



DO YOU HAVE A "DIFFERENT GOSPEL?"

THE "DIFFERENT" GOSPEL: "If someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough." (2 Cor. 11:4)

DEFENDING THE FAITH: "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints." (Jude 3)

A. Those with a different gospel

1. Appear to be Christian
2. Redefine the personage of God
3. Use extra-Biblical writings

A. The "Different Jesus" in Biblical Times

1. GNOSTICISM {Introduction to I John, NIV Study Bible}:

"Christ's true humanity was denied in two ways: (1) Some said that Christ only seemed to have a body, a view called Docetism, from the Greek dokeo ("to seem"), and (2) others said that the divine Christ joined the man Jesus at baptism and left him before he died, a view called Cerinthianism, after its most prominent spokesman, Cerinthus. This view is the background of much of I John (see 1:1; 2:22; 4:2-3)."

2. Occasion and Purpose {Introduction to 2 John, NIV Study Bible}:

"During the first two centuries the gospel was taken from place to place by traveling evangelists and teachers. Believers customarily took these missionaries into their homes and gave them provisions for their journey when they left. Since Gnostic teachers also relied on this practice, 2 John was written to urge discernment in supporting traveling teachers; otherwise, someone might unintentionally contribute to the propagation of heresy rather than truth."

3. "Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God, whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take

him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work." (2 John 7-11) Jesus was the Christ at birth (Luke 2:11) .

A. The "different" Jesus in modern times

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned!" (Galatians 1:8). "For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve." (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

1. Jehovah's Witnesses teach that God's first created angel was Jesus, known as Michael the archangel. This life-force was transferred to the womb of Mary, and Jesus was born a perfect man (not God). The Holy Spirit is an active force (not God).

2. This cannot be, for Heb. 1:4, 5 says, "So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son; today I have become your Father?'"

3. Mormons teach that all existed in heaven before coming to earth – Jesus was just one of those preexisting spirits – the first born of God's children. They believe that their Jesus is the spirit-brother of Lucifer (Satan). They believe in three separate gods.

4. This cannot be, for Jesus created everything that exists. Jesus is Lucifer's creator! Not his brother! "For by him (Jesus Christ) were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: and he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Colossians 1:16, 17).

A. Jesus, according to John 1:1, 14

1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

2. Jesus asked Peter a very important question: "But what about you, 'Who do you say I am?'" Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Christ the Son of the living God.'" (Matt. 16:15,16).

THE NEW AGE

The New Age view of Christ presents Jesus Christ as a "world teacher," an "ascended master," a "cosmic Christ." Believers become gods. "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons" (I timothy 4:1).

There is only one God – we do not become gods. "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God, or give thanks; but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man..." (Romans 1:20-23).

New Age is not new, but a combination of Eastern mysticism and revived Gnosticism. There is only one scripture in the Bible where humans are told they can become gods, and that was Satan the devil lying to the gullible and foolish Eve! (Genesis 3:4,5).

WITNESSING WITH LOVE AND CONCERN

1. Why bother? "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:8,9).
2. Always share your personal testimony. You must take the initiative to do this. A good formula: (a) your life before you met Christ; (b) how you met Christ; and, (c) what He means to your life now.
3. Create a conflict in their mind. Remember: Jesus used questions to promote thinking among the religious people of His day. Ask – Are you a Christian? Do you believe you'll lose your hope everlasting life if you leave your organization and attend another church? What do you tell people they must do to become a Christian? The apostle Paul was asked the same question and he answered: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." (Acts 16:30,31). Do you believe you must believe in Jesus plus your organization to be saved? Jesus said, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)
4. Who is Jesus? You must know bible passages that demonstrate the deity of Jesus Christ. You must stay on the subject because they will attempt to "hopscotch" to other subjects.
5. Some cults predict the end of the world. The test of a prophet of God (Deut. 18:20-22).

6. Be patient! You must demonstrate your concern for those approaching you. You are not trying to just win an argument – you want to lead them to Christ! Pray for the leadership of the Holy Spirit.