. All share the common errors of preaching and teaching a false Gospel, a false Christ and a false Christianity.

Had God Almighty willed, Christ could easily have been born in the television age. Imagine, handheld cameras could have captured Christ's Sermons on the Mount, His Crucifixion and Resurrection in High Definition. These holy images could have then been preserved for all posterity to view again and again. The huge widescreen monitors placed above Pastor Osteen's stage would have been an incredible vehicle to use to convince sinners of the truth of Christ. Or would they?

In His unsearchable wisdom, the Lord has ordained that man be drawn to Christ, not by the building of multi-million dollar edifices, not by the performances of 'Christian' superstars, not by the personality, charisma and charm of the preacher, not by his folksy anecdotes and humor, not by his hair gel and Neiman Marcus suits, but by the Word of God, unedited, uncensored, uncompromised, spoken in Spirit and truth.

This writer quotes below Nicholas Ridley, excommunicated Bishop of London; words he wrote days before his burning martyrdom for Christ's sake in 16th century England; words which refute the present-day Gospel of Greed overspreading modern-day professing evangelical Christianity; words which manifest who the true champions are:

*"It is not as the wicked thinketh, that poverty, adversity, sickness, tribulation, yea painful death of the godly, be tokens that God doth not love them; but even clean the contrary, as all the whole course of Scripture doth evidently declare: for then He would never have suffered His most dearly beloved, the patriarchs, to have had such troubles, nor His prophets, apostles, martyrs and chief **champions** and*

maintainers of His truth and Gospel, so cruelly of the wicked to have been murdered and slain." [John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments*, volume 7, p. 582.]

It is the sincere prayer of this present writer that Pastor Joel and you, his deceived congregation, would repent of your heresies and your sin of unbelief, that you would lose your selfish lives, pick up your cross and follow the true Christ, whose sufferings we, as Christians, are destined to suffer for his sake:

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake. (Phil. 1:29)

The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs of Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Romans 8:16-18)

In Christian love of the whole counsel of God,

Rand Winburn

Director

Protestant Reformation Publications

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