

# Don't Fall for This All-Too-Common Deception on Easter Sunday

What a joyous week this is as all of Christendom rejoices in the sacrificial death and resurrection of the Son of God, the Messiah, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!

But did you know that there is “another Jesus” that the Scriptures warns us about? In fact, the Bible teaches that many of those who think they are Christians will be following *the wrong Jesus* this Easter Sunday—a very serious error because the “other Jesus” cannot save them from their sins.

The “other Jesus” is a cultural concoction of form, ceremony, idolatry, sin and deception. He is whitewashed on the outside, but inside, he is filled with dead men's bones (Matt. 23:27-28).

In 2 Corinthians 11:3-4, the Holy Spirit warned that people would be teaching “another Jesus” (“Jesus” means “Savior”).

*But I fear that somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve through his trickery, so your minds might be led astray from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he who comes preaches another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if you receive another spirit, which you have not received, or another gospel, which you have not accepted, you might submit to it readily enough (2 Cor. 11:3-4).*

## The Nature of Deceivers

In 2 Corinthians 11:13-15, the Holy Spirit warns of men posing as “angels of light” who come to deceive:

*For such are false apostles and deceitful workers, disguising*

*themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also disguise themselves as ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works.*

Such hirelings fill the pulpits of an astonishing number of churches, preaching immorality, selfishness, unbelief, greed and even worse. They are tares (weeds that look like wheat) among genuine wheat (Matt. 13:24-30).

Not only do many follow a different Jesus, still others mislead many by proclaiming that *they* are the Christ—meaning “the anointed one”. In the “Olivet Discourse,” Jesus warned of “false Christs” who would deceive many:

*“Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. ... Then many will fall away ... And many false prophets will arise and will deceive many” (Matt. 24:4-5, 10-11).*

And in 1 Timothy 4:1, it says, “Now the Spirit clearly says that in the last times some will depart from the faith and pay attention to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.”

### **The Indispensable Element of True Doctrine**

People today like to criticize the need for true or sound doctrine (1 Tim. 1:8-11; 2 Tim. 4:3; Titus 1:9; 2:1). Many don’t even study it, even though Jesus’ last command to His disciples was to teach the people to obey all that He commanded (Matt. 28:18-20).

First Timothy 6:3-4 (ESV) says, “If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing.”

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (MEV), we read, “For the time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine, but they will gather to themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires, having itching ears, and they will turn their ears away from the truth and turn to myths.”

And in 2 Peter 2:1-3:

*But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. And in their greed they will exploit you with deceptive words. Their judgment, made long ago, does not linger, and their destruction does not slumber.*

Hmmm, “stories that they’ve made up” –sounds like much of what you see on the History and other channels. They invent ridiculously inaccurate and blasphemous versions of Jesus and His story, fiction that is usually aired around Easter so as to sow doubt into the minds of viewers about Jesus’ divinity, His atoning death on the cross and the need to bow the knee to Him as Lord & Savior.

So—which Jesus will you be following this Holy Week? It is vitally important that the Jesus you worship is the one true Jesus and not one of the concoctions of men and fallen angels.

### **Worship the Real Jesus**

In John 4:23b-24, Jesus said, “‘True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father seeks such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and truth.’”

If you were to walk up to my friend Karl and call him David, no matter how much you wanted him to be David, it simply

wouldn't be true. There is only one of my friends named Karl, and he is defined by his own existence, being, history, DNA and personality. He cannot be made David by calling him David. Neither can Jesus. If someone has redefined Him, then it is not really Him that they speak of or worship.

The Scriptures reveal a Jesus who is the Creator of the universe (Col. 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:10; Revelation 4:11, 10:6); who is God (Exodus 3:14-15; John 1:1, 14; 8:57-59, 10:33; Col. 2:9; Heb. 1:3,8); and the one and only Savior (Acts 4:12). He is the one who hung on that cross 2,000 years ago and rose from the dead to prove that He is God.

He was endowed with a brilliant understanding of the Scriptures from a very early age, calling the temple in Jerusalem His Father's house (Luke 2:46-49). He told the religious leaders of His day, "Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins."

In other words, knowing Him correctly, following Him faithfully and worshipping Him truly are critical to being saved. To worship and follow another person is not the same and will not save you, even though you call him Jesus.

The real Jesus reaffirmed the entire Old Testament (Matt. 5:17-20) even to the tiniest of letters and punctuation points. Yet, He did not condemn those who struggled with sin, provided they believed in Him, repented of their sins and followed Him. In fact, He came to die for them so they could be with Him in heaven.

Being God and the only Savior given to men by God (Acts 4:12; John 14:6) and being sinless (John 8:48; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15, 7:26; 1 Pet. 1:19, 2:22; 1 John 3:5), His death on the cross was the only means by which we could be saved. He paid the penalty for the sins of anyone who would follow Him.

## **Overturning the Tables**

There are all kinds of cults, religions, liberal denominations and special interest groups who have created another Jesus and who bow down to him (or her, in some cases). The real Jesus warned that if we do not believe that He is the one He claimed to be (God, Savior, Creator, upholder of righteousness and so forth), then our worship is not for Him but rather for a powerless facsimile that can save no one.

Salvation and heaven are at stake in this matter of biblically sound doctrine, with its call to surrender to the *true* Savior of the world. You can read about His “way of escape” in what is affectionately called “The Romans Road” (Rom. 3:10-18, 23-24; 5:1, 8; 6:23; 8:1; 10:9, 13). Then respond to His invitation during this Holy Week to enjoy eternal life with Jesus Christ in heaven. {eo}

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