

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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What Evil Looks Like

(Jerry Fite)

A Rolling Stone Magazine’s cover caused a recent uproar when it presented the picture of the surviving Boston bombing perpetrator. The most common complaint was that “*they glorified him.*” Dzhokhar Tsarvaev looked like a normal teenager of our time. A young, non-menacing face, flocked with curly hair is a picture of normalcy.

Did they really glorify him? He was not made up with red paint as the disturbed killer in Colorado appeared looking like the “Joker”. Nor did he appear wild eyed and crazy as Charles Manson, the long time incarcerated killer, has often been portrayed. We can accept great acts of evil if they come from those who look abnormal or insane. But to present a picture of one who has done such evil, making him look like us, is not acceptable to many.

We need to be reminded of Paul’s inspired statement concerning how the Devil appears: “*and no marvel, for even Satan*

fashioneth himself into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). Paul is stressing that the Corinthians should not marvel when false apostles and deceitful workers appear before them as apostles of Christ. Since Satan in all his darkness can appear as an angel of light, “*it is no great thing therefore if his ministers also fashion themselves as ministers of righteousness...*” (2 Corinthians 11:15).

Jesus warns us to not look at appearance, but the fruits of those who present themselves as teachers from God. They appear in “*sheep’s clothing*”, but are in reality “*ravening wolves*” (Matthew 7:15). These teachers often come appearing humble and professing love, but the fruits of financial and spiritual ruin among the unsuspecting remind us that the self-proclaiming ministers of righteousness are sometimes self-serving predators.

There are some that look at “*godliness*” as not a spiritual goal (1 Timothy 4:7), but a stepping stone to their own financial gain (1 Timothy 6:5). Godliness

makes a good appearance, but can be a façade for evil to overthrow households as the deceitful workers line their own pockets (Titus 1:11).

Peter warned of false teachers enticing people to continue serving the flesh as they appear with the message of “*liberty*” (2 Peter 2:19). After all, did not Jesus come offering us freedom from sin? Looks good, but it is spiritually disastrous. As Peter reminds us, they “*become bond-servants of corruption, for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he also brought unto bondage*” (2 Peter 2:19).

Evil can come looking godly, offering liberty, standing before you as your spiritual protector. We should not marvel when evil appears attractive or normal. This is how Satan and his ministers work. Combat this fact with knowledge of God’s word, and look at the fruits of a teacher, not his “*sheep clothing*” appearance. As Jesus says in another context: “*Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment*” (Jn. 7:24).