

## **Which Jesus Do You Believe In?**

Do you follow the man-made Jesus or the Jesus?

Who is revealed in the Bible? Your answer will determine where you spend eternity.

Perhaps you have been lied to. Perhaps you have been told that God loves you...He does. Perhaps you have been told that God wants to forgive you...He does. Perhaps you have been told that God expects you to do nothing but believe in Him...He doesn't.

Jesus said something very strange, "I assure you, unless you are born again, you can never see the Kingdom of God." (John 3:3) If that is true, isn't it worth your time to figure out what that means?

Imagine a man who said, "I know a woman that I love more than anyone else in the whole world, and I really believe that marriage is a good thing." Now imagine if that man never asked her to marry him. It is obvious he is lying. He is lying about his love for that woman or he is lying about his belief in the institution of marriage. Either way, he is a liar.

The same thing is true about our relationship with God. If we say we believe in Him, but we never commit to Him, we are lying. It is like the father who abandons his children and sits in a bar telling anyone who will listen that he loves his children. Oh no he doesn't. If he truly loved his children, he would go home and be with them. Otherwise, he is a liar.

Indeed, God tells us we are supposed to believe in Him. But believing in Him does not save us from hell. The Bible tells us that even the demons believe in God, and they tremble in terror (James 2:19). But they are not going to inherit eternal life. Why? Because mere mental ascent does not save us. Merely professing that you believe in Jesus without committing your life to him is like a drunk man in a bar claiming to love his children.

Please read these words very carefully. "What's the use of saying you have faith if you don't prove it by your actions? That kind of faith can't save anyone. So you see, it isn't enough just to have faith. Faith that doesn't show itself by good deeds is not faith at all--it is dead and useless." (James 2:14,17)

So what does make one a "real" Christian? Here is what the Bible says, "What this means is that those who become Christians become new persons. They are not the same anymore, for the old is gone. A new life has begun!" II Cor.5:15,17

If you call yourself a Christian, but you have not become a "new person", you are not saved. If you are not "born again," you are not a Christian and you will not inherit eternal life.

You believe in the man-made Jesus and your faith walk has been a series of fits and starts. One minute you are hot, the next minute you are cold. You walk with the Lord for a while and then you backslide. If that describes you, it is because you have never repented and committed your life to the Lord. Instead, you have merely “believed” that God is going to forgive you.

The Bible says you should do something. You should make your calling and election sure. You should examine yourself to see if you are in the truth.

Let’s do that right now.

The Bible says, “You are storing up terrible punishment for your yourself because of your stubbornness in refusing to turn from your sin (repent). For there is going to come a day of judgment when God, the just judge of all the world, will judge all people according to what they have done. He will give eternal life to those who persist in doing what is good, seeking after the glory and immortality that God offers. But he will pour out his anger and wrath on those who live for themselves, who refuse to obey the truth and practice evil deeds. There will be trouble and calamity for everyone who keeps on sinning.” (Romans 2:5-9)

Gulp. God is going to judge you for every thought, word and action. How will you do? Let’s see.

Have you ever told a lie? What does that make you? If you are honest, you know you are a liar.

Have you ever stolen anything...even a piece of gum or a paper clip? What does that make you? That’s right...a thief.

Jesus said that if you hate a person you are guilty of murder. Have you ever done that? Then according to Jesus’ standard, you are a murderer.

Let’s try one more. Have you ever taken the Lord’s name in vain? If you have used the name of the God who has given you life as a four letter filth word, you are a blasphemer.

If you are being honest before God, you know you are guilty of breaking God’s holy law...and we only looked at four of the ten commandments. So, if God judges you based on His standard (the ten commandments) and not yours...will you be innocent or guilty?

That’s right, you will be guilty.

Knowing you are going to stand guilty before God, do you deserve to go to heaven or hell?

I know what you said. Heaven. I don't blame you. Hell is a horrific place. The Bible describes hell as a lake of sulfur where there will be eternal torment. Unfortunately, that is where you are headed. That is what you deserve.

I know what you are saying. "God is loving, He won't send me to hell."

Oh yes He will. If you were brought before an earthly judge and you were found guilty of murder and theft, would he let you go because he is loving? No. He may be loving, but if he is a just judge, he will give you what you deserve...punishment.

The same is true with God. He is loving. But He is also just, and because He is just, He has to punish evil doers.

"I won't do it again," you think.

It doesn't matter. Time does not erase earthly crimes that have been committed and time will not erase the crimes you have committed against God.

"But I believe in Jesus," you proclaim.

It doesn't matter. Remember? Mere mental ascent does not save anyone.

Imagine you are on an airplane when the pilot makes an announcement. "Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please. We are presently cruising at 36,000 feet, but we have a problem. The tail just fell off the airplane. Thankfully you have a parachute under your seat. Thank you for flying with us and have a nice day."

Would you just sit there and believe in the parachute? Would you wait until Sunday and just worship the parachute? NO, you would put on the parachute. And that is exactly what you need to do with Jesus Christ. You need to put Him on. (Romans 13:12)

You need to understand that He is holy and perfect. You need to understand that you have broken His laws and fallen short of the perfect standard required to be with Him for eternity. You need to understand that He hates your sin. You need to realize that you are an enemy of God.

You need to realize this: "We are made right in God's sight when we trust in Jesus Christ to take away our sins. And we all can be saved in this same way, no matter who we are or what we have done. For all have sinned; all fall short of God's glorious standard. Yet now God in his gracious kindness declares us not guilty. He has done this through Christ Jesus, who has freed us by taking away our sins. For God sent Jesus to take the punishment for our sins and to satisfy God's anger against us. We are made right with God when we believe that Jesus shed his blood, sacrificing his life for us." (Romans 3:22-25)

You need to count the cost. “You cannot be my disciple if you do not carry your own cross and follow me. Don’ t begin until you count the cost. No one can become my disciple if without giving up everything for me.” (Luke 14:27,28,33)

You need to understand that Christianity is not easy. It requires a daily dying to self. “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have nailed the passions and desires of their sinful nature to his cross and crucified them there.” (Gal. 5:24) It requires that we do what He wants and not what we want. (Gal.5:17)

You need to REPENT. Peter wrote, “Now turn from your sins (repent) and turn to God, so you can be cleansed of your sins.” (Acts 3:19) John the Baptist said, “Prove by the way you live that you have really turned from your sins (repented) and turned to God.” John 3:8

God wants us to believe. But repentance is required with that belief. When you believe that God is the “just judge of all the world” and that He is going to judge you guilty and you are going to spend eternity away from Him in a lake of fire, you will repent. You will turn from your sins and turn to Him.

Are you willing? Are you willing to follow Him for the rest of your life? Are you willing to stop living for yourself and start living for Him?

If you are, it is time to repent. It is time for you to find a private place and fall before God and beg for forgiveness. Tell Him you are sorry for angering Him. Tell Him you want Him to be the Lord of your life. Tell Him how thankful you are that He sent Jesus to take the punishment you deserve. Tell Him you love Him.

Then get up, start reading your Bible every day and do what it says.

If you do that, you will no longer be following a man-made Jesus. You will be following the Savior of your soul. You will be born again, and you will have moved from death to life.

Please. Inherit eternal life.