

WHO IS CHRIST TO YOU?

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The indefatigable apostle Paul wrote, “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him” (I Cor. 8:5-6).

Many mold Christ by their conception of him saying, “He would do this,” or “he would do that.” Our generation is not unlike his as Matthew 11:16-19 shows, “But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.” The people wanted what they wanted whether it was what he wanted or not.

Again, in John 6:15 they wanted a king even if it meant they would force Jesus into their conception of the kingdom, but John wrote, “When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.” Jesus is not molded and shaped by man’s conception of him. Remember he is the “rock of ages”!

Matthew told of an event in the life of Jesus which is interesting on this point. He wrote, “While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? Whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions” (Matt. 22:41-46). Is it not remarkable that upon being instructed that their understanding of Christ was flawed that they did not ask him any more questions? Perhaps their human nature was to blame. People like to be right and to be correctly informed and taught would require a great deal of effort. Obviously, they were not willing to pay the price to learn who Christ was. In order to truly

know Christ we must be diligent students of his word (cf. Luke 6:46; Col. 3:16; John 1:14; II Tim. 2:15, II Cor. 3:18).

Christ is many things to many people today:

To Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, and Jews he is the founder of Christianity. He may have been a good man. His teachings emphasize morality and ethics. He is believed by Christians to have been raised from the dead.

To the Catholics Christ is viewed as the Savior, but his word is not definite, that is, a final solution and alone authoritative. It may be added to and subtracted from with impunity. Christ is now in heaven, but he has a specially designated deputy administrator over the church called the pope and known as the vicar of Christ, that is, the substitute for Christ. The pope is infallible when he speaks *ex cathedra* or “from the throne,” but he is more nearly described by the apostle Paul as “the son of perdition” than he is the Son of God (II Thess. 2:3-4). Their doctrine of transubstantiation has Christ suffer every time “the mass” is observed, but the Bible says Christ *once* suffered for sins (Heb. 9:28; I Pet. 3:18).

To denominational adherents Christ is the Savior, but his word is open to hundreds of varying and even contradictory interpretations all of which are allowable. Christ is viewed as giving an individual faith to each person so that what is written in the Bible is important, but it serves only as a source book for bolstering a personal faith that is “better felt than told.” The church is important only as an outlet for personal faith. It is not essential for salvation. Widely differing forms of organization and worship are allowed and, in fact, encouraged. The church universal is viewed as the mystical body of Christ. “Mystical” means “having a spiritual meaning or reality that is neither apparent to the senses nor obvious to the intelligence,” that is, a subjective way of referring to all who claim to be Christians. Robert A. Baker, author of *The Baptist March In History*, wrote, “The use of the word [church] in this sense never has reference to the congregate of churches, but only concerns itself with individual Christians in their immediate relationship with Christ” (p. 8).

To the universalists Christ is the Savior. He will save everyone unconditionally. Whereas the denominationalists believe the church is not essential and has no vital place or role in man’s salvation, the universalists believe the word of Christ is non-essential. God is going to save everyone regardless of whether he knows anything about the Bible or not.

But, to the Christian (in the biblical usage of the word) Christ is the Savior of the obedient believer (Heb. 5:8-9), the head of the church (Eph. 1:22-23), and the embodiment of the word of God (John 1:14).

As there are lords many and gods many (I Cor. 8:5-6) and the scriptures state a serious warning about someone carrying Christians off as captives or robbing them spiritually (Col. 2:8), this question warrants the most serious attention: Who is Christ to you?