

Counterfeit Christs

A study of false saviors and false salvation

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins." - John 8:24

Counterfeit Christs

Introduction - The Danger of a Counterfeit

"For if one comes and preaches *another Jesus* whom we have not preached, or you receive a different spirit which you have not received, or a different gospel which you have not accepted, you bear this beautifully." (2 Corinthians 11:4)

coun•ter•feit

1. an imitation intended to be passed off fraudulently or deceptively as genuine.
2. forgery.
3. a copy.
4. a close likeness; portrait.
5. impostor; pretender.

Christ's Warning to Us

"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will mislead many ... Then if anyone says to you, 'Behold, here is the Christ,' or 'There He is,' do not believe him. For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will show great signs and wonders, so as to mislead, if possible, even the elect."
(Matthew 24:5,23-24)

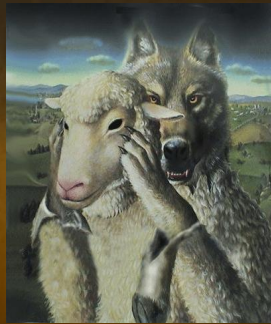
The Pattern of False Teaching

A False prophet
A False authority

Proclaim



A False god
A False christ
A False gospel



"Who do people say that the Son of Man is?"
- Matthew 16:13



Is Believing in the Right Christ Important?

Does it really matter whether you believe...

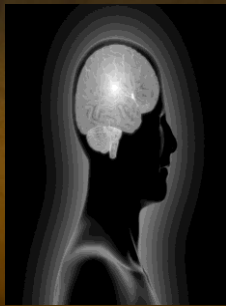
1. Jesus is God in the flesh and the savior of mankind.
2. Jesus is the Son of God, but only a created being.
3. Jesus is not the Son of God, but only an important prophet of God.
4. Jesus was a great, moral teacher, but nothing more.
5. Jesus manifested the Christ, but was only one of the Christ's incarnations.
6. Jesus was just a myth, but a good moral idea to cling to.



A Review of Logic & Critical Thinking

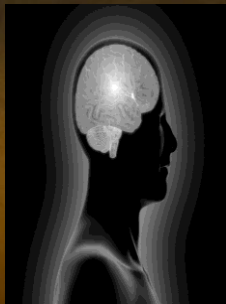
Logic is built upon four foundational laws

1. Law of non-contradiction – something cannot be “A” and “non-A” at the same time and in the same sense.
2. Law of identity – “A” is really “A”.
3. Law of the excluded middle – something is either “A” or “non-A”.
4. Law of rational inference – e.g. All men are mortal, John is a man, therefore John is mortal.



The Importance of the Law of Non-Contradiction

1. Makes rational thought possible: it basically mandates that the opposite of true is false
2. Anyone denying the law of non-contradiction actually makes use of it; therefore their argument becomes self-defeating



The Importance of the Law of Non-Contradiction

“We believe that all religions are basically the same,
 at least the one that we read was.
 They all believe in love and goodness.
 They only differ on matters of
 creation sin heaven hell God and salvation.”
 - Steve Turner, excerpt from *Creed*

The Importance of the Law of Non-Contradiction

“Anyone who denies the law of non-contradiction should be beaten and burned until they admit that to be beaten and burned is not the same thing as to NOT be beaten and burned.”

- Avicenna, Muslim Philosopher



The Importance of the Law of Identity

1. Makes rational communication possible
2. Acts as a protective mechanism. For example, does it matter which of these you drink?:



The Power of the Law of Identity

1. Immune to sincerity
2. Immune to belief
3. Immune to desire

No matter how sincere a person is, no matter what they believe, no matter how much they desire their belief to be true, the law of identity overrules them.



Does a case of "Mistaken Identity" have consequences for those who put their belief in the wrong Jesus?

Why Believing in the Real Jesus Matters



1. Enables a true salvation experience.
2. Enables a true reconciliation between God and man.
3. Enables a true view of God and affects how we live.

The Real Jesus Enables True Salvation



“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”
(John 8:24).

The Real Jesus Enables True Reconciliation



“For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.”
(1 Timothy 2:5-6)

The Real Jesus Enables Our Lives

AUTHORITY

- Jesus, being God, shows us what God is like.
- Jesus, being God, shows God's love for us.
- Jesus, being God, has the authority to tell us how to live.
- Jesus, *if not God*, becomes just another voice to be considered and dismissed.

“Why do you call Me,
‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not
do what I say?”
(Luke 6:46)

So Does it Matter What You Believe?

BELIEF

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,
because you travel around on sea and land to
make one proselyte; and when he becomes one,
you make him twice as much a son of hell as
yourselves.”
(Matthew 23:15)

Seven Counterfeits of the Real Christ

1. The counterfeit christ of false religions
2. The counterfeit christ of the cults
3. The counterfeit christ of the occult
4. The counterfeit christ of mythology
5. The counterfeit christ of humanism
6. The counterfeit christ of pluralism
7. The ultimate counterfeit – the Antichrist



The Counterfeit Christ of False Religions

"O followers of the Book! do not exceed the limits in your religion, and do not speak (lies) against Allah, but (speak) the truth; the Messiah, Isa son of Marium is only an apostle of Allah and His Word which He communicated to Marium and a spirit from Him; believe therefore in Allah and His apostles, and say not, Three. Desist, it is better for you; Allah is only one God; far be It from His glory that He should have a son, whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is His, and Allah is sufficient for a Protector."
 The Koran, sura 4:171

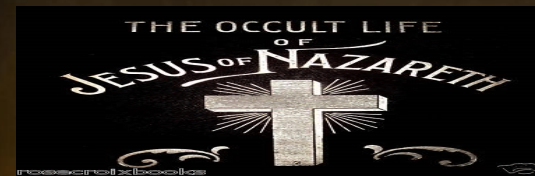


The Counterfeit Christ of the Cults

"Being the only begotten Son of God . . . the Word would be a prince among all other creatures. In this office he [Christ] bore another name in heaven, which name is 'Michael'. . . Other names were given to the Son in course of time."
 Jehovah Witnesses
The Truth Shall Make You Free, p. 49



The Counterfeit Christ of the Occult

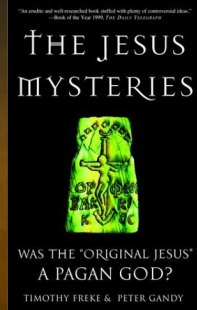


"When we say 'Jesus the Christ' we refer to the man and to his office, just as we do when we say Edward, the King, or Lincoln, the President. Edward was not always king, Lincoln was not always president, and Jesus was not always Christ. Jesus won his Christship by a strenuous life."
 - Levi Dowling
The Aquarian Gospel, pg 14

The Counterfeit Christ of Mythology

"Why should we consider the stories of Osiris, Dionysus, Adonis, Attis, Mithras, and the other pagan mystery saviors as fables, yet come across essentially the same story told in a Jewish context and believe it to be the biography of a carpenter from Bethlehem?"

- Timothy Freke / Peter Gandy
The Jesus Mysteries



The Counterfeit Christ of Humanism

"Silent night! Holy night! All is calm. All is bright. Only the Chancellor steadfast in fight Watches o'er Germany by day and by night Always caring for us.

"Silent night! Holy night! All is calm. All is bright. Adolf Hitler is Germany's wealth, Brings us greatness, favor and health. Oh, give us Germans all power!"
- Nazi Silent Night Revision



The Counterfeit Christ of Pluralism

"My Jesus would never send anyone to Hell..."

My Jesus doesn't discriminate and accepts all lifestyles including homosexuality..."

My Jesus values peace over everything else..."



The Ultimate Counterfeit Christ

"Then I saw a beast coming up out of the sea, having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns were ten diadems, and on his heads were blasphemous names. And the beast which I saw was like a leopard, and his feet were like those of a bear, and his mouth like the mouth of a lion. And the dragon gave him his power and his throne and great authority. . . . And the whole earth was amazed and followed after the beast; they worshiped the dragon because he gave his authority to the beast; and they worshiped the beast, saying, "Who is like the beast, and who is able to wage war with him?" There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him. And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who dwell in heaven. It was also given to him to make war with the saints and to overcome them; and authority over every tribe and people and tongue and nation was given to him. All who dwell on the earth will worship him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain. If anyone has an ear, let him hear."
 (Revelation 13:1-9)



When Jesus was asked about the end times,
 the first thing he chose to say was:

“See to it that no one misleads you...”

- Matthew 24:4

The Silver Linings in All the Counterfeits



1. They strip Jesus of His true identity and divinity; therefore, His authority can be overridden.
2. They make Jesus' death on the cross fiction or insufficient for salvation; a works-based salvation is usually the end result.

" But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons," (1 Timothy 4:1)

False Religions Cults Occult Mythology Humanism Pluralism Antichrist

In one form or another, all of the above are the end result of spiritual deception

"The Worst Forms of Wickedness Consist in Perversions of the Truth"
- R. C. Lensky

Identity and Truth Matters

Does switching the label on the bottle from 'Poison' to 'Lemonade' change the contents of the bottle?



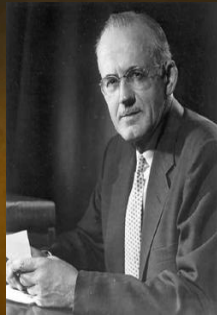
The Law of Identity is a powerful reminder that reality is what reality is. Why think it works any different in the spiritual realm?



A counterfeit may look and feel very much like the real thing, but it does not have the authority and/or power to bring about a true end result. Someone will always be short-changed. So it is with those who put their trust in a counterfeit Christ.

“To believe on Christ savingly means to believe the right things about Christ. There is no escaping this.”

- A.W. Tozer
How important is Creed



Why the Identity of Christ is Critical

All other faiths approach God in one of three ways:

1. Epistemologically – through knowledge. “If I just learn something, I’ll be better”
2. Pragmatically – through works. “If I just do something, I’ll be better”
3. Existentially – through experience. “If I just experience something, I’ll be better”

Why the Identity of Christ is Critical

Christianity is unique among all other faiths because it is **ontological**.

Christianity is grounded in being – in the true person of Jesus Christ.

"For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know **whom** I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:12)

Notice – "whom", not what...

Why the Identity of Christ is Critical

Jesus personifies all other approaches:

1. Epistemologically – we learn through words. John 1:1,14 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
2. Pragmatically – what work is commanded of Christians?
"Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent." (John 6:28-29)
3. Existentially – experience is through living and life. "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me." (John 14:6)

"We should clarify that Christianity isn't primarily about subscribing to a set of doctrines. Christianity is focused on the person of Christ. We're called into a relationship, not simply to believe a set of doctrines."

- Paul Copan
Christian Philosopher

