

A Different Jesus

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Jesus – if we were to accept the multitudes of various understandings and depictions given of Him by all the factions and sects claiming to belong to Him - would seem to be a contradiction in terms, a schizophrenic with more personalities than Medusa had snakes on her head. Let us examine some of these various renditions and see how they differ from the Jesus of the Bible:

- Gentle Jesus, meek and mild. Some, apparently from their overindulgence in Sunday school and bedtime stories about Jesus, are so addicted to this myth about Jesus that they will even teach that Jesus' whip (when He "cleansed the temple" by roughly driving the merchandisers and animals out of the temple and forcefully overturning the moneychangers' tables – Jn. 2:15), didn't actually touch anyone. To say that it did (thus saying that Jesus actually did violence to someone that day) is, according to these, to add to the meaning of Scripture. Unfortunately, since the Scriptures are silent on this matter, to say that He *did not* actually hit someone with His braided scourge is *also* to add to the meaning of Scripture!
- Jesus the fiery prophet. Some see Jesus in this way, pronouncing woe upon almost everyone. This is the "Jesus" of those "churches" where the "pastor" feels that he must yell at you to get his point across. Exhortation (something which is to be done by "one another" and not by the "pastor" – Heb. 3:13, etc.) and especially "fiery exhortation" (something which is not to be the usual diet of the sheep as it can cause severe spiritual heartburn, inner flatulence and indigestion!) is only one aspect of the whole counsel of God and is completely intolerable when the listeners know that the man yelling at them from up front has a lifestyle worse than their own!
- Forgives all things, overlooks all things. This "Jesus" doesn't really care what all you do with your six days so long as you attend "church," pay your dues and don't get into any trouble that would embarrass the "pastor" or the "church" one attends. So long as you don't do anything really bad, it's okay. (See 1 Cor. 5:9-11, however) It's all about "grace," brother, so don't tell me about sin or law! This "grace" and tolerance club forgets that knowledge of the law is how we know what sin is. (Rom. 3:20, etc.) Any teaching or practice of "grace" that doesn't enable its practitioners to fulfill the laws and ways of God and thus *overcome* the sinful ways of the flesh has missed something rather essential to the real gospel.
- Forgives nothing but enacts even more demanding laws. This "Christian" legalists club has more rules than you can shake a stick at. Women must be silent always, must wear long hair and long skirts and wear no make-up ever, wives must submit to their husbands (but husbands need submit to no one except the "pastor" except where they can pay enough to be left alone) and divorce would seem to be the unpardonable sin, except perhaps when committed by a beloved "pastor."

- Honors clergy and divisions. Even though Jesus attacked the Pharisees and Sadducees for their destructive clergy class and high-minded separation from the “sinners,” the new “Christian Jesus” calls and gifts men so they can be exalted clergy lording over their brothers. This “Jesus” provides millions of dollars in “blessings” and “tithes” and “offerings” to build abominable sects and divisions (denominations – Gal. 5:20) that leave the orphans and widows and the poorest of Christ’s brothers alone in their sufferings and makes a wonderfully comfortable place to be just as worldly as any other rotary or social club. (see Jas. 1:27)

- Health, wealth and prosperity. This “gospel” is put forth by a “Jesus” who wants us all to always be healthy, wealthy and prosperous in every venture to which we put our hands. Anyone experiencing a Jacob to Israel transition (that leaves one limping the rest of one’s days), a Job’s trial or simply just suffering according to the will of God (see 1 Pet. 4:19) must be disobedient, rebellious and under God’s judgment. “Jesus” and “God” are reduced to “the formula god” whereby once one knows what prayers to pray and what promises to “claim,” why one can virtually twist God’s arm and make Him do whatever we want Him to.

- Suffering and soberness. This club of Stoicists seems to have missed the fruit of the Spirit called joy (Gal. 5:22) and insist that all of one’s life be lived in sober contemplation of matters too banal to be believed. Frivolity and happiness are seen as signs of worldliness and apostasy.

- King James only. Since “Jesus” spoke only the King’s English, by God, so should we. Anyone who owns or reads any other translation than the “divinely inspired” 1611 model is demon-possessed and should be burnt at the stake. This blindness is more prevalent than one would imagine possible.

- Yeshua, Yashua, Joshua or Yehoushua. This group insists that we *must* return to the Hebrew pronunciation of the name of Jesus (and usually Yahweh for God as well) or we’re not talking to or about the right Man or God. Some even say that the word “Jesus” is a Greek and Roman reference to pigs. Unfortunately these Messianic Hebrew “scholars” can’t come into unity about which is *the* appropriate pronunciation and their return to the synagogue has also drawn a number of Jews and Gentiles to return to the law and depart from grace. (see Gal. 5:4, etc.) God long ago made it clear that His word was even more important than His name. (Psa. 138:2)

- Intellectuals only. While this club rarely excludes the ignorant and Biblically illiterate (after all, they do need passive victims to be their audience), only the brilliant orators and rhetoric-ticians, schooled in homiletics, hermeneutics and homey alliteration, get groomed for upward mobility on the “church’s” corporate ladder. These will even boast of their “line upon line, precept upon precept” teaching methods but somehow have failed to notice that this method is a *judgment* from God. (see Isa. 28:13)

- Hyper-charismatic laughter and joy. These “revivalists” specialize in “spiritual gifts”

that are outlandish, wild and uncontrolled. Anyone who might suggest that these manifestations might be of some spirit other than God is quickly ridiculed and escorted to the door.

- Rituals, pomp and ceremony. The sects who like these things often insist, at least among their own cohorts, that those who don't practice them, especially those who don't practice them under approved priests and bishops or who don't practice them *exactly* like they've been practiced for centuries, are bound for hell – unless, of course, a certain amount of money is paid to the right people and certain acts of contrition and penance are performed. Then maybe God might be merciful and give the heretics only a few centuries or millennia in hell.

The amazing thing is that there truly *are* genuine followers of Christ within each of these aberrations! That is, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13) provided that they actually obey the One they have called upon (see Heb. 5:9) and do not disobey the truth and reject God's righteousness. (Rom. 2:8-9, 2 Ths. 2:12, etc.) That is, these, even as they are spiritually introduced to or seek to pursue and follow Christ in the context of one of these lopsided presentations of His nature, these must go “outside the camp” to meet Christ. (Heb. 13:13)

Those who reject Jesus so as to cling to their camp's distortions about Christ will have to answer to Christ on the day when He judges all men for their actions, attitudes and idle words. (Rom. 14:10, 2 Cor. 5:10, Mt. 12:36) Where their deeds, beliefs and words are simply “wood, hay or stubble,” these may yet remain with Christ for eternity. (1 Cor. 3:12-15) But where these deeds, beliefs and words have devolved into mere lawlessness (a rejection of truth and righteousness so as to embrace and follow whatever is right in one's own eyes) and these have brought about a defilement of God's temple (His true people), these lawless ones will be dismissed by Christ (Mt. 7:23) and destroyed by God. (1 Cor. 3:16-17)

There is only one evidence of our possessing life in Christ. Paul wrote, “If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.” (Rom. 8:9) The evidence that we do actually have the Spirit of Christ is the regular manifestation of what Paul calls the fruit of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.” (Gal. 5:22-23) Unless these things are routinely produced by the presence of the Spirit of Christ within us, we simply are not His and no amount of religious pretense and subterfuge will make up for this lack.

Paul wrote,

“But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough.” (2 Cor. 11:3-4)

That so many “Jesuses” would be presented by those who claim to be His is no coincidence or accident. It is the direct result of Satan's long-range, millennia-spanning strategies to keep the people of Christ from returning to their first love of simply walking hand in

hand with their Bridegroom and Husband (Rev. 2:4-5) and progressing on to overcome all the filthiness of this world so as to be a spotless and blameless bride ready for His return. (2 Pet. 3:14, Eph. 5:27)

We must find the real Jesus as He is – this is a major aspect of the love of the truth which we must possess if we are to be passed by when God delivers over to strong delusion those who prefer some unrighteousness. (2 Ths. 2:11-12) It is not enough to have a “Jesus” of our own imagination or preferences, a “God” created according to our own manufacture who enables us to do and be whatever is right in our own eyes. We must find and know and follow and obey the one and only true King of kings and Lord of Lords. To do anything else is to obey the usurper who is His enemy and, if this is what we have done with our lives, we will one day share in the same rewards of the devil and his angels. (Mt. 25:41, Rev. 20:15)

There is only one Jesus – any different “Jesus” is only a counterfeit and a lie, a pretender to the throne that is reserved only and always for the Lamb who was slain before the foundations of the world. (Rev. 5:6) Anyone whose life serves the interests and agendas of these usurpers and pretenders (fronts for the work of the devil and the demonic) does so at their own risk.

Let he who has ears hear.

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