

Beware of These False Identities Our Culture Tries to Put on Jesus

“Who are you?” they asked in a less than gracious tone.

Jesus had been in the temple area since early morning, teaching a large gathering of people who have come to hear His words.

A group of religious leaders brought an adulterous woman into the middle of the crowd, right before him and said, “The Law of Moses says stone her. What do you say?”

They were not seeking counsel but an opportunity to impugn His character and His teaching.

Jesus turned the tables on his accusers: “You, who are without sin, cast the first stone.”

Indignant and offended by His tone, convicted in their own hearts, the men who had brought the woman slithered away one by one.

The woman remained before Him, no doubt humiliated, maybe very angry at the men and at the crowd around her.

Jesus looked at her with eyes of love, mercy and grace. “Where are those who accuse you? Is someone condemning you?” Jesus asked. “No one,” she answered. “Neither do I condemn you,” He answered, “Go, and sin no more.”

Jesus continued teaching the crowd that had been with Him all morning.

Among them were some Pharisees who had watched this whole scene with great interest. They began to question the Lord. “Where

is your father? Who are you?"

Ah, there you have the great question that Lucifer has used for millennia to gain an entrance and establish a foothold in a person's life.

He used that strategy on Jesus when was in the wilderness 40 days fasting and praying.

The Lord was preparing Himself spiritually for the next three years of public ministry.

Satan came on the last day seeking opportunity to stop the advance of God's kingdom. "If you are the Son of God," he challenged the one born in Bethlehem's stable.

When Jesus parried His attacker with "It is written ..."

The devil resumed the offense with, "If you are the Son of God ..."

Jesus again parried His attacker with, "It is also written ..."

Satan made a countermove with a more subtle attack on Jesus' true identity, "All these things I will give You if You fall down and worship me."

The Son of Man knew His true identity.

He not only parried the assailant's move, He defeated him: "Away with you Satan, for it is written..."

This Luciferian strategy was the challenge throughout His years of ministry.

It was the very point that sent Him to the cross of Calvary. The night Jesus was arrested and brought before the High Priest, many accusations were thrown against Him.

None of them stuck.

In frustration and anger, the high priest declared, "I adjure You by the living God, tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. 26:63). That is the stumbling block of all ages.

The prophet Isaiah wrote, "He shall become a sanctuary, but a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, and a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem" (Is. 8:14).

The apostle Paul quoted that passage from Isaiah when he wrote to the church in Rome, "For they stumbled over the stumbling stone. As it is written: 'Look! I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes in Him will not be ashamed'" (Rom. 9:32b-33).

The apostle Peter also quoted two passages from Isaiah, clearly connecting the dots. "For also it is contained in the Scripture, 'Look! I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious, and he who believes in Him shall never be put to shame.' Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious. But to those who are disobedient, 'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'" (1 Pet. 2:6-8).

What is it that makes Jesus Christ such a lightning rod?

It is not that He is a founder of a religion. Thousands down through the centuries have founded new religious groups without this level of animosity.

It is not that He was a prophet. Nostradamus, Edgar Cayce, Baba Vanga and Jeane Dixon are a few the world has acknowledged, continuing to publish their words.

The Christian church has recognized men and women who have been anointed by the Holy Spirit to speak prophetically: Martin Luther, John Wesley, Smith Wigglesworth and David Wilkerson, just to name a few.

It is profoundly interesting to observe in the public arena that you can speak about Muhammad and Buddha; display the Hindu goddess on the Empire State Building; build a statue of Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and learning, on Embassy Row to bless our nation's capital; and Imams can pray in the name of Allah.

However, it is not permitted to wear images or symbols of Jesus Christ on clothing at public schools.

Teachers are not permitted to share the teachings of Jesus Christ, although it is common for them to share teachings of Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Why is Jesus Christ singled out as unacceptable?

There is one reason.

Jesus Christ declared Himself to be the Son of God! "He is the image of the invisible God and the firstborn of every creature ... All things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together ... For it pleased the Father that in Him all fullness should dwell" (Col. 1:15-19).

Jesus Christ is not a reasonable facsimile of Almighty God.

He is Almighty God "for in Him lives all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And you are complete in Him, who is the head of all authority and power" (Col. 2:9-10).

He is called the Word of God.

He pre-existed His virgin birth.

Indeed, He pre-existed all of creation.

He existed before all things, and by Him all things are held together.

All of creation came into being by His mighty hand and the word of His power: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were created through Him, and without Him nothing was created that was created" (John 1:1-2).

He makes it very clear: the redemption of mankind, the forgiveness of sin and eternal life is possible only through Him.

That exclusivity drives the sinful human heart crazy.

Mankind desperately wants to believe he can save himself, that he is basically good and has the capability of making himself good.

Polytheism and political correctness demands there be many roads to God, and tolerance makes no room for an exclusive Savior.

None of that changes the truth of the Holy Scripture and the true identity of Jesus Christ.

He alone is "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29b).

There is no other sacrifice for the sins of mankind that can transform the human heart and deliver a person from the powers of darkness and transfer them into the kingdom of God.

There is no other human being who took upon Himself the sins and the guilt of the human race and was crucified, buried in a grave and raised from the dead the third day.

There is no other man that ascended back to heaven, sat down at the right hand of God and ever lives to make intercession for the human race.

Jesus Christ alone carries that identity.

There is no other mediator between God and man.

There is no other avenue to God because no one can come to the Father except by Jesus Christ.

There is no other name given to mankind through which one can be saved.

He is exclusively the Savior.

He is exclusively the Promised One, the Alpha and the Omega.

He is exclusively the Son of God.

Dr. F. Dean Hackett *has served in full-time Christian ministry since October 1971. He has ministered throughout the United States, Canada and Europe, serving as pastor, conference speaker and mentor. He has planted four churches, assisted in planting 15 others and currently serves as lead pastor of Living Faith Church in Hermiston, Oregon. Dr. Hackett founded Spirit Life Ministries International in 2001 to facilitate ministries in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina and to open a training center for workers in those nations. You can find him at F. Dean Hackett – Foundational, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest.*