

Comparative Religions

Session 2: An Accurate Perception

“Getting the gospel right necessarily means getting Jesus right; the efficacy of Christ's work hinges on His identity. If I were a bettin' man, I'd say this is where the enemy would seek to aim most of His cannons. Evidently this is exactly what has happened: the Jesus of Scripture has been reduced to an unattainable enigma. For most people, it seems the issue is not that you get Him right, but that you get Him at all. Everyone's idea is valid. Even the claim that he was a Kung Fu warrior. That's right—I'm not joking.”

Anonymous

The late comedian George Carlin was known for his mockery of Christ and Christianity. Few people are as bold as he was in his willingness to publicly blaspheme the King of Kings. While true followers of the Lord Jesus will find examples of Christ debasement—like George Carlin's “Buddy Christ” (*Dogma*, 1999)—to be a perversion of the true Jesus, many that profess to be Christ followers have unwittingly fallen for notions of Christ that reflect more the rebellious spirit of the age than the glorious biblical portrait of the Savior. The Jesus of fallen man makes no demands; instead, He is there to meet the demands of a sin-directed heart. This Jesus is nearly impossible to follow with any consistency, because His will matches the shifting ideals of society instead of the uncompromising truth found in God's Word.

But how does a reduction of Christ Jesus affect the message? Consider the “Jesus” the men in the following description must believe in in order to justify their evangelistic approach.

Ray Comfort, founder and president of Living Waters (www.livingwaters.com) was once approached by some pastors who didn't like what he was doing. Contrary to Ray's approach of using the law of God to appeal the sinner's conscience and so drive them to seek Christ, the pastors shared with Ray how they told people Jesus wants to be their friend, how he has a mansion for them in heaven, and wants to save them from “the wages of their humanity” (purposeful avoidance of offensive words like sin).

With this in mind, and what was shared in the lesson today, proceed to the questions below.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it possible for someone to be saved by putting their trust in an unbiblical Jesus? Doesn't the savior of a person's faith meet the proportion of their necessity? In your sharing of the gospel and the Bible's description of man's condition to others, would the only rational recourse for them be to flee for refuge at the glorious Christ of the Bible? If not, what needs to be adjusted in your message?

//A Challenge// Ask a group member to share the gospel as they understand it. Then, go over the following:

- I. Did their presentation exalt the Lord and make it impossible for the hearer to miss Christ's supremacy over all? At the same time, did their presentation make it seem like something had to be done in order to be right with God.
- II. Did they go through the gospel in an orderly fashion so concepts like sin, judgment, righteousness, and salvation could be adequately understood?

If you are already comfortable in sharing your faith, please boldly go for it so the others may learn.

2. People need help seeing the implications of the simple gospel message. Unfortunately, most people in our sphere of influence know enough of the gospel to mix it with the erroneous philosophies and religions of man, and so get it wrong. How would you help someone who has heard the biblical gospel but responds to it in an unbiblical way? Is there some deconstruction that needs to be done?